

HabPost

Updates from
UN-Habitat

UNHABITAT
www.unhabitat.org
unhabitat-info@un.org

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Back to The Future We Want



Editor's note

Dear Reader,

Celebrations of the World Habitat Day are now behind us, but not without a bang. The engagement and commitment by many to work together to contribute to a better future where the right to adequate housing is fully realized has never been stronger. Regardless of the pandemic, events were held, and cities and key stakeholders came together. New avenues were found to engage with one another and to continue to raise awareness of the importance of housing for development and for protection against crises such as the current pandemic.

In this issue, we encourage you to keep spreading the word, and provide you with new tools to better relate to the New Urban Agenda, at the core of our work.

Happy Reading!

The HabPost Team



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Alerts

COVID-19

- As of 7 October 2020, there were over 35 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including over a million deaths, reported to WHO. Monitor the situation [here](#).
- Oxfam's [Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index \(CRII\)](#) shows catastrophic failure to tackle inequality left the majority of countries woefully unprepared for COVID-19.
- UNHCR indicated that the global pandemic had curtailed access to asylum and threatened refugee rights but had also shown the value of protecting displaced people.
- US and European [central bankers](#) have called for renewed government spending in an effort to support families and businesses.
- WHO has indicated that a vaccine against COVID-19 may be ready by [year-end](#). The organization also noted that the pandemic had [disrupted or halted critical mental health services](#) in 93 per cent of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health was on the rise.
- The IMF has warned about the [damage](#) that could be caused by removing fiscal and monetary support too soon.



Back to The Future We Want



What does the movie *Back to the Future* and the World Habitat Day have in common? At the outset, nothing much – how could Marty McFly and the right to adequate housing be linked in any way?

Surely, we wouldn't be asking if we didn't think we could (somehow) link the two. Well, generations X and Y, unite! It is now 35 years since the science fiction and World Habitat Day were created, when the [General Assembly](#) decided to designate the first Monday of October of every year as "World Habitat Day" to start reflecting on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right of all to adequate shelter.

But that's not all. The two seemingly separate events share an even stronger bond when one's willing to scratch (dig?) beneath the surface: in a way, they both remind us to be mindful of our actions today as they hold the potential

to bear catastrophic consequences for the future. A fitting coincidence when World Habitat Day intends to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

Three days ago, on Monday 5 October 2020, 57 cities celebrated the 35th edition of World Habitat Day under this year's theme of *Housing For All: A better Urban Future*. For the first time since 1986, the global observance was held in hybrid fashion. The city of Surabaya brought together a network of 81 events across 44 countries.

With COVID-19 still raging globally, it came as no surprise to hear speakers emphasize the essential role of housing in preventing the spread of the pandemic. Because housing isn't only shelter: it is one of the most important elements in our lives and communities, a link to the neighbourhood and larger community.

