



The role of National Urban Forums as multi-stakeholder platforms to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda

Report on the Expert Group Meeting

October 2020

Virtual event co-hosted by UN-Habitat, Israel Urban Forum and Israel Ministry of Construction and Housing



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ACRONYMS

DFID	Department for International Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUF	National Urban Forum
NUP	National Urban Policy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SAGE	Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
VLRS	Voluntary Local Reviews
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WUF	World Urban Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 20-21 October 2020 UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Israel Urban Forum and the Ministry of Construction and Housing of the state of Israel, held an online Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on National Urban Forums (NUFs) and their role in accelerating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda (NUA) in the Decade of Action.

A range of experts, many from member states with experience hosting NUFs, reaffirmed the value of the NUFs for creating and carrying forward a “common vision” of sustainable urbanisation, shared by multiple stakeholders and across levels of government. With the world still in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, experts noted that this “common vision” is critical for building back better and developing cities that are inclusive, green, and resilient to numerous challenges, including climate change and future pandemics.

This report summarises the proceedings of the EGM, highlighting case studies, best practices, and recommendations from experts and participants.

The EGM discussions highlighted how NUFs play a fundamental role in connecting local, regional and national governments, as well as civil society and non-government partners. Experts highlighted the pivotal role of partnerships and the importance of identifying and including relevant stakeholders (civil society, business, academics, the United Nations) to take part in NUFs, contribute to urban policy discussions, and monitor outcomes. In particular, they identified the need for governments to formalise relationships with civil society partners and for NUF hosts

to actively think about how to bring in urban actors, such as the urban poor and those living in informal settlements, who typically fall outside the “mainframe” of sustainable urban development.

The NUFs are a valuable platform for formulating, implementing, and reviewing the implementation of national urban policies, as well as communicating about policy outcomes and progress on priority areas. They provide a valuable policy feedback loop. At the same time, NUFs link with global development agendas and are critical for accelerating implementation of the NUA and SDGs.

Following the [Abu Dhabi Declared Actions](#),¹ produced at the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, in February 2020, UN-Habitat is promoting the production of action-oriented documents at NUFs, which can then be used for follow-up and review. NUFs are encouraged to produce their own Declared Actions, monitor progress on these, and share the outcomes at the biennial WUFs.

EGM participants emphasised their need, and willingness, to collaborate at the international level by sharing experiences and learning from each other about good practices for NUFs, different NUF models, and ways of building and strengthening partnerships, particularly across different levels of government. This spirit of collaboration extends to WUF11, taking place in Katowice, Poland, in 2022. Moving forward, UN-Habitat plans to promote further knowledge exchange and international collaboration between countries and cities that host NUFs through a global NUF alliance, while working within the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Insights and recommendations

- NUFs can create a “common vision” for sustainable urbanisation across levels of government and among diverse stakeholders, encouraging vertical and horizontal collaboration.
- NUFs are a platform for formulation, implementation, and review of the progress on National Urban Policies (NUPs), thus creating a policy feedback loop. To do this effectively, they cannot be one-off events and must maintain a continuous momentum.
- NUFs can be a major tool for monitoring and reporting on efforts to achieve the SDGs and the NUA in the Decade of Action. NUFs are encouraged to produce action-oriented outcome documents (e.g., NUF Declared Actions), which can be used for follow-up and review and can feed into the WUF process.
- NUFs provide opportunities to partner with key and diverse stakeholders (e.g., business, academics, professionals, civil society, government, parliament, municipalities) as well as key urban actors (e.g., communities, women, youth, the urban poor and minority groups). This applies to engagement in the NUF itself, discussions around sustainable urbanisation across levels, and for monitoring progress on implementation of the SDGs and NUA. NUF hosts need to actively seek out relevant stakeholders and consider ways of strengthening their capacity to participate.
- There is a need to encourage and strengthen civil society's ability to be actively engaged in sustainable development policy formulation and implementation. It is therefore important to have formal and legitimate representation of civil society at NUFs and in decision-making institutions.

- NUFs should be proactive and responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic as an urban crisis that also provides an opportunity to rethink cities, address inequalities, and build green, resilient and inclusive cities.
- NUFs should recognise that cities are frontline responders to the pandemic and other issues (e.g., climate migration). In most cases, collaboration across levels of government is weak. If cities want to play their frontline role it needs to be complementary to national level engagement. NUFs can help to overcome some of the barriers to collaboration, which are sometimes political.

NUFs moving forward

The EGM reaffirmed the importance of the NUFs as an advocacy and action platform. NUFs can play a valuable role at many levels for setting a “common vision” for diverse stakeholders - particularly at the time of COVID-19 - and can help bridge political divides. They should be seen as a process and not as one-off events.

The NUFs provide an opportunity for UN-Habitat to learn about how its partners are dealing with the challenges of sustainable urbanisation. NUFs have an important role to play in the mobilisation of national, regional, and local governments and stakeholders on the road to WUF11.

In the run-up to WUF11, UN-Habitat will work to coordinate international collaboration and knowledge exchange between NUF hosts through a global NUF alliance. The aim is to support implementation of the NUA and SDGs and create synergies between local, regional, national, and global efforts toward sustainable urban development in the Decade of Action.



01

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the EGM, with insights from each of the four panel sessions.

It highlights good practices, key discussion points, and recommendations from the experts

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the role of National Urban Forums (NUFs) as multi-stakeholder platforms to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) brought together a diverse range of urban experts, representing national governments, civil society, and the United Nations system to discuss the next cycle of the NUFs and the mobilisation of national, regional and local governments and relevant stakeholders on the road to Eleventh Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11) in Katowice, Poland, in 2022.

This report provides a summary of the EGM, with insights from each of the four panel sessions. It highlights good practices, key discussion points, and recommendations from the experts. The report will feed into an updated version of UN-Habitat's NUF guidelines, which provide advice on hosting a NUF, and it is hoped will stimulate ongoing discussions about the role and value of NUFs in forthcoming EGMs.

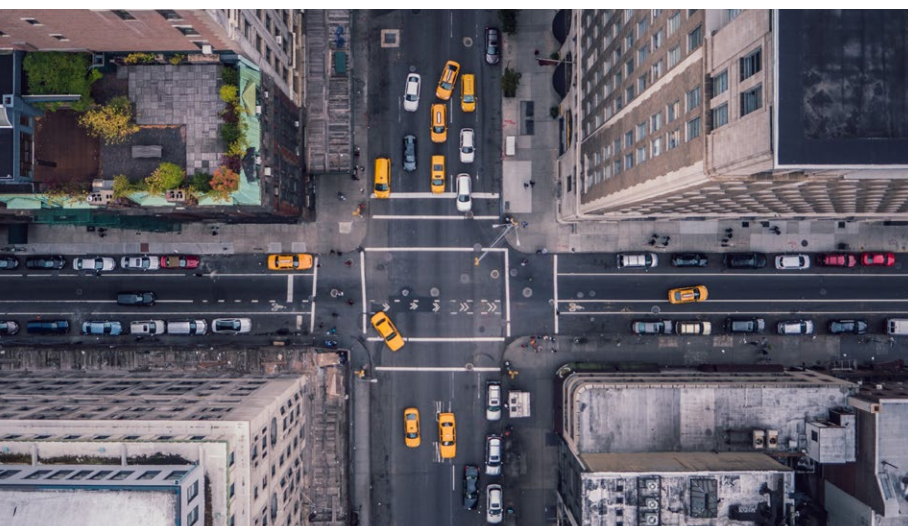
EGM objectives

- Highlight achievements and good practices from previous NUFs.
- Facilitate a learning exchange (including lessons around COVID-19).
- Identify priorities and challenges for the 2020-2022 cycle in the run up to WUF11.
- Revisit the NUF objectives and strategies to mobilise partners and propose an outcome agenda for countries considering the 2030 Agenda for the Decade of Action and the Declared Actions of WUF10.
- Discuss the roles and contribution of the NUFs in the COVID-19 era. What are the constraints and opportunities?
- Identify recommendations and opportunities for collaboration in the 2020-2022 cycle.

Speakers

Speakers² included representatives of national and local governments, civil society, NGOs, and UN-Habitat. Speakers presented case studies and insights from Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Poland, Spain, Tanzania, and New York City. Twenty speakers joined the meeting from 10 countries in different regions. More than a third of them were women.

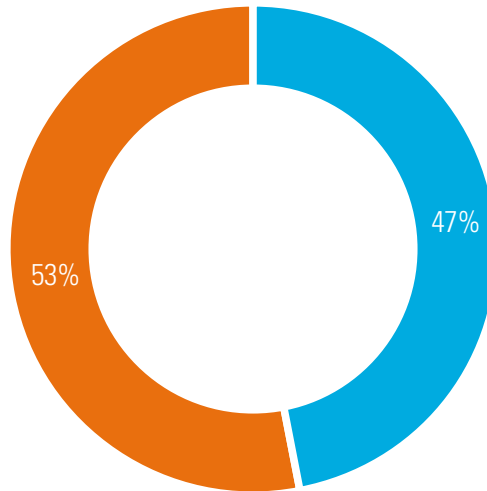
Professor Siraj Sait, Director of the Noon Centre of Equality and Diversity at the University of East London and Co-Chair of the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE), was the moderator for the EGM. Mr. Brendon Bosworth, an independent communications specialist, served as rapporteur.



Participants

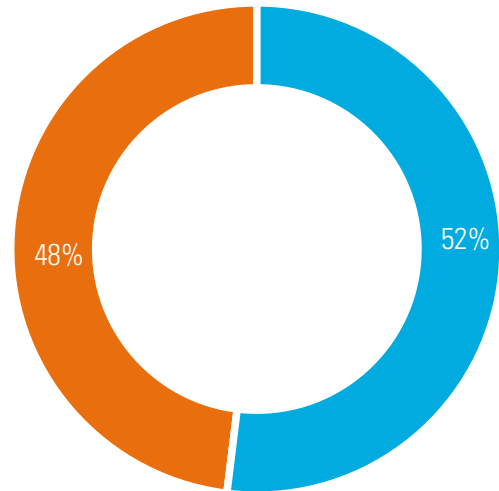
Sixty participants registered for the EGM, with 40 taking part on the first day and 50 taking part on the second day. There was roughly equal participation by men and women (Figures 1 and 2.) Participants represented a diverse range of partner types (Figures 3 and 4).

Fig 1. NUF EGM day 1: participation by gender
20 October 2020



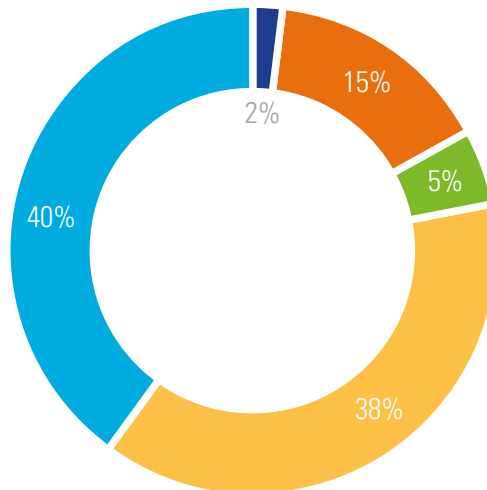
Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	19	47%
Male	21	53%
Total	40	100%

Fig 2. NUF EGM day 2: Participation by gender
21 October 2020



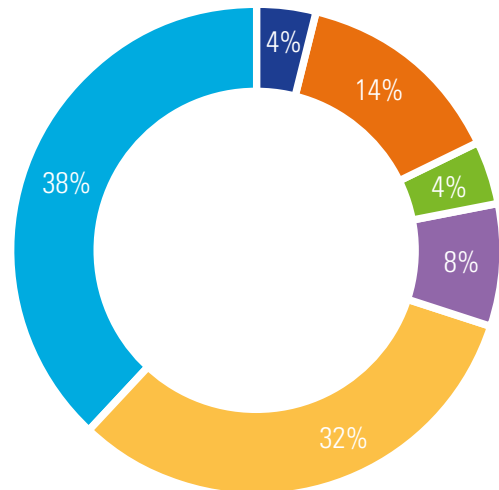
Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	26	52%
Male	24	48%
Total	50	100%

Fig 3: NUF EGM day 1: participation by partner type
20 October 2020



Partner type	Number	Percentage
Academia/Research	1	3%
Civil society organisation	6	15%
Individual	2	5%
National government	15	38%
United Nations system	16	40%
Total	40	100%

Fig 4: NUF EGM day 2: participation by partner type
21 October 2020



Partner type	Number	Percentage
Academia/Research	2	4%
Civil society organisation	7	14%
Individual	2	4%
Local and regional government	4	8%
National government	16	32%
United Nations system	19	38%
Total	50	100%

Twenty-five NUFs took place in the intersessional period between WUF9 in 2018 and WUF10 in 2020, and at least 35 are scheduled to take place between WUF10 in 2020 and WUF11 in 2022.

Background on National Urban Forums

The first session of the WUF was held in Kenya in 2002. Subsequently, NUFs played a major role in countries' mobilisation of political commitments towards sustainable urbanisation and for formulating the first draft of the NUA. The NUA is the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which took place in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016. It is underpinned by transformative commitments articulated across the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) and is a blueprint for achieving sustainable urbanisation and a roadmap for its effective implementation. It reasserts a positive notion of cities, demonstrating that if well planned and managed, urbanisation can be a transformative force for inclusive prosperity and well-being, while protecting the environment and addressing climate change.

