

# Abu Dhabi Declared Actions

## Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation

1. We, the participants of the tenth session of the World Urban Forum, represent national, subnational and local governments, international and regional organizations, parliamentarians, civil society, older persons, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, grassroots groups, indigenous peoples and local communities, professionals, the private sector, foundations and philanthropies, academia, professionals and other relevant stakeholders. Together we gathered in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to dialogue on the theme “Cities of Opportunities, Connecting Culture and Innovation.” Now, at the conclusion of this World Urban Forum we declare our voluntary actions and commitments for the next two years and beyond. We do so in support of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in this Decade of Action.

2. We recognize that an increasingly urbanized world constitutes a transformative force which can be harnessed and steered for more sustainable development. Cities have the opportunity to take the lead to plan and design as well as manage transitions towards inclusion, resilience, sustainability, economic growth and shared prosperity. At the same time, cities are addressing many global challenges including poverty, gender inequalities, human rights violations, unemployment, health emergencies, loss of social cohesion, threat to cultural heritage and cultural diversity, environmental degradation, migration, disaster risk and climate change.

3. We, the participants of WUF 10, are convinced that culture is an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanisation and achieving the New Urban Agenda. The urban environment, in turn, has an influence on culture. Culture is a core component of local identity including heritage, creativity and diversity and urbanisation need to be planned, designed and managed to enhance this. Culture is considered by some constituencies as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and must be a stronger strand of global solidarity. Culture and heritage are essential in the context of peoples’ empowerment as well as their universal access to services, and ownership of regeneration and social cohesion strategies. Urban heritage—both cultural and natural—is an asset and enables sustainable urban development. Revitalising cities whilst respecting urban heritage allows us to celebrate the past while embracing a sustainable future. It limits the negative impacts of city sprawl while also reducing waste, infrastructure needs and transportation costs. Strategic integrated urban planning provides the tools to ensure the integration of urban heritage, culture, local economic needs, environmental considerations, biodiversity, low carbon development and climate resilience to ensure the creation of sustainable, prosperous, liveable

communities. Attention to the urban rural continuum and to nature in cities is essential. Participatory community engagement and innovation are key means to achieve this.

4. We believe that cities are centres of creativity and innovation as well as places with valuable cultural heritage and identity. The culture and creative industries are rapidly expanding sources of employment and economic development in cities and urban areas globally. Innovation and cultural heritage must at the foundation of how urban centres operate, with strong support from national governments, a strengthened role for subnational and local governments and systematic collaboration with civil society. Cities that are well-planned and well-managed, grounded in cultural heritage, have more opportunities for sustainable urban development. Supported by people-centred technology, smart city initiatives and fit-for-purpose land governance, culture and innovation become creative drivers for sustainable growth, shared prosperity and inclusive development.

5. We also believe that cities are incubators of social, economic, environmental, political and cultural progress. They are equally the guardians of cultural heritage and identity which must be safeguarded to pass on to future generations. Subnational and local governments play an integral role in enhancing the diversity of urban life, through the adoption of rights-based approaches to cities and, in particular, with the promotion of gender equality and equal access to opportunities for all. They provide solutions for decent work, housing, and transport, the provision of basic cultural services such as libraries, tangible and living heritage, and community centres and adopt inclusive, accessible, and transparent participatory processes.

6. The New Urban Agenda acknowledges the importance of culture, cultural diversity and cultural heritage in all its forms as resources that enrich humankind, making an important contribution to sustainable urbanization and the development of inclusive safe cities and human settlements, empowering all people to play an active role in development initiatives.

7. We celebrate cultural heritage as a valuable resource to be protected and safeguarded in its diversity of expression and forms. These assets inspire innovation and creativity in cities and human settlements, creating and implementing new knowledge and solutions to improve living conditions for all. We emphasize that women and girls are key agents of transformative change in their cities. Culture offers a perspective on leaving no one and no place behind as it enables women and girls to identify with their heritage and make their voice heard through creative means. Women and girls must have effective and equal ways to participate through cultural expressions as well as innovative and inclusive decision-making.

8. We encourage stronger commitments to safeguarding culture heritage and finding related innovative solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and other global frameworks.

9. We recognize the need for an integrated approach to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by all levels of government and by various stakeholders. This includes enhanced

coordination and coherence supported by institutional, social and technological innovations which protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This is crucial for the achievement of sustainable urban development and the overall prosperity of cities and human settlements.

10. We also recognize that innovation and advances in science and technology are critical for implementing the NUA, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and other global development frameworks relevant to sustainable urbanization.

