



31 DAYS OF PROMOTING  
A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

ABRIDGED

# URBAN OCTOBER REPORT 2021

**UNHABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE







## Short Summary of events during Urban October 2021

Despite the continuing challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, some 570 events focusing global attention on the challenges and opportunities created by our increasingly urban world were reported as taking place during Urban October. Most events were held in America (156) followed by Europe (810), Asia (58) and Africa (56). Brazil held by far the most events (180 as part of its Urban Circuit) with 52 in Mexico and between 20 and 30 in Spain, Bolivia, Kenya, Ecuador and the USA. Key events included the Innovate4Cities Conference (I4C), launch of the Saudi Green Initiative in Riyadh, the SDG Conference in Shanghai.

The largest number of events (90) were held by civil society organizations, followed by UN partners (61) and those involved in academia and research (57).

There were 1,500 uses of #UrbanOctober with nearly 30,000 interactions along with over 880 articles published in China, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Spain, Egypt and Cameroon. In addition there were 2,700 mentions of UN-Habitat in the media and 419 uses of #ClimateAction4Cities with an engagement of 7,300.

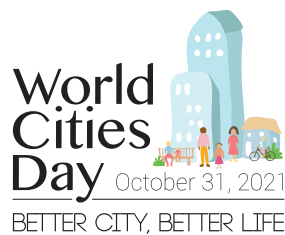


The month began as always with World Habitat Day on Monday 4 October on Accelerating urban action for a carbon free future which led to 75 events across the world including in the USA, the Republic of Korea, Cambodia, the Philippines, Spain, Ghana, Mexico, Kenya, Peru and Nepal. The most popular hashtag was #WorldHabitatDay with 5,400 uses and 126,400 interactions along with mentions in around 200 articles.

The Global Observance in Yaounde Cameroon was attended or watched by around 1,200 people. The high level opening ceremony

included online and in person speeches and video messages from the First Lady of Turkey, the UN Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNEP, the Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) network, Cameroon's Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Nobel Laureate Mohammed Yunus, UN-Habitat's Goodwill Ambassador for Africa, Poland's Secretary of State, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy and the African Union.

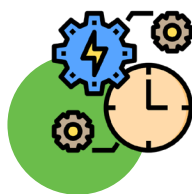
UN-Habitat presented the Scroll of Honour Awards to this year's five winners with Egypt's Vice Minister for Housing and representatives from Shining Hope for Communities, Kenya, Let's do it World Estonia and Ciudad Emergente Chile attending in person while Baoji City, China sent a video.



### Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience

Urban October closed with World Cities Day on 31 October on Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience which coincided with the opening of the UN Climate Conference - COP 26. There were around 50 global events including in China, Mexico, India, USA, Benin, Netherlands, Kenya, Ecuador, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, and Chile as well as a full day at the Dubai Expo.

The Global Observance in Luxor, Egypt was attended by the Egyptian Prime Minister, with contributions from the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, the Director General of the World Health Organization, the Head of UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, UN-Habitat's Goodwill Ambassador for Arab States, China's Minister for Housing and Urban Rural Development, the Mayor of Shanghai, the President of UCLG, the Mayor of Ekaterinburg, Russia (a former World Cities Day host), the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Road Safety and the Chair of his Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. There was a live link up to the World Cities Day at Expo2020Dubai. The opening ceremony was followed by roundtable discussions.



## 570 EVENTS

Focusing global attention on the challenges and opportunities created by our increasingly urban world were reported as taking place during Urban October.

# Global Observance World Cities Day 2021

## ROUNDTABLE OUTCOMES

### Roundtable 1 : Renewable Resources for Urban Climate Mitigation

**Moderator:** Vincent Kitio, Lead Urban Energy Solutions Team UN-Habitat

**Panellists:** Dr Muhammad Gambo, Director Centre of Excellence, Shelter Afrique. Who represented Mr. Andrew Chimphondah, Group Managing Director/CEO Shelter Afrique (virtual); **Mr. Sanjay Seth**, Senior Director of the Sustainable Habitat Division, The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI), India (virtual); **Ms. Alice Charles**, Project Lead for Cities, Infrastructure and Urban Services, World Economic Forum, Geneva (virtual); **Ms. Rana Adib**, Executive Director, Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), France (virtual); **Ms. Imen Gherboudj**, Programme Officer, Resource Assessment, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) (virtual)

#### Discussion

Around 35 participants joined the roundtable online while 65 participants attended the event in person.

The session started with a brief introduction from the moderator who presented both the topic for discussion and the panellists.

**Ms. Alice Charles** of the World Economic Forum, pointed out how cities are important player in addressing climate change given that they consumed most of the resources and contribute significantly to the production of GDP. She informed the participants that more and more public and private sectors are working with cities to achieve the net-zero carbon future. In fact, more cities would like to significantly reduce their carbon footprint by 2030. The race to Net-zero carbon future is on.

She informed the participant that cities need to decarbonise their electricity generation system, promote ultra-efficient buildings and e-mobility and most importantly design compact cities. Alice recommended that local governments should aim at cutting their carbon emission by 50% by 2030.

**Ms. Rana Adib**, the Executive Director, of Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), talked about the global transition toward cleaner energy systems. She emphasised on the fact that cities should aim at "making Renewable Energy the norm". This will contribute significantly to the reduction of the CO2 emission. But it was important to undertake energy planning by adopting Energy Action Plans. Cities consume around 75% of the total national energy for cooling, heating,

transportation, industry and trade. Cities are the driving force of the economy. She pointed out that more data was needed for good planning and policy development. As a leading agency on Renewable energy research, she informed the participants that globally 1852 city governments have declared their transition policies. She invited other cities to do so. She also invited participant to download the latest REN 21 report entitled Renewable in Cities 2021: Global Status Report.

**Dr Muhammad Gambo**, from Shelter Afrique highlighted the fact that his agency is embracing green building strategies and is also working with IFC to adopt the EDGE rating system in their social housing program. This will help them reduce energy consumption and promote adoption of green energy. He pointed out that Shelter Afrique new policy is to deliver social housing units that are sustainable. This will reduce carbon footprint since housing is the key contributor to climate change.