The NUA includes a commitment to broadening "inclusive platforms, in line with national policies, that allow meaningful participation in decision-making, planning and follow-up processes for all, as well as enhanced civil engagement and co-provision and co-production."³ It also includes a commitment to promoting "participatory age- and gender-

responsive approaches at all stages of the urban and territorial policy and planning processes, from conceptualisation to design, budgeting, implementation, evaluation and review, rooted in new forms of direct partnership between governments at all levels and civil society, including through broad-based and well-resourced permanent mechanisms and platforms for cooperation and consultation open to all."⁴

As national-level platforms that bring together a variety of stakeholders across levels, NUFs can support the ambitions of the NUA by driving inclusive processes and policies to support implementation of sustainable urbanisation, decision-making and review processes.

Twenty-five NUFs took place in the intersessional period between WUF9 in 2018 and WUF10 in 2020, and at least 35 are scheduled to take place between WUF10 in 2020 and WUF11 in 2022. To support countries in their preparations for NUFs, UN-Habitat provides NUF guidelines, which have been widely shared among hosts and partners. The guidelines are available at <https://unhabitat.org/nuf> along with more information about NUFs.



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Opening session

The EGM aims to open debates and discuss the next cycle of NUFs and mobilisation of national, regional, and local governments and stakeholders on the road to WUF11 in Katowice, Poland, in 2022

Ms. Christine Knudsen, Director, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat, opened the EGM by thanking the government of Israel, Israel Urban Forum, and distinguished speakers taking part in the panel discussions.

The EGM aims to open debates and discuss the next cycle of NUFs and mobilisation of national, regional, and local governments and stakeholders on the road to WUF11 in Katowice, Poland, in 2022, she said. She thanked Mr. Daniel Baliński, Poland's Deputy Director, Department for Development Strategy, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, for attending and presenting on Poland's preparations for WUF11.

Since WUF10 in February 2020, the world has changed but the EGM provides an opportunity to take stock and look forward to see how we can adapt in the time of COVID-19, she said.

She noted that the NUFs play a key role in advancing the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, agreed upon at WUF10, which aim to accelerate the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs. The NUFs play a vital role in advancing these voluntary actions at the national level.

Mr. Netanel Lapidot, Deputy General Director of the Strategy and Policy Planning Division of Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing, also thanked attendees. The fact that the EGM was taking place virtually was a reminder that it was happening during "the most severe crisis of the last century" and that "we constantly have to reinvent ourselves and make adjustment to continue to create and promote better urbanism in the world," he said.

Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing sees great importance in strengthening relations at the local and international level, he said.

“ The NUF is recognised in the New Urban Agenda as an important multi-stakeholder platform for meaningful and inclusive participation in policy debates on sustainable urban development at the national level in view of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In this decade of action it is critical that we pull together, and that we keep our lines of coordination, communication, and learning open and viable.

Ms. Christine Knudsen, Director, External Relations Strategic Planning, Knowledge and Innovation, UN-Habitat.

Panel 1:

Origins and achievements of National Urban Forums - perspectives from UN-Habitat and organisers

Panel overview

This session focused on the role of the NUFs and contribution of UN-Habitat in fostering and supporting these platforms, which are key for the development and review of inclusive national urban policies, strategies, and action plans. At the global level, NUFs are well placed to support a coordinated national contribution to, and participation in, international development processes and frameworks (e.g., the NUA and 2030 Agenda). The panel responded to questions about the value of NUFs for promoting sustainable urbanisation, achievements of NUFs to date, the role of UN-Habitat in supporting and promoting NUFs during the Decade of Action, and the ways different cities have responded to the COVID-19 crisis.

Presentations

Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni, Programme Manager World Urban Forum, World Urban Forum Coordination Office, External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat, gave an overview of NUF origins, achievements and expected outcomes from the EGM.

She provided background on the NUFs. Following the first WUF in Kenya in 2002, the first NUF was initiated in the Philippines. Subsequently, NUFs played a major role in having countries mobilise political commitments towards sustainable urbanisation and for formulating the first draft of the NUA. Many took place from 2015 to 2017 in preparation for Habitat III and its post-Habitat III follow-up events.

Ms. Lonardoni outlined NUF objectives and achievements.

Key NUF objectives

- To create an opportunity for inclusiveness at the country level to discuss and debate the national development agenda and to provide a “broad base and holistic substantive inputs” to urban policies and programmes at the national level.
- To advocate and raise awareness about the importance of sustainable urbanisation.
- To monitor progress on local and global policies.
- To mobilise financial support for sustainable development.
- To enhance capacity through knowledge sharing and learning.

Examples of NUF achievements

- The NUFs mobilised the political commitments needed to formulate the NUA.
- Cambodia is preparing to start its National Urban Policy (NUP) formulation process as a recommendation from the NUF declaration.
- In Bangladesh, civil society has participated in the NUF and taken the opportunity to influence and contribute to government decisions.
- In Kenya, NUFs are strengthening the National Habitat Committees.
- In Nepal, institutionalisation of the NUF has contributed to the NUP and sustainable urban development.

Ms. Lonardoni noted that NUFs are critical opportunities for UN-Habitat to understand where partners are in terms of achieving their own development agenda and global agendas. At WUF10 in Abu Dhabi, for the first time, there was a special session on NUFs. Many partners reaffirmed the importance of NUFs for their own sustainable development priorities.

NUFs by the numbers

- Since 2013, more than 45 countries or regions have hosted NUFs.
- With some countries hosting regular Forums, over 60 NUFs have taken place since 2013.
- 25 NUFs took place between WUF9 in 2018 and WUF10 in 2020.
- At least 35 NUFs are scheduled to take place between WUF10 in 2020 and WUF11 in 2022.

Cambodia's first Urban Forum helped identify key priority issues, including how rapid unplanned urban growth is leading to emerging issues

The EGMs and a series of other consultations will help UN-Habitat arrive at Katowice in 2022 with an even stronger agenda and clarity on how the NUFs will contribute to the Decade of Action. With the EGM, there is the opportunity to revisit the objectives of the NUFs, and consider the key question of how NUFs can help countries accelerate implementation of the NUA and Agenda 2030 in the Decade of Action, she said.

Ms. Lonardoni emphasised that UN-Habitat understands that NUFs are a country-led process, and it is important for the agency to listen. The EGM and similar meetings will help previous NUF hosts strengthen their collaborations with the aim of building a NUF global alliance for continuous dialogues between WUF hosts, UN-Habitat and others.

Moving forward, UN-Habitat will share the findings and key recommendations from the EGM with relevant stakeholders and UN-Habitat regional offices, and will then finalise the work plan for "NUF 2.0" -- the intersessional period between WUF10 and WUF11 -- and revisit UN-Habitat's package of support for NUF hosts, including the NUF guidelines.

Dr. Pen Sophal, Secretary of State, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (Cambodia), spoke about Cambodia's first Urban Forum, which took place in November 2019, and its objectives and outcomes.

Dr. Sophal explained how Cambodia anticipates having one third of its population living in urban areas by 2030. Urbanisation is included in the country's National Strategic Development Plan (2019-2023) but challenges remain, namely with regards to expanding urban social services and infrastructure to match the needs of an increasing urban population. Urbanisation can play a positive role if disparate actors and stakeholders come together around a common platform, he said.

Cambodia's NUF has several objectives

- Share knowledge and experiences of urbanisation, while highlighting urban trends, key issues, solutions, and best practices.
- A platform to discuss and agree on urban priorities shaping Cambodia's vision of smart, sustainable and inclusive cities.
- Discuss and agree on the way forward to address key priorities that have been agreed upon.

Cambodia's first Urban Forum helped identify key priority issues, including how rapid unplanned urban growth is leading to emerging issues (e.g., growth of informal settlements, links between migration and urbanisation, and affordable housing challenges). The Forum also resulted in opportunities to work with multiple stakeholders to form action-oriented partnerships, and highlighted the need to develop a NUP and a National Housing Policy.

The Forum resulted in recommendations, including the need to:

- Advocate for a vision of sustainable urbanisation for prosperous, inclusive, safe, smart cities.
- Establish a stronger knowledge base and deepen evidence-based policymaking to inform planning and investment decisions.
- Advocate with public and private actors for the need for increased, long-term, predictable financing for sustainable urban development.
- Support the development of a robust national enabling environment for sustainable urbanisation.
- Ensure the participation of all urban stakeholders throughout the urban policy and planning process to create people-centred urban futures.

The achievements of this participatory planning process include the creation of citizen training spaces on fundamental issues of sustainable urban development and discussions of new legal instruments.

Ms. Vanessa Pinto, Coordinator, Contrato Social por la Vivienda (Ecuador), shared reflections on Ecuador's NUF from a civil society perspective.

Ecuador held its first NUF in 2013, led by the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, and a second NUF in 2016, led by the same ministry in collaboration with other relevant ministries. Preparations for the NUF included focus groups on issues such as resiliency, mobility, and public planning; a virtual platform to collect citizen input; and four regional forums. The process involved multiple stakeholders and resulted in inputs and objectives for Ecuador's [Sustainable Habitat Agenda 2036.5](#).

The achievements of this participatory planning process include the creation of citizen training spaces on fundamental issues of sustainable urban development and discussions of new legal instruments. It was an important effort by the state to reflect on sustainable urban development together with citizens and generate a sustainable development agenda. While the process included spaces for dialogue toward development of the Agenda, the publication did not, for unknown reasons, include multi-stakeholder discussions that took place "within the house," she noted.

While the active participation of citizens is key for monitoring implementation of the national Habitat Agenda, there are challenges. Social organisations in Ecuador have been weakened due to legal regulations that limit their actions and budget cuts and many local NGOs have been absorbed into partisan and state logic in

recent years, she explained. Importantly, while certain citizen initiatives focus on following up on the Agenda, this process has not finalised specific mechanisms to guarantee social sustainability.

Ms. Pinto offered reflections on the role of civil society in NUFs and monitoring of policy implementation:

- To promote active citizen participation it is necessary to generate processes to strengthen civil society and its capacity to monitor agreements reached.
- Policies implemented on local budgets do not always respond to the guidelines agreed in a sustainable development agenda. Transitions in governance or local authorities exacerbate that challenge.
- It is necessary to generate information on implementation of the Agenda so there is a monitoring system with accessible information that facilitates public oversight.
- There is a need to strengthen the capacity for dialogue between public, private, and social sectors.
- Numerous citizen events at Habitat III showed a high capacity for citizen participation in Ecuador but at the same time a weak capacity for articulation. This has affected civil society's capacity to advocate for monitoring of the sustainable development agenda.
- Academics can play a key role in processing information and generating space for dialogue. It is important to make use of this potential in the process of strengthening civil society.

“Effective participation is not something that will occur naturally, especially in contexts of economic crisis and its institutionalisation, such as those experienced in Latin America. [There is a need for], among other things, spaces for training and capacity building.

Ms. Vanessa Pinto, Coordinator, Contrato Social por la Vivienda (Ecuador).

The Israel Urban Forum wants to work with UN-Habitat and partners to develop a NUF network to enable shared learning.

Ms. Naomi Tsur, Chair of the Israel Urban Forum, presented on the experiences of Israel's National Urban Forums, achievements, and contributions to sustainable urban development.

Israel held its first urban forum, known as the Akko Convention, in the multi-ethnic city of Akko in 2015. The Forum was established with the goal of creating a broad platform for cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary dialogue on themes relevant to city life and urbanism. It serves to promote sustainable urbanism in Israeli society within the framework of a broader global dialogue.

The Forum includes a broad set of partners, including business, municipalities, academics, residents, civil society organisations, government and parliament. Ms. Tsur noted that a core issue is how to get all these stakeholders from different sectors around the table to discuss issues at one time.

In the run-up to the second Akko Convention (2017), the Israel Urban Forum held a series of roundtable discussions with the various partners, which resulted in a report presented at Habitat III. The report focused on issues including integrated and inclusive cities, the need to coordinate multiple city agendas, the links between urban and rural areas, micro-urbanism, and the importance of public space and the public domain.

Good practice: Roundtables with diverse partners

To bring partners together and identify and discuss urban priorities, the Israel Urban Forum hosted roundtables with various partners. "It's not an easy thing to do and people don't open up easily, to be talking to other sectors, but we've discovered it's the most important thing. When people sit at the table things happen," said Naomi Tsur, Chair of the Israel Urban Forum.

Achievements of the Israel Urban Forum include obtaining representation on national planning committees, a process which has unfortunately been halted but Ms. Tsur said she hoped would be resolved, and the celebration of Urbanism Day with the Israeli parliament and Knusset urban lobby.

Ms. Tsur spoke about the opportunity COVID-19 provides to "rethink, reset and go forward to a new normal that will be more sustainable." She noted that empty office blocks (a result of people working from home) could be used to densify cities with less harm done to natural areas, and that many of the things that help build resilience to pandemics also help address climate change. For example, in Israel there has been a growing interest in food rescue, growing locally, composting, and more careful food management.

The Israel Urban Forum wants to work with UN-Habitat and partners to develop a NUF network to enable shared learning. Ms. Tsur said that at the third Akko Convention, in June 2021, the Israel Urban Forum would welcome a further conversation with colleagues, similar to the EGM. The Israel Urban Forum is also working locally to create local urban forums in cities and is coordinating a national think-tank on dilemmas of regional planning and management.

Discussion

The discussion following the presentations was framed around three guiding questions: What was innovative about the approach of the case studies? What were the lessons learned? And what are the key recommendations for NUF proceedings?

