



GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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UN-HABITAT IMPROVING PUBLIC SPACE WORLDWIDE

UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme, launched in 2012, is now active in more than 30 cities across the world. We produce policy guides, share knowledge and carry out advocacy work to promote public space as a key element to ensure good quality of life for all urban residents. The Programme helps cities assess and map their public spaces to prepare city-wide public space strategies and urban development frameworks. In collaboration with local government and civil society partners we demonstrate the importance of public space for achieving social, economic and environmental benefits through more than 50 concrete public space upgrading projects selected through annual expressions of interest. We share good policy and practice on a global level through a network of around 100 partner organisations.

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Public spaces contribute to defining the cultural, social, economic and political functions of cities. They continue to be the first element to mark the status of a place from a chaotic and unplanned settlement to a well-established town or city.

Dr Joan Clos,
UN-Habitat Executive Director
2010-2017



WHY PUBLIC SPACE?

Research shows that there is a positive correlation between planned urbanization and development and that urban economies are more productive than rural economies. Well-planned urbanization can be a powerful tool for creating employment and livelihoods. This requires a mindset shift away from viewing urbanization as a problem towards viewing urbanization as a powerful tool for development. UN-Habitat supports countries to develop urban planning methods and systems to address current urbanization challenges such as population growth, urban sprawl, poverty, inequality, pollution, congestion, as well as urban biodiversity, urban mobility and energy, by promoting compact, better integrated and connected cities which are socially inclusive and resilient to climate change.

Public space is a vital component of a prosperous city. Well designed and managed public space is a key asset for a city's functioning and has a positive impact on its economy, environment, safety, health, integration and connectivity. The quality of life for people in cities is directly related to the state of its public spaces. Providing public spaces enhances community cohesion and civic identity and supports the levels of urban density required for environmentally and economically sustainable cities. Cities with sufficient public space make it possible to have well-maintained, safe and attractive places to live and work in. Public spaces and streets are multifunctional areas for social interaction, economic exchange and cultural expression among a wide diversity of participants. The role of urban planning is to organize public spaces and the role of urban design to encourage their use.

SDG 11.7: "by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities."

THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON PUBLIC SPACE

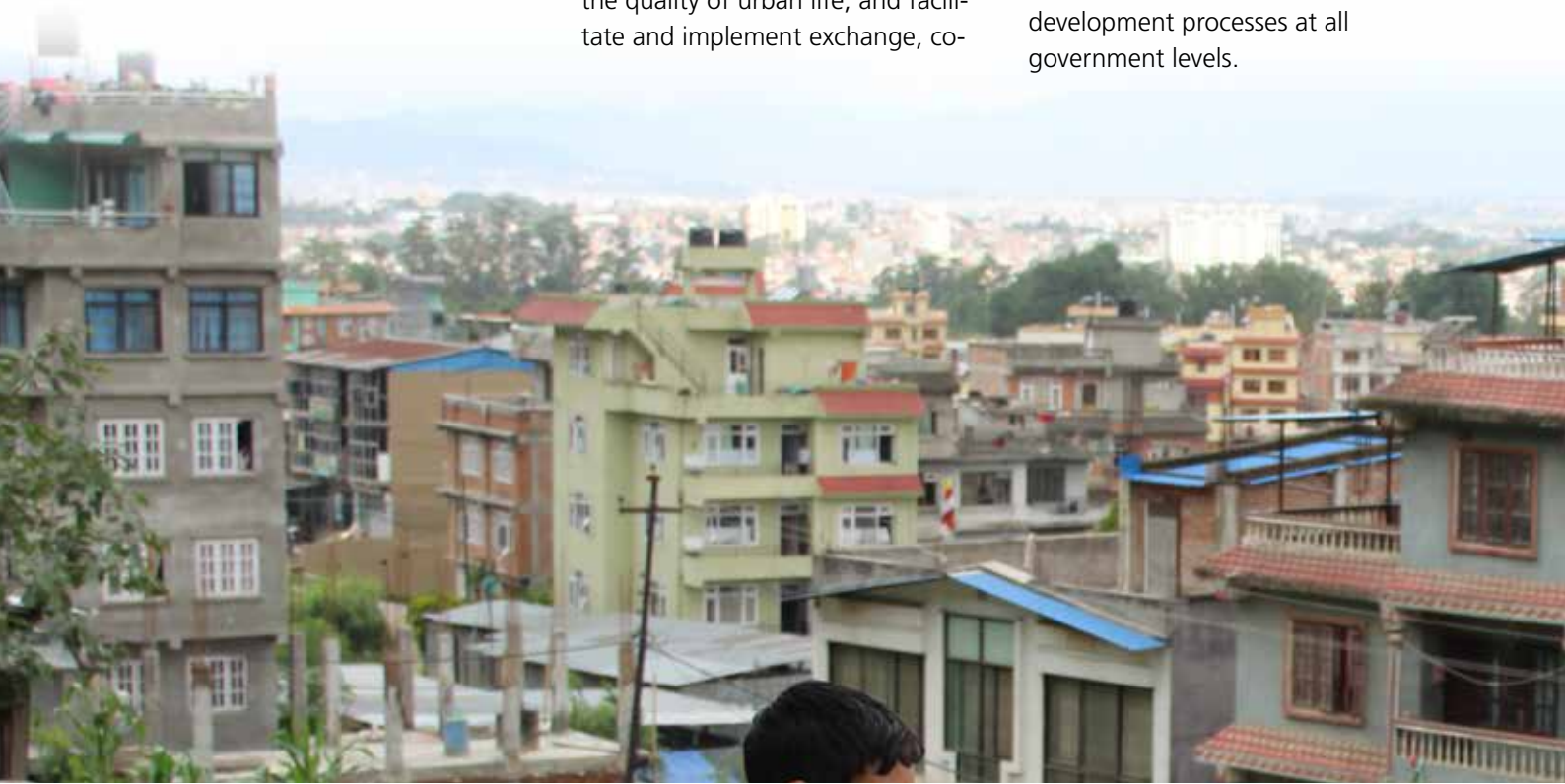
Prior to the launch of the Global Public Space Programme, UN-Habitat had worked in the field of public space for over 20 years. However, at the 23rd Governing Council of UN-Habitat in 2011, United Nations Member States specifically requested UN-Habitat to place a larger focus on public space and how it can contribute to sustainable urban development.

In *Resolution 23/4: Sustainable urban development through access to quality urban public spaces*, Member States mandated UN-Habitat to:

- Advance the agenda on place-making and public spaces in a way that will consolidate local and international approaches to creating inclusive cities, enhance the knowledge of UN-Habitat partners and local authorities of place-making, public spaces and the quality of urban life, and facilitate and implement exchange, co-

operation and research between partners working in this field;

- Develop a policy approach on the role that public spaces can play in meeting the challenges of our rapidly urbanizing world, to disseminate that policy and its results widely and to develop a plan for ensuring its application internationally;
- Assist in coordinating UN-Habitat partners in disseminating knowledge to existing sustainable urban development processes at all government levels.



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