

## Global Observance of the Annual World Cities Day 2021 and 2022

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### Background

UN-Habitat is inviting cities to express their interest in hosting the Global Observance of World Cities Day for 2021 and for 2022.

World Cities Day was established on 27 December 2013 by General Assembly resolution A/RES/68/239, in which the General Assembly “decides to designate 31 October, beginning in 2014, as World Cities Day, invites States, the United Nations system, in particular UN-Habitat, relevant international organizations, civil society and all relevant stakeholders to observe and raise awareness of the Day and stresses that the costs of all activities that may arise from observing the Day should be met from voluntary contributions”.

World Cities Day is an annual occasion to promote and inspire action around sustainable urbanization by advancing international cooperation, celebrating successes, maximizing the opportunities and addressing the challenges created by the fast global pace of urbanization. in innovation, technology and investment among others and to address challenges of urbanization such as housing, climate change, equitable access to basic services, security, and decent jobs.

The enduring theme of World Cities Day is *Better City, Better Life*. Each year a different topic is chosen to focus on and a host city is selected for the Global Observance.

The first global celebration of the World Cities Day was in Shanghai, China on 31 October 2014, with the topic: Leading Urban Transformations. In 2015 the topic was Designed to live together taking place in Milan, Italy; in 2016 it was Inclusive Cities, Shared Development in Quito, Ecuador; in 2017 Innovative Governance, Open Cities in Guangzhou, China; in 2018 in Liverpool, United Kingdom Building Sustainable and Resilient Cities and in 2019 in Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation, World Cities Day focused on Changing the world: innovations and better life for future generations.

World Cities Day has been strongly supported by the People’s Republic of China through the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the Shanghai Municipality.

UN-Habitat is inviting cities to express their interest in hosting the Global Observance of World Cities Day on **31 October 2021** and/or the Global Observance of World Cities Day on **31 October 2022**.

### Objective

World Cities Day aims to raise international awareness of urbanization trends, challenges and visions for sustainable urban development, promote international cooperation and contribute to global efforts to build equitable, prosperous, sustainable inclusive cities that provide their communities with better living environments and quality of life.

## Participation

UN-Habitat takes the lead in inviting and mobilizing the United Nations system, international organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to observe World Cities Day.

The host city and country of the Global Observance work with partners and UN-Habitat to organize the main event programme. The host may invite other stakeholders in the country and region such as Ministers and Mayors to take part and support the Global Observance. The general public in the city, country and globally will be encouraged to get involved including through global platforms including social media and live streaming.

The host provides a financial contribution to UN-Habitat for the mobilization of the international community and other stakeholders to ensure that the event receives global visibility.

Details on commitments, roles and responsibilities of UN-Habitat and the host, will be outlined in a contribution agreement which will be signed by all parties involved.

## Financial contribution

To hold the Global Observance of World Cities Day in either 2021 or 2022, the host is required to provide a cash contribution of USD 350,000 (United States Dollars Three Hundred Fifty Thousand) to UN-Habitat.

The contribution is used for planning, mobilizing stakeholders, outreach activities, website, social media, design, communication, editing, programme development, operations support, reporting and evaluation. Ultimately it supports the overall advocacy and communication of World Cities Day within the framework of Urban October.

Additionally, the host city is required to provide an in-kind contribution of the venue with its facilities, exhibition space and services, security within the city around and within the venue, interpretation from English to the local language or other languages of high-level speakers, operational and logistical needs, and international travel and local costs for key delegates from least developed countries (for further information see Annex 1).

## Selection Process and Criteria

The selection of the host will be made by a UN-Habitat internal committee. The selection of the global host for World Cities Day will be guided by the following:

- Demonstration of good practice within the host country and city on issues relating to the themes of World Cities Day
- Geographical balance based on the locations of previous World Cities Day Global Observances
- Demonstration of ability and financial commitment to meet the conditions outlined above and provided in more detail in the attached World Cities Day hosting guide.
- Experience of hosting international events, including events relevant to cities
- Accessibility of the city for international delegates.

## Theme

The general theme of World Cities Day is *Better City, Better Life*.

The topic of World Cities Day 2021 will be linked to **Climate Change and Climate Action** which is the focus of UN-Habitat's Flagship programmes on Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor looking at climate change adaptation for informal settlements. 2021 will also be the first year of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The theme also relates to the post COVID-19 recovery and the importance of greener cities that are more resilient to potential future pandemics.

