



**WORLD CITIES DAY 2016
MESSAGE OF THE UN-HABITAT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DR. JOAN CLOS**

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The World Cities Day is already an essential celebration on the calendar to greatly promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization.

This year the World Cities Day is of big significance as it comes as a follow up of the recent United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III.

The Habitat III Conference as a whole was a resounding success: 30,000 participants and almost 1,000 events in four days. Such high turnout is a testimony of the strong world interest in urban development, and in taking part in the global conversation about our cities.

The way cities are planned and managed is one of the main challenges of the 21st century for the sustainable global development, and it is the key to achieve equal and inclusive societies.

This year the World Cities Day is happening within the framework of a New Urban Agenda -first in this century- to make possible the change of the current cities' model for better urban life.

The New Urban Agenda shares a vision of cities for all, ensuring that all citizens are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable and sustainable cities for foster prosperity and quality of life.

In the line with Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris agreement on climate change, the New Urban Agenda envisages cities and human settlements where everyone can feel a sense of belonging and have equal opportunities to participate in. It opens a chapter for pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met, including those of vulnerable situations.

The New Urban Agenda is an impulse for better and greener urban future where everybody has access to the benefits of urbanization. A vision where all persons are able to enjoy equal rights and fundamental freedoms.

Together we have the knowledge to change our cities for better. Now we need commitment to make the change and to go into actions. This will require strong coordination among different scales and partnerships among sectors.

This year's World Cities Day theme on Inclusive Cities and Shared Development is result of this global discussion. The United Nations has selected it to emphasize social fairness and justice and to promote balanced development among cities.

I wish you a happy World Cities Day and, on this day, I call for action on the performance of the New Urban Agenda.

Thank you for being part of this historic shift of urban paradigm.