**Mr. Sanjay Seth**, from The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI), India talked about the work of TERI in promoting sustainability and resilience in cities. He mentioned that TERI was a knowledge hub on sustainability. The Indian Government has committed to reduce its emission by 30 % by 2030. TERI is helping the government to do just that. He mentioned that the energy sector is receiving more attention: In fact renewable energy was being integrated in the energy mix. Mr Seth mentioned that Net Zero Energy was not enough and that we should push for Near zero energy. He also recommended to put in place a good energy efficiency programme across sectors. He concluded by mentioning

the 100 Smart city programme that the Indian government has put in place.

**Ms. Imen Gherboudj**, Programme Officer, Resource Assessment, at the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) presented the Solar City simulation tool developed by IRENA to assist local authorities to assess their solar energy potential. The information provided by the tool is useful to develop proper policies and investment program on solar energy. She gave some examples of cities that are already using the tool. She invited those cities that are interested to channel their request through their ministry of energy.

During the discussions, the mayor of Buea mentioned that he was very interest in testing the solar city simulation tool in his municipality. Other participant asked why most emphasis was been put on solar energy alone when we know that a country like Cameroon has several hydropower potentials. Another question was related to climate change. The participant asked why we should be bordering about climate change since our contribution to greenhouse emission was less than 2 %.

## Summary and looking forward

The transition toward nearly zero energy was agreed to be the way forward. Access to data was also seen as a key determinant for proper policy development. Energy efficiency measures in buildings was to be encouraged at all times to reduce the demand for energy. African cities were invited to invest in the energy transition.



**Cities need to decarbonise their electricity generation system, promote ultra-efficient buildings and e-mobility and most importantly design compact cities.**

**Local governments should aim at cutting their carbon emission by 50% by 2030.**

## Roundtable 2: Clean cities for everyone – moving to a zero carbon and waste world

**Moderator and Coordinators:** **Francesca Calisesi**, Associate Officer, Solid Waste Management, Urban Basic Services Section, Global solutions Division, UN-Habitat

**Panellists:** **Ms. Ralyn Satidtanasarn “Lilly”**, Youth champion; **Ms Bijal Bhatt**, Head Mahila Housing Trust; **Mr Ibrahim Adejuwon Odumboni**, Executive Officer of the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA); **Ms Daira Gómez**, Executive Director, CEGESTI; **Mr Justin Wood**, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships, Alliance to End Plastic Waste; **Ms Heidi Solba**, President and Head of the Global Network at Let's Do It World

### Discussion

**Ms. Ralyn Satidtanasarn “Lilly”**, a youth champion from Thailand, delivered a visionary statement on the right to clean cities for everyone, highlighting that individual action and youth involvement are critical to combat climate and waste global crisis. She shared her experience as a young climate justice activist, the struggles and resistance she faced while advocating for nature and stop single use plastic items. In this regard, she also emphasized the urgency for collective action to overcome barriers and obstacles to change perception of waste and to generate global awareness from low to high levels of society.

**Ms. Bijal Bhatt**, Head Mahila Housing Trust, discussed about the role of the informal sector and how it is often overlooked in contrasting climate change and global warming. She underlined the critical role the informal sector plays in supporting a circular economy approach that reduce energy consumptions by recovering waste and resources through the recyclables' picking and collection activities. She reiterated the need to improve their working conditions through coordinated actions among the local governments and other waste chain actors. For example, making waste segregation at source mandatory, will allow to increase recovery of resources as well as for waste pickers to work in cleaner environments and be less exposed to hazardous waste.

**Mr Ibrahim Adejuwon Odumboni**, Executive Officer of the Lagos Waste Management Authority, discussed the challenges that developing countries and cities face in setting up a sound solid waste management system. He highlighted the multiple difficulties that a mega city like Lagos encounters in sustainably manage solid waste: collection, especially in low income areas, currently rating at 48% of total waste generated by the city; recovery of resources, currently at 8%; avoiding illegal dumping. He emphasized the role of awareness and behavioural change activities as critical to a sound waste system and the need to coordinated actions between the private and public sector as well as citizens.

**Ms Daira Gomez**, the Executive Director of CEGESTI, a non for-profit organization with the mission to promote sustainable development in Latin America, working both with private and public sector. She reiterated the necessity of integrated approach to solid waste management and circular economy. She shared the case study of Guatemala: the country with a steadily increasingly gross domestic product, resulting in increase use of resources and waste generation, and 66% of uncollected waste, with common opening burning and illegal dumping practices, struggled to manage and recover waste in a sustainable manner. CEGESTI trained 340 municipalities on the elaboration of Integral

Solid Waste Management Plans, and 8 municipalities completed their plans. Ms Daira reiterated the need to build capacity development for public staff, to facilitate the implementation and dissemination of best practices and to set up a solid waste data system.

**Mr Justin Wood**, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships, Alliance to End Plastic Waste NGO, discussed the role of private sector in sustainable waste management. He highlighted how consumers can influence the development of innovative business models and the products' design, moving from linear to cradle to cradle approach. He emphasized how collaboration among the manufactures, local and national governments and consumers is key to tackle the global waste crises and ensure clean cities that will contribute to zero carbon and waste world.

**Ms Heidi Solba**, President and Head of the Global Network at Let's Do It World and among the winners of the UN-Habitat scroll of honours winners of 2021, highlighted the importance of awareness and sensitization among the population as trigger for behavioural change. Let's Do It World, with its presence in over 160 countries, organizes clean ups to clean up the environment while shaping environmental conscious citizens.