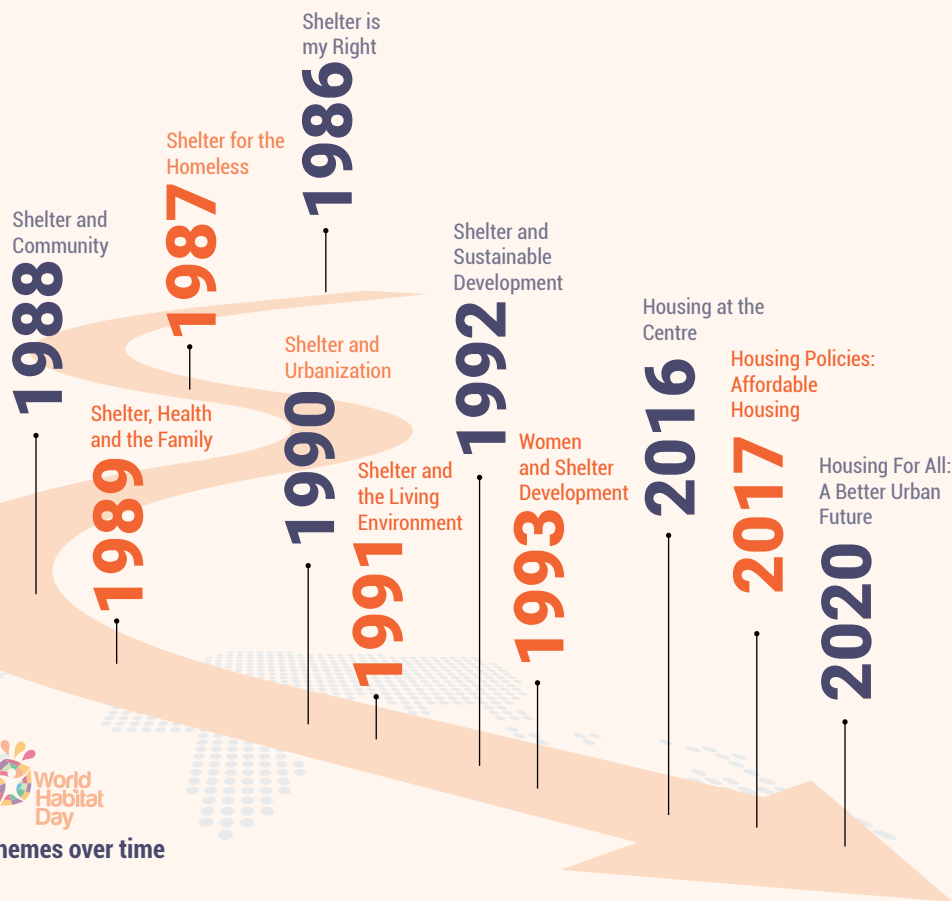


The Human Shelter, a documentary by Danish film director Boris B. Bertram and Good Company Pictures. The film investigates the question of what makes a home and explores different people's ways of creating their homes around the globe. The documentary generates provoking questions on the essence of housing around the world.

Throughout the years, the themes of World Habitat Day have varied and represented the priorities of their time. Interestingly, the first few years of the global observance focused on shelter, while three of the last five editions focused on housing. This underlines the efforts made to adopt an inclusive and integrated approach for empowerment of individuals – and in particular of the most vulnerable – in realization of their human right to adequate housing.



Themes over time



In fact, the global observance [roundtables](#) of 6 October saw most if not all participants highlight their willingness to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to achieve housing for all. Specific commitments were also made, for instance by Mexico who committed, by the end of the year, to create an urban excellence and innovation unit to foster innovation; and by the city of Subang Jaya which committed to produce its first voluntary local review in commemoration of its access to city status.

What did this year's World Habitat Day have in store for us to support the commitments of the New Urban Agenda in achieving everyone's full human potential, and what can we do to help?

What you should remember, and what you can do

What better time to launch a digital tool than 2020, when millions of workers still rely on their home internet connection to plug into their workday? UN-Habitat's [Urban Agenda Platform](#) launched this week to allow Member States to share their voluntary reports on progress in implementing the New Urban Agenda. The platform was coined

a great opportunity to accelerate actions towards achievement of the New Urban Agenda and SDG11, and it is expected to be a place to share, learn, and exchange to fully realize the benefits of sustainable urbanization. Many colleagues have contributed to the development of the Platform – [do take a tour!](#)

The Platform didn't launch on its own as this week also marked the start of the [Housing for All Campaign](#), which will run for five weeks to raise awareness of the role of adequate housing in development and to catalyse solutions to existing gaps. Importantly, the campaign will also call on all actors to commit to ensure housing for all. You are encouraged to mobilise your partners to join the campaign and commit to action and share innovations towards safer cities. Do reach out to Christine Auclair (christine.auclair@un.org) and Francesca Lionetti (francesca.lionetti@un.org) to share your impact stories and videos on the Campaign website and on social medias. And remember to spread the word: don't miss out on the opportunity to share quotes by leaders and influencers engaged in your projects commenting on Housing for All.

Finally, the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour was awarded to the winners on [5 October](#). Our Executive Director congratulated the five winners and called for everyone to join forces and share solutions. "With 95 per cent of all confirmed cases of COVID-19 happening in cities and urban areas, it is clear that we need collective and multilateral efforts if human settlements are to recover from this global crisis", she said. Which brings us back to *Back to the future* (of course): in the words of the wise Dr. Emmett Brown, "If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything." Will you?