Ms. Lonardoni shared a reflection based on the presentation from Ms. Pinto. Despite the strong institutional processes connected

The case studies presented showed that there are different approaches to NUFs but the results, more or less, are going in the same direction

to NUF, priorities can change, she said. The NUFs are processes that are owned and led by UN-Habitat's partners (governments) and should be inclusive but Ecuador provides an interesting case of how a change in governance and policies can affect participation. A lesson learned is that there is a need to think about how to mitigate the risk of that happening so that participation from diverse stakeholders continues. She noted that the case of Israel showed how NUFs have become an important platform to contribute to other government processes.

The case studies presented showed that there are different approaches to NUFs but the results, more or less, are going in the same direction, noted UN-Habitat's **Ms. Lucia Kiwala**. When taking stock, careful attention needs to be taken regarding the variations. She highlighted the importance of a "whole of government and whole of society approach" to partnerships and said there is a need within governments to engage different government departments, as well as other actors that specialise in particular areas. She noted that Israel's approach showed the connection between grassroots and higher-level decision-makers, a focus on rural-urban linkages, and the importance of asking the important question about what constitutes a region. She asked for further clarification on whether the Israel Urban Forum had all the critical players involved in this process.

Key questions for NUF partnerships and participation

Who matters? Who is actually acting? Who is actively engaged now? Who is missing but vital to urban development? How can those missing actors be brought into play? - **Ms. Lucia Kiwala**, UN-Habitat.

Ms. Tsur agreed that it is important to ask, Who is not yet sitting at the table? There will always be stakeholders who are not yet at the table and it is the job of the NUF to constantly seek stakeholders and bring them in, she said.

Sometimes, they need to be persuaded or don't want to join but the Israel Urban Forum has found that "nothing can achieve more than sitting around a table talking." From her experience, businesses have been out of conversation, and there has been a disconnect between local and national government, which is true in most countries. She reiterated that cities are key sites of action. "All the different forces in the field are represented at the city level. That's why the city is the unit of the future," she said.

Ms. Pinto highlighted the necessity of civil society participation. "This will not happen naturally. We must encourage it and strengthen it," she said. Sustainable cities require responsible and committed citizens who monitor authorities and elect good ones, and it is important to examine how spaces of civic participation can contribute to ensuring implementation of agreements reached with active participation from civil society, she noted.

Moderator **Dr. Siraj Sait** asked about what could be learned from Ecuador's experience compared to that of Israel and Cambodia. Ms. Pinto noted that it is important to articulate who the participants are in different sectors and to help them to participate, at the level of the NUF and the WUF.

Ms. Tsur described how in the case of Israel, the model for urban forums involves the Israel Urban Forum, which is a civil society organisation, working in partnership with a government ministry. The challenge is to ensure that such partnerships are real and "preach what they practice." Getting citizens to take part in civil society is complex, as is the relationship between civil society and government, she noted. Cities are the bridge between citizens and national government, so the question is: How do we go from the residents to the cities to the region to the government, make it work smoothly, and produce good results?

Civil society is a crucial partner that plays a role in monitoring progress on sustainable urban development and informing policy and practice.

Ms. Lonardoni noted that in the past few years, only a couple of cities have taken the lead on NUFs but city-level interest is on the rise, possibly due to local governments becoming increasingly prominent in the implementation of the SDGs and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

Mr. Daniel Wasik, from Poland's Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, shared his insights from Poland's third NUF, held the week before the EGM. The NUF provided an opportunity to present the assumptions of Poland's new urban policy, which is in the process of being updated. He noted that the world is in a stage of "revolution when it comes to urbanisation" since the majority of people are living in cities, and the pandemic is making people consider what is available to them locally (e.g., parks, supermarkets). Poland, he said, is trying to change the thinking around cities so that they are viewed as "for pedestrians." The NUFs have provided an opportunity to learn from multiple stakeholders, including NGOs and civil society.

Ms. Kiwala noted that the challenge for those leading NUFs is to build the partnerships between local and national governments and other actors (e.g., civil society, academics, private sector) as well as partnership between different ministries. This requires advocacy and communication strategies. It helps to be truly multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral, looking at horizontal and vertical connections at local and national level, she said.

Panel 1: Insights and recommendations

The value of NUFs

- NUFs have played a major role in mobilising political commitments towards sustainable urbanisation. NUFs also mobilised the political commitments needed to formulate the NUA.
- NUFs are critical opportunities for UN-Habitat to understand where partners are in terms of achieving their own development agenda and global agendas.
- NUFs help to identify key priority issues for sustainable urban development, create opportunities to work with multiple stakeholders to form action-oriented partnerships, and contribute to the development of NUPs.
- NUFs provide an opportunity for governments to learn about sustainable urban development issues, opportunities, and challenges from multiple stakeholders, including NGOs and civil society.

Partnerships and inclusion

- NUFs benefit from the inclusion of diverse stakeholders and partners (e.g., business, academics, citizens, civil society, government, parliament, municipalities), both before the event (e.g., to help set priorities) and during. To get partners "talking," a good practice is to host roundtables. The NUFs need to actively seek relevant stakeholders and bring them into discussions.
- Civil society is a crucial partner that plays a role in monitoring progress on sustainable urban development and informing policy and practice. But civil society capacity and engagement changes over time, which can be a result of a changing political, regulatory, and financial landscape. It is necessary to generate processes to strengthen civil society and its capacity to take part in NUFs and

- urban policy processes, and to monitor the implementation of agreements reached.
- Partnerships should be underpinned by a “whole of government and whole of society approach.” Governments are encouraged to engage different departments, as well as other actors that specialise in particular areas. It is necessary to identify stakeholders who are “missing” from discussions but vital to urban development (e.g., slum dwellers) and work to bring them into the discussion.
- UN-Habitat will share the EGM outcomes with relevant stakeholders and UN-Habitat regional offices, and then finalise its work plan for “NUF 2.0” (the intersessional period between WUF10 and WUF11). UN-Habitat will update its package of support for NUF hosts, including the NUF guidelines.

Cities and COVID-19

- COVID-19 presents an opportunity to create a more sustainable “new normal” and re-think cities to build resilience. Issues like climate change resilience and pandemic resilience go hand-in-hand.

UN-Habitat's support for NUFs in the Decade of Action

- The EGMs and other consultations will help UN-Habitat clarify its vision for how the NUFs will contribute to the Decade of Action, and strengthen collaboration between NUF hosts with the aim of building a NUF global alliance.



Panel 2:

National Urban Forums in the COVID-19 era - efforts to prepare, respond and recover

Panel overview

In this session, experts shared perspectives on resilience building and COVID-19 recovery. The session aimed to share lessons learned, good practices, and solutions for urban challenges, such as water and sanitation in informal settlements, while exploring further synergies and common challenges in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The NUF global alliance and network brings potential added collaborations and ways to scale up implementation of the global urban agendas together.

The panel raised questions about the role of cities in COVID-19 responses, the links between national and local governments, and the role that NUFs can play in COVID-19 recovery efforts that support long-term sustainable urban development.

Presentations

Mr. Filiep Decorte, Chief (Officer-in-Charge), Programme Development Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat, presented on the role NUFs can play in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

He first outlined two main potentials of a NUF:

- It helps to set an agenda, and can empower a variety of stakeholders, who in a normal governance setup may not have their voices represented in the same way.
- It encourages horizontal collaboration and creates a shared narrative and understanding across stakeholders.

“ A crisis is at the same time a great opportunity to shift the way we do business. The aim is to create greener, healthier, more resilient cities.

Mr. Filiep Decorte, UN-Habitat.

The role of NUFs in COVID-19 recovery⁷

- NUFs have the potential to create a “common vision” across stakeholders around the potential of urbanisation, not just to deal with the pandemic but also to address other challenges like climate change. The NUF can help to set a common set of priorities and a real national agenda, carried forward by a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Local governments are frontline responders to the pandemic and climate migration issues. In most cases, collaboration across levels of government is weak. If cities want to play their frontline role it needs to be complementary to national level engagement. NUFs can help to overcome some of the barriers to collaboration, which are sometimes political.
- With the resource base for local governments decreasing, it is important that national governments focus on stimulus packages for local governments and service providers to keep cities functioning. NUFs can be an important vehicle to advocate for local governments and ensure they have the capacity to continue to play their frontline role going forward for crisis management and recovery.
- NUFs cannot be one-off events. They need to create a platform for continuous collaboration across stakeholders and horizontally across cities in specific countries.

Mr. Decorte shared insights from the United Nations Secretary-General's policy brief [COVID-19 in an urban world](#),⁶ which has three main goals: 1) Tackling inequalities and overcoming development gaps, 2) Strengthening capacities of local actors, particularly local governments, 3) Working toward a recovery that is green, inclusive, and resilient.

COVID-19 is an urban crisis. Since cities play a major role in national economies, contributing up to 75 per cent of GDP, lockdown impacts are felt far beyond cities. However, the “urban dimension” is largely absent in socio-economic responses by national governments, including in economic stimulus packages, he explained. The policy brief includes ideas on the way out of the COVID-19 crisis. There is an opportunity to shift our way of doing things in

recovery, harnessing the transformative role of urbanisation to achieve the SDGs and engaging with longer-term resilience planning.

Mr. Decorte said the pandemic has exposed structural inequalities that require a longer-term systemic approach and that “leaving no one behind” has a strong territorial dimension. He emphasised the need to strengthen the capacity of local governments, whose resource base is decreasing with the pandemic. He noted that the pandemic has come at a time when the world is facing a climate emergency and has made it clear that human and planetary health are closely interconnected. “Any recovery needs to put resilience building against all hazards at its centre,” he said. At the same time, the use of nature-based solutions and the way we manage and plan our cities is becoming increasingly important.

To move from short-term solutions to long-term policies that enable sustainable development, and to ensure that there is carrying capacity from stakeholders, including the public, requires mobilisation. “We are talking about fundamental shifts in behaviours -- the way we live, work and the choices we make. This will not happen top-down. It also has to happen bottom-up, carried forward by a wide variety of stakeholders,” he said.

The COVID-19 policy brief indicates that at the United Nations level there is a need for much stronger collaboration between agencies, and the same goes for stakeholders at the country-level, **Mr. Decorte** stressed. “The challenges are such that what needs to be done is so daunting that it requires acting and delivering as one across stakeholders at the country level,” he said.

Mr. Jeremiah Ougo, National Project Officer, Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat (Kenya) presented on how UN-Habitat and its partners have been supporting post-COVID-19 recovery with local communities through implementing the COVID Action Plan for Kenya.

With over 1 billion people globally living in informal settlements, and up to 95 per cent of COVID-19 infections happening in urban areas, focusing on informal settlements has been key in Kenya. As part of the COVID Action Plan for Kenya, UN-Habitat focused on providing WASH stations in informal settlements in six counties. The stations have three taps: one for drinking, one for hand washing, and one for liquid soap. A lesson learned was that without stable water supply in informal settlements, the WASH stations had to be built along the main water supply.

Besides improving access to sanitation in informal settlements, the project led to positive institutional outcomes and policy change, **Mr. Ougo** explained.

Outcomes include:

- The Action Plan informed DFID's policy advice for the response to COVID-19 in Kenya's informal settlements, which fed into the government's Economic Recovery Programme.
- Nakuru County, which has its own county assembly, prepared WASH bylaws as a result.
- In Kisumu, a COVID-19 multi-agency group on informal settlements has been established and will continue work in informal settlements after UN-Habitat exits.
- Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs): 14 groups of PWDs within Kisumu's informal settlements were enrolled in technical and vocational training and were part of the SMEs that built the hand-washing stations.

Mr. Eduardo Moreno, Head, Knowledge and Innovation Branch, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat, shared insights about the COVID-19 response and the need to “re-think cities,” based on a forthcoming UN-Habitat report, the State of the World's Cities and Living with the Pandemic.

Regarding inequalities, the urban poor have been most exposed and are more likely to die from COVID-19, while ethnicity and racial inequalities play an important role.

He noted that COVID-19 started as a global urban crisis in major cities but the disease is moving to secondary cities and, in some countries in the second wave, to rural areas. He emphasised the need to re-think notions of territorial planning and consider a system of cities where “intermediation” plays a fundamental role, creating the political and technical conditions for secondary cities to respond.

The “old normal” was a bleak social context, characterised by rampant corruption, poverty, inequalities, a burning planet, political divisions, unsustainable urbanisation, and increased human-wildlife contact that increased the risk of disease, he said.

Mr. Moreno identified the need for change in numerous areas:

- Societal change, which includes a change in attitudes regarding the way we are dealing with the pandemic and the construction of a notion of empathy and social responses.
- Spatial planning, city distances and rediscovering the fundamental notion of proximity to move quickly from mobility to accessibility.
- Citizen processes and governments and the fundamental notion of togetherness.
- The need to make use of the global agendas, which are relevant to the required reforms.
- Rethinking development, with a focus on circular economies, accelerated decarbonisation, and rethinking the notion of the commons.
- Consensus building, in identifying who is responsible for what in the recovery phase.
- Real participation, which involves moving from a conversation to the right to participate.

The forthcoming UN-Habitat report analyses 1,500 cities. It identifies four focal areas for change: governance, inequalities, urban form, and urban economics.

In terms of governance, **Mr. Moreno** noted that cities that have implemented good responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have three things in common: 1) transparent information, 2) clear horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms, 3) central governments that have created conditions to empower and reinforce local authorities so that national and local governments work together to create the most appropriate response. He highlighted the need to build connections between central and local governments.