## Summary and looking forward

There is an increasingly urgent need to coordinate actions among the actors of the waste chain, from producers to consumers, to local and central governments to private and informal sector, to organization and educational institutions for effective planning and implementation of sustainable waste management system that contribute to resources efficiency and climate mitigation in urban context. Cities are becoming the centre of resources and energy consumption, leading by example and sharing good practices and lessons learnt on sound waste management practices is equally key to achieve a carbon free world and the goals set by Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

With Heidi Solba, it was discussed to take forward activities under the recently signed MoU, especially on:

- collaboration and joint activities in relation to waste education projects, especially in Africa
- engagement with Let's Do It Network, especially in the countries where both organizations have projects, such as Lebanon and Burkina Faso



**Making waste segregation at source mandatory, will allow to increase recovery of resources as well as for waste pickers to work in cleaner environments and be less exposed to hazardous waste.**

**Awareness and behavioural change activities are critical to a sound waste system and the need to coordinated actions between the private and public sector as well as citizens.**

**Collaboration among the manufactures, local and national governments and consumers is key to tackle the global waste crises and ensure clean cities that will contribute to zero carbon and waste world.**



## Roundtable 3: Urban Climate Action through Low-Carbon Planning and Mobility

**Moderator and Coordinator:** Doug Ragan, UN-Habitat

### Discussion

The Urban Climate Action through low-Carbon Planning and Mobility panel was held during World Habitat Day on 4 October 2021 to discuss the key aspects of urban planning and mobility that should underpin a green and healthy recovery.

The panel discussion was opened by the UN Secretary General Special Envoy for Road Safety, **Mr. Jean Todt**, who highlighted the challenges currently faced by cities incl. COVID-19, climate change and road safety. He highlighted the transport related SDGs and the need for a common global roadmap for urban mobility of the future.

The Minister of Transport of Cameroon, **Mr. Jean Ernest Massena**, addressed issues relating to the planning of safe and low-carbon transport at the national level and highlighted the need for linking the sectors of transport and energy.

After the Video on the Cycling Cities Campaign, **Ms. Heather Thompson**, CEO of the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), expressed her excitement of UN-Habitat having joined the campaign. She further mentioned that “the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how cycle friendly cities can bring about emissions reductions to increasingly people centered and equitable urban landscapes.”

These introductory statements were followed by a Panel Discussion on “Building back safer, greener & healthier – urban public space and mobility solutions in the post-COVID era”. The panel was opened by Prof. Carlos Moreno, Scientific Director, IAE Paris-Sorbonne

University, who discussed the need to design compact, inclusive cities with complete streets and public spaces. The “15 Minute City” allows residents to lessen the number of trips to be made and enables a shift to other modes of transport such as public transit and bikes. Instead of cities with distinct districts for living, socializing and working, the 15-minute city envisages the urban centre as connected neighbourhoods where all three functions co-exist.

The International Union of Railways (UIC) Director General François Davenne noted the need to find appropriate solutions for the African context such as rail. Mr. Davenne explained UIC’s vision in which rail links with other modes of public transport within cities – as the backbone of an integrated, multi-modal sustainable mobility system.

To provide an outlook on COP26, **Ms. Maruxa Cardama**, Secretary-General of the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) provided her reflections on what needs to happen to redirect transport toward a truly low carbon pathway while emphasizing the need for intersectoral partnerships as key to urban climate action.

In his remarks, **Mr. James Delaney**, Chair, Block by Block Foundation, illustrated the need for public-private partnerships and the important role of the private sector to ensure that no-one is left behind. He provided collaboration examples with UN-Habitat, in which the computer game Minecraft has helped to facilitate participatory design of public spaces and streets.

The session was rounded up with a statement by **Ms. Rosaline Van Der Vlies**, Head Clean Cities, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission, who explained that one of the Horizon Europe Missions aims at having at least 100 climate-neutral cities by 2030. According to her, the work that the EU is doing on the European Missions has been inspired by the cooperation with UN-Habitat, particularly by the Urban Maestro and the SOLUTIONSplus project.

### Summary and looking forward

The session recognized the ongoing challenges of land use planning and transport, including increasing sprawl and fragmentation of neighborhoods in the face of rapid urbanisation, resulting in increasing emissions, air pollution and road traffic crashes. The discussion furthermore reflected on the impact of COVID-19 on our cities, transport systems and mobility patterns incl. the emergence of the concept of the 15-minute neighborhood. And the session also drew some key recommendations towards Safer Roads and Low-Carbon Urban Transport. These include:

- To take measures to prioritize "mobility of people" over infrastructure development to accommodate car-based traffic;

- To provide incentives for a shift from car-based traffic to public transport integrated with better facilities for walking, cycling and electric, shared mobility;
- To promote the coordination and integration between transport and urban policies on the local and national level;
- To ensure participation of civil society, businesses and all stakeholders in the preparation of policies and implementation projects; to ensure the participation of women and other vulnerable groups;
- To provide an enabling environment that encourages innovation, digitalization and entrepreneurship in developing innovative solutions to improve mobility and public space.

Looking ahead at COP26, the transition to zero emission mobility needs to happen much more quickly in order to meet the Paris Climate Goals. The world has to build on the momentum of COVID-19, which gave us a glimpse of the benefits that cleaner, more sustainable cities could deliver. As humankind, we have to act now, and cannot accept any further delays.



**Provide incentives for a shift from car-based traffic to public transport integrated with better facilities for walking, cycling and electric, shared mobility.**

**The work that the EU is doing on the European Missions has been inspired by the cooperation with UN-Habitat, particularly by the Urban Maestro and the SOLUTIONSplus project.**

## Roundtable 4: Climate Change Financing in African Cities: Bridging The Financing Gaps for Climate Resilient Urbanization in Africa

**Moderator and Coordinators:** **Mr. Jean-Paul Adam**, Director of the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Division; **Oumar Sylla**, Regional Director of the Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat; **Fruzsina Straus**, Program Management Officer, Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat

**Focal point:** **Claude Ngomsi**, UN-Habitat

**Panellists:** **Ms. Yang Kristiina**, Project Coordinator, Climate Policy Initiative; **Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi**, Secretary General, UCLGA; **Mr. Stefan Atchia**, Lead, Urban Development Division, AFDB; **Mr. Papa Sy**, Global Lead Urban Development, IsDB; **Mr. Raf Tuts**, Director, Global Solution Division

**Closing remarks:** Mr. Oumar Sylla, Director (A.G.) Regional Office for Africa UN-Habitat

### Discussion

**Ms. Kristiina Yang**, highlighted that developing capacity at the local level is critical, and we need investment for this especially in Africa's secondary cities. The Green City Finance Directory is an excellent resource for our cities and attendees were encourage to explore it. She also emphasized the need for the region's decision makers to consider the holistic disbursement infrastructure and include resource allocation for institutional capacity building, to amplify impact.

