

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD CITIES DAY
31 October 2018

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the New Urban Agenda together provide a roadmap for a more sustainable and resilient world. How our cities develop will have significant implications for realizing the future we want.

This year's World Cities Day focuses on resilience and sustainability. Every week, 1.4 million people move to cities. Such rapid urbanization can strain local capacities, contributing to increased risk from natural and human made disasters. But hazards do not need to become disasters. The answer is to build resilience -- to storms, floods, earthquakes, fires, pandemics and economic crises.

Cities around the world are already acting to increase resilience and sustainability. Bangkok has built vast underground water storage facilities to cope with increased flood risk and save water for drier periods. In Quito, the local government has reclaimed or protected more than 200,000 hectares of land to boost flood protection, reduce erosion and safeguard the city's freshwater supply and biodiversity. And in Johannesburg, the city is involving residents in efforts to improve public spaces so they can be safely used for recreation, sports, community events and services such as free medical care.

On World Cities Day, let us be inspired by these examples. Let us work together to build sustainable and resilient cities that provide safety and opportunities for all.