Regarding inequalities, the urban poor have been most exposed and are more likely to die from COVID-19, while ethnicity and racial inequalities play an important role. However, Mr. Moreno noted that in slums in large cities the incidence of disease does not always align with the map of poverty. This means there is a need to think not just in terms of formal vs. non-formal, or poor vs. non-poor, but to consider a “new spatial vulnerability understanding.” To better understand these relationships requires good data. “Data and information should be seen in the new context of the pandemic as a public good and should be clearly produced,” he said.

Concerning urban form, he explained that exposure to COVID-19 relates to: place (e.g., inadequate housing), mobility (e.g., inadequate public transport), and the type of work people do. He noted that density is not a key contributor; studies show that overcrowding and lack of appropriate responses play a key role.

“ The future of COVID-19 responses will be a territorial response and we need to rethink the notion of urban planning. We need to reinvent a new urban history in which some of the elements that were mentioned in, for example, the Paris 15-minute city⁸ are important to consider.

Mr. Eduardo Moreno, Head, Knowledge and Innovation Branch, External Relations Strategy, UN-Habitat.

Regarding urban economies, he explained that cities are facing challenges of low fiscal capacities to respond to the pandemic and are lacking central funding, while some countries are seeing an 8-12 per cent reduction in GDP, and medium and small enterprises are being seriously affected.

In conclusion, **Mr. Moreno** stressed the need for more data, rethinking the state, and the meaning of the local economy - thinking about it in terms of a local safety net - and reducing inequalities to enable more sustainable responses to the pandemic.

Discussion

Dr. Yoel Siegel, Co-founder of InterLoc Development, Israel, spoke to the value of community action during COVID-19. He gave an example of how in Jerusalem there are neighbourhood councils, which are formally constituted and serve as an interface for cooperation between civil society and local government. These councils have been instrumental in managing the pandemic, doing things like identifying people at risk and making sure the elderly get medication. He emphasised that we need to look at the pandemic as a “wake up call.”

Ms. Tsur highlighted the example of the Israeli city of Yeruham, a small city of about 12,000 residents that was badly hit by COVID-19. The city's woman mayor did a lot of community engagement and managed to get the community onboard with recommended health and safety practices, successfully alleviating the COVID-19 situation.

UN-Habitat's Bernhard Barth, who supports the Pacific region, shared perspectives from the Pacific Urban Forum. He explained how for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) the underlying vulnerabilities to climate change and COVID-19 are very similar, in particular among the urban poor in informal settlements. The Pacific Partnership for the NUA has stepped up its activities during the COVID-19 response and supported nine member states in the region and the development of the social-economic impact assessment and social-economic response plans. He highlighted the value of cross-regional knowledge exchange, noting that there is a conversation happening across the SIDS, particularly in the Caribbean and African region, to share experiences.

COVID-19 provides an opportunity to shift our way of doing things in recovery, harnessing the transformative role of urbanisation to achieve the SDGs and engaging with longer-term resilience planning.

Ms. Kiwala raised the question of how NUFs can position themselves to inform strategies for crisis response at the national level, where decisions are made that affect people at the community level. She gave the example of daily wage workers living in slums in Kenya who are typically not included in community engagement processes, and asked how NUFs can mobilise such actors who fall “outside the mainframe” of sustainable development.

Mr. Decorte noted that the commitment that communities have to “acting as one” in response to COVID-19 has to continue from the short-term responses (e.g., social distancing and mask-wearing) to longer-term responses. NUFs should be seen as an instrument of advocacy, urgently needed at this point in time, to mobilise a broader movement. The Forums are not just about who takes part physically or virtually; the outreach and communication around them is equally important, he said.

Mr. Ougo said that strengthening the National Habitat Committees would be one way to realise their effective contributions to the NUFs. A lesson from the Kenyan Urban Forum in January was that there is a lack of understanding around the SDGs and NUA. UN-Habitat has proposed training for the Habitat Committee on the SDG indicators, especially the urban ones.

Panel 2: insights and recommendations

COVID-19 – an urban crisis

- COVID-19 is an urban crisis, which has exposed structural inequalities and is disproportionately affecting the urban poor and marginalised groups. There is a need to better understand the relationships between poverty and the incidence of disease, which requires good data.
- To deal with the structural inequalities exposed by the pandemic requires a longer-term systemic approach. “Leaving no one behind” has a strong territorial dimension.
- The economic impacts of lockdowns in cities are felt far beyond cities but the “urban dimension” is underrepresented in national responses to COVID-19. With a declining resource base for local government, national governments need to focus on stimulus for local governments.
- Effective COVID-19 responses can fulfil multiple objectives for sustainable urban development at different levels. For example, UN-Habitat’s COVID Action Plan for Kenya resulted in the introduction of WASH stations in informal settlements and fed into national policy responses. It led to the introduction of a set of WASH bylaws at the county level, and included training and employment opportunities for PWDs.

An opportunity to rethink cities

- COVID-19 provides an opportunity to shift our way of doing things in recovery, harnessing the transformative role of urbanisation to achieve the SDGs and engaging with longer-term resilience planning.
- Building pandemic resilience requires rethinking cities, territorial planning, and creating the conditions (political and technical) for secondary cities to respond. This involves rethinking the notions of city distances and connections and rediscovering the notion of proximity.

NUFs can play a pivotal role in COVID-19 recovery

- NUFs can create a "common vision" across stakeholders around the transformative potential of urbanisation and help define a shared set of priorities and a real national agenda. This can guide efforts to deal with the pandemic and other sustainable development challenges (e.g., climate change).
- Local governments are frontline responders to the pandemic and other challenges (e.g., climate migration). For cities to play their frontline role there needs to be synergy between local and national level efforts. NUFs can help to overcome some of the barriers to collaboration, which are sometimes political. NUFs can also be a vehicle to advocate for local governments and ensure they have the capacity to play their frontline role in crisis management and recovery.
- Cities that have implemented good responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have three things in common: 1) transparent information, 2) clear horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms, 3) central governments that have created conditions to empower and reinforce local authorities so that national and local governments work together to create the most appropriate response. This highlights the need to build stronger connections between central and local governments.
- NUFs cannot be one-off events. They need to create a platform for continuous collaboration across stakeholders and horizontally across cities in specific countries.
- The NUFs can help to strengthen the capacity of key actors to understand and engage with the NUA and SDGs through training events on these frameworks and the SDG indicators.



Panel 3:

National Urban Forums in the Decade of Action - a platform to accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals

Panel overview

The NUA reasserts a positive notion of cities, demonstrating that if well planned and managed, urbanisation can be a transformative force for inclusive prosperity and well-being, while protecting the environment and addressing climate change. Localising and scaling up the implementation of the NUA in cities and at the national level will accelerate achievement of the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

The NUA includes commitments to the creation of platforms and mechanisms for wide, meaningful and inclusive participation in policy debates on sustainable urban development at all stages of the urban decision-making process. NUFs, as national-level multi-stakeholder platforms, are encouraged to facilitate these inclusive processes. The NUFs also serve as the main platforms for raising awareness and strengthening commitments to implementation of the NUA at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The NUA includes commitments to the creation of platforms and mechanisms for wide, meaningful and inclusive participation in policy debates on sustainable urban development at all stages of the urban decision-making process.

This panel explored questions about lessons learned for fostering inclusive dialogue, how NUFs can contribute to accelerated implementation of the NUA and SDGs in the Decade of Action, and the critical role of NUFs in the formulation and review of national urban policies that advance sustainable urban development. Experts addressed the links between NUFs and the global development agendas, and discussed the links between local efforts to achieve the SDGs with VLRs and the global agendas. The session also discussed opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences between NUF hosts as part of the global NUF alliance.

Presentations

Mr. Wataru Kawasaki, Programme Management Officer, World Urban Forum Coordination Office, External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat, emphasised that NUFs provides a platform to mobilise governments, business, civil society, and other stakeholders to accelerate implementation of the SDGs and NUA in the Decade of Action. He reminded participants how UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, has called on all sectors of society to mobilise for the [Decade of Action](#)⁹ at three levels -- global, local, people -- to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Mr. Kawasaki explained that in the intersessional period between WUF10 and WUF11, the NUFs can be considered as "NUF 2.0." They are multi-stakeholder platforms with a focus on inclusive participation, but it is key that they link to the achievement of global development process and UN frameworks while feeding into the biennial WUFs.

He cited examples of NUFs contributing to implementing global agendas in various countries:

- In Cuba, the NUF deliberated for a new urban and territorial planning law (to be approved in 2021) for localising the SDGs and NUA.
- Colombia was successful in formulating and adopting national policy into the cities system and has established an urban observatory to support evidence-based policy-making.
- The Caribbean sub-regional urban forums brought up provisional discussions on contributions during the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs.

There are several ways that NUFs can contribute to the Decade of Action:

- By promoting scaling up of efforts and international exchanges on achieving the SDGs.
- By serving as inclusive platforms to advance evidence-based policy making, follow-up and review, and promoting wide engagement at national level.
- By producing action-oriented commitments (e.g. Declared Actions), engaging across all levels of government on the progress of national and global agendas, and sharing their Declared Actions and progress via existing platforms such as UN-Habitat's [Urban Agenda Platform](#).¹⁰ The Platform is a knowledge portal for collecting voluntary actions, best practices, and data for reviewing progress made on implementing the NUA to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- By feeding their progress on declared actions and implementation of the SDGs and NUA into the WUFs, NUFs play a key role in creating a "shared vision," bridging the local and national, and bringing it up to the global level.

How NUFs can play a significant role at each stage of the policy formulation process

- In countries without a NUP, NUFs can facilitate and support the beginning of a policy process. They can increase awareness of the need for a cross-sectoral national policy to support national urban development.
- In the diagnostic phase of a policy process, NUFs can be useful to map and identify all stakeholders and validate some of the diagnostic findings that have been produced around key urban challenges.
- Where a policy proposal has already been drafted, the NUF can be a place to discuss the draft policy document to build consensus around it and verify if there is broad consensus around identified policy objectives.
- At the policy implementation phase, NUFs can raise awareness of the existence of the NUP and its goals.
- At the monitoring and evaluation phase, NUFs can provide a feedback loop between the policy and its implementation, helping stakeholders to reflect on the achievements of the policy and learn about what has and hasn't worked.

Mr. Gianluca Crispi, Legal Specialist in the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat, focused on the linkages between NUFs and NUPs and the potential for creating synergies between the two.

He noted that addressing the challenges of urbanisation in a sustainable, equitable manner requires a cross-sectoral approach to urban policies and an increased level of vertical and horizontal coordination between levels of government. NUPs, as a government-led process of coordinating various actors around a common vision and goal, play a role in establishing the enabling and coordinating environment for responding to the challenges of urbanisation.

A NUP is not just a document but "must be considered as a process that is important on its own." This process engages top-down and bottom-up policy approaches, helps create a collaborative and cooperative institutional environment, and assists with mobilisation and coordination of responsibilities of stakeholders, and builds their capacities.

- Since the Habitat III conference in 2016, and adoption of the NUA, there has been renewed interest among governments around the world in the development of NUPs, he said. UN-Habitat has been working with the OECD and Cities Alliance to support the formation of urban policies and has supported the formulation of more than 53 urban policies in the global south. For countries interested in NUPs, there are resources available online via the [NUP database](#).¹¹ These include a NUP E-Learning course, guidebooks and tools to support the policy process in each of its phases, and diagnostic reports and policy reports.

The benefits of having an established and regular NUF for NUPs include the creation of a policy feedback loop so that government and other stakeholders can provide feedback on the implementation of NUPs and discuss whether an established policy is working. The NUF can also mainstream stakeholder participation and help translate some of the political will into a concrete roadmap for a NUP, he explained.

Mr. Crispi identified five suggested activities, which correspond with different stages of NUPs:

- A NUF and NUP awareness campaign at national level.
- Mapping and identifying stakeholders and outlining their priorities and recommendations.
- Consultation workshops to verify the policy.
- An overall capacity assessment and capacity development session.
- A NUP process evaluation.

Ms. Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner for International Affairs, City of New York, presented on the VLRs, and their value for localising the SDGs and monitoring progress on their achievement.

New York City pioneered the VLR and presented the first one to the United Nations (at the High-Level Political Forum) in 2018. The VLR is a way for local governments to exchange best practices and accelerate the SDGs through strategic engagement within their own communities.

"As cities, I believe we need to harness our collective power to advocate and agitate for change," said Ms. Abeywardena.

- In 2019, at the United Nations General Assembly in September, New York City launched the [Voluntary Local Review Declaration](#)¹² for local and regional governments to formally commit to reporting on the SDGs. At the launch there were 24 signatories but the VLR has now "become a movement," she said. More than 210 cities and states have committed to sharing ideas and using SDGs to accelerate change in their communities via the Declaration.

When signing the Declaration, signatories commit to three actions:

- Identify how existing strategies, programmes, and targets align with the SDGs.
- Host one forum for stakeholders to come together to share experiences, lessons learned, and information gathered using the SDG framework.
- Submit a VLR to the United Nations during the United Nations High-level Political Forum when ready.

Ms. Abeywardena noted that she has seen a rise in interest in the VLR during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We need cities to work together, today more than ever because when it comes to battling the pandemic and building back stronger and better, we need to do this together," she said.

“ We see the VLR process as an opportunity for sub-national voices to take part in global conversations, and more importantly it is a tool that cities can use to identify ways to improve service delivery for the benefit of their citizens.

Ms. Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner for International Affairs, City of New York.

