

Concept Note  
World Urban Forum 9

**Implementing Global and Regional Agendas for Sustainable Urbanization:  
The Role of UN Regional Commissions**

One UN Room

Thursday 8th February, 11:30-13:00

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**CONTEXT**

Implementation of global commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) will require coordination, localization and multi-level action. The unique link of cities to other development sectors and a wide range of stakeholders at all levels, make them key to ensuring achievements of global commitments. As the regional outposts of the United Nations, the UN Regional Commissions (RCs) play a key role in mobilizing the potential of cities for the implementation and achievement of 2030 Agenda and the NUA. Regional Commissions are uniquely positioned to translate these global commitments into regional development plans and to help national and sub-national governments localize and advance critical areas of sustainable urban development. Given the intergovernmental nature and proximity to member States, RCs serve as a crucial link between the global level and national and sub-national levels, working towards a coherent and integrated implementation of global commitments at all levels and with all relevant stakeholders.

RCs are mandated to promote, follow-up on and review the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the NUA in their respective regions. Among other activities, RCs hold Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSDs) which serve as the main regional platforms for coordinated implementation of the 2030 Agenda providing regional inputs to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the main global platform for the review of the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, the HLPF will specifically review progress on SDG 11 for Sustainable Cities and Communities, recognizing the growing role of cities in sustainable development. The outcomes from these regional processes will inform the first Global Report on the Implementation of the NUA, at the 2018-2019 UN General Assembly session. RCs have also developed several regional frameworks and practical guidelines to support member States in translating global commitments into regional and national frameworks, including strategies, policies and plans. Much of these frameworks are being developed to leverage synergies with other commitments and building on UN Habitat Action Framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA).

Similarly, RCs played an important role in the Habitat III process, in close collaboration with the regional UN-Habitat offices, drawing from Habitat III National Reports, regional expert group meetings and thematic meetings. RCs prepared Habitat III Regional Reports providing regional inputs to the formulation of the NUA. RCs facilitated the implementation of the NUA through regional meetings, ministerial meetings and regional urban forums.

In **Africa**, harmonized regional implementation, monitoring and reporting frameworks for the NUA have been developed following guidance from the Ministers of Housing and Urban Development under the African Union Specialized Technical Committee (AU-STC 8) on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization and the UN-Habitat Governing Council, which both encouraged development of such frameworks.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with its partners, the African Union Commission and UN-Habitat therefore developed an Africa regional implementation, monitoring and reporting framework, anchored on the aspirations and goals of Africa's Vision, Agenda 2063, and other global and regional commitments, including 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction among others.

In **Europe**, the Committee on Housing and Land Management has helped to mobilize governments and stakeholders to address key urban development challenges, including post-war housing reconstruction, building resilient and climate neutral cities, promoting energy efficiency in buildings, and making homes affordable and adequate. In 2014, countries endorsed the [Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing](#). The Charter supports member States to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing. It provides clear guidelines and benchmarks for assessing progress in achieving this goal.

In November 2017, Ministers, Heads of Delegation and high-level representatives from forty member States adopted the [Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development](#) at the 78th session of the Committee. The Ministerial Declaration reiterates the importance for governments at all levels and relevant stakeholders in the UNECE region to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant global and regional commitments. In adopting the Declaration, countries further renew their commitment to strengthening synergies, intergovernmental and cross-sectoral cooperation.

In close collaboration, UNECLAC, UN-Habitat and the Forum of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Housing and Urban Development in **Latin America and the Caribbean** (MINURVI), as well as over 125 regional experts representing diverse urban stakeholders have developed the "Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean" (RAP). The RAP provides a strategic framework and priority policy guidance for the region's cities and human settlements towards the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs and the establishment of a new, more equitable urban paradigm in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Recognizing the unique context and challenges faced by the Caribbean, the development of a Caribbean Sub regional Action Plan prioritizes key areas for intervention within the sub region.

In October 2017, UNECLAC hosted the first "Cities Conference: Implementing the

NUA in LAC”, which brought together a wide group of stakeholders involved in the planning and management of urban and territorial development. One year on from Habitat III, it provided a strategic platform for dialogue on the implementation, follow up and review of the NUA in LAC. Within this context, and given the pressing need to monitor the implementation of these agendas and to strengthen regional capacities for implementation, UNECLAC, UN-Habitat and MINURVI are developing a “Latin American and Caribbean Urban and Cities Platform”. This online platform will have two key components: a virtual forum for knowledge exchange and capacity development; and an observatory for the compilation and analysis of national and city-level information to support qualitative and quantitative urban assessment methodologies, including a good practice repository.

In the **Arab** region with support from the Government of Morocco, Arab League and UN-Habitat, the Second Arab Ministerial Forum on Housing and Urban Development took place in Rabat, Morocco from 20-23 December 2017. Inputs regarding leveraging new data, access to financing as well as new partnerships with the private sector and civil society were reflected in the ‘Rabat Declaration for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Arab States.’

