



ROUNDTABLE 3
CONCEPT NOTE

17 August 2021

Urban Climate Action through Low-Carbon Planning and Mobility

Cities account for about 75 percent of the world's energy consumption, and are responsible for some 70 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Transport, including urban traffic, accounts for a quarter of these emissions, and is the fastest-growing emission source, also causing harmful air and noise pollution.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, pollution and greenhouse gas emission in major cities across the world dropped to almost pre-industrial levels, giving citizens a glimpse of the benefits a cleaner, more sustainable urban landscape could deliver. As the world looks forward to building back better, greener and healthier, it will be important that decision makers make the right choices for the future of urban planning and mobility, tackling the impacts of cities on climate change in a gender-, age- and ability-responsive manner and ensuring resilience in the face of new social, environmental and health challenges.

This roundtable during World Habitat Day will discuss the key aspects of urban planning and mobility that should underpin a green and healthy recovery. The need to design compact, inclusive cities with complete streets and public spaces and mixed land uses will be emphasised, focusing on the concept of the '15-minute city'. This concept allows to avoid trips to be made, and enables a shift to non-motorised and public modes of transport in the city. Moreover, its application promotes integrated land use and more efficient delivery of basic services, reducing disparities in healthcare, education and socioeconomic inequalities. Improved and greener transport also has a positive impact on road safety as more people shift to public transport and safe walking and cycling modes. The importance of non-motorised transport, transit-oriented development, electric mobility and air pollution, crucial when rebuilding urban mobility systems, will be discussed.

This discussion will be rooted in UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda and SDG 3 on health, SDG11 on sustainable and inclusive cities, and SDG13 on urban climate action, striving for safe, sustainable cities and urban climate action that places vulnerable populations at its heart. Important initiatives will be showcased, and government partners and key sustainable urban planning and mobility stakeholders will be invited to elaborate on their national and city-level efforts to build back better, leaving no-one and no place behind.

Proposed Session Outcome

Emerging from the panel discussions, a World Habitat Day Action Declaration on Safer Roads and Low-Carbon Urban Transport supported by participants is proposed. The Declaration incorporates key recommendations for the transition towards low-carbon urban mobility and road safety centred around accessible public and non-motorised transport that is inclusive for all.