The topic of World Cities Day 2022 will be linked to the theme of UN-Habitat's Flagship Programme on **Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities**. It will focus on transforming socially, economically, environmentally deprived urban areas into connected, dynamic, diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods that achieve increasing equality of outcomes for all. The theme will focus on urban regeneration as a tool to reduce inequalities and poverty.

## Activities

Activities related to the Global Observance will be developed in line with available human and financial resources from the voluntary contribution by the host. A programme will be jointly developed with the host. UN-Habitat will provide branded online advocacy tools and kits to support mobilization of partners and maximize outreach. Details of planned World Cities Day activities taking place around the world will be uploaded by UN-Habitat on its website and social media sites and the host and partners will be encouraged to publicize their activities widely.

## Timeframe

The closing date for receiving the Expression of Interest to host World Cities Day 2021 and 2022 is 31 January 2021. The table below outlines important milestones and dates.

Milestones	Date
Call for Expression of Interest open	11 September 2020
Deadline for receiving Expressions of Interest	26 February 2021
Outcome of selection process is communicated to the cities	19 March 2021
Legal Agreement finalized and signed	April 2021
Announcement of the hosts for the Global Observances of World Cities Day for 2021 and 2022	May 2021

## Expression of Interest to host the Global Observance of World Cities Day in 2020 or 2021

A city or country wishing to express its interest to officially host the Global Observance of World Cities Day in either in 2021 or 2022 is required to send an official communication on an organizational letterhead and with an authorized signature, highlighting its capacity in the areas outlined in the selection criteria and indicating its commitment to provide a financial contribution of USD 350,000 (United States Dollars Three Hundred Fifty Thousand) to UN-Habitat, addressed to the UN-Habitat Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

The official communication is to be transmitted within the deadline via the following email address:  
[unhabitat-wcd@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-wcd@un.org)

*Please note: Any submission which does not meet the criteria, or not on official letterhead and duly signed, or received after deadline will not be considered.*

## Annex 1

### Hosting the Global Observance of World Cities Day

#### **The specific responsibilities of UN-Habitat will be as follows:**

UN-Habitat will designate a focal point to work with the local focal point and organizing team.

UN-Habitat shall provide the necessary backstopping and support to ensure the successful hosting of the Event by undertaking the following responsibilities:

#### **1. Advice and support to operations and logistics**

- Give guidance to the host on the preparation of the Global Observance of World Cities Day;
- Assist with invitations of international guests;
- Support logistics and travel arrangements relating to invited and sponsored international guests from outside the host Country;
- Handle online registration of international participants;
- Engage with the City to agree on the venue and setting up of the same according to requirements;
- Shipment of information and promotional materials to the venue;
- Maintain the database and disseminate all international invitations.

#### **2. Invitations**

- Invite high-level representatives of the United Nations system and relevant international organizations; civil society; representative of Member States, Mayors and other relevant stakeholders;
- Invite representatives of the diplomatic community in the host Country
- Disseminate all international invitation letters, which could be jointly signed.

UN-Habitat shall invite United Nation officials, Mayors outside the host country and internationally recognized organizations and experts, representatives of foreign missions and other partners, in close collaboration and consultation with the City, to the Event. The City shall invite, in close collaboration with UN-Habitat, the highest possible representative from the host Government and representatives from Ministries responsible for various aspect of urbanization e.g., Ministries of Local Governments, Housing, Infrastructure, Urban Development, Regional Planning and Environment, local experts, among others, to the Event.

Where possible, the invitation will be jointly signed by UN-Habitat and the City using the electronic signatures for strictly this purpose only. The parties will consult and agree on whether the electronic signature of the Mayor of the host City will be provided to UN-Habitat, or the signature of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat will be provided to the City for purpose of signing the joint invitation letter.

#### **3. Publicity**

- Prepare on-line information kits and branding tools, a World Cities Day concept note, relevant statements, design posters and banners, invitation letters, the programme of the day;
- Provide information to governments and stakeholders on the theme and location of World Cities Day through the Executive Director of UN-Habitat;
- Advertise World Cities Day Global Celebration events around the world through all available means, including target-

ed newsletters, social media and internet adverts;

- Prepare and disseminate press releases and bring the Event to the attention of the international media;
- Develop a dedicated World Cities Day page on the UN-Habitat website in English.

#### 4. Programme

- Provide guidance on the main programme for the Global Observance of World Cities Day;
- Provide guidance on the programme of side events/workshops/break out session at the venue on the day, or if applicable in the period leading up to and immediately after World Cities Day.

