



H.R.H. Princess Lamia Bint Majed AlSaud
UN-Habitat Regional Goodwill Ambassador for the Arab States
Global Observance of World Habitat Day speech
Monday 5 October 2020

Hello everybody, it is a great honor to be here today.

First of all, I would like to express my deep thanks and gratitude for being appointed as the UN Habitat Good Will Ambassador for the Arab region this February. Of course, with such a title, comes such great responsibility; and I must say that I will fulfill this responsibility with great pride and determination.

Second, I would like to thank UN Habitat for giving me the opportunity to be part of this event on World habitat Day 2020 as it presents the opportunity to engage in a global discussion on the transformative impact of COVID-19 on the housing sector. Indeed, there is no better time than this to be discussing such a critical topic, the topic of housing and providing a better urban future for all.

This year has not been an easy year, the Covid-19 pandemic has shifted people's lives and created immense societal changes. We have been struck with a major pandemic that has forced people to quarantine in their homes. People have been instructed to social distance and wash their hands on a continuous basis.

But what about the people who do not have these advantages of having a roof on top of their heads, or running water? What about the people who are living in condensed areas that does not support such measures?



Today, we will be focusing on those people and on these issues.

One cannot deny the impact of COVID-19. Its effect has been most devastating in poor and densely populated urban areas, on people in informal settlements and slums, on refugees, and internally displaced people.

According to UN Habitat, there are around 1 billion people who live in slums, informal settlements, and in overcrowded and inadequate housing. There is also around 2.4 billion people who lack adequate access to safe water and sanitation. The UN Habitat were very aggressive in addressing these situations, and they were successful in providing solutions; so, I would like to thank the UN-Habitat for all its efforts in supporting local governments and for providing community driven solutions in informal settlements during this pandemic.

At Alwaleed Philanthropies, it has always been a top priority to provide homes and adequate shelter for the people who are struggling to make ends meet.

Some of our many housing initiatives spanning across includes projects in Saudi Arabia, where we provide more than 1000 housing units per year for people in need.

Through our partnership with International Medical Corps, 137 earthquake-resistant shelters were constructed to tsunami affected communities in Indonesia.

With our partners in Egypt, The Sutra project aims at improving the residential environment for 10,000 Egyptian families, that is 1,000 houses per year in all governorates of the Arab Republic of Egypt except Cairo, North Sinai and South Sinai.



Through our partnership with Nubian Vault, Alwaleed Philanthropies is proud to state that this project not only provides housing for local communities, but it also trains the community itself to build their own homes using their own earth resources and material. This initiative is very important because it is sustainable, provides job opportunities and training for the local communities and provides shelter for all.

Also, with Habitat for Humanity, in Albania we are currently serving 102 families by repairing and constructing their damaged homes from the earthquake in November 2016. I hope this will be an inspiration to all the privileged people to try their best to make a difference in the lives of the many unfortunate people who are struggling every day.

Thank You and stay safe.