Good practice: pre-NUF stakeholder engagement to identify priorities

To get the most out of NUF engagements, it is valuable to frame the discussions at the NUF properly so that participants engage with a clear idea of what to share and report on. To guide discussion at the Malaysia Urban Forum, 2020, Urbanice identified key priority topics from the Urban Forum 2019, and held pre-event labs (e.g., webinars, events) with stakeholders who were concerned about those issues. This helped them to understand and navigate the Forum discussions to generate clear outcomes.

Spain's inaugural NUF will be held in January 2021 and organised around the theme of the role of cities in social and economic recovery.

Ms. Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive, Urbanice Malaysia, shared the achievements and lessons learned from Malaysia's experience hosting NUFs. After hosting WUF9 in 2018, which resulted in the [Kuala Lumpur Declaration of Cities 2030](#),¹³ Malaysia hosted its first NUF in February 2019, based on an inclusive format with open dialogue. In October 2019, Malaysia hosted the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Penang, which resulted in the [Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanisation](#),¹⁴ which supports accelerated implementation of the SDGs and the NUA.

In September 2020, Malaysia hosted another NUF, an event with virtual and physical sessions due to COVID-19. This NUF provided an opportunity to take stock of progress on the SDGs and to link local and national agendas. Ms. Hashim explained that Urbanice is working closely with the economic planning unit of Malaysia, which does reporting on national SDG implementation. She stressed the importance of reporting back on SDG progress at the local level.

"At the end of a good NUF there must be some actionable outcomes," noted Ms. Hashim. At the recent NUF, women and youth stakeholders tabled commitments, which have resulted in two position papers.

Ms. Hashim highlighted the importance of planning the platform and format for NUF to support engaging and interactive participation, especially with virtual events in the time of COVID-19. Urbanice developed its own platform for the recent NUF and had attendees from as many as 70 countries.

Ms. Hashim shared two key recommendations for NUF hosts:

- Bring in the right stakeholders and have buy-in from government.
- Communicate with stakeholders about outcomes and progress.

Ms. Ángela de la Cruz, Spain's Deputy Director General for Urban Policies, Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, presented on the linkages between Spain's Urban Agenda, the SDGs and the NUF.

Spain's inaugural NUF will be held in January 2021 and organised around the theme of the role of cities in social and economic recovery. It will focus on four areas: ecological decisions and city models, citizen health, fairness and social cohesion, and digital decisions and innovation

Ms. de la Cruz noted that Spain has its own [Urban Agenda](#)¹⁵ (approved in 2019), which is in accordance with criteria set by the 2030 Agenda, NUA, and Urban Agenda for the European Union. Spain's Urban Agenda has various action plans. One of these is the national government action plan, which aims to achieve the 10 top-level goals for the strategic framework and territorial and urban model proposed by the Spanish Urban Agenda. The NUF is a tool for supporting achievement of [Strategic Goal 10](#)¹⁶ of Spain's Urban Agenda, which seeks to improve intervention instruments of participation and governance, Ms. de la Cruz explained. The NUF supports specific targets of this goal, specifically 10.2 and 10.4, which aim to inspire

Good practice: Multi-stakeholder monitoring committee for NUFs

In Spain, the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat established a monitoring committee to provide the functional structure of the NUF. The committee is responsible for monitoring and follow-up of the NUF. For the 2021 edition of the forum, it is supported by three working groups -- 1) autonomous communities (regional level), 2) local government, 3) civil society -- and a coordination group, which includes the Ministry of Transport, Mobility, and Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat.

To support the promotion of sustainable urbanisation and design a National Urban Policy, Israel created a National Headquarters of Urbanism, comprised of government officials (from eight ministries), 23 local authorities, and members of the private sector, academia, and civil society, with the Israel Urban Forum as its main partner.

citizen participation in, and knowledge of, urban development matters, promote transparency, and to design and implement training and awareness campaigns on urban matters. The NUF will be a platform for exchanging experiences. It is open to the public, private sector, business, NGOs, and civil society.

Mr. Ariel Partush, Policy and Foreign Affairs Department, Strategy and Policy Planning Division, Israel presented on Israel's experience with NUFs and described its efforts in implementing the SDGs and NUA.

He highlighted the value of partnerships, noting how his department has had a partnership with the Israel Urban Forum, which is a non-governmental organisation, for the past five years. In 2015, the Israel Urban Forum held the first Akko Convention on Urbanism, and in 2017 the second Akko Convention. Both were encouraged and sponsored by the Ministry of Constructions and Housing.

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The National Headquarters of Urbanism has been involved in:

- Creating a set of guidelines and principles and a policy toolbox.
- Mapping seven components of urbanism and forming thematic working groups.
- Helping prepare [Israel's national report](#)¹⁷ for Habitat III.
- Sending representatives as part of the Israeli delegation to Quito.

The Ministry cooperates with the Israel Urban Forum in numerous ways:

- Taking an active role in both Akko Conventions (held by the Israel Urban Forum), sponsoring these, and hosting an expert meeting on collaboration between local and central government to promote public space, as well as producing a booklet on how to promote public spaces for local authorities.
- The Ministry prepared a special report on [SDG11 implementation in Israel](#),¹⁸ which was part of Israel's first [Voluntary National Review in 2019](#). The Israel Urban Forum added a contribution to the report.
- Working with the initiative of the Israel Urban Forum, representatives of different departments of the Ministry presented actions taken to promote the NUA in Israel to the Israeli Parliament as part of Urbanism Day.
- The Ministry and the Israel Urban Forum worked closely on compiling the list of participants, including substantial representation of civil society, for WUF9 and WUF10. The Israel Urban Forum was in charge of compiling the list of civil society participants.

Mr. Partush highlighted that Israel's experience shows:

- The value of Urban Forum hosts partnering with a national government ministry.
- The value of partnership and ownership by national government (the ministry plays a key role in advocating and raising awareness).
- The value of having a good relationship with the Israel Urban Forum (a non-governmental organisation).

Mr. Redy López, Director, Housing and Urban Development of Colombia's National Planning Department, presented on Colombia's experience with NUFs, emphasising the way in which NUFs have helped to identify priority areas for the government and other stakeholders to focus on for sustainable urban development.

Colombia has hosted seven NUFs in various cities since 2012. The Forums serve as platforms for policy debates for sustainable urban development at all stages of urban development at all stages of urban decision-making processes, noted Mr. López.

He explained that NUFs are valuable because:

- They allow the government to explore many different solutions to challenges faced by cities.
- They are places for exchange of knowledge and practices that support development of sustainable cities and territories.
- They reinforce the importance of urban development in local, national, and international public policy.
- They encourage community building during planning processes.

In 2016, Colombia issued a public policy for the national sustainable development goals, with key focus areas that include food and human safety, urban governance, urban-regional integration, housing and basic services, safer cities, and implementation of the NUA, among others. The NUFs have fed into the national urban policy and have been instrumental in providing insights into what national government needs to be working on in the near future regarding sustainable urban development, said Mr. López.

The NUFs have helped Colombia identify priorities in three areas:

- Social development - there is a need to review current tools to optimise subsidy allocation.
- Regional development - there is a need to strengthen the system of cities to promote economic growth and keep reinforcing city planning at a larger scale. There is also a need to promote regional integration for urban public policy making and to acknowledge the importance of rural territories as the complement of cities.
- Urban development - there is a need to prompt multi-level conversations to take on the challenges of the NUA, commit to urban renewal plans for city centres and downtown areas, foster city growth, and strengthen private sector engagement in territorial development.

Good practice: hosting NUFs in a variety of cities

In Colombia, Urban Forums have taken place in several cities, not just in the biggest and most developed ones. This has enabled the government to reinforce discussions of urban development and territorial management, recognise the needs of diverse cities in a diverse country, bolster ties with local stakeholders, and acknowledge the efforts intermediary cities make to implement urban policies.

Discussion

Following **Ms. Abeywardena's** presentation on VLRs, representatives from UN-Habitat raised questions about the VLRs. Ms. Lonardoni asked how the WUF might support VLRs in the 2020-2022 cycle as a global legacy, noting that there could be opportunities to build the capacity of cities to do their VLRs. Ms. Abeywardena replied that there is need for support in three areas: 1) encouraging more cities to join and commit to doing VLRs; 2) supporting cities as they sign up to do their VLRs with capacity and resources; 3) recognising that the VLR is a tool and thinking about how to get community organisations and civil society to support their local governments in understanding the value of VLRs.

Ms. Kiwala highlighted the challenge of data standardisation at the national and local levels, which can make monitoring of progress on the SDGs difficult. In many places, there is a lack of information around urban-related SDGs (not just SDG11), she said. While a multiplicity of stakeholders and government departments are collecting information around urban indicators, that information is not always part of national statistical systems and local governments face the issue of different data sources from different government departments and others. She suggested that it would be good for NUFs to host events on VLRs¹⁹ and Voluntary National Reviews VNRs²⁰ but said questions remained about how best to bring in experts to standardise data from government and other sources (eg., private sector) to enrich reporting at the local and national levels.

EGM participants raised questions for panellists overall. Ms. Daria Cibrario, Director of Geneva Cities Hub, asked, What can be learned about governance of NUFs "behind the scenes?" For example, is there an inter-departmental steering group? Dr. Mukuki Hante, with the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, Tanzania, asked about how the NUFs treat relations between central and local government.

Dr. Yoel Siegel noted that he was struck by the broad differences in types of NUFs and how they operate. He wanted to know how NUF hosts might set up a platform to connect with each other and share experiences, given the differences in the ways the NUFs are structured.

Deogratias Kalimenze, with Tanzania's Ministry of Housing, noted that most countries have different policies that govern urban development and human settlements. He wanted to know if NUFs consider what has already been proposed in different countries. Responding to Ms. de la Cruz's presentation, he asked about how a NUF monitoring committee can be used to monitor implementation of the NUA.

Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni highlighted the importance of tying the discussion back to the role of NUFs in the Decade of Action. Responding to Ms. Lonardoni's comment, **Mr. Daniel Wasik**, with Poland's Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, explained how Poland is planning to have action plans for cities as outcomes of WUF11. The idea is for the plans to be signed by city authorities in Poland and hopefully cities abroad. These would include actions a city

would need to take to be green, fair, productive, and would be consistent with provisions of the NUA, the European Union's Urban Agenda, and the European Green Deal.

Regarding the coordination and governance of NUFs, Ms. de la Cruz explained how in Spain there are 17 autonomous communities and more than 8,000 municipalities which worked together to build the Spanish Urban Agenda. "It's not a document; it's a working method," she said. Responding to the query about the NUF monitoring committee, she clarified that the monitoring committee provides the functional structure of the NUF, and follows up on activities of the Forum itself. A different organisation is responsible for monitoring implementation of national urban policy. She noted that Spain is considering hosting a NUF annually and is working with more than 30 cities to help them elaborate and approve their strategic action plans. Regarding the question of NUF governance, Mr. Partush noted that this shouldn't happen "backstage" and it is important that partners work to bring in all participants.

Panel 3: Insights and recommendations

NUFs in the Decade of Action

- NUFs are inclusive platforms to advance evidence-based policy processes and broad engagement at the national level. They can also promote scaling up of efforts and international exchanges on achieving the SDGs.
- NUFs allow for engagement across all levels of government on the progress of national and global agendas. NUF hosts are encouraged to produce action-oriented commitments (e.g. Declared Actions) and share these, along with achievements in SDG and NUA implementation, via UN-Habitat's Urban Agenda Platform, to help foster a "shared vision" bridging the local and national, and bringing it up to the global level.

- NUFs take various forms in different countries. A platform for international knowledge sharing would help NUF hosts to learn from one another.

NUFs and NUPs

- NUPs, as a government-led process of coordinating various actors around a common vision and goal, play a role in establishing the enabling and coordinating environment for responding to the challenges of sustainable urbanisation.
- A NUP is not just a document. It is a process that is important on its own. It engages top-down and bottom-up policy approaches and helps to create a collaborative and cooperative institutional environment. It assists with mobilisation and coordination of the responsibilities of stakeholders, and builds their capacities.
- NUFs play a significant role at each stage of the policy formulation process. Continuous NUFs create a policy feedback loop so that government and other stakeholders can give feedback on the implementation of NUPs and discuss whether an established policy is working.

VLRs – connecting local to global

- VLRs track progress on SDG implementation at the local level and provide a link between sub-national achievements and the global agendas. To build the potential of VLRs as a tool to accelerate SDG implementation, there is a need to encourage more cities to commit to VLRs, support participating cities with capacity and resources, and consider how civil society and community organisations can support local governments in understanding the value of VLRs.

- NUFs could play a role in building capacity for VNRs and VLRs by continually hosting sessions on these. NUFs could also incorporate events around standardising data for SDG indicators to help address the issue of poor data standardisation.
- It is important to communicate with stakeholders about NUF outcomes and progress, and to report back on national SDG implementation at the local level.
- NUFs should result in actionable outcomes (e.g., position papers on priority areas).
- Partnerships and collaboration across levels and stakeholders bolsters the effectiveness of NUFs. For example, in Spain a monitoring committee made up of regional, local, national government, civil society, and UN-Habitat provides the functional structure of the NUF. In Israel, the Israel Urban Forum, an NGO, partners with a national government ministry.