**Mr. Stefan Atchia** provided us with some staggering figures on current climate investment flows and highlighted the need to increase these investments and establish new investments. He identified making advancements in capacity building, innovation and technology, mobility, basic services provision and clean energy ventures, to increase infrastructure investments and featured Dakar, Senegal as a best practice. He advices cities to plan, benchmark and share knowledge as financiers look for resources. I quote, 'When you have money you spend it, when you don't, you plan'.

**Mr. Papa Sy** reiterated the issue of innovation and funds for development, using Public Private Partnerships as an avenue. He exemplified this by mentioning a billion-dollar investment in reforestation. An ambitious PPP where they are using result based finance model. Hearing about the IsDB's future plans and commitments to green infrastructure investments from Mr. Papa Sy was very promising and hopeful. On the need for tracking, monitoring and evaluation urban climate financing, he mentioned that it is a very important consideration as reinforced by Ms. Yang.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi** started with an important point that the correct price tag on carbon compensation could cement Africa's global position as a solution to rather than an instigator of the adverse effects of climate change. The ideas, initiatives and innovations are here, the financing needs to catch up. Housing the approach in green economic recovery from COVID-19, Mr. Mbassi's thoughts on focusing on green infrastructure and especially on the most vulnerable areas,



is key to ensuring climate funds go where they are most needed. He also provided data on Africa's efforts towards financing for climate change through initiatives like the Africities Summit.

From UN-Habitat, Mr. Raf Tuts complemented the other speakers and filled in some gaps, talking about looking at effective partnerships, and new approaches and business models for own source revenues and how they can be generated. For example, the storm water management model in South Africa. He also mentioned the importance of city planning to bridge the financing gap and embedding local climate action into the broader plans and strategies. UN-Habitat has developed tools, such as City RAP, that enable municipalities to work hand in hand with communities to plan resilience building actions and develop proposals to attract private sector investment and donor funding to implement them. Finally, there was a quick reminder of the upcoming Innovate4Cities conference next week.

## Summary and looking forward

There is an increasingly urgent need for resources that will go towards climate adaptation programs and planning for adaptation and mitigative measures that will protect African cities from adverse effects of climate change. However, it is equally important for the region's decision makers to consider the holistic disbursement infrastructure and include resource allocation for institutional capacity building, explore resources from the private sector through PPP's, put the correct price tag on carbon compensation and make resilience planning participatory in order to amplify impact




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**Provide incentives for a shift from car-based traffic to public transport integrated with better facilities for walking, cycling and electric, shared mobility.**

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**The work that the EU is doing on the European Missions has been inspired by the cooperation with UN-Habitat, particularly by the Urban Maestro and the SOLUTIONSplus project.**

# Global Observance World Cities Day 2021

## ROUNDTABLE OUTCOMES

### Roundtable 1: Climate Adaptation for the most vulnerable people

**Moderator:** Raf Tuts, UN-Habitat

**Opening Remarks:** H.E. Dr. Rania Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation in Egypt

**Panelists:** Dr. David Dodman, Director of Human Settlements at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED); Ms. Sheela Patel, Founder of SDI, Founder Director of SPARC; Dr. Monika Kuffer, ITC, University of Twente; Mr. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Governor of Kisumu County, Kenya ; Hon. Martha Delgado, The President of UN-Habitat Assembly; Mr. Andrew Chimphondah, Shelter Afrique; Mr. Alessandro Rainoldi, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

**Closing Remarks:** Hon. Martha Delgado, The President of UN-Habitat Assembly

### Discussion

**Dr. David Dodman**, Director of Human Settlements at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

- Good urban development should go hand in hand with good climate responses to emissions and risks.
- The need for effective working relationships between vulnerable groups, communities, cities and national government.
- The need for recognizing the way in which positive urban change takes place and that it needs to be for all urban individuals.

**Dr. Monika Kuffer**, ITC, University of Twente

- The majority of urban population belong to urban poor but their needs are not taken care of.
- Global data sets show that Urban poor are systematically underrepresented.
- Insufficient knowledge about hazard conditions of urban poor areas. They're more susceptible to hazards e.g. massive amount of waste flowing to communities, floods landslides.
- Not having spatial data on location of urban poor underrepresents them in samples.

- Not understanding their diversity of urban poor which is not really voiced.
- There is a lack of data analysis in the urban poor areas and local communities. We need to support them and build together with local actors
- There's little understanding and knowledge of the scale of the problems and future issues they'll be facing.

**Ms. Sheela Patel**, Founder of SDI, Founder Director of SPARC

- Unless the billions of people who vulnerable people are not organized to produce collective voice, the transformation required to participate in will not happen.
- Development assistance always treat poor people as individuals who you force feed into solutions which professionals think is good for them
- Poor people especially in cities in the global south have been inter-generationally poor for 3-5 generations.
- 9/10 times the mayors and municipalities are locked in an adversarial relationship because of structural problems that make informality continuously invisible.

**Mr. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o**, Governor of Kisumu County, Kenya

- The whole idea of making the urban area resilient is being inclusive in trying to get rid of informality and convert it to formality.
- The kind of services that are needed in informal sector to formalize risks is where the formality is needed.
- What kind of resources is needed to abolish informality?
- Complete revision of what the urban plan should be for sustainable development and residents' habitation.

- It's important to Invest in informal settlements and slums and bring them in to the main matrix of urban planning and formal settlements.

**Hon. Martha Delgado**, The President of UN-Habitat Assembly

- In some cases, the informal sectors are more vulnerable to those (climate) impacts and the capacity to adapt to those impacts is very correlated to social and economic developments of that society.
- The capacity to adapt a community is related to the consciousness and preventive ability of authority and the population.
- Prevention is related to tech and the ability of cities and mayors to make good decisions. Vulnerable communities do not have access to these things and the central government should provide capacity for them to access these technologies.