In **Asia and the Pacific**, UNESCAP recently convened, along with UN-Habitat, a [‘Regional Partners Forum’](#) to review the implementation of the outcomes of Habitat III and localization of the SDGs in Asia Pacific during the 2017 SDG Week. From the inputs of over 70 stakeholders from over 17 countries participating, financing urbanization and cities ability to leverage financing from domestic and debt capital markets was highlighted as one of the most serious challenges to the ‘means of implementation’ of Agenda 2030 in cities.

To support a stronger follow up and review process for the localization of SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in advance of the 2018 Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, UNESCAP with regional and global partners are reviewing the current financing gap for cities in the region to identify policy actions for both national and local governments to support sub sovereign access to long term, adequate financing for cities to meet burgeoning infrastructure needs. Findings and recommendations from new research will be presented at this event and support UNESCAP member states as well as partner institutions identified in the 2017 Partners Forum to identify and prioritize policy options for the leveraging of long term debt capital financing for resilient, resource efficient, socially responsible, economic infrastructure in cities.

This networking event will highlight the ways in which the five RCs can help catalyze its various partners to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA, according to each region’s specific priorities and contexts. The event will provide an opportunity to present different implementation strategies to a broader base of stakeholders and to promote and explore multiple forms of collaboration among these stakeholders. In this way, the event aligns with this year's theme of the World Urban Forum “Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda” which places the focus on the NUA as a tool and accelerator for achieving the 2030 Agenda in and by cities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The overarching objective of the event is to discuss the ways and means RCs can support its various partners in the local implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA. The event is meant to encourage and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships in sustainable urban development and substantially contribute to promoting the localization of the SDGs as well as the NUA transformative commitments and means of implementation. More specifically, the event will:

- (1) Identify and discuss country and regional perspectives and priorities regarding the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA, including harmonization of different approaches;
- (2) Facilitate exchange and dialogue among countries, stakeholders, RCs as well as the wider UN System regarding regional approaches, methodologies, good practices and lessons learned in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA;
- (3) Explore opportunities for more effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for collaboration regarding the means of implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA and promote intraregional and interregional cooperation.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

Expected outcomes of the event are threefold:

- (1) Enhanced understanding and increased knowledge of member State and stakeholder responses to the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA;
- (2) Joint input for regional guidance and action frameworks that are being developed by the RCs in partnership with member States and stakeholders;
- (3) Identification of new partnerships for effective implementation, including a better understanding of how actors in different regions can become involved in regional implementation processes.

## **TIME AND PLACE**

The event will take place in the OneUN Room of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center (KLCC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday 8th February from 11:30-13:00. The event is a 90-minute networking event and part of the Ninth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9), which will be convened in the same location from 7 to 13 February 2018.

## **PARTICIPATION**

The event is open to all stakeholders relevant to the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA as well as to sustainable urban development more general. Participants to the event will include representatives from regional, national and local governments, representatives of non-governmental and community-based organizations,

academics, research and training institutes, the private sector, international organizations and donors.

The event will maintain gender parity in terms of women and men's participation and seek to highlight multi stakeholder perspectives in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA in different regions.

## OUTLINE

	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Curt Garrigan, Chief, Sustainable Urban Development Section, UNESCAP</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><i>Africa:</i> H.E, Honorable Mr. Habofanoe Lehana, Minister for Local Government and Chieftainship of the Kingdom of Lesotho</p> <p>Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Director, Social Development Policy Division, UNECA</p> <p><i>Europe:</i> H.E. Klára Dostálová, Minister of Regional Development, Czech Republic</p> <p>Ms. Gulnara Roll, Head, Housing and Land Management Unit, UNECE</p> <p><i>Latin America and the Caribbean:</i> Ms. Marina Klemensiewicz, Under-Secretary of Habitat and Human Development, Ministry of Interior, Public Works and Housing, Argentina. Presidency of the Forum of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI)</p> <p>Ms. Juliet Braslow, Human Settlements Unit, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, UNECLAC.</p> <p><i>Arab States</i> H.E. Fatna Lkhiel, Vice Minister in Charge of Housing, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Urban Policy, Kingdom of Morocco</p> <p><i>Asia and the Pacific</i> Ms. Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive Officer, Urbanice, Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, Malaysia;</p>
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	<p>Mr. Curt Garrigan, UNESCAP</p> <p>Discussant: Ms. Aisha Kacyira, Deputy Executive Director, UN Habitat</p>
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## ORGANIZERS

The event is organized by UNESCAP in coordination with the five RCs UNECA, UNECE, UNECLAC, UNESCAP and UNESCWA. The overall contact person at UNESCAP is Mr. Omar Siddique:

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