



Hon. Martha Delgado

Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico

Global Observance of World Habitat Day speech

Monday 5 October 2020

Mr. Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia (video).

Mr. Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General (video).

Mrs. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat),

Ms. Tri Rismaharini, Mayor of Surabaya.

Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, UN Special Rapporteur on Housing (video)

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Representative of the Economic Commission for Asia Pacific.

Good morning to all, I am happy to join you today at this magnificent Opening Ceremony of 2020's World Habitat Day. I convey cordial greetings to everyone from the beautiful Mexico City, where we had the honor to host last year's World Habitat Day.

I wish that all of you and your close ones have remained safe and healthy in these challenging times of pandemic.

I would like to start by thanking Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, for coordinating this important event and for your leadership on urban excellence and innovation.

I would also like to thank Mayor Rismaharini for hosting us today despite the difficulties that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed upon us. Additionally, I want to commend your world-known efforts on urban sustainability.

I am grateful for the opportunity to address all of you on such special day, devoted to holding a dialogue, observing and reflecting on one of the most valued things to everyone of us, our homes.



Based on this, I was extremely happy when I found out that this year's World Habitat Day would focus on Housing for All: A Better Urban Future.

Beyond being a human right, housing is a catalyst for sustainability and equality, as it contributes to an holistic development of individuals within their communities. Well managed housing can enhance social cohesion and community integration.

This year has proven the deep importance of ensuring inclusive, affordable, and adequate housing for everyone.

Clearly, COVID-19 calls for urgent action in the matter of adequate housing, as we have come to realize that a house is much more than just a place to sleep, but rather a commodity for our wellbeing.

As a significant segment of the population have been forced to remain in their houses, we have become painfully aware of the need to have decent living spaces that allow us to maintain our physical and mental health and livelihoods.

Moreover, for those who cannot currently stay at home due to multiple reasons, houses still demand access to services and proximity to our workplaces in order to avoid, as possible, the risk of infection.

Finally, we have seen the disproportionate impacts of housing precariousness, overcrowding, and homelessness on vulnerable populations, which increases and accelerates our exposure to the negative effects of the pandemic. Hence the urgent need to build sustainable cities and communities.

Fortunately, since 2016, with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, the United Nations Member States and agencies have had a clear direction on how to ensure that all people have access to adequate housing and basic services.

Undoubtedly, there are still many issues that need to be addressed related mostly to improving governance, ease of access to financing, and enhancing capacity building. Nonetheless, I believe governments, private sector and civil society have become more aware and responsive to finding ways to promote and implement innovative urban solutions.



The best example of this are today's awardees, who have come together to show that urban sustainability is not only a slogan, but rather a concept that can be implemented on the ground ;Congratulation to all the winners!

Above all, you are an inspiration to all of us to take action.

In the post COVID era, we must have the intention to share not only resources and ideas, but rather collaborate with our peers in order to guarantee a fast and open access to the most efficient and effective solutions. Cooperation is the way to achieve the best outcome for all.

As President of UN-Habitat Assembly, I recognise the great effort of UN Habitat on hosting a myriad of events, debates and conferences dedicated to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and capacity building on sustainable urbanism.

Let us continue working together to build sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities to all, so that more and more people can get access to better conditions related to their health, dignity, safety and wellbeing.

I wish you productive and fruitful deliberations. Thank you.