**Mr. Alessandro Rainoldi**, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

- Localization of efforts is crucial.
- National efforts with international funding is not enough. Grassroots exploration is important.
- We need policy alignments across territorial levels and domains
- It's important to listen to communities to enable and empower them.

**Mr. Andrew Chimphondah**, Shelter Afrique

- The most impacted through climate change need to influence building designs to reduce carbon footprint in Africa.
- 35% of energy consumption in 2019 came from buildings.
- By 2050 there's going to be 15% reduction of GDP because of failure to adapt to climate change.



## Summary and looking forward

**Dr. David Dodman:** We can't separate good urban development from effective climate change responses both mitigation and adaptation. Good urban development is a solid pre-condition for climate responses to reduce emissions and risks. The only way of achieving this is through effective working relationships between organized groups of urban residents and local municipal and national governments as the only effective way to support cities.

**Dr. Monika Kuffer:** We need to go into action with local communities and develop actions together with local groups.

**Mr. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o:** The reasonable answer lies in how we use the urban space. We need to decolonize our minds and democratize the use of urban space and the balance of that urban space so that it cannot be vulnerable to flooding.

**Alessandro Rainoldi:** There's need for directionality of climate policy efforts. It must be streamlined and aligned. If only one tile of the puzzle doesn't do their job, then we might risk having some optimal impact on the people.

**Hon. Martha Delgado:** We have to reflect on the fact that right now we want to gain resilience and adaptation in cities and to reduce GHG emissions. But at the same time communities are eager to be developed and are demanding more energy and services as population is increasing. So, we need to switch and make a transition to energy demands that are greener and cleaner.




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**Good urban development should go hand in hand with good climate responses to emissions and risks.**

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**The capacity to adapt a community is related to the consciousness and preventive ability of authority and the population.**

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***Good urban development is a solid pre-condition for climate responses to reduce emissions and risks.*** The only way of achieving this is through effective working relationships between organized groups of urban residents and local municipal and national governments as the only effective way to support cities.

## Roundtable 2: Innovate4Cities Conference Outcome

**Moderator and Coordinators:** **Mr. Sebastian Lange**, Focal point for Climate Change and Environment, Planning, Finance and Economy Section, UN-Habitat, (in-person)

### Panellists

**Innovate4Cities outcome panel:** **Distinguished Professor Xuemei Bai**, Australian National University, Australia, (online); **Mr. Seth Schultz**, CEO, The Resilience Shift, USA (online); **Dr. Mauricio Rodas**, former Mayor of Quito, Ecuador (online); **Mr. Indy Johar**, Executive Director at Dark Matter Labs, UK (online)

**Regional panel:** **Dr. Khaled A. Mahdi**, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Kuwait, (online); **Prof. Dr. Ahmed Y. G. Rashed**, Department Architectural Engineering, The British University in Egypt (BUE), (in person); **Dr. Najeeb, Al-Shorbaji**, Independent Consultant, Knowledge Management and eHealth, Jordan (in-person)

### Discussion

**Professor Xuemei Bai:** The Innovate4Cities in October 2021 was a new milestone following the first Cities and Climate Change Science conference that took place in 2018 in Edmonton. It was very instrumental in mobilising the scientific community for a cities' related research agenda. A more systematic analysis and synthesis of the conference is still underway. But what one can already say is that all the research areas presented in the original GRAA are still very much relevant.

Four key areas of research have emerged as priority areas, going forward:

- 1) Cities have played a key role in raising societal awareness of the growing risks of climate change, and in growing this momentum. Cities also pledge to become net-zero and are thus increasing the pressure on national governments. More locally based, trans-disciplinary research is needed towards concrete and actionable policy options. The involvement of different stakeholder groups is needed for co-producing knowledge.
- 2) We still don't have a good grasp of how to achieve climate adaptation in informal settlements. By 2050 there will be 3 billion people living in informal settlements with the dual challenge of poor living conditions and the exposure to a growing impact of climate disasters. There is currently not enough knowledge on how to deal with this growing problem.
- 3) There is also not enough knowledge on how to build cities and the necessary infrastructure without emitting too much carbon, and especially under conditions of rapid urbanisation in the global South. Projections have shown that an urbanisation progressing similarly to that of the Global North would entail as much as 226 Giga tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, which represents a large proportion of the remaining 500-800 Giga tons of CO<sub>2</sub> which is the remaining carbon budget until we pass the 1.5°C target line. There are no good solutions for avoiding this carbon embedded in urbanisation.

- 4) Systems approaches require more attention. While Nature-Based Solutions and blue and green infrastructure have received increasing attention, thereby addressing multiple benefits, including the urban heat island effect, it remains unclear, how this green infrastructure can be developed, built, and integrated at scale with engineering solutions to maximise the benefits. System approaches need to even go further, across disciplines, including urban planning, governance, and practice.

**Mr. Seth Schultz** offered a practical perspective on the I4C conference. One very interesting aspect of the I4C conference was the co-mingling of perspectives in light of the multiple challenges that we are facing. The I4C conference offered a different perspective on the challenges in implementing solutions at scale and at the remaining time, towards have the transformational results that are needed. The co-generation approach to knowledge generation at the I4C included very different communities of practice coming together, helping to understand and learn from each other, including academia, policy makers, government representatives and practitioners. In this way a better understanding was gained on the existing gaps, which are for instance not just gaps in the literature (for academia), or finance issues, policies or technologies. The I4C conference has yielded more wholistic knowledge, incorporating inputs from different disciplines and communities of practice on tackling the climate crisis. The organisation of related processes, our re-alignment of how we are doing things and why, and the speed at which that happens, including a new approach to failure and learning (or try and error), must be a key concern.

