

GLOBAL OBSERVANCE OF WORLD CITIES DAY 2024

YOUTH LEADING CLIMATE AND LOCAL ACTION FOR CITIES



The Global Observance of World Cities Day 2024 will be held under the theme **“Youth climate changemakers: Catalyzing local action for urban sustainability”**. This event will highlight the pivotal role of local governments and young people in advocating for and taking bold measures and actions to address the climate crisis in cities. It aims to spotlight innovative ideas and ambitious yet implementable targets proposed by youth and explore pathways to translate these into tangible actions. We seek to harness the energy and commitment of youth towards building resilient and sustainable cities for all.

BACKGROUND

With urban areas projected to accommodate 70 per cent of the global population by 2050, cities face unprecedented challenges, particularly in the context of climate change. In cities worldwide, youth represent a significant demographic, with their voices and actions pivotal in shaping urban futures. It has been estimated that 60 percent of the world’s population will live in cities by 2030 and that as many as 60 percent of urban dwellers will be under the age of 18. Despite progress towards the SDGs, urban areas continue to grapple with poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, necessitating urgent and transformative actions.




In the Global South, these challenges are often more pronounced due to rapid urbanization, limited infrastructure, and insufficient resources. Cities in these regions frequently face severe housing shortages, inadequate access to clean water and sanitation, and higher vulnerability to climate-related disasters. Youth in these areas are particularly affected, experiencing high levels of unemployment and limited educational opportunities. Therefore, addressing the unique needs and leveraging the potential of young people in the Global South is crucial for achieving sustainable urban development and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Engaging youth meaningfully in urban decision-making processes is essential for fostering inclusive and resilient cities. By empowering and enabling young people to participate actively, cities can tap into their creativity, innovation, and commitment to drive sustainable development. Moreover, involving youth in policymaking ensures that urban strategies reflect their aspirations and concerns, leading to more effective and equitable future.

Through the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations, the imperative is to establish frameworks that prioritize the voices of youth and future generations, ensuring their active participation in shaping sustainable urban landscapes. The Pact for the Future aims to strengthen the multilateral system to address current and future challenges, explicitly recognizing the crucial role of youth and future generations. This commitment is reflected in the Declaration on Future Generations, which seeks to safeguard the rights and interests of those yet to be born by promoting long-term, responsible decision-making.

As we prepare for the Summit of the Future, these frameworks will be critical in shaping the discussions and outcomes. The Summit of the Future is an opportunity to integrate youth perspectives into global policy, ensuring that the multilateral system is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the younger generation. By adopting these frameworks at the Summit, we commit to creating pathways for young people to influence urban policies and strategies actively. This includes establishing youth councils, integrating youth representatives into local government bodies, and ensuring continuous dialogue between young people and policymakers. These actions will help build cities that are not only sustainable and resilient but also reflective of the diverse voices and needs of all their inhabitants, present and future.

World Cities Day (WCD) will be held right before the World Urban Forum 12 (WUF 12) in Cairo. This event will energize youth to engage actively in WUF 12. As part of the agenda, the Youth Forum will tackle many of these pressing challenges. The discussions and outcomes from the Youth Forum will feed directly into the declaration and outcome document of WUF 12, shaping the future cities forum and ensuring that youth perspectives are integral to urban planning and policy decisions.

OBJECTIVES	
<p>Recognize the leadership of local governments and potential of youth in advancing climate and local action for cities.</p> 	<p>Celebrate successful city projects and youth-led initiatives and contributions to urban sustainability.</p> 
<p>Facilitate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to accelerate climate action and sustainable urban development.</p> 	<p>Highlight the importance of integrating youth perspectives in urban planning, policymaking, and implementation processes.</p> 