Each week will be dedicated to five critical dimensions of development to which adequate housing contributes. A [communication toolkit](#) will guide all those engaged in the campaign to promote the key messages and key solutions through multiples channels.

Week 1: Health

Adequate housing is a first line of defence against a number of health risks. This week will focus on the importance of adequate housing to face the COVID-19 crisis.

Week 2: Dignity

Having an adequate house is an essential condition for living in dignity. This week will also focus on the plight of homelessness during the [World Homeless Day](#) celebrated on 10 October.

Week 3: Safety

An adequate physical shelter protects people against multiple safety risks. The week will also explore the links between housing and safety in the [40 Days Safer Cities Challenge](#).

Week 4: Inclusion

The stability of a safe home is essential to ensure social and economic inclusion as part of a neighbourhood and community and to access jobs and livelihoods. This week will also discuss the role of housing to [Valuing our Communities and Cities](#), the theme of [World Cities Day](#) celebrated on 31 October.

Week 5: Well-being

Adequate housing provides the basis for belonging and the well-being of people enabling them to grow, engage, live, work and learn together. Community spaces and shared facilities for diverse population groups, needs and cultural activities must be considered when designing houses and settlements and planning for a better urban future.

► **Vacancies**

Role
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements, P3
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 24 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements, P4
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 17 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Administrative Assistant, G5
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 22 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Intern, Programme Support (Temporary Job Opening)
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 12 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Programme Officer (Team Leader), P4
Duty Station
 Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Deadline
 13 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)



Role
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements, P3
Duty Station
 Dakar, Senegal
Deadline
 21 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements, NOC
Duty Station
 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Deadline
 14 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements (Technical Advisor), P4
Duty Station
 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Deadline
 20 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Senior Programme Management Officer (Project Post), P5
Duty Station
 Maputo, Mozambique
Deadline
 21 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Intern, Sustainable Finance (Temporary Job Opening)
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 12 October 2020
[Apply Here](#)



Upcoming events and corporate calendar

Visit UN-Habitat's [events page](#) for information on Urban October events and activities!

Other organizers



18th European Week of Regions and Cities

The European Week of Regions and Cities is the biggest annual Brussels-based event dedicated to regional policy. The event allows participants to discuss common challenges for European regions and cities and to exchange ideas on possible solutions by bringing together, among others, political representatives, decision-makers, experts, and practitioners of regional policy. The themes of the Week this year are Green Europe, Cohesion and Cooperation, and Empowering Citizens. [More information](#)



Urban Resilience in a Context of Climate Change Conference

Organized in the framework of RESCCUE – Europe's first large-scale innovation and urban resilience project – this event aims to bring together different actors from academia, administrations, businesses and local communities to discuss multiple aspects of urban resilience and climate change. The conference will be a space to exchange knowledge, to present excellence on Research and Innovation for urban resilience and climate change, and to discuss key challenges and solutions in cities, specifically on European urban areas. Esteban León of UN-Habitat will co-chair the conference. [More information](#)



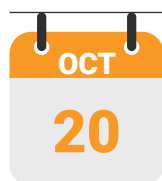
Intergeo Conference 2020

When designing the city of tomorrow to be liveable and sustainable, decision-makers, concepts, and solutions are in demand. And geodata: because without precise data on time and space there is no Smart City. At the Intergeo Conference, around 100 speakers will report on the contribution geodesy and geoinformation are making to climate protection, the digitalization of the construction industry, and the resilience of cities. [More information](#)



Smart City Festival: Smart Beyond Cities

The Smart City Festival brings together technologists, futurists, urban planners and thinkers from across Europe to share experience dealing with the challenges of urban life and harness innovation to make cities work for those who call them home. [More information](#)



All Ireland Smart Cities Forum Fourth Annual Conference: Building a Responsive and Resilient City in Post Crisis

This half-day conference will examine how cities/local government across the island of Ireland responded to the challenges of Covid-19 in terms of how service delivery had to adapt, the role digital played in supporting this adjustment, and how these experiences will assist cities and local government in building responsive and resilient cities post-crisis. [More information](#)



WRLDCTY

WRLDCTY is a virtual event dedicated to cities, their citizens, culture and experiences. Thought-provoking and inspiring presentations are on the menu, as well as conversations and experiences from cities around the world. [More information](#)



Learning

Become a New Urban Agenda Expert!