**Dr. Mauricio Rodas** offered a local government perspective on the I4C conference. The I4C has revealed again that there are still no adequate mechanisms at hand for coordinating between different levels of government, i.e. to improve vertical integration and multi-level governance with the aim

of addressing local needs. We should take advantage of the fact that cities during the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrate to be bold and innovative when we are thinking about solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation. There is a great opportunity now, because many countries have set up COVID-19 recovery packages, if mechanisms are in place to disburse funds from these recovery packages directly to cities, to allow cities to become effective players in helping countries in meeting their NDC targets. We have a problem today with an international financial architecture that was designed for countries and not for cities, and it is urgent that the financial system is becoming more cities friendly. Cities lack the necessary level of technical capacity, but they also often do not have the credit worthiness to access resources. Private sector engagement in cities needs to be enhanced: Typically, the private sector is not very familiar with the processes and projects that cities would promote. Urban Development needs to consistently adhere to and be guided through sustainable development principles and be implemented with the aim of achieving climate resilience. The question of equity and justice is also very important in this context. Equity should be in the center of urban planning and urban climate solutions especially for climate change adaptation. A peoples-centered approach is needed. Dr. Rodas concluded that cities need to be enabled for becoming drivers for climate mitigation and adaptation.

**Mr. Indy Johar** opened his remarks by highlighting the planetary dimensions of the climate crises, with an increasing climate migration (of perhaps half a billion people on the move in the next 30-40 years). This climate change induced process will significantly influence and shape urbanisation in the next decades, but also infrastructure development, very likely amounting to the need to largely rebuilding urban infrastructure. The I4C conference put in question our ability to make decisions. IPCC (and others) has been continually providing the facts.



A lot of the climate risks that we are facing today are not priced. While there is a discussion ongoing on how to address the climate risks, the fact remains that they are not priced, which makes it difficult for capital to be effectively used to address climate risks. The processes, instruments and institutions for mobilising this capital and for handling climate finance at the scale needed does simply not yet exist. Climate Change will also influence in a very fundamental way how cities will look like, function and how value will be created in cities. It will much different from the models of today with for instance more distributed production capabilities and much more questioning the aggregative functions of the cities.

**Prof. Rashed** has been curating a regional group (MENA) for the I4C conference. Here the approach has been a bottom-up approach in terms of innovation and knowledge creation. One critical challenge discussed was related to water and the subsequent migration or respective the need for migration, and for building new cities. Luxor was chosen as a case city for the discussion, where new urban settlements were developed on the western side of the Nile River. Luxor is one of the oldest cities we know and has been able to re-invent itself over its history again and again. The Egyptian Architect Hassan Fathy has been a pioneer for sustainable architecture and community participation of the urban poor in Luxor.

**Dr. Najeeb Al-Shorbaji** emphasised that some of the ideas raised are already on the way in the region, including for instance the move towards a knowledge-based society, expanding information and communication technology, but also deploying communities of practice in the effort of finding solutions to climate change. The question of public health must not be left out of the discussion, including the social determinants of health and the environment. WHO has been promoting a healthy cities network programme including Cairo among some 60 plus cities in the region with some 300 million people. Digitalisation will have a positive impact on both, public health and climate change, because of

increasing connectedness while at the same time the need for transportation will be reduced. The new ideas that came forward from the I4C conference are also very much interesting in the context of the improvising public health and digitalisation in the region.

**Dr. Khaled A. Mahdi** emphasised the need to move beyond the science arena. Moving beyond the science arena means by large the policy making based on evidence, which means to draw conclusions and take action based on the debate. But the I4C conference seemed to have emphasised that the policy making infrastructure is not mature enough. In 2022, Kuwait will be releasing its 4th generation master plan, which will for the first time propose a shift away from a "single city state" towards also supporting secondary cities. This will also be more climate efficient with also services being more decentralised. The Kuwait vision 2035 includes a public-private-people-partnership model, including also innovative financing instruments. There has been an extensive public debate in Kuwait on the major strategic shift associated to the 4th Master Plan, including the new emphasis on secondary cities and the private sector involvement. The decision was made to move ahead with the dual role of the government as a driver and enabler for the development.

## Summary and looking forward

1. The discussion in the round table was both interesting and engaged. The I4C outcome was illuminated from different perspective, including the perspective of the impact on the Global Research and Action Agenda (GRAA), the perspective of conclusion for local governments, the perspective of innovation and new modalities of cooperation as well as the question of addressing the implementation gap.
2. The I4C conference has largely confirmed the GRAA which was initially concluded from the 2018 Edmonton conference of Cities and Climate Change Sciences. An important

emphasis was made on bringing the urban poor into the centre of the focus. There is still more to be done to develop resilience of the urban poor and to put the urban poor into the centre of both research and implementation action towards adaptation. The importance of urban planning (research and action) was also strongly emphasized. Some momentum has been gained through an increasing movement of cities towards carbon neutrality and a net-zero carbon urban development outcome.

3. Continued attention needs to be given to the urban poor and to informal settlements and slums in the context of building community resilience, and climate change adaptation.
4. Local governments are still disadvantaged in combatting climate change for different reasons, including the lack of technical capacity and the lack to access to adequate financing. On the later point, an entirely new approach will be necessary to act and deliver on scale and in time, and also in terms of financial risk management towards bankable projects. The risk-structuring of financial mechanisms, instruments and services from both private and public sources requires an entirely new thinking in the context of the climate crisis.
5. Communities of practice, which have to be trans-disciplinary and include stakeholders from the public and private sector, as well as researchers, youth and marginalized groups, like for instance the urban poor, may be a good way to tackle the further development of workable solutions. It was noticed that such instruments do not exist at scale today, and a paradigm shift towards a new practice and towards collaboration modalities will have to be achieved soon. Action (especially for climate change mitigation) in this sense is needed now, as the time window towards still being able to manage climate change is rapidly closing.
6. Our ability to make decisions has been seriously eroded until now. Entirely new institutions are needed that can learn, and to act at scale, and to help facilitate the global transition.
7. Regionally, these points were echoed and endorsed, while the need for locally tailored approaches was underlined. Digitalization (also here in the region) and new modalities to work may help in the process. An emphasis on secondary cities will be required in addition.



