

Achieving SDGs in times of global crises



Side Event 44

Resilient cities, greener neighbourhoods, thriving communities: the power of nature-based solutions

 Thursday 8 JUNE 2023, 18:15-19:15 EAT

 Conference Room 14

SUMMARY

To become sustainable and climate resilient, urban communities and cities can tap into the power of nature. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) at neighborhood and city-level are powerful solutions to address urgent environmental, social and food security challenges by improving ecosystems services in cities and rebalancing their relationships with surrounding areas, people, food and the planet. NbS can play a major role in addressing a broad range of societal challenges, from managing water scarcity to reducing disaster risk to poverty alleviation.

By accelerating the implementation of green roofs, urban forests, and urban wetlands, decision-makers can help mitigate the effects of climate change by providing carbon sequestration, reducing the urban heat island effect, reducing energy needs, and preventing flooding caused by heavy rainfall. With community and school gardens, rooftop farms, and urban agriculture, cities can produce fresh and healthy food, improve food nutrition, reduce inequalities and improve environmental education.

However, one of the main challenges we face is that to successfully unleash the power of NbS in cities and ensure durable benefits, a multi-level approach is needed. Promoting nature in cities through bottom-up collaboration and inclusive participation can help cities become more resilient and healthier, while ensuring inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, equity, and long-term success. The neighborhood is the perfect size to experiment on innovative NbS while involving communities and allowing them to see tangible results. Creating green neighborhoods is at the heart of developing resilient cities and thriving communities.

Another important challenge is that of securing public-private finance flows to Nbs. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has proven a significant potential for cities to harness NbS beyond current levels of investment and estimates that nature-positive investments - such as nature-based solutions for infrastructure or returning land to nature - could create more than 59 million jobs in cities worldwide and generate over \$1.5 trillion in annual business value by 2030. However, according to UNEP's State of Finance for Nature 2022, global finance flows to NbS are currently less than half of the US\$384 billion per year needed by 2025 to limit climate change to below 1.5°C, halt biodiversity loss and achieve land degradation neutrality.

In this session, we will highlight opportunities and best practices to upscale mainstreaming practices into urban planning or policies at neighborhood and city-scale. Representatives of national and local governments cities across several regions worldwide will highlight the challenges they have faced in delivering Nbs at the urban level, especially relating to securing finance mechanisms. We will also hear from experts that will discuss pathways to overcome these obstacles and accelerate action, as well as showcase examples of cities which have achieved increased sustainability and resilience by allying with nature.





UN-HABITAT

ASSEMBLY

5 to 9 June 2023

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Organizer(s)

[United Nations Environment Programme](#), France

[UN Habitat](#), Kenya

[C40 Cities](#), United Kingdom

[World Economic Forum](#), Switzerland

Moderator

Ms Anastasia Ignatova, Urban Planning and Design Expert, Urban Lab, UN Habitat

Speaker(s)

- Ms Mirey Atallah, Head of Nature for Climate Branch, United Nations Environment Programme, Lebanon
- Mr Bernhard Barth, Subprogramme Coordinator, Climate Change and Urban Environment, UN-Habitat, Germany
- Ms Eugenie L. Birch, co-Director, Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania, USA
- Ms Alice Kaumba, Senior Manager Land Use Planning, C40, Kenya
- Ms Irene M García Brenes, Advisor to the Mayor, Municipality of Curridabat, San José, Costa Rica
- Ms Kira Intrator, Head Office, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Switzerland



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Agenda

Time (EAT)	Agenda Item	Speaker(s)
18:15	Welcome and Moderation	Ms Anastasia Ignatova, Urban Planning and Design Expert, Urban Lab, UN Habitat
18:15-18:25 (10 minutes, 5 each)	Opening Remarks	Ms Mirey Atallah, Head of Nature for Climate Branch, United Nations Environment Programme Mr Bernhard Barth, Subprogramme Coordinator, Climate Change and Urban Environment, UN Habitat
18:25 - 19:00 (35 minutes)	Panel discussion: <i>Mainstreaming and upscaling nature-based practices into urban planning and strategies</i>	Ms Irene García Brenes, Advisor to the Mayor, Municipality of Curridabat, San José, Costa Rica Kira Intrator, Lead head office, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Switzerland Ms Eugenie L. Birch, co-Director, Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania Ms Alice Kaumba, Senior Manager Land Use Planning, C40, Kenya
19:00 - 19:10 (10 minutes)	Q&A - if time allows	Audience & Panelists
19:10 - 19:15 (5 minutes)	Summary of key messages & closing	Ms Anastasia Ignatova, Urban Planning and Design Expert, Urban Lab, UN Habitat