11. We draw attention to the importance of data and knowledge as a fundamental starting point to understand gaps and needs. We acknowledge the need to critically link data to evidence-based policy formulation, development of action plans and sources of funding. In this regard we welcome the New Urban Agenda monitoring platform, City Prosperity Initiative, and other platforms such as the Culture 2030 indicators. In this respect, the global people-based definition of cities and settlements (Degree of Urbanization), will be a crucial instrument for collecting comparable data and facilitating harmonised reporting in the implementation of the SDGs.

12. We encourage stakeholders to declare their actions towards strengthening investments and efforts in developing better data platforms to support evidence-based policies and investments and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

13. We believe that together sustainable urbanization, culture and innovation are fundamental in supporting the Decade of Action. We aim to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals which call for sustainable and inclusive solutions to all the world's biggest challenges. Cities represent an entry point for all 17 SDGs and create a window of opportunity for sustainable urban development. Service provision, density and economies of scale are factors that bind all development goals together.

14. We encourage all development actors gathered in Abu Dhabi to mobilize their respective capacities in this Decade of Action. We will continue to call for actions and mobilisation and track progress through a monitoring and reporting mechanism. At the global level, this requires strong leadership, more resources and smarter solutions. At the local level, this includes shifts in policy, budget, institutions, and regulatory frameworks to make cities safe, resilient and sustainable, grounded in cultural heritage and creative practice. At the people level, we call for a movement of youth, civil society, media, private sector, academia and others to advocate for social and economic transformations. We want to raise awareness of all stakeholders: the cities we build today are tomorrow's heritage.

15. We thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the City of Abu Dhabi, and UN-Habitat for convening the Forum. And we commit to providing continuous cooperation to the next hosts, the Government of Poland and the City of Katowice.

Abu Dhabi, 13 February 2020

# Declared Actions

We welcome and recognize the diverse commitments made by participants during WUF 10.

## International Organizations

- The European Union (EU) and its Member states reaffirmed their commitments for accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the EU and beyond. The EU and its member states declared their tangible actions to support sustainable urban development in particular the Urban Agenda for the EU, the Global people-based definition of cities and settlements, and the International Urban Cooperation programme notably
- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in partnership with UCLG, ICLEI, the World Bank, UN-Habitat, the World Council on City Data and the Global Resilient Cities Network (Rockefeller Foundation) recognize the urgent need for reducing risks in urban areas, in coherence with the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework, Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. These organizations commit to making cities resilient by 2030, during the Decade of Action, through support to cities from their tools and knowledge products, their regional offices and networks and associations, and improved coordination with national governments and leaders of local governments.
- UN-Habitat commits to pursuing the development of the New Urban Agenda monitoring platform with the aim to systematize updates on progress and enhance knowledge sharing and innovations related to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- The Resident Coordinators System will:
  - Endeavor to work with governments and local and non-State actors to promote sustainable urbanization to further the development objectives of the UN country teams in the areas of spatial equality and poverty eradication, prosperity and economic development, climate action and environmental sustainability, and crisis reduction and recovery.
  - Incorporate sustainable urban development as part of the development of the various instruments of the UN country teams, including: Common Country Analysis (CCA), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (also known as Cooperation Framework), the implementation coordination groups of the results areas of the Cooperation Framework, and the monitoring of the implementation of the results areas.
  - Actively promote the implementation of the United Nations Systemwide Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development among Resident Coordinators by creating spaces for UN-Habitat participation in United Nations country team retreats, regional meetings of Resident Coordinators, and through global and regional webinars, among other forums.

- World Blind Union (WBU) in partnership with UN-Habitat agrees to implement an agreement to accelerate UN-Habitat’s work towards mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility within its strategies, policies, programs and operations in line with the Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. WBU commits to contribute to awareness raising and learning on universal design by publishing a special issue of the Journal on Public space in partnership with City Space Architecture prior to World Urban Forum 11.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) commits to:
  - Promoting greater respect for international humanitarian law during urban warfare to strengthen the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure; and support resilient, safe, and impartial urban services for urban populations during armed conflicts and other situations of violence, including through innovative funding mechanisms.
  - Promoting urban planning and design which positions military installations at an appropriate distance from the civilian population, civilian infrastructure, and cultural property in accordance with international humanitarian law.
  - Partnering with States and local governments to: 1) raise awareness of the effects of urbanisation on humanitarian trends and vice versa; 2) collaborate to strengthen urban systems and local services for community resilience; 3) work to improve individual and collective capacity to a) respond swiftly to anticipated and realised humanitarian challenges in urban areas, and b) engage in urban planning and investment processes that reduce future disaster risk; 4) work to decrease the vulnerability and exposure of the urban poor, particularly those living in slums and informal settlements; 5) work in partnership to catalyse and localize investment in the necessary human, technical and financial resources to reduce future disaster risks and the effects of climate change.”
- The Association of Commonwealth Universities, Commonwealth Association of Architects, Commonwealth Associations of Planners and Commonwealth Local Government Forum commit to the development of an inter-disciplinary, cross-sectoral collaboration, working to advance sustainable urbanisation in the Commonwealth; home to one third of the World's population and nearly 50% of the projected increase of the World's urban population to 2050.