Lessons learned and good practices for NUFs

- A NUF cannot be a one-off event. It has to have sustained momentum and be continuous.
- NUF hosts need to bring in the right stakeholders and have buy-in from government. Government ownership of the NUF is key.
- When planning a NUF, attention needs to be paid to the format and, in the time of COVID-19, the optimal digital platforms for inclusive and engaging virtual participation.
- To get the most out of NUF engagements, it is valuable to frame the discussions at the NUF properly so that participants engage with a clear idea of what to share and report on. This can be done by holding pre-NUF discussions with stakeholders about priority issues.
- Hosting NUFs in several cities, not just the biggest and most developed, helps inform discussions of urban development and territorial management, highlights the needs of different cities, bolsters ties with local stakeholders, and acknowledges the efforts intermediary cities make to implement urban policies.



Panel 4: The road to the World Urban Forum 11

Panel overview

The WUF, a non-legislative technical forum convened every second year by UN-Habitat since 2002, has strengthened its linkages with the NUA, facilitating partnerships and knowledge sharing, as well as mobilising support for implementation, follow-up, and review. In this final session, experts focused on the contribution of NUFs to WUF11, taking place in Katowice, Poland, in 2022.

Speakers highlighted how the NUFs happening in the lead up to WUF11 provide an opportunity for stakeholders and policymakers to reflect on national urbanisation trends, achievements, and solutions for positive transformation. The session raised questions about how NUF hosts and UN-Habitat can collaborate at the international level to share experiences, knowledge and good practices, and set sustainable development priorities for the 2020-2022 cycle that link with the SDGs and NUA, and tie into discussions and priorities for WUF11.

Presentations

UN-Habitat's **Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni** focused on WUF11 and the role NUFs can play in monitoring and reporting on actions toward achieving the SDGs and NUA in the Decade of Action. She noted that the WUF is a great opportunity for UN-Habitat to see where partners are with their own plans to implement urban policies, as well as get an overview of the collective efforts to implement the NUA.

The WUF is inclusive and lately UN-Habitat has seen an increase in participation from the private sector and business leaders. WUF10 was a major milestone, which led to the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, a result of the call by UN-Habitat's Executive Director Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif for an action-based outcome. There is no reason that NUFs cannot adopt the same approach, she noted.

Ms. Lonardoni reiterated that NUFs can be a major tool for follow-up, review, and reporting on actions toward achieving the

SDGs and NUA in the Decade of Action, and these achievements can then be shared at WUFs. She explained the importance of the WUF legacy projects, which are a key part of the WUF process. For example, at WUF10, UN-Habitat established the [WUF alumni network](#)²¹ and launched the [Cities Investment Platform](#). WUF10 host city Abu Dhabi launched a network of bicycle lanes along with a [public art sculpture](#)²² by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, as well as a [tree-planting campaign](#).²³ Additional signatories from 17 cities also joined the Voluntary Local Review Declaration.

Ms. Lonardoni noted that 25 NUFs took place between 2018 and 2019, and there are at least 35 NUFs slated to take place before WUF11. UN-Habitat is in advanced preparations for WUF11 with host country Poland, she said.

Ms. Lonardoni invited inputs from the experts.

Ms. Tsur said Israel is holding its third NUF in June 2021 and would like it to be an opportunity for conversations with other NUF hosts on the way to WUF11. **Ms. Chana Moran**, CEO, Israel Urban Forum, said the Israel Urban Forum has been promoting integration of social aspects and implementation of the SDGs and NUA into national and local planning and would like to initiate an international framework in order to learn, share, and promote this idea together.

Ms. Lonardoni said that through the NUF alliance there is a wealth of opportunities for learning exchanges and the role of UN-Habitat is to facilitate these exchanges. The next step will be to think on how such a framework could work and what the best tools are for knowledge exchange due to the constraints of COVID-19. There will be a special session on NUFs at WUF11, as there was at WUF10.

Mr. Daniel Baliński, Poland's Deputy Director, Department for Development Strategy, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy presented on Poland's preparations for WUF11.

While still to be finalised, the theme for WUF11 will focus on new trends for a sustainable and just transition in cities. Poland recently held its third NUF, with more than 200 participants, which kicked off the national debate on new urban policy in Poland. WUF11 provides an opportunity for the government and other stakeholders to refine attitudes to NUPs, according to the SDGs, NUA, and the way the European Union thinks in this regard, in order to have an integrated cross-sectoral policy, he explained.

Mr. Baliński offered an invitation to the EGM experts to participate in the WUF11 preparations, which he said can be seen as “group work.” Poland has established a local steering committee to help structure the potential themes and subjects to focus on at WUF11 and will be requesting input locally and internationally, especially with regards to the voluntary commitments at the city level, which can then feed into the proposed outcomes documents, the City Action Plans.

Mr. Baliński highlighted two key interventions for WUF11:

- Poland has identified youth as key stakeholders for WUF11 and will be running a competition for young people to get them interested in urban issues, such as accessibility, green transformation, and resilience. Poland hopes that others will be interested and will organise similar competitions for young people in the NUFs in 2021. Winners can then contribute to WUF11 and present their outcomes.
- Poland plans to have City Action Plans as an outcome from WUF11. These are not just declared actions but will link to concrete indicators, where cities show what will change as a result of their actions (e.g., How many roads will be closed to cars? How many open spaces will be open to the public? How many bicycle paths will be opened?). Poland requests that the City Action Plans process involves other stakeholders from the EGM and invites

them to identify cities in their own countries that can take part and provide input on the action plans.

The outcomes and achievements of the youth competitions and City Action Plans would be shared at WUF11 and included in the outcome report from WUF11. Mr. Baliński reiterated his call for international cooperation in realising the potential of WUF11 for providing practical solutions to urban challenges.

Discussion

In the group discussion that followed, **Ms. Tsur** highlighted a set of key reflections:

- It is important to engage all sectors of civil society as active stakeholders in promoting SDG11, as well as other SDGs.
- In an urbanising world, countries must have a NUP. It's a challenge, going from NUF to NUP, and there is a need for inter-ministry and multi-stakeholder cooperation, which the NUFs can play a key role in.
- Networking at the global level can be a “game changer” but there is a need to do things in between to share knowledge, case studies, regional frameworks and experiences of meeting common challenges.
- There is a need for city urban forums, and cities are encouraged to host them.

Tanzania's **Dr. Hante** recommended that the WUF should include a focus on the importance of rural-urban linkages when it comes to implementation of the NUA, which is key for countries such as Tanzania, which is predominantly rural.

Regarding the role of civil society in the NUF process, Dr. Siegel made two recommendations:

- Formal representation of civil society on government decision-making bodies. This enables formal, legitimate representation

“ We believe it is the role of NUFs to engage civil society organisations and legitimise their work, responses, and demands. The kind of networking a NUF can engage in can be a game changer in bringing all the actors together because we need to set a coherent urban agenda at the national and city level.

Ms. Naomi Tsur, Chair of the Israel Urban Forum.

- of civil society on global decision-making bodies.
- Civil society's role is not only as a monitoring watchdog. Civil society needs to be encouraged to take a proactive role in achieving sustainability and the SDGs.

Mr. Baliński noted that territorial and cross-sectoral approaches are key to the NUP, and that making change involves a consideration of “governmentalism.” To achieve sustainable urban development outcomes at the national level requires changing mindsets among local authorities about how they run cities and localise the SDGs, he said. Partnerships, in the context of integration, sectoral policies, and localising SDGs, are at the root of the NUP. He agreed that formal participation of civil society is important, and said Poland has included civil society organisations in the local committee for WUF preparation.

Panel 4: Insights and recommendations

NUFs and their links to WUF

- NUFs are a major tool for follow-up, review and reporting on actions toward achieving the SDGs and NUA in the Decade of Action. NUFs are encouraged to produce action-based outcomes (e.g., Declared Actions). Achievements can be shared at the global level via the WUFs.

- There is keen interest among NUF hosts for sharing knowledge, case studies, regional frameworks, and experiences of meeting common sustainable urban development challenges.
- UN-Habitat can facilitate this exchange through the NUF global alliance and will consider how such a framework could work and what the best tools are for knowledge exchange due to the constraints of COVID-19. There will also be a special session on NUFs at WUF11, as there was at WUF10.
- Experts are invited to contribute to WUF11 preparations, particularly with regards to voluntary commitments at the city level, which can feed into proposed outcomes documents for WUF11, the City Action Plans, which will link with concrete indicators.
- Poland has identified youth as key stakeholders for WUF11 and will be running a competition for young people to get them interested in urban issues. NUF hosts are encouraged to organise similar competitions for young people in 2021. Winners can then contribute to WUF11 and present their outcomes.



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Closing remarks and the way forward

The EGM aims to open debates and discuss the next cycle of NUFs and mobilisation of national, regional, and local governments and stakeholders on the road to WUF11 in Katowice, Poland, in 2022

In her closing remarks, UN-Habitat's **Ms. Christine Knudsen** said the EGM had reaffirmed the importance of the NUFs as an advocacy, planning and action platform. NUFs can play a valuable role at many levels for setting a "common vision" for diverse stakeholders - particularly in the time of COVID-19 - and can help bridge political divides.

She emphasised the importance of looking at NUFs as a process and not one-off events. The NUFs also provide an opportunity for UN-Habitat to learn about how its partners are dealing with the challenges of sustainable urbanisation.

Adding to the previous comment about the need to focus on all SDGs, not just SDG11, she said: "We see SDG11 as the docking station for all of the SDGs in cities. All of the SDGs are equally important in cities and we view SDG11 as a way to bring all of that to bear in an urban environment."

In his summary feedback at the EGM, and in subsequent analysis for this report, moderator **Dr. Sait** highlighted key insights from the expert discussions. He addressed the role and value of the NUFs in supporting implementation of the SDGs and NUA, highlighted the links between NUFs and the WUF, and underscored the value of collaboration between NUF hosts in the run-up to WUF11. These outcomes will help to set the priorities for "NUF2.0" and guide UN-Habitat's role as the facilitator of knowledge-sharing exchanges between NUF hosts.

Lessons learned about NUFs

- Cities are different and so are the NUF models but NUF hosts can learn from one another through best practices and innovations.
- Success of NUFs is about process and planning (e.g., Malaysia and Israel), which starts with partnerships and how we identify and build on them.
- NUFs require real partnership not tokenism. This requires that all stakeholder groups (including women, youth and communities) are represented and given space to effectively contribute.
- Political buy-in is essential as successful NUFs build on connections with governments, or are government-led.
- The link between NUFs and NUPs needs emphasis as NUFs can help to identify urban development priorities and set the agenda and plans.
- UN-Habitat offers many tools for countries wishing to host NUFs and develop NUPs, which need to be promoted.
- A challenge for effective multi-stakeholder dialogues is differential technical and political levels, so capacity building, and pre-NUF support is necessary, especially to include marginalised groups including urban poor, women, youth and minorities.
- NUFs facilitate good governance models by serving as connectors of local, national, and global levels of participation.

How NUFs link with the WUF to promote sustainable urbanisation in the Decade of Action

- NUFs provide an opportunity to monitor and check in on the implementation of WUF Declared Actions and implementation of the NUA and the SDGs.
- Sustainability includes social, economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions and NUFs can provide an integrated and innovative urban vision for the future by informing WUF dialogues.
- NUFs are not merely platforms for consensus building and follow-up action but opportunities for new thinking and strategies for inclusive, healthy, safe, prosperous, resilient and resilient future cities.
- NUFs are important for promoting sustainable urbanisation through, for example, VLRs. They play a role in planning, engaging with multiple stakeholders, and reviewing and feeding back on progress on implementation of the NUA and SDGs, as well as setting the agenda for the WUFs.

The role of NUFs in building more sustainable cities

- NUFs have the potential for a cyclic dialogue, which can link to the parallel process of NUPs.
- NUFs have the flexibility to incorporate emerging concerns or crises, such as pandemics, and respond pro-actively with medium and long-term approaches.
- NUFs give NUPs teeth by acting as platforms for monitoring and capacity building.
- Outcomes documents, like the action plans for cities, aspire for inclusive, green, resilient, productive cities and emerge from participation at the national level.

Key recommendations for NUF hosts

The experiences shared by the experts about what works to strengthen inclusive participation, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participation, national urban policy formulation, and effective hosting of NUFs provide valuable insights for NUF hosts.

Partnerships and inclusion

- A whole of government and whole of society approach to NUF partnerships is required. Those leading NUFs need to build partnerships between local and national governments and other actors (e.g., civil society, academics, private sector, United Nations) as well as partnerships between different ministries. This requires advocacy and communication strategies.
- NUFs need to actively seek relevant stakeholders and bring them into discussions. It is necessary to identify stakeholders who are missing from discussions but vital to urban development (e.g., slum dwellers) and work to bring them into the discussion. Questions to ask include: Who matters? Who is actually acting? Who is actively engaged now? Who is missing but vital to urban development? How can those missing actors be brought into play?
- To get partners talking to each other, a good practice is to host roundtables.
- Civil society is a crucial partner that plays a role in monitoring progress on sustainable urban development and informing policy and practice. To promote active citizen participation it is necessary to generate processes to strengthen civil society and its capacity to monitor agreements reached. It is also necessary to generate information on implementation of the policies and urban development agendas so there is a monitoring system with accessible information that facilitates public oversight.

- There is a need to encourage and strengthen civil society's ability to be actively engaged in sustainable development policy formulation and implementation. It is therefore important to have formal and legitimate representation of civil society at NUFs and in decision-making institutions.

Preparing for NUFs

- Before hosting a NUF it is important to get inputs from key stakeholders on priority issues for discussion. This can be done through focus groups, webinars, regional forums, and roundtable discussions.
- When planning a NUF, attention needs to be paid to the format and, in the time of COVID-19, the optimal digital platforms for inclusive and engaging virtual participation.
- It is beneficial to host NUFs in various cities, not just the biggest and most developed. This can reinforce discussions of urban development and territorial management, recognise the needs of diverse cities, strengthen ties with local stakeholders, and acknowledge the efforts intermediary cities make to implement urban policies.