#### The specific responsibilities of the City will be as follows:

1. The City will designate a focal point and organizing team who will be working with UN-Habitat;
2. The City shall provide UN-Habitat with the list of international participants whom the City wishes to invite to the Event for onward dissemination by UN-Habitat;
3. The City may invite all identified personalities, i.e. Mayors or experts from the host City to attend the Event while sharing the contacts with UN-Habitat;
4. The City shall provide UN-Habitat with financial support of a minimum of USD 350,000 (United States Dollars Three Hundred Fifty Thousand) 30 days after the Legal Agreement has been finalized for the support provided by UN-Habitat for the event hosted in 2021. For hosting the event in 2022, the financial support shall be provided by 31 March 2022 at the latest;
5. The City shall provide all required logistical and IT services and cover all local costs related to the preparation and organization of the Global Observance of World Cities Day;
6. The City shall, at no cost to UN-Habitat, provide the necessary material and logistical support, including printing of merchandise, printing of badges, provision of photographers and videographers for the Event;
7. The City shall, at no cost to UN-Habitat, provide the necessary premises for the Event and related activities, which shall take place at the host City, including the conference and workshops rooms, working areas, office space and equipment, media room and press conference room;
8. The City shall ensure stable Wi-Fi connection at no cost throughout the venue, including all premises dedicated to the Event, for all participants and provide internet high speed LAN connection to also enable linking to other locations to the world via the internet for live transmission. It further shall make arrangements to provide free interpretation services (including equipment) to all meetings of the Event in at least the two working languages of the Event, that is, English and local language if different from English and add, as appropriate, for the opening/closing sessions, other United Nations Official languages or other language(s) that may apply in case of high level attendance from such country. It is also advisable to provide sign language to make the event full inclusive;
9. The City shall work in partnership with UN-Habitat in all aspects related to the realization of the Event and will provide, at no cost, to UN-Habitat a venue for the celebration of the Global Observance of World Cities Day with the following facilities:
  - Main hall for the celebration of the Global Observance with sufficient seating for invited guests and a raised podium for speakers;
  - At least two to four rooms for technical discussions and side events at the venue, if this is included in the day's programme;
  - Press conference room;
  - Photography and video coverage of the Event and other bilateral meetings of the Executive Director;

- Space for the Exhibition;
  - Registration and information desk;
  - An office for the UN-Habitat Executive Director for bilateral meetings set-up with executive furniture (desk, swivel chair, sofa set/chairs, coffee table) for meetings with up to 6 persons including coffee/tea/snacks throughout being served;
  - A designated suitable car with driver for the Executive Director for the duration of Event;
  - An office for UN-Habitat staff (8 pax) with a large boardroom table;
  - An office for City and other staff;
  - Luncheon for invited guests and international guests; and refreshments (e.g. water) during meetings; coffee/tea snacks during breaks;
  - Public Announcement system and equipment for PowerPoint, video presentations and Internet Connectivity in each room;
  - Interpretation facilities from English to the local language if different from English and vice versa; and additional languages as by confirmed delegates;
  - World Cities Day branding throughout the venue and build as backdrop in the main hall and other rooms;
  - Security for delegates;
  - 5 flag poles with the provision of UN flag in addition to the local City flag; the Country flag may be added if a Minister from the host Country is in attendance.
10. The City shall provide adequate medical facilities with English/local language speaking personnel for First Aid in emergencies within the Event's area. For serious emergencies, the City shall ensure immediate transportation and admission to a hospital. All medical expenses incurred thereafter shall be borne by participants. UN-Habitat as an invitee to the Event shall not in any way be liable for any medical expenses of any participant;
  11. The City shall ensure the availability of adequate public or private transportation on a reasonable commercial basis for all the Event's participants and UN-Habitat officials to and from the airport before, during and after the Event, as well as to and from the principal hotels and the Event premises for the duration of the Event;
  12. The City shall ensure the availability of adequate hotel accommodation on a reasonable commercial basis for all the Event's participants;
  13. The City is committed to implementing the activities and providing the services outlined under the Agreement through its organizational structure and by using appointed professionals and in accordance with its specific needs as identified by the City;
  14. The City shall engage and provide, at its expense, local staff and volunteers, who will work in close collaboration with the staff of UN-Habitat and under the overall coordination of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat or persons designated by her;
  15. The City shall ensure that local staff shall be available for work throughout the entire period of the Event and, where necessary, before the Event;
  16. The City may, at the request of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat or any person designated by her, arrange for additional numbers of the local staff as may be required by UN-Habitat.
  17. The City may put up street banners, and branding, at strategic locations;