## National Governments

- Fiji commits to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- National governments reiterate their commitments to support the implementation of the NUA, particularly with regard to innovation and culture to help achieve liveable, inclusive, prosperous and resilient cities and communities, notably:
  - The Government of Senegal will deploy the necessary efforts to use Islamic Finance in the application of land-value capture.

- The Special Olympic Saudi Arabia will implement inclusive sports across major cities through partnerships between a minimum of one major university in each of the big cities and all facilities by 2021.

## Local and Regional Governments

The commitments made by LRG at the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, during WUF10 are as follows:

The constituency of LRG encourages all stakeholders are involved in local, territorial, national, and international plans to carry out the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator for the SDGs, to make this achievement a global endeavour so that our communities can find ownership in these agendas and truly make them a reality, addressing the challenges as one humanity. The constituency of LRG commits to developing a sustainable development model that is strongly anchored in culture and human rights, upholding public service provision to ensure adequate living standards for all; the Right to the City needs to be a reality. The constituency of LRG assumes a more prominent role for cities and local and regional governments in the discussions regarding the ecological transition, to localize climate action, prioritise nature-based solutions and traditional knowledge, and mainstream both nature and culture in sustainable urbanization. The constituency of LRG commits to foster locally relevant cultural policies and programmes to maximize the relationship between cultural rights, memory, creativity, diversity and knowledges, to integrate heritage and culture in urban planning and to promote global cultural partnerships as strands of solidarity and vectors for peace; the promotion of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development needs to be pursued. The constituency of LRG commits to understanding innovation beyond technology, placing communities at the centre of the agenda, and securing a technological revolution that services the communities, that guarantees equal access by all people, that fosters women empowerment, and that goes beyond the notion of consumerism. The constituency of LRG commits to continue consolidating the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as the representative mechanism through which our constituency provides inputs to the global agendas, building on the realities and expertise of our communities.

The LRG further recognizes:

- The urgent need for reducing risks in urban areas, in coherence with the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework, Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, in order to save lives and livelihoods.
- The urgent need to strengthen mechanisms for citizen participation that facilitate and measure women's agenda setting and leadership roles in planning and decision making

- The urgent need to recognize and value the participation, knowledge and expertise of women and girls (across their diversities) by convening dialogue and agenda setting processes that value lived experience, cultural expression, and grassroots community generated data as innovative inputs to public policy making and programming

The implementation of the **Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities** (Cities of Abu Dhabi, Helsinki, Barcelona, Banjul, and Almaty)

In the context of **Voluntary Local Reviews** the cities of Barcelona, Rostov-on-don, Betio Town, Kuala Lumpur, San Justo, Tandil, Seberang Prai, Buang, Sipalay City, Brussels Capital Region, Tawau, Esplugues de Liboregat, Turkestan City and Acapulco de Juarez, join previous signatories in their commitment to: i) identify how existing strategies, programs, data, and targets align with the Sustainable Development Goals; ii) To provide at least one forum where stakeholders can come together to share experiences, lessons learned, and information gathered using the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals; and 3) To submit a Voluntary Local Review to the United Nations during the United Nations High-Level Political Forum.

## Private Sector

The private sector commits to:

### *Finance*

- Learning from venture capital funding and embracing that approach to financing urban development.
- By 2030, local governments can draw from a selection of financing mechanisms to achieve SDGs and increase their opportunities and overall sustainability.
- Exploring different types of financing (Islamic finance, land-based finance, land-value capture), and to better adjust to local contexts and risk profiles of low-income groups.
- Working towards ensuring that the specific and strategic infrastructures, most needed for the realization of the SDGs, are identified and coupled with appropriate financing mechanisms (Standard Chartered Bank and Rendeavor).
- Ensuring that SDG investment plans are financially sustainable (Webank).
- Exploring further applications of land-based finance to resolve issues of urban finance and city planning.