Communication

- NUFs should be seen as an instrument of advocacy to mobilise a broader movement around sustainable urban development in the Decade of Action. Outreach and communication around them is important.
- NUF hosts should communicate with stakeholders about outcomes and progress of the NUFs, as well as progress on the SDGs.

Action-based outcomes

- NUFs are encouraged to produce action-oriented commitments (e.g. Declared Actions). These can be shared via UN-Habitat's Urban Agenda Platform, a knowledge portal for collecting voluntary actions, best practices, and data for reviewing progress made on implementing the NUA to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- NUFs should result in actionable outcomes (e.g., position papers on priority areas).

Capacity building

- The NUFs can help to strengthen the capacity of key actors to understand and engage with the NUA and SDGs by, for example, hosting training events on these frameworks and the SDG indicators.
- NUFs could play a role in building capacity for VNRs and VLRs by continually hosting sessions on these. NUFs could also incorporate events around standardising data for SDG indicators to help address the issue of poor data standardisation.

NUFs as a platform to promote NUPs

- NUFs play a significant role at each stage of the policy formulation process. Suggested activities, at each stage of policy formulation, include: A NUF and NUP awareness campaign at national level; mapping and identifying stakeholders and outlining their priorities and recommendations; consultation workshops to verify the policy; an overall capacity assessment and capacity development session; a NUP process evaluation.
- The NUP database hosts key resources for countries wishing to develop NUPs.

Next steps

This EGM was the first in a series of meetings that will help to inform the NUF process moving forward. The NUFs held in the lead-up to WUF11 are part of the NUF 2.0 cycle. They will play a key role in feeding achievements at the national level on achieving the SDGs, NUA and other UN frameworks into the WUF process.

UN-Habitat will:

- Update the current NUF guidelines for the NUF 2.0 cycle in view of the discussions, recommendations, and findings of the EGM. These provide guidance to NUF hosts, detailing NUF objectives, expected outcomes, and suggested steps for setting up a NUF. They are intended for all levels of governments, UN representatives, women groups, youth, academics, community and business leaders, urban activists, and more.
- Coordinate a NUF global alliance to promote networking, knowledge sharing and partnerships among NUF hosts and partners. The alliance will help promote cross-learning and sharing of good practices among the NUF hosts to improve the positive impact and contribute to the WUF process. The alliance will help promote the implementation of the NUA and urban-related SDGs, and support the implementation of WUF Declared Actions at the national and local levels.
- Develop a work plan for NUF 2.0, which indicates key activities, milestones and outputs on the road to WUF11 in 2022. This work plan will help ensure that the NUFs in this cycle make a substantive contribution to WUF11.
- Coordinate and consult with future NUF hosts as well as UN-Habitat's offices on NUF 2.0.
- Follow up with and encourage NUF hosts to use the Urban Agenda Platform for their action-oriented commitments (e.g. NUF Declared Actions)
- Engage with multiple stakeholders and facilitate their contributions to the NUFs. Involvement of partners in the field of sustainable urbanisation and human settlements development is essential for NUFs. UN-Habitat continues strengthening its engagement with partners, and established the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) composed of a cross section of stakeholders to allow partners to contribute to the design and implementation of its normative and operational programmes at every level. SAGE will be a good entry point as a means of further engagement with relevant partners at all levels in order to mobilise and organise NUFs.
- Develop a new website for the WUF, which will serve as a common platform for information about the WUF, WUF legacy projects and Alumni, and NUFs. It is important to include the NUFs and their outcomes as part of the WUF process and to be not only collaborating with UN-Habitat's regional and country offices but also with its sub-programmes and normative activities such as NUPs, VLRs, and partnerships, among others.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of speakers

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONTACT
Moderator		
Mr. Siraj Sait	Professor, University of East London	sirajsait@uel.ac.uk
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H.E Dr. Pen Sophal	Secretary of State, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (Cambodia)	pensophal12@gmail.com
Ms. Naomi Tsur	Chair of the Israel Urban Forum (Israel)	naomitsur@gmail.com
UN-Habitat		
Ms. Christine Knudsen	Director, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division	christine.knudsen@un.org
Mr. Eduardo Moreno	Head, Knowledge and Innovation Branch, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division	eduardo.moreno@un.org
Mr. Filip Decorte	Chief (Officer in Charge), Programme Development Branch, Global Solutions Division	decorte@un.org
Mr. Jeremiah Ougo	National Project Officer, Regional Office for Africa	Jeremiah.Ougo@un.org
Mr. Gianluca Crispi	Legal Specialist in the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section	gianluca.crispi@un.org
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Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni	Programme Manager World Urban Forum	fernanda.lonardoni@un.org
Mr. Wataru Kawasaki	Programme Management Officer	kawasakiw@un.org
Ms. Helen Odera	Associate Programme Officer	helen.oder@un.org
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Appendix 2: Speaker biographies



Ms. Christine Knudsen

Director, External Relations Strategic Planning, Knowledge and Innovation, UN-Habitat

Ms. Christine Knudsen joined UN-Habitat in January 2020. She is a dynamic leader and advocates with a demonstrated history of working through partnerships to effect lasting change in policy and practice. She is skilled in strategic planning, humanitarian operations and policy, non-profit management, corporate social responsibility, emergency management, and international relations.

As Sphere Executive Director, Christine worked with a global humanitarian community leading a process of collective review and revision of the flagship Sphere Handbook, the most widely used reference framework in the sector. She has over 20 years of humanitarian experience.

Formerly the Humanitarian Partnerships Manager in UNICEF's

Office of Emergency Programmes, she has negotiated and built common policies on key issues with the United Nations, the Red Cross, and the NGO community. Before joining UNICEF, she also worked with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Ms. Knudsen holds a Master's degree in International Relations and Affairs from The Johns Hopkins University.



Mr. Netanel Lapidot

Deputy Director-General for Strategy and Policy planning, Ministry of Construction and Housing, Israel

Head of the Strategy and Policy planning department for the past six years.

While managing the department which formulates and leads the policies and work plans of the ministry and promotes governmental housing policies, Mr. Netanel Lapidot has led numerous governmental task forces, and is also a member of the Prime Minister's Office Strategic team.

A few of Netanel's most prominent projects have been leading the government's efforts to industrialize the construction sector and promoting and implementing advanced technologies in the construction industry.

Netanel also established and headed the National Urbanisation task force and the interdisciplinary

team for the housing master plan of the ultra-orthodox community in Israel. Netanel is a senior member of Israel's bilateral committee and was the professional government representative of task forces for numerous agreements with foreign governments.

Netanel holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Political Science from Bar-Ilan University and an MBA from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.



Prof. Siraj Sait,
Professor, University of East London

Prof. Siraj Sait is Director, Noon Centre of Equality and Diversity at the University of East London and Co-Chair, UN Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE). He is a leading development expert and human rights lawyer with experience of working with the UN, governments and the business community. He is a

founder member of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), while on sabbatical to the UN. His appointments include Special Public Prosecutor, Chair of Somalia law drafting committee, and the United Nations high-level Advisory Group on Gender Issues (AGGI). Among other roles, Sait was a member of the WUF Advisory

Group for the World Urban Forum 10 at Abu Dhabi in February 2020. He is currently leading UN and other funded projects, research and training on gender equality, youth, human rights, urban governance, climate change, conflict and land rights.



Mr. Brendon Bosworth
Communications specialist,
Human Element Communications, South Africa

Brendon Bosworth is a communications specialist with a focus on climate change, urbanisation, and sustainable development. He runs Human Element Communications and works with universities and other organisations to communicate key research findings. He is particularly interested in ways of humanizing academic research to make it more accessible to non-specialists.

Brendon has worked with the African Centre for Cities and African Climate and Development Initiative (both at the University of Cape Town). He served as editor for the UN-Habitat report on the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (2020) and was lead author for the UN-Habitat report on the strategic development phase of the Global Future Cities Programme (2019). Brendon was formerly a

correspondent for U.S. publication Citiscope, where he wrote about sustainable urban development and urban innovation globally. He covered the 2016 Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador. Brendon is a Fulbright scholar and holds a master's in journalism from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Panel 1: Origins and achievements of National Urban Forums. Perspectives from UN-Habitat and organisers, assessing the lessons, sharing experiences and key achievements



H.E. Dr. Pen Sophal

Secretary of State, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, Cambodia

H.E. Dr. Pen Sophal is Secretary of State of the Ministry of Land Management and Construction, a position he has served in since 2013. He is a leading professional with experience in urban and spatial planning in Cambodia, including preparation of regulatory frameworks, regional spatial planning of Cambodia Coastal Area, Sihanoukville provincial

spatial plan, and 14 urban master plans for cities and towns, and all urban master plans in Cambodia's cities and towns. He is also an architect and lawyer with a distinguished career in public services, such as the Permanent Deputy Chairman and Secretary General of the National Committee for Land Management and Urban

Planning and the Secretary General of National Committee for Cambodia's Coastal Management and Development, and a Governing Council Member of the Board of Cambodian Architects. H.E. Dr. Pen Sophal has passed various professional trainings abroad and has lectured at universities and institutions in Cambodia.



Mrs. Vanessa Pinto

Coordinator, Contrato Social por la Vivienda-Fundación Somos, Ecuador

Sociologist with a mention in Development from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, Magister in City Government and Candidate for a PhD in Public Policy from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (Ecuador). She is currently president of the Somos Ecuador Foundation and her professional life has focused on the development of participatory processes for sustainable

habitat management and social responsibility volunteering. She has coordinated participatory habitat improvement projects and has experience in facilitating spaces for multi-stakeholder dialogue, articulation of actors, training processes and organisational strengthening, both in the public and private sectors. She has developed studies on housing policies and water and sanitation

for the Spanish Agency for Cooperation, the French Agency for Cooperation, UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, among others. As a volunteer, she has participated in various development processes together with rural and marginal urban communities in Ecuador. She is currently the Coordinator of the Social Contract for Housing in Ecuador.



Ms. Naomi Tsur
Executive Chair, Israel Urban Forum, Israel

Naomi Tsur is an environmental and social entrepreneur. As Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem (2008-2013), Tsur was responsible for strategic planning, environmental protection, sustainability and historic conservation. Tsur is the founder and Executive Chair of the Jerusalem Green Fund, (www.jgf.org.il) established in 2015. The JGF is a cooperative philanthropy. Tsur co-chairs the Jerusalem Water Forum, in which municipal experts join forces with civil society organisations to formulate water

policy for the city. Tsur heads the Sustainable Jerusalem Lobby, a coalition of neighbourhoods, organisations, academia and businesses that work together with city hall to prepare Jerusalem for the impacts of climate change.

The SJL recently hosted a virtual citizens' conference, addressing the need for rethinking norms and lives, in the wake of COVID-19. Tsur is frequently invited to lecture at international seminars and conferences on urban sustainability and

participatory democracy. She is a senior contributor to "The Nature of Cities" (<http://www.thenatureofcities.com/author/naomitsur>). Recently Tsur headed an international team in developing an ethical code for water in cities. In 2015 Tsur led a team of urban professionals and leaders in the establishment of the Israel Urban Forum, at the First Akko Convention on Urbanism, in November 2015. Tsur has served as Chair of the IUF since its establishment.



Dr. Mukuki Hante
**Director of Rural and Urban Development, President's Office –
Regional Administration and Local Government, Tanzania**

Dr. Hante is an experienced Development Planner with over 30 years in the field, practicing in the local government system in Tanzania with a major in development and planning in the contexts of both rural and urban development. His further specialty is in environment and sustainable development wherein social and economic dimensions are used to safeguard instrumentation and carrying out regulated rural and urban growth based on pre-determined Indicators.

He has dealt with urban infrastructure improvement programmes and projects in Tanzania, preparation of urban development policy, and capacity and development investment programmes at national level. Moreover, he has technically contributed well outside and inside Tanzania in urban upgrading, social and environmental assessment, impact evaluation, imparting leadership skills, urban project management, community – driven development and expanded public works programmes, and

transformative Geographical Information System application in rural-urban linkages in development.

Currently, he is pioneering in the nurturing of Emerging Small Towns as grassroots nodes of future cities. He joined a technical team to prepare of the Master Plan of Dodoma - 2019-2039, new Capital City of Tanzania. He is also involved in advocating for inclusive capital investment in rural and urban areas for better welfare of the people and strong local economies.



Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni

Programme Manager World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat

Fernanda has 15 years of experience managing urban development and housing projects at the international level; spanning technical cooperation, policy, strategy, operations, knowledge management and partnerships,

coupled with wide experience working with UN-Agencies and Governments. As a policy adviser, she has implemented normative and operational projects at national and local level, advising ministers, mayors and high-level

decision makers. She is now the coordinator of the World Urban Forum and leads the preparation for the Eleventh Session of WUF to be held in Katowice in 2022. She is trained as an architect and urban planner and holds a PhD in urban sociology.

Panel 2: National Urban Forum in the era of COVID-19



Mr. Filiep Decorte

Chief (Officer-in-Charge), Programme Development Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat

He is currently the Chief (Officer-in-Charge) of UN-Habitat's new Programme Development Branch. He was until recently the Deputy Director of UN-Habitat's New York Liaison Office and the focal point for UN-Habitat's crisis-related work in New York. He was acting Director from December 2016 to February 2018. He is Chair of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.