 Three-hour course

Education is the foundation of knowledgeable and tolerant societies, and a main driver of sustainable development. It is the key to personal growth, and the future of societies. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the [largest education disruption](#) ever recorded.

With limited possibilities for in-person training, opportunities to deliver alternative capacity building activities flourish. At UN-Habitat, we have started using digital technologies to remotely engage with local government officials and other stakeholders on sustainable urbanization.

The [New Urban Agenda crash course](#), developed by the Capacity Development and Training Unit, is based on the upcoming New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook. The Handbook explains the core dimensions, messages and transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda, and unpacks the original text with examples, case studies, infographics, and illustrative actions.

The New Urban Agenda crash course takes this to the next level. Delivered on a dedicated learning platform, the course explains the most important concepts from the Handbook in interactive lectures, explainer videos, as well as graphics and quizzes in an interactive, engaging, and – believe it or not – fun way.

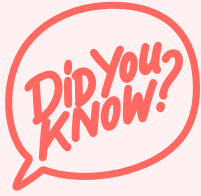


The course is intended for anyone with an interest in sustainable urbanization, and is especially useful for mayors, local government officials, architects, urban planners, NGO workers and volunteers, and employees of international organizations.

The first part of the course – the core dimensions of the New Urban Agenda – launched on World Habitat Day on 5 October; the second part of the course on means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda will be released later this year.

Start learning today! [Access the platform.](#)





Our engagement with the Adaptation Fund is progressing!

The recent August/September intersessional review period concluded with the approval of two new projects:



1. **Climate change adaptation through protective small-scale infrastructure interventions in coastal settlements of Cambodia.**



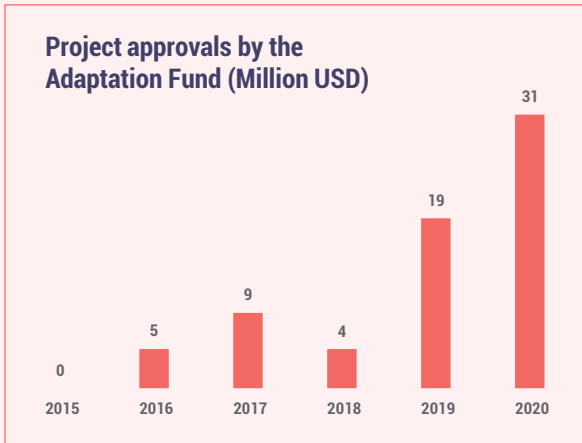
2. The regional project **Increasing the Resilience of both Displaced Persons and Host Communities to Climate Change-Related Water Challenges in Jordan and Lebanon.** This is our first ever approved project in the Arab States.

Our approved projects have now surpassed the 10 projects mark, totalling USD 68 million in 3 regions (8 in Asia-Pacific, 1 in Africa, and 1 in Arab States). But that's not all! The Fund has also endorsed three new concepts:

1. Nature-based climate adaptation programme for the urban areas of Penang island (Malaysia).
2. Climate Change Resilient Communities through Integrated Natural Resource Management in Eastern Ghouta in Rural Damascus (Syria).
3. Increasing Resilience of the Education System to Climate Change Impacts in the Eastern Caribbean Region (Antigua & Barbuda and Saint Lucia) – this is the first promising project in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Fund's Board also confirmed our [re-accreditation](#), and the next project submission deadline is 11 January 2021.

For more information, and to closely coordinate project development with the Subprogramme III team, contact Bernhard Barth at bernhard.barth@un.org.



ADAPTATION FUND

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Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at unhabitat-habpost@un.org.

Editorial Team

Advisors:

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director
Victor Kisob, Deputy Executive Director

Leads: Neil Khor, Amy Wood

Coordinator and editor: Rachad Nassar

Sub-Editor: James Ohayo

Design & Layout: Michael Lusaba

Contributors: Marcus Mayr, Vasko Vidar, Raphaelle Vignol

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2020 AND BEYOND



IMPLEMENTING
THE NEW
URBAN AGENDA