



31 DAYS OF PROMOTING A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

URBAN OCTOBER

REPORT 2020



Housing For All:
A Better Urban Future



BETTER CITY, BETTER LIFE
Valuing our communities and cities



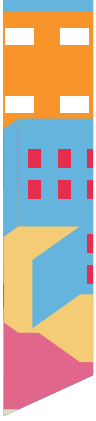


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**Housing For All:
A Better Urban Future**

WORLD HABITAT DAY EVENTS

WORLD HABITAT DAY'S VIRTUAL GLOBAL OBSERVANCE IN SURABAYA, INDONESIA

World Habitat Day was celebrated on Monday 5 October 2020 with the theme Housing for All: A Better Urban Future. There were 69 events celebrated globally in 42 countries and 58 cities.

The Global Observance of World Habitat Day co-hosted this year by UN-Habitat and the Government of Indonesia, came from Surabaya, Indonesia combining dynamic physical meetings with global online participation and video messages. While Surabaya held a local gathering to host the event, the pandemic prevented many people from travelling so instead they joined online.

In his video message, the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, called for increased efforts to improve housing in cities through promoting partnerships, pro-poor policies and regulations.

"As we strive to overcome the pandemic, address the fragilities and inequalities it has exposed, and combat climate change, now is the time to harness the transformative potential of urbanization for the benefit of people and planet," he said.

President Joko Widodo, of the Republic of Indonesia, in a video message, said urbanization was a great opportunity to advance as cities were centres of creativity leading to economic growth and increased livelihoods.

He said the Housing for All theme was ***"the right agenda for all of us"*** as globally a house is a basic need, adding that the Indonesian Government was trying hard to ensure everyone had decent housing.

In her statement the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, said a quarter of world's population living in slums and informal settlements were in the region.

"To realize a future vision of "cities without slums" we need to make large-scale public investments in affordable and adequate housing and slum upgrading to ensure that marginalized groups have access to shelter that facilitates physical and mental health during the pandemic and beyond," she said.

Mexico's Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Martha Delgado said the pandemic underlined that a house was much more than a place to sleep. Her words were echoed by Indonesia's Minister of National Development Planning/Head of Bappenas, Suharso Monoarfa, who

said everyone now realised that ***"housing is an important need and pre condition for properly accessing needs such as education and health."***

UN-Habitat's Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Arab States H.R.H. Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud, thanked UN-Habitat for its work supporting local governments and for providing community driven solutions in informal settlements during the pandemic.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director launched the Urban Agenda Platform explaining it was a space for Member States to "share their voluntary reports on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and for all stakeholders to share what they are doing, and to make committed actions moving forward."

She also launched the Housing for All Campaign which will run for five weeks raising awareness about the key role of housing, gathering solutions and encouraging global commitment.

One of the highlights of the Global Observance, was the awarding of the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Awards to the five winners.



UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif watches the Global Observance of World Habitat Day 2020 broadcast from Subang Jaya, Malaysia ©Subang Jaya Municipal Council

Colombia's Minister of Housing, City and Territory, Jonathan Malagón, said that his Ministry, which was one of the winners, was one of the youngest in Colombia but they had achieved great results reducing the housing deficit and providing drinking water and subsidies for housing purchases.

The Executive Director was in Subang Jaya, Malaysia where the Municipal Council was given the award for its holistic and integrated approach to affordable housing and community empowerment. The Mayor of Subang Jaya, Noraini Roslan, said she hoped their programme would inspire others around the world.

Community Impact Nepal, from Kathmandu, Nepal was honoured for empowering entrepreneurs to produce eco-friendly constructions for families in substandard housing. Pratik Singh Parmar, the Project Manager and Partnership Developer, speaking from Nepal said: **"if you want to make a real change never ever give up."**

The founder of the fourth winner, Upcycle Africa, Johnmary Kavuma speaking from Uganda spoke about his own family's struggle to find decent housing when he was a child. His organization was awarded the Scroll for transforming lives through affordable housing provision, waste education and job opportunities.

The representative of the fifth winner, Mexico's ECOCASA SHF, Dr. Jose David Alvarez, General Director of Promotion, travelled to Surabaya to receive the award. He said his organization was committed to offering sustainable financing solutions. ECOCASA SHF received the award for addressing energy efficient construction standards for housing, facilitating inclusive access to financial mechanisms and creating decent homes.

The Executive Director congratulated all the winners and called for everyone to join forces and share solutions.

During the second day of the virtual Global Observance the Urban Agenda Platform, was discussed in more depth during the first Roundtable on The launch of Urban Agenda Platform: Reporting progress and sharing knowledge in the Decade of Action.

