

## **World Habitat Day 2022 in Balıkesir, Türkiye**

Balıkesir, Türkiye (3 October 2022) – This year, the Global Observance of World Habitat Day takes place in Balıkesir, Türkiye, under the theme **Mind the Gap: Leave No One and Place Behind**. It looks at the problem of growing inequality and challenges in cities and human settlements around the world.

“The gap we are faced with is very worrying. It is estimated that one in every three urban dwellers are poor, the majority of whom are living in developing countries. By 2030, there will be 600 million people living in extreme poverty,” said Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat at the opening ceremony of the global observance of World Habitat Day.

“Whilst 5.3 billion people have access to digital technologies, 2.6 billion are not connected to the internet at all. Europe has one planner for about 3000 people, but Asia and Africa have one planner for about 77,000 and 100,000 people respectively.”

Discussions at World Habitat Day focused on immediate actions needed at national and local levels to close the growing gap between the haves and have-nots. Keynote speakers included Türkiye’s Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Urban Planning Murat Kurum, President of UN-Habitat Assembly Martha Delgado of Mexico, a video address from the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Road Safety Jean Todt, the Governor of Balıkesir, Hon. Hasan Şıldak and the Mayor of Balıkesir Yucel Yılmaz. More than 300 guests, representing 76 countries registered for online and in-person participation.

The United Nations designated the first Monday of October of every year as World Habitat Day to reflect on the state of our habitats, and on the basic right of all to adequate shelter. The day is also to remind the world of the power and responsibility to shape the future of our habitats. The first World Habitat Day was celebrated right here in Nairobi in 1986 and 36 years later, the event has grown in stature and prestige and is now one of the flagship events of UN-Habitat.

The aim of World Habitat Day is to bring representatives of local governments, from mega cities to middle-size and small cities, to discuss their current challenges and ways to address inequalities. How to narrow the gap between the urban poor, between the rural and urban areas or different neighbourhoods within cities.

World Habitat Day launches Urban October – 31 days to promote a sustainable urban future. This month starts with World Habitat Day on the first Monday of October and ends with World Cities Day on 31 October.

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