

**Speech by Mr. A.G. Vysokinsky,  
Mayor of Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation  
World Cities Day,  
October 31, 2020**

Dear Mrs. Sharif,

Dear organizers and participants of the Global Celebration of the World Cities Day,

I am happy to welcome you at the celebration of the World Cities Day and let me congratulate you on such a significant international event! It is a great honor for me to speak at the event today in presence of the representatives from different countries of the world experienced in solving different issues that human settlements face.

A year ago, Ekaterinburg hosted the sixth World Cities Day, and it was a memorable day. Together with the guests of the celebration that was held at one of the largest convention venues in the country, being excited with the first snow, we discussed a wide range of issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals achievement.

The cities participating in UN Habitat are located at different continents and in different climatic zones, but when it comes to the World Cities Day we all feel the common warmth of this holiday.

Last year such words as the ‘pandemic’ and ‘COVID-19’ were never heard at our celebration platform. However, today, the present and the future of our cities could not be discussed without mentioning these words which accounts for the significance and scope of these issues. With respect to the current situation the local authorities take additional measures on the economy stabilization and coping with the negative consequences, update the instruments for coordination of the activities in order to ensure a decent life for the population. I hope that today's conversation will become an additional impetus for the cities joining the efforts in resolution of these temporary difficulties.

The theme of the World Cities Day this year, **“Valuing Our Communities and Cities”**, is very close to Ekaterinburg City Administration.

We value our city and our communities. We are proud of the fact that we established the dialogue between the city management and representatives of the business, scientific, and civil community in the process of selection of strategic targets and priorities in urban development. Ekaterinburg has many different communities that unite people by age, interests, residence territories. When the strategy for the city development or development of certain districts or areas in the city, is outlined, every resident has the equal right to participate in the discussion, make proposals, raise issues and get answers, regardless of organization he or she represents.

In recent years, we managed to expand the communication with the local community by use “smart” technologies. We see revolutionary changes in mass media, availability and quality of traffic management systems, construction, provision of government and municipal services.

The Urban environment changes as well. Nowadays, the comfortable and safe urban environment is created not only as a result of beatification of the territory, but as a result of integration into municipal infrastructure of the recent IT achievements. And an important task for the local authorities would be safe implementation of smart systems in the urban environment.

Such systems are also used in street cleaning and lighting; for beautification and in public transport; in social sphere and cultural life.

Local authorities are working on improvement of the quality of peoples' life, development of human potential, improvement of the environment, creation of the comfortable urban environment, creation of the environment for accelerated development of the digital economy, and introduction of smart services.

We are ready to share our experience with the foreign partners and study the practice of our foreign colleagues, learn about trends in mastering the "green" technologies, construction of environment-friendly housing, and creation of urban inclusivity.

We hope that meetings in Ekaterinburg under the auspices of UN-Habitat will be continued. I think that today we have a unique chance to enter the new level in development of the urban technologies that will serve for the benefit of mankind and allow people to live in harmony with the surrounding world.

We consider the UN-Habitat festive events as the platform for exchange of the best practices, we are expecting the straight talk about such practices that will allow us to value our communities and cities. I wish productive work and health to all participants.

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