Ms. Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of the United Cities and Local Governments network (UCLG), who moderated the Roundtable said that **"the New Urban Agenda is much more than SDG11, but SDG11 is a building block and the cornerstone of all the other SDGs."**

Poland's Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, said that the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and the New Urban Agenda were important for her country in designing a National Urban Policy and an Urban Policy.

“Poland is determined to implement the 2030 Agenda and approaches this programme as a long-term investment,” she said.

Rwanda's Minister of Infrastructure, Claver Gatete, said that reporting progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda mattered to governments because they could assess and evaluate their performance progress level against commitments, goals, and indicators.

In her opening remarks at Roundtable Two on Responding to resilient, inclusive, gender-equal and green economic recovery in informal settlements, the Mayor of the host city, Surabaya, Tri Rismaharini said the city aimed to protect the rights and dignity of people living in informal settlements.

“The city has never encouraged demolition of informal settlements to pave the way for new developments; instead, we embarked on campaigns to teach them on how to better their living conditions,” she said.

The Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, Yvonne Aki-Sawyer said that due to the lack of development and planning control, they had 74 informal settlements across the city. She added that successful interventions needed everyone on board, including informal settlements' residents.

Kenya's State Department of Urban Development Principal Secretary, Charles Hinga, said that the right to adequate housing was enshrined in his country's constitution and that the provision of housing was key in ensuring social justice.

In his address, the European Commission's Lars Groenvald, Team Leader urban development, advocated for an all-inclusive plan for cities which included those living in informal settlements.

South Africa's William Jiyana, Chief Director in the Department of Human Settlements,

said they were committed to working with other governments to find solutions to the current pandemic.

During Roundtable Three on Housing at the centre of the COVID-19 response Mexico's Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Martha Delgado, said the pandemic had highlighted the critical role of housing.

“I firmly believe one of most outstanding opportunities during COVID-19 for both national and sub national governments is to develop strong policies that not only ensure adequate housing but help strengthen urban sustainability and the resilience of communities in order to create a new normality,” she said

Cities Alliance Regional Manager for Latin America and Caribbean, Anacláudia Marinheiro Centeno Rossbach, said: “In the global south the informal settlements are very prevalent and COVID has affected the financial capacity of families here so we have observed an increase in people living on the streets and an expansion of informal settlements.”

According to Marissa Plouin, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: “COVID did not create a housing problem but it turned a lot of chronic housing challenges into a housing crisis and they become much more visible and hard to ignore.”

From the European Investment Bank, Senior Housing Specialist Grzegorz Gajda, said one key lesson from the pandemic was the importance of public spending and public services such as health.

In her closing remarks, UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif underscored the unique circumstances during which this year's World Habitat Day celebrations were held.

“World Habitat Day 2020 is historic for many reasons. For the first time since 1986, we held the Global Observance in hybrid fashion,” she said. ***“For the first time, World Habitat Day is truly global in its reach and scope.”***



UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif presents the Scroll of Honour to Mayor Noraini Roslan of Subang Jaya Municipal Council during the Global Observance of World Habitat Day 2020 ©Subang Jaya Municipal Council



AFRICA

CAMEROON

Douala city hosted a lively World Habitat Day 2020 event with the presentation of several awards recognizing developers and city cleanliness and a virtual speech at the Global Observance ceremony from Surabaya, Indonesia.

Under the patronage of the Prime Minister represented by the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Célestine Ketcha-Courtès, the meeting brought together cabinet ministers, representatives of ShelterAfrique, UN agencies, the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Minister of Housing and Infrastructures of Burundi, UN-Habitat's senior officials and some 500 other participants both online and physically present.



The celebrations presented an opportunity to recognize the winners and participants in the inaugural Real Estate Awards and the Clean City Competition.

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, in a video message, encouraged participants to continue the enthusiastic work of the Clean Cities Campaign.

"I personally followed this mobilization for cleaner environment online through the WhatsApp group set up by the Minister last year. On behalf of UN-Habitat, I thank the people and mayors who decided to take this opportunity to improve their living condition and children's well-being," she said.

Speaking from Addis Ababa, the Executive Secretary of UNECA, Dr Vera Songwe, stressed the need to prioritise the housing sector and ensure it takes the aspirations of girls and young women into account.

"As SDG 11 implies, we must continue to work to ensure that we build enough houses so that we can ensure our girls and young women study well. You need efficient and effective housing to be able to produce the rest of the resources that society need," she said.

The African Union Commission, through the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Cessouma Minata Samata, sent a video message where she welcomed the celebration and the link with the African Union's 2063 Vision.

"The African Union Commission welcomes the choice of the theme for this year's World Habitat Day, "Housing for All: A Better Urban Future". In line with that theme, we will make sure that the drafting of

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