**Equity should be in the center of urban planning and urban climate solutions especially for climate change adaptation. A people-centered approach is needed.**

**This climate change induced process will significantly influence and shape urbanisation in the next decades, but also infrastructure development, very likely amounting to the need to largely rebuilding urban infrastructure.**

## Roundtable 3: Towards a Resilient and Green Future: COVID-19 Recovery in Partnership

**Moderator and Coordinator;** Mr. Esteban León, Head of the UN-Habitat's City Resilience Global Programme

**Panellists;** Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa (in-person); Eng. Alaa Abdel-Fattah, Chairman of the General Organization for Physical Planning, Egypt (in-person); Ms. Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); Ms. Gabriela Uchoa, Director of International Cooperation, City of Teresina, Brazil (online); Mr. Piet Dircke, Global Leader Resilience & Water Management at ARCADIS, Netherlands (online); Ms. Kobie Brand, Africa Regional Director and Deputy Secretary General, ICLEI; Ms. Dana Omran, Global Director Strategy and Operations, Regional Director Africa, Resilient Cities Network (online); Mr. Ronald Jackson, Head of UNDP's Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery for Building Resilience Team (online); Dr. Mona Rady, Chairperson of the Habitat Professionals Forum (in-person); Mr. Sameh Wahba, Global Director, Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice, World Bank Group (Video statement); Mr. Shoubin Chen, Mayor of Yixing, Jiangsu Province, China (Video statement)

### Discussion

The Roundtable was to reflect on cities' practices and learn from actual experiences, thus, informing policies and programmes for a more resilient and sustainable future. It was organized in a hybrid modality, with panelists and participants attending in-person in Luxor, Egypt, and others connecting in live online with over 100 participants. The video is here.

The Roundtable was opened by Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa, who highlighted that cities are the place of departure to seek models that guarantee resilience. This idea linked to the words by Eng. Alaa Abdel-Fattah, the Chairman of the General Organization for Physical Planning in Egypt, who precisely presented the case of the new strategic vision of Sharm el-Sheik (Egypt), that is transforming it into a green city and an eco-friendly tourist destination as a recovery plan for the COVID-19.

**Ms. Gulnara Roll**, Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at the United Nations

Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), recalled that 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 due to the impacts of the Pandemic. Ms Roll stressed the idea that 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, cooperation and transversal solutions.

**Ms. Gabriela Uchoa**, Director of International Cooperation in the City of Teresina (Brazil), explained how her city works towards the journey of resilience building from a holistic and multi-hazard approach through the engagement and cooperation with all critical stakeholders and the different levels of government.

**Mr. Piet Dircke**, Global Leader Resilience & Water Management at ARCADIS, highlighted

the need of identifying local practices and maximizing resources as a guide for future investments, as well as the urgency of connecting knowledge and investment. Following to this, **Ms. Kobie Brand**, ICLEI's Africa Regional Director and Deputy Secretary General, emphasized how urban leaders are already playing a vital role in translating national climate commitments into action. At the COP26's door, subnational governments are pushing to ensure their climate action plans to be recognized and supported at the international and national level.

Consistent with this approach of supporting local governments, **Ms. Dana Omran**, Global Director Strategy and Operations and Regional Director Africa for the Resilient Cities Network, illustrated the impact of the pandemic in the urban areas and the most vulnerable groups. Ms Omran provided with the vision of equity in the heart of any city resilience strategy, understanding that where there is not equity it is not feasible to build resilience.

Furthermore, **Mr. Ronald Jackson**, Head of UNDP's Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery for Building Resilience Team, stressed the sense of urgency for cities and organizations to better cooperate for building a green recovery. Mr. Jackson introduced the topic of science, technology and inclusive digitalization in the discussion as key elements for building resilient societies.

To end up with the live discussion, **Ms. Mona Rady**, Chairperson of the UN-Habitat Professionals Forum, transferred the vision of the urban professionals around the world on how the urban profession needs a more holistic approach to tackle current global challenges. Ms Rady highlighted the international agendas, with special emphasis to the New Urban Agenda, as the roadmaps for sustainable urbanization.

Through a video-statement, **Mr. Sameh Wahba**, the Global Director of Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice of the World Bank Group, sent the

message that the fight to climate change must go hand in hand with any recovery plan. Cities require access to long-term, affordable finance to implement climate-resilient recovery measures.

The session was rounded up with a video-presentation by **Mr. Shoubin Chen**, the Mayor of Yixing (China) to explained how Yixing has continuously integrated the concept of low-carbon ecology and green transformation into urban construction, closely following the United Nations' requirements in its Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and New Urban Agenda.

## Summary and looking forward

The session recognized the ongoing city experiences and strategies for improving local climate resilient and green recovery strategies during and after the COVID-19. It also served to identify the factors and difficulties for cities to access to long-term and resilience-oriented funding. More cooperation and collaboration mechanisms -leading to a more integrated and effective responses- were highlighted by all the panelists of the discussion as a priority need for recovery.

Transforming mobility models, nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, access to formal economy, affordable housing for all where transversal issues that were identified as solutions towards a green future.

Looking ahead at COP26 and the momentum provided by COVID-19, more commitment and support at local level is required to meet with the global goals. As a follow-up, UN-Habitat, together with the UN Regional Commissions and UNCDF will launch a Policy paper on urban economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2021. In addition, the High Level Political Meeting to review the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (April 2022, New York) and the World Urban Forum 11 (June 2022, Katowice) will be key milestones for monitoring green recovery.



## Roundtable 4: Climate Change in the Arab Region – Challenges and Opportunities

**Moderator and Co-ordinators:** **Mr. Ahmed El-Dorghamy**, Programme Officer, Basic Services and Climate Change Programme, UN-Habitat Egypt; **Ms. Shaden El Galaly**, Programme Assistant, Basic Services and Climate Change Programme, UN-Habitat Egypt.

