



## Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience

— LUXOR, EGYPT —

# Towards a Resilient and Green Future: Covid-19 Recovery in Partnership

### Background:

Urban areas with their high concentration of population and economic activities, have been the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic with some 95 per cent of COVID-19 cases initially found in cities. This has had adverse impacts on the global economic output, 80 per cent of which is produced in cities. As most of the economic activities came to a standstill due to the pandemic, cities are grappling with severe urban economic and financial impacts such as massive loss of jobs and rising unemployment, dwindling local government revenues, and enormous losses in productivity and business activity providing a massive opportunity to reorient the economy towards a green future before restarting.

According to the **framework** developed by the United Nations for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, there is an urgent need to 'empower local governments; scale community and city level resilience' in order to engender better and green recovery, aligned with the sustainable development goals of UN's 2030 Agenda. In words of the UN Secretary General António Guterres "**COVID-19 recovery and our planet's repair can be two sides of the same coin**". In this sense, cities require urgent access to long-term, affordable finance to implement climate-resilient recovery measures that will avoid emissions and climate-vulnerability for the next decades. "We have both a moral imperative and a clear economic case for supporting developing countries to adapt and build resilience to current and future climate impacts", also stated by António Guterres.

The recovery is an opportunity to transform cities and its urban economies to become more sustainable, socially just, and resilient; which can only be realized with strong global partnerships and cooperation. This would pave the way for healthier, resource-efficient and green urban areas, pivoted on sustainable consumption and production patterns anchored to sustainable value chains.

There is a growing trend among city and local government organizations to unite on global issues, making them crucial operational partners internationally but also locally. In addition, city-to-city cooperation and collaboration mechanisms can lead to more integrated and effective responses, also serving as a catalyst for developing or improving local solutions and contributing to increased city-to-city exchange of capacity and knowledge.

The latest UN-Habitat's report on **Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green and healthy future** demonstrates how cities can reduce the impact of future pandemics and become more equitable, healthy and environmentally friendly. The report promotes strategic, scaled responses in urban areas that lever the co-benefits of actions to address climate change, health and inequalities in tandem. It states how response and relief funding should also be earmarked for nature-based solutions and ecosystem services that integrate blue, green and grey infrastructure into regional open space and basic service networks, helping regions enhance their climate resilience and advance their socio-economic recovery.

According to UNEP's **Emissions Gap Report 2020**, a green recovery could cut 25 per cent off the greenhouse emissions expected in 2030, while we need to cut one-third of emissions by 2030 to get back on track of the Paris Agreement target of keeping global temperature rise well below 2°C.

In this line, the **UN's Global Compendium of Practices** for building urban economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 strongly states that every decision taken and initiated as part of the recovery and reconstruction effort must pass the test of sustainability by being assessed for its impact on the environment and marginalized and vulnerable groups in line with 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

### The Roundtable:

Recovering from critical urban economic and financial impacts requires a holistic, multi-hazard approach through engagement with all critical stakeholders. This Roundtable offers a unique and pertinent opportunity for national and local governments and urban stakeholders to strengthen their capacities in urban climate resilience during and after COVID-19. It offers a platform for cities to reflect on their practices and learn from actual experiences of other global cities, thus, informing policies and programmes for a more resilient and sustainable future. This Roundtable will identify integrative pandemic green recovery plans and strategies, as well as initiatives to enhance existing partnerships towards building resilience.

### Specific Objectives:

- Exchange experiences, ideas and serve as a catalyst for developing or improving local climate resilient and green recovery strategies during and after COVID-19.
- Identify the factors and difficulties for cities to access to long-term and resilience-oriented funding.
- Foster city-to-city cooperation and collaboration mechanisms –leading to more integrated and effective responses.
- Provide a platform to cities and local governments to unite on building resilience and green recovery, making them crucial operational partners for global challenges.

### Key Outputs:

A final report of the event, including key policy recommendations, will be produced and disseminated among participating institutions, policy makers and key stakeholders.