### *Training and information and awareness*

- Supporting the development of an Inclusive City Index 2030 in partnership with public and private sector to measure inclusion and accessibility in cities (World Enabled)

### *Political, inclusion and social engagement*

- Engaging in dialogue with a network of cities to ensure technology is accessible to all (Mastercard).

- Promoting of a culture of evidence-based policies which ensures that local and regional action attempts to address actual problems on the ground.

## Civil Society

Civil Society organizations commit to:

### *Community engagement and inclusion*

- Raising awareness around accessible and inclusive urbanization in Nairobi through writing blogs and articles in newspapers and public campaign including sharing knowledge, guidelines and other resource materials (Elizabeth Ombati commits herself as a journalist with disability and through her organization Users and Survivors of Psychiatry).
- Enabling staff to have essential skills on embracing innovation with inclusiveness policies and programs on Universal Design (Joint Association of Persons with Disabilities Nigeria commits to advocate for capacity building of Government Agencies in the city of Abuja, Nigeria).
- To engage private sector and grassroots communities to identify innovative design solutions that are sustainable and affordable for the urban poor.
- Recognizing grassroots communities in their important contributions and supporting them in building and scaling-up impactful partnerships with governments.
- Enhancing and accelerating practical and strategic partnerships with mayors and local authorities to improve the living and working conditions of women in poor communities and expand grassroots women's public decision-making roles.
- Ensuring knowledge, good practice and tools of rural and urban poor and indigenous women's groups are mainstreamed in poverty reduction and women's empowerment initiatives (local-national-regional levels).

### *Training, information and awareness*

- OHANA Indonesia commits to continue partnering with five government municipalities to achieve JOGJA Accessible 2024 and take concrete actions to 1) develop action plans, including conduct of trainings for government officials who work for infrastructures, advocacy for inclusive budgeting and realization of accessibility audits in 5 districts and municipalities; 2) monitor and evaluate actions including budget related to maintenance and improvement of accessibility in public spaces including government offices.
- Advocating for commitment of timeline implementation and strategies for the New Urban Agenda in Abuja, Nigeria.
- Sensitizing communities and grassroot groups through continuous education to partner with local government, academia, civil societies.
- Setting up an aggregated development data database which is accessible to the local community (and to which they contribute data) so that realities are understood, and gaps and biases are easily identified.



## Annex to the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions of WUF 10

- Sensitizing communities and grassroots groups through continuous education to partner with local government, academia, civil societies.
- Strengthening data collection efforts by grassroots communities through sensitization of national and local governments and create avenues for joint partnerships.
- Investing in stronger accountability mechanisms for local grassroots communities that rely on innovation to track project implementation.
- Investing in contribution of grassroots data and knowledge systems with the national statistics offices and contribute to the achievement of SDGs based on credible people-focused data and information.
- Investing in retaining the practices, knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples and use this for improved urban & territorial planning including environmental protection.

## Academia

- Advancing the development and use of spatial data, such as data from remote sensing and GIS, which holds significant opportunity for improved city governance, and is becoming more readily available at fine geographic scales.
- Using administrative data, which cities have held in a variety of mostly unusable formats for decades to improve the efficiency of everyday city functioning.

## Other groups

Grassroot communities commit to:

- Strengthening data collection efforts through sensitization of national and local governments and create avenues for joint partnerships.
- Investing in contribution of grassroots data and knowledge systems with the national statistics offices.
- Investing in stronger accountability mechanisms for local grassroots communities that rely on innovation to track project implementation.

The youth associations commit to:

- Invest in retaining the practices, knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples and use this for improved urban & territorial planning including environmental protection.
- Enhancing the science-policy interface through citizen-generated data from formal, informal, traditional and indigenous sources; participatory and community-based technology assessment; building digital and complementary skills that promote sustainable livelihoods; and designing appropriate innovations that fill gaps in the territorial dimension of sustainable urbanization.

The Women's Assembly constituents collectively commit to sustain the role of the Women's Assembly as a key space for convening diverse actors (grassroots leaders, local authorities, planners, researchers and NGO activists) working across themes and sectors to share the best practices, knowledge, tools and advocacy women are locally leading to advance empowerment and gender responsive and inclusive urban and settlement development and cities; and to take inventory, track and monitor:

- the actions of the women's constituency in localizing and implementing the 2030 agenda and New Urban Agenda.
- the actions of governments and other key stakeholders in achieving measurable progress in gender responsive implementation and expands women's public leadership roles (across their diversities).
- challenge cultural norms through collective acts as disruptions to patriarchal cultural.