



UN-Habitat side event
2023 High-level Political Forum
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#UNHABITATHLPF2023



CONCEPT NOTE

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Rescuing SDG 11 for a resilient urban planet

Abstract

By 2030, we will not meet most SDG 11 targets without major shifts in urban policy and investments in local government. The consequences of not achieving SDG 11 in particular are immense, directly impacting billions of people's daily lives. It is urgent to prevent the disastrous effects consequences ahead of us by changing the way we plan, manage, and govern our cities and human settlements. To avoid a collective failure and to rescue SDG 11 but also Agenda 2030 more broadly, actions need to be taken now and at scale across cities and human settlements. In line with the call of the UN General Assembly to rescue the SDGs,¹ this is the moment to rescue SDG 11 through scaled action and investments. This side event will focus on the urgent transformative shifts needed to embrace innovative and bold measures to accelerate SDG 11 progress. It considers new ways of thinking and working that can positively alter the way in which policies are designed, implemented, and financed to accelerate progress with SDG 11 and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels

Background

Humanity's present and future is urban. Now is the time for leaders to think, plan and act urban. Agenda 2030 sets out a vision of common global goals that links humanity's future to the fate of cities and human settlements. For millennia, the economic and political transformation of societies has gone hand in hand with the evolution of villages into towns and cities. Urban growth continues in all world regions, and in a rapid, unplanned manner in some parts.

Urbanization—how cities develop and grow—determines the quality of life for an estimated 4.4 billion people globally. This premise led the General Assembly to adopt Sustainable Development Goal 11: to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Creating the conditions for environmentally sustainable, economically prosperous, and socially equitable and just cities and communities is of paramount importance for present and future generations.

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1126981>



As SDG 11 is cross-cutting and a foundation to realize 63% of all the other SDGs, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be won or lost in cities. Achieving SDG 11 is also a necessary means for accelerating the recovery from the negative socio-economic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

At its core, SDG 11 sets benchmarks for urban development policies and practices that facilitate access to adequate housing, basic services, energy, public transportation and open space for everyone everywhere. This goal is achieved when member states and city managers develop policies, embrace integrated planning and develop investment budgets alongside stakeholders in a way that offers opportunities for all. As such, the day-to-day lived experiences of the world's urban dwellers depend on the realization of SDG 11.

Additionally, global divergence is a prominent feature today in our urban planet. The widening gap between the haves and have nots is manifested in cities through spatial fragmentation, climate-driven inequalities and the digital divide. The lack of progress towards attaining SDG 11 is bound to exacerbate these global divides. The success of efforts to enhance global resilience thus on what happens in cities and human settlements.

By 2030, we will not meet most SDG 11 targets without major shifts in urban policy and investments in local government. The consequences of not achieving SDG 11 in particular are immense, directly impacting billions of people's daily lives. When urban challenges are left unaddressed, they can escalate into global threats that affect all of humanity.

It is urgent to prevent the disastrous effects consequences ahead of us by changing the way we plan, manage, and govern our cities and human settlements. To avoid a collective failure and to rescue Agenda 2030, actions need to be taken now and at scale across cities and human settlements. The immense opportunities inherent in urbanization must be leveraged for optimal outcomes.

Positive transformative change that Member States and stakeholders have called for at the High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (2022) and at the 11th session of World Urban Forum (2022) respectively requires political will, policy continuity, and policy agility to developed local level action plans with the required budget and financing strategies to make measurable and swift progress.





Objectives

The event will focus on key transformative policy and investment shifts necessary to accelerate progress with SDG 11 and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels. Specifically, it will consider priorities for:

- Anchoring sustainable cities and human settlements at the center of national planning, development policies and investments plans to deliver better outcomes for everyone everywhere
- Shifting economic and financing models for more effective investments in how cities are planned, managed and governed
- Fostering multi-level, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder governance to realize SDG 11 and the 2030 Agenda more broadly
- Tackling inequality within and between cities to narrow the great urban divide
- Anticipating and preparing for the future of humanity and global resilience in an urban planet

Expected outcomes

- Elevated multi-level, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration to implement SDG 11
- Enhanced commitments to enable transformative policy, investment and governance shifts necessary to achieve SDG 11
- Improved understanding of opportunities and effective practices for scaling and spreading impacts towards SDG 11
- Enhanced perspectives on global urban futures and their implications for the Pact for Future (2024 summit of the future)

For further information, please contact: Edlam Abera Yemeru (yemeru@un.org)

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

P.O.Box 30030,Nairobi 00100,Kenya;

Tel: +254-20-76263120; Fax: +254-20-76234266/7 (central office);

unhabitat-info@un.org