

Sri Lanka Celebrates World Cities Day

31 October 2015, Colombo, Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka celebrated World Cities Day with a special event in its administrative capital, Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, on 31st October 2015. Organised by the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development, the celebrations for a “Better City – Better Life” included a walk followed by a special event at the “Ape Gama” cultural centre in Battaramulla. The President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena was the Chief Guest at the event. The Minister of Megapolis and Western Development, the Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Deputy Minister, Hon. Lasantha Alagiyavanna, Hon. Isuru Devapriya, Chief Minister (Western Province) and the Chief Technical Advisor of UN-Habitat, Mr Tim McNair also participated at the event. Representatives of key urban sector agencies in Sri Lanka and senior Government officials were also present. This important national event marked the culmination of celebrations which focuses on this year’s World Cities Day theme “Better City – Better Life”.

Mr Tim McNair shared the UN-Habitat Executive Director’s message with the gathering. Emphasising the importance of well-planned urban design to ensure sustainable cities, he stated “for a sustainable urban future, we must ensure that good design is part of the planning process. Sustainable Development Goal number 11 highlights the importance of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. UN-Habitat is committed to supporting the Government of Sri Lanka to achieve this goal.”

The event featured several cultural presentations and handing over of prizes by his Excellency the President to school children for art and essay competitions.

The United Nations has designated the 31st of October as World Cities Day to promote the international community’s interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization and contribute to sustainable urban development around the world.