**Panellists:** **Mr. Erfan Ali**, Regional Representative, Regional Office for the Arab States, UN-Habitat; **Mr. Ali Al-Hemoud**, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR); **Mr. Mohanna Al-Kattan**, Chairman of Climate Change Committee, Jordan; **Mr. Mazen Malkawi**, Regional Adviser, Air Pollution and Chemical Safety, CEHA, WHO; **Mr. Mohamed Bayoumi**, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Egypt; **Mr. Ahmed Zahran**, CEO, and co-founder, KarmSolar; **Ms. Yasmine Deghedy**, Principal Environmental Advisor, EBRD

### Discussion

**Mr. Erfan Ali**, gave an overview of the common challenges faced in the Arab Region. 90% of the region's population live on 4% of the total area, and more than 63% of the population lives in urban areas with many concentrations of economies on the coastlines. It is also among the most water-scarce regions in the world, with the current utilization rate of water resources estimated at 76.6 per cent compared to about 7.5 per cent worldwide. Water scarcity is a major issue in 19 of the 22 Arab countries, while desertification and land degradation affect 17 countries. The Arab region also has the highest food-deficit and is the highest food-importing region in the world, currently, importing 70% of its food needs. Productivity gains are also slowing, noting that agricultural yields are currently far below potential, especially in rain-fed areas which account for 70% of cultivated land in the region. Impacts have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and have intensified the pandemic's impact on the region. It is noted as well that political challenges must be acknowledged in the efforts to map the challenges and plan for interventions for climate action.

**Mr. Ali Al-Hemoud**, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) discussed an example of transboundary issues in the region, specifically the case of dust storms in Iraq and

Kuwait. In surveys conducted it was noted in the sample the prevalence of fine dust that can pose health hazards, and in monitoring of the various sandstorm trajectories, it is notable that trajectories move through major cities such as the capital of Kuwait and other populated areas. Modeling and prediction facilitates preparation and response efforts.

**Mr. Mohanna Al-Kattan**, presented the activities of the Climate Change Committee in Jordan and shed light on Climate adaptation interventions to mitigate flash floods in Jordan. Among the notable insights was the prevalence of both droughts and flashfloods as problems in the same country, and how engineering solutions and green infrastructure interventions addressed this through novel water storage solutions.

**Mr. Mazen Malkawi** explained key environmental risk factors to address in the Arab Region and progress in linking policy to practice, with a focus on health impact. It was noted that in the Arab Region, about 58 per cent of deaths due to environmental factors were attributed to air pollution rather than unsafe water and sanitation or occupational risks, etc. Accordingly, the Arab Strategic Plan of Action on Health and Environment 2017-30 places much emphasis on air pollution, while policy makers are further advocating a form

of recovery from COVID-19 that is healthy, just and green. He further recommends COP26 to be a HealthCOP, placing health and social justice at the heart of discussions.

**Mr. Mohamed Bayoumi**, presented a Case-study of low-cost dike systems to enhance Climate resilience in Egypt's coasts, project under implementation in multiple coastal areas along Egypt's northern coastlines. This Integrated Coastal Zone Management intervention, not only demonstrates the technical viability of nature-based solutions, but also demonstrates a good example of how climate financing, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) can be well mobilized to provide high-impact support and demonstrate an example of a replicable solution for coastal cities in threat.

**Mr. Ahmed Zahran**, shed light on several examples of private sector innovation in initiating novel climate solutions and mitigation projects such as novel means to integrate solar power in agricultural irrigation applications and in water desalination, as well as green building solutions in desert environments. A key message was that many interventions are possible within a framework of an economically feasible revenue-generating business, which in turn enables the sustainability of such solutions.

**Ms. Yasmine Deghedy**, gave an overview of the various means by which multilateral development banks (MDBs) support governments and the private sector in advancing green development, through various green financing facilities or through support in planning and strategy development, such as in the Green Cities Program. It was noted for example that in the Arab region, there are several cities that have become an EBRD Green City, such as three cities in Egypt (6th of October, Alexandria, and Cairo), as well as Amman in Jordan.

**Ms. Maha Fahim**, in a final presentation, reflected on the various topics covered and explained the development of planning processes in Egypt and how environmental considerations and climate change awareness

was gradually reflected in the overall national urban development plan of Egypt developed by the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP) of the Ministry of Housing of Egypt.

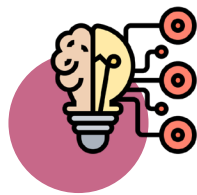
In the discussions, it was noted that with the various interventions by development partners, the introduction of various environmental (and social) criteria and assessment tools are good opportunities for governments and other local stakeholders to be exposed to good-practices and to facilitate mainstreaming environmental considerations in policies, plans and projects. It was also noted that many climate impacts are shared with the rest of the world, but also specific issues that characterize the Arab region specifically are notable, such as issues associated with the context of desert environments, associated dust storms, distinct water scarcity levels, and the effects of such context on any other direct and indirect impacts as well. It is also noted that with substantial import dependence (70% of food imported), any risks of droughts in exporting countries imply a substantial indirect impact on the Arab region as well.

## Summary and looking forward

A substantial opportunity for exchange of experience between countries within the Arab region are noted, whether in the realm of adaptation or in mitigation interventions which may also substantially involve private sector engagement and opportunities for job creation as well. Transboundary issues such as dust storms as well as shared challenges including droughts and flashfloods, are areas where prevention, early warning, adaptation, and recovery are needed and cities can benefit from exchange of case studies and demonstrational interventions. Furthermore, the interplay between such environmental threats and existing political challenges as well, was among the issues that must be discussed together with addressing climate change due to the substantial impact of political turbulence on prevention and response measures, and it should be acknowledged. The way forward involves a healthy, green, and just

recovery from COVID-19, prioritizing climate interventions with the largest health, social and economic gains, transition to renewable energy and green technologies as well as nature-based solutions, promote sustainable

healthy urban design and transport systems, supporting private sector and leveraging green financing options available, and ensuring the integration of adaptation and mitigation in all development plans.



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**Private sector innovation in initiating novel climate solutions and mitigation projects:** Many interventions are possible within a framework of an economically feasible revenue-generating business, which in turn enables the sustainability of such solutions.

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