

**Nairobi/Milan 31 October 2015**—Successful events were held across the globe to mark the second [World Cities Day](#). Dubbed ‘Designed to live together’, the highlight of this year’s event was in Milan where the celebrations marked the end of the Expo 2015 Milano which has been running since May.

At the United Nations, the event was the culmination of the [Urban October](#), a month that started with the [World Habitat Day](#) and that allowed all the actors to reflect on the urban future and all the opportunities to create a new and transformative urban agenda. In his message, United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon said the theme of this year’s celebrations was chosen to highlight the complexity of cities and how urban design is the tool that provides the opportunity to transform the way that we live, to facilitate the development of socially integrated, prosperous cities where people live together.

“Good urban form is the foundation for sustainable cities. Good design means building an integrated all-encompassing urban system that considers not only what the urban form of the city should be, but also what should be the process of envisioning it. When planning cities, public authorities should facilitate a collaborative design process with a broad range of concerned stakeholders that develops a debate around concrete interventions, step by step.

Design is the point of departure from which through debate and reflection, testing and improving, a common vision is reached,” he said. According to the Secretary-General, design is thus a strong participatory tool for making a city for all because it helps people come together around shared goals and visions, promotes everyone’s equal access to services, jobs and opportunities, to the city’s social, cultural and political life.

In his message, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Dr. Joan Clos, said this year the World Cities Day focused on the capacity that urban design had to affect how people live, how they move around, how the neighbourhoods look like and how safe people feel on the streets. “Urban form is the combination of streets, building typologies and networks of public spaces. They form the underlying structure of the city, a skeleton around which people’s lives are built and activities carried out. Good design contributes to social integration, equality and diversity. Planning residential areas with different possibilities in terms of typology and price enables residents from different backgrounds and income levels to live together, prevents the creation of isolated ghettos or gated communities, fights segregation and discrimination. Good design gives space for different cultures, ethnicities and lifestyles to mix and come together,” he said.

In the celebrations of the World Cities Day, local governments around the world launched a joint-message –[Local Governments moving towards the New Urban Agenda](#)- recognizing the opportunity to transform cities into inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable places as they work together towards [Habitat III](#) and the New Urban Agenda.

Speaking at the Global Observance in Milan, UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Director, Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira said: “Today we are celebrating that cities have the power to transform our lives into a more sustainable and inclusive path”. In his speech, the Mayor of Milan, Mr Giuliano Pisapia, advocated for sustainable and innovative cities in order to face global challenges.

The event was marked with an entertaining football tournament that brought together nine teams drawn from UN agencies and diplomatic missions based in Nairobi. UN-Habitat clinched the trophy in post-match penalties. This year’s fete comes smack in

the middle of two ground breaking events. The first was the adoption last September of the new Sustainable Development Goals – which include SDG-11 to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, recognize this transformational approach of sustainable urban development.

The second is that it comes exactly a year before the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III to be held next October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. The World Cities Day was celebrated for the first time last in Shanghai after the decision by the United Nations Assembly to establish this international observance as one of the legacies of Expo 2010 Shanghai.