World Cities Day 31 October 2026

BETTER CITY, BETTER LIFE

Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All

— Fuzhou, China —

CONCEPT NOTE

Thematic Forum 2: Dialogue on Implementation and Reporting of the New Urban Agenda: Strengthening National and Local Delivery for the 2030 Horizon

Date: 1st November
Time: 13:30-15:00
Title: Implementation and Reporting of the New Urban Agenda: Strengthening National and Local Delivery for the 2030 Horizon

1. Background and Rationale

World Cities Day (WCD), celebrated annually on 31 October, is UN-Habitat's flagship global observance dedicated to promoting sustainable urbanization and advancing international dialogue on urban development. The 2026 edition, hosted by Fuzhou Municipality, provides a timely opportunity to take stock of global progress towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and to accelerate collective action towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 and other urban-related targets of the 2030 Agenda. As one of China's leading cities for ecological civilization, integrated urban-rural development, and innovation-driven growth, Fuzhou offers a relevant platform to showcase practical approaches for translating global urban commitments into national and local action.

The thematic session builds directly upon the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the New Urban Agenda convened by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2026. The Midterm Review highlighted both notable progress and persistent gaps in implementation ten years after the adoption of the NUA. It reaffirmed the continued relevance of the NUA as the global framework for sustainable urbanization and emphasized the need for stronger mechanisms to support implementation, monitoring, reporting, peer learning and multi-level governance.

The thematic session builds directly upon the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the New Urban Agenda convened by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2026. The Midterm Review highlighted both notable progress and persistent gaps in implementation ten years after the adoption of the NUA. It reaffirmed the continued relevance of the NUA as the global framework for sustainable urbanization and emphasized the need for stronger mechanisms to support implementation, monitoring, reporting, peer learning and multi-level governance.

Key messages emerging from the Midterm Review included:

- Persistent reporting and monitoring gaps across regions and countries.
- Limited institutional capacities for tracking implementation at national and local levels.
- The importance of housing, land, and basic services as accelerators of sustainable urban development.
- The growing need for integrated urban data systems and evidence-based policymaking.

- The importance of localizing the NUA through cities, local governments, and regional cooperation mechanisms.
- The need for stronger financing frameworks and partnerships to support delivery.
- The opportunity to leverage South-South and triangular cooperation to accelerate knowledge exchange and implementation.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half of the world's urban population and continues to experience rapid urbanization, demographic transitions, climate vulnerability, environmental degradation, housing challenges, spatial inequalities and increasing exposure to disasters. While significant progress has been made in many countries, reporting on NUA implementation remains uneven. Several countries have yet to submit national reports, while others, including China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Fiji and Japan, have made important advances in monitoring and reporting their urban development commitments.

At the same time, Member States across regions are increasingly recognizing the importance of regional cooperation frameworks to support implementation and reporting. In response, UN-Habitat and its partners have facilitated the emergence of regional mechanisms aimed at strengthening peer learning, capacity development, technical assistance and harmonized reporting approaches.

Malaysia and UN-Habitat are concurrently advancing the Asia-Pacific Dialogues on the New Urban Agenda and the Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform (AP-UAP), envisioned as a regional mechanism to support reporting, cooperation, knowledge exchange and implementation of the NUA across Asia and the Pacific. Similar efforts are emerging in Africa through regional NUA reporting and cooperation frameworks supported by regional institutions and partners.

Against this backdrop, the World Cities Day thematic dialogue in Fuzhou serves as a strategic post-Midterm Review platform to examine how Member States, cities, regions and partners can accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda during the final five years leading to the 2030 Horizon. Beyond reporting, the dialogue will focus on strengthening delivery mechanisms, mobilising financing, enhancing multi-level governance, and advancing regional cooperation frameworks that support implementation on the ground.

The session will connect global recommendations from the Midterm Review with national and local realities, while fostering exchange among countries and regions that are developing innovative approaches to urban transformation, monitoring and accountability.

In this context, regional cooperation mechanisms such as the Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform (AP-UAP) and emerging regional reporting initiatives in Africa represent important building blocks of a broader ecosystem for NUA implementation, peer learning and monitoring. By bringing together national governments, local authorities, regional organisations, development partners and urban stakeholders, the dialogue aims to contribute to a stronger global architecture for accelerating NUA implementation towards 2030.

The dialogue specifically provides an opportunity to:

- Connect global outcomes of the NUA Midterm Review with regional and national implementation efforts.

- Showcase China's leadership and experience in advancing sustainable urbanization and NUA implementation.
- Highlight the Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform (AP-UAP) as an emerging regional mechanism for reporting, cooperation and peer learning.
- Exchange experiences between Asia-Pacific, Africa and other regions on NUA delivery and monitoring.
- Strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation among Member States and cities.
- Promote innovative approaches to urban data, Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), reporting systems and digital tools.
- Enhance visibility of UN-Habitat's global, regional and country-level support to Member States on NUA implementation and reporting.

2. Sessions Overview

A key message underpinning the session is that the New Urban Agenda Midterm Review marks a transition from assessment to acceleration. The dialogue will therefore focus not only on reporting progress, but on identifying the implementation pathways, financing mechanisms, institutional arrangements, partnerships and regional platforms needed to achieve the New Urban Agenda by 2030. The session is intended to position regional mechanisms such as the Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform (AP-UAP) as part of an emerging global ecosystem that supports implementation, reporting, peer learning and accountability across regions.

3. Objectives

- Strengthen national and local systems for implementation, monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda, with emphasis on urban data, indicators, institutional coordination and evidence-based policy making.
- Showcase country experiences, city-level initiatives and regional cooperation mechanisms, including China's leadership and Malaysia's Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform (AP-UAP), that support implementation and reporting of the New Urban Agenda.
- Identify priority actions, financing solutions, partnerships and capacity-building needs required to accelerate delivery of the New Urban Agenda towards the 2030 Horizon.
- Promote stronger collaboration among national governments, local authorities, regional institutions and development partners to advance implementation of global urban commitments.

4. Expected Outcomes

- Increased visibility for China's leadership in advancing implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- Enhanced understanding of priorities and recommendations emerging from the 2026 New Urban

Agenda Midterm Review.

- Clear identification of regional priorities and actions required to accelerate implementation towards the 2030 Horizon.
- Increased recognition of regional cooperation mechanisms, including the Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform (AP-UAP), as vehicles for implementation support, reporting, peer learning and capacity development.
- Stronger collaboration between Asia-Pacific, Africa and other regions on New Urban Agenda implementation, monitoring and knowledge exchange.
- Identification of financing, capacity-building and technical assistance needs for Member States and local governments.
- Enhanced partnerships among UN-Habitat, MOHURD, Fuzhou Municipality, regional organizations, development partners and cities.
- A set of practical recommendations and follow-up actions to support implementation, reporting and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda during the final stretch towards 2030.

5. Guiding Questions

Panel Discussion:

Technical Dialogue: Accelerating Implementation and Reporting of the New Urban Agenda

(a) What institutional arrangements best link national urban policies to local implementation?

(b) What are the main challenges in translating commitments into action?

(c) How can sustainable urban development principles be translated into concrete initiatives?

(d) How can local governments drive the implementation of national urban commitments?

(e) How can urban data better support decision-making and implementation?

(f) How can reporting move beyond compliance to drive implementation?

Presentation:

Financing the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

(a) What key financing reform could accelerate implementation before 2030?

(b) How can regional platforms connect implementation priorities with investment opportunities?