During his career, Filiep has

predominantly focused on urban initiatives in conflict- and crisis-affected countries, specializing in urban planning, land, and housing issues. He globally focuses on migration, displacement, land and conflict and the humanitarian-development nexus. He co-edited with Andrew Rudd the Quito Papers and the New Urban Agenda, led by Prof. Richard Sennett. He has worked for UN-Habitat for

more than fifteen years in different capacities, including long-term assignments in Haiti, the occupied Palestinian territory, Somalia, and Morocco. He also acted as coordinator for UN-Habitat's Global Disaster Management Program. He was trained as a civil engineer, architect, and urban and regional planner with advanced master's degrees from the Universities of Ghent and Leuven in Belgium.



Mr. Eduardo Moreno

Head, Knowledge and Innovation Branch, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat

Eduardo Moreno is Head of Knowledge and Innovation at UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and Director Interim for Mexico and Cuba country office. Prior, he was the Chief of the Global Urban Observatory (2002-2008) and Senior Technical Adviser in

the Bureau of Africa and the Arab States, UN-Habitat (1999- 2002). He has over 35 years of academic and professional experience in housing and urban development policies, policy evaluation, institutional analysis, global

monitoring, and equity and urban poverty issues.

His qualifications include a Ph.D. in urban geography and a master's degree in urban sociology from the University of Paris III-Sorbonne.



Mr. Jeremiah Ougo

National Project Officer, Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat

Jeremiah Atho Ougo is an Urban Planner currently working at UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Africa as National Project Officer responsible for day-to-day implementation of UN-Habitat activities in Kenya. In this capacity, Jeremiah is responsible for coordinating urban sector stakeholders' involvement in projects in Kenya's urban areas including liaison with government, urban donor group members (World Bank, DFID, AFD, Sweden, Japan, relevant INGOs and NGOs)

and UNCT to achieve sustainable urban development in Kenya.

Jeremiah previously worked as a Physical Planner with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees where he supervised shelter, physical planning and infrastructure provision to refugees and host communities living in the Dadaab refugee camps and environs. He also worked for the Department for World Services, Lutheran World Federation (LWF/DWS) as a Senior Planning Officer for close to three years and was

responsible for designing, planning and surveying the world's largest refugee settlements located in Dadaab.

He holds a bachelor of Urban Planning degree (Makerere University) and a master's degree in Project Planning & Management (University of Nairobi). Jeremiah is past Assistant Registrar and Assistant Secretary of the Kenya Institute of Planners. He is also a registered Lead Expert with the National Environment Management Authority.

Panel 3: NUF in the Decade of Action a platform to accelerate the implementation of the NUA and SDGs



Mr. Gianluca Crispi

Legal Specialist in the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat

Gianluca Crispi is a lawyer with more than ten years' experience in supporting policy formulation and the review of urban planning frameworks. Gianluca is currently serving as Legal Specialist in the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section of UN-Habitat, providing legal advice to UN-Habitat's projects and assisting National

and Local Governments in translating urban policies into effectively implementable laws. He is currently leading the Essential Law Programme, an initiative that aims at analyzing the main constraints of practicability and enforceability of urban legislation in developing countries. Prior to his current position, he worked

as Research Officer for the UN State of the World's Cities Report, a normative tool geared to inform policy discussion and to assist local governments in designing sustainable urban policies. He holds an advanced university degree in law from the University of Palermo in Italy.



Ms. Penny Abeywardena

Commissioner for International Affairs, City of New York, U.S.A.

Penny leads the City's global platform for promoting its goals for a more just society, showcasing the diversity of New Yorkers and sharing policies and best practices with the world. Her agency serves the largest diplomatic corps in the world, including strategic

partnerships and programming reaffirming NYC's local leadership on global issues.

From 2009-2014, Penny was the Director of Girls and Women Integration at the Clinton Global Initiative, where she led the

program's evolution into one of CGI's most successful efforts. Penny is a French-American Foundation Young Leader (2017) and a WEF Young Global Leader (2016) and a Co-Chair on WEF's Global Future Council.



Ms. Norliza Hashim

Chief Executive Officer, URBANICE MALAYSIA, Malaysia

Norliza Hashim is the Chief Executive of Urbanice

Malaysia, a Centre of Excellence for Urban Well-being and Sustainability of Malaysia. Urbanice focuses on four key areas – Knowledge Platforms, Urban Innovation, Applied Research and Development, and Projects and Partnerships. Through these, Urbanice hopes to provide urban leaders, practitioners and communities with the knowledge and support needed to achieve a sustainable urban nation for Malaysia.

Norliza led the Local Secretariat team for World Urban Forum 9, where she worked alongside the UN-Habitat WUF Unit to deliver the objectives of the Forum and has since then worked with all levels of government, decision makers and stakeholders at national, state and local levels towards localisation of the agendas. In realising the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030, she organised the Malaysia Urban Forum and co-organised the Asia Pacific Urban Forum to bring

local and regional stakeholders together to dialogue, discuss and declare actions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Norliza is also a Board Member of the Malaysian Board of Technologist and sits on the Leadership Council for Sustainable Development Solutions Network Malaysia as her passion lies in innovating and affecting change towards the sustainability agenda.



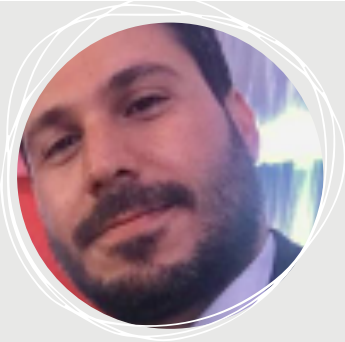
Ms. Ángela de la Cruz

Deputy Director of Urban Policies, Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, Spain

Lawyer, expert urban planner. Civil Servant of Central Public Administration (Government of Spain). Drafter of numerous state legislation on land and urban planning (among them,

the current National Land Act). Assiduous speaker at National and International Conferences and Seminars. Author of many articles published in specialized magazines. Responsible for the

elaboration of the Spanish Urban Agenda and nowadays, the person directly in charge of its widest implementation. Work experience in the three levels of Public Administration (national, regional and local).



Mr. Ariel Partush

Senior Coordinator for Policy and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Construction and Housing, Israel

For the past three and a half years, Ariel Partush is responsible for foreign affairs of the Ministry of Construction and Housing of the state of Israel. He also helps the promotion and implementation of the New Urban Agenda and of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of Agenda 2030 in Israel.

Ariel was part of an inter-ministerial forum which prepared the first voluntary national review of Israel, presented at the 2019 HLPF. Ariel is also responsible for the ministry's international agreements, and for hosting professional foreign delegations and individuals, as well as organizing professional delegations

of the Ministry. Ariel represents the Ministry at international forums and conferences and is the contact person for international organisations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the OECD, the UfM and more.

Ariel has a BA and an MA in International Relations from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Mr. Redy Adolfo López López

Director, National Planning Department, Colombia

Economist from Universidad del Rosario of Colombia, with a specialization in Development and Regional Planning and a master's in public policy from the University of Chicago. His work experience

has developed almost entirely in the public sector. He has served as Macroeconomic Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Finance, Advisor to the Deputy Director of the National

Planning Department, Director of Public Investment Programming at Bogotá's Planning Secretariat and currently works as Director of Urban Development of the National Planning Department.



Mr. Wataru Kawasaki

Programme Management Officer, UN-Habitat

He brings more than 16 years of diverse and wide-ranging work experience and hands-on skills in programme management, humanitarian and emergency assistance, and knowledge management, communications and advocacy, coupled with a background in the field within UN-

Habitat in the Asia-Pacific region, Afghanistan, New York, USA, and Kenya.

Seconded to the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and led programming and planning of its global and regional events, Policy

Units as well as the United Nations Task Team to formulate the New Urban Agenda. He currently works in the World Urban Forum Coordination Office, UN-Habitat headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations, and Master of Science in Development Studies.



Mr. Daniel Baliński

Deputy Director, Department for Development Strategy, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy (Poland)

Public administration officer with a long-standing experience in programming and implementation of development policy, structural funds, and especially its territorial dimension in Poland.

Since 2004, starting with employment at the Ministry of Economy and Labour and later i.e. the Ministry of Regional Development he was involved in the elaboration of the National Development Plan 2007-2013,

the National Cohesion Strategy 2007-2013 and later the National Strategy for Regional Development 2010-2020 and the Partnership Agreements 2014-2020.

Within implementation functions he was involved in – among others – coordinating the preparation and implementation of Integrated Territorial Investments (main territorial instrument under Cohesion Policy supporting integrated actions for sustainable

urban development). Currently, as Deputy Director in the Department for Development Strategy of the Ministry of Economic Development, he is responsible for national urban policy and strategic projects under territorial development policy deriving from the new main development strategy for Poland (Strategy for Responsible Development).

Appendix 3: EGM programme

DAY 1 - 20 October 2020		
14:00 - 14:15 (EAT/IDT time)	Welcome and Opening Remarks	<p>[5 mins] Brief welcome by moderator Mr. Siraj Sait, Professor, University of East London</p> <p>[5 mins] Opening remark: Ms. Christine Knudsen, Director, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat</p> <p>[5 mins] Welcome remark: Mr. Netanel Lapidot, Deputy General Director, Strategy and Policy Planning Division, Director-General of the Ministry of Construction and Housing (Israel)</p>
14:15 – 15:45	<p>Panel 1 Origins and achievements of National Urban Forums. Perspectives from UN-Habitat and organizers, assessing the lessons, sharing experiences and key achievements.</p>	<p>[10min] Origins and objectives of NUFs – a platform to implement New Urban Agenda (NUA) and SDGs Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni, Programme Manager World Urban Forum, World Urban Forum Coordination Office, External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat</p> <p>Case presentations [40 min]: focusing on previous experience of NUFs, main lessons and achievements</p> <p>[10 min] H.E Dr. Pen Sophal, Secretary of State, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (Cambodia)</p> <p>[10 min] Mrs. Vanessa Pinto, Coordinator, Contrato Social por la Vivienda (Ecuador)</p> <p>[10 min] Ms. Naomi Tsur, Chair of the Israel Urban Forum (Israel)</p> <p>[30 min] Panel discussion [10 min] Wrap up of the session</p>
15:45 – 16:00	Break – cultural entertainment	
16:00 – 17:10	<p>Panel 2 National Urban Forum in the era of COVID-19. Efforts to prepare respond and recover.</p>	<p>[10 min] COVID-19 Programmatic Response - Mr. Filiep Decorte, Chief (oic), Programme Development Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat</p> <p>Case presentations [20 min]:</p> <p>[10 min] Case from UN-Habitat: Mr. Jeremiah Ougo, National Project Officer, Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat (Kenya)</p> <p>[10 min] Q&A</p> <p>[20 min] Panel discussion</p> <p>[10 min] Cities and Pandemics - Mr. Eduardo Moreno, Head, Knowledge and Innovation Branch, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat</p> <p>[10 min] Wrap up of the session</p>

DAY 2 - 21 October		
14:00 - 14:10 (EAT/IDT time)	Recap of Day 1 and overview of Day 2	Moderator: Mr. Siraj Sait Rapporteur: Mr. Brendon Bosworth, Communications specialist
14:10 - 16:00	Panel 3 NUF in the Decade of Action a platform to accelerate the implementation of NUA and SDGs	<p>[10 min] Decade of Action - NUF oriented to actions and outcomes - Mr. Wataru Kawasaki, Programme Management Officer, World Urban Forum Coordination Office, External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat</p> <p>[10 min] National Urban Policy - Mr. Gianluca Crispi Legal Specialist in the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat</p> <p>[10 min] Voluntary Local Reviews - Ms. Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner for International Affairs, City of New York</p> <p>Case presentations [40 min]</p> <p>[10 min] Ms. Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive, URBANICE MALAYSIA (Malaysia)</p> <p>[10 min] Ms. Ángela de la Cruz, Deputy Director General for Urban Policies, Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (Spain)</p> <p>[10 min] Mr. Ariel Partush, Policy and Foreign Affairs Department, Strategy and Policy Planning Division, (Israel)</p> <p>[10 min] Mr. Redy López, Director, Housing and Urban Development of the National Planning Department</p> <p>[10 min] Dr. Mukuki Hante, President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (Tanzania) (Colombia)</p> <p>[25 min] Panel discussion</p> <p>[15 min] Wrap up of the session</p>
16:00 - 16:15	Break – cultural entertainment	
16:15 - 17:30	Panel 4 The road to the World Urban Forum 11 (WUF11) - Discussions on innovative approaches, key priorities and expected outcomes from the National Urban Forums in the next cycle 2020-2022 (NUF 2.0). What role should UN-Habitat play as a facilitator, fostering and supporting such platforms?	<p>[10min] Preparations for WUF11, NUF2.0 Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni, Programme Manager, World Urban Forum Coordination Office, External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat</p> <p>[10min] Mr. Daniel Baliński, Deputy Director, Department for Development Strategy, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy (Poland)</p> <p>[45 min] Group discussion – all participants intervene sharing the next steps for NUFs in their countries and recommendations for UN-Habitat</p> <p>[10 min] Wrap up of the session by Mr. Siraj Sait and Mr. Brendon Bosworth</p>
17:30 - 17:45	Conclusion and Final Remarks	<p>[10min] Wrap up of EGM – key takeaways by Moderator: Mr. Siraj Sait</p> <p>[5 mins] Closing Remark: Ms. Christine Knudsen, Director, External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat</p>

Appendix 4: List of participants

1	Penny Abeywardena	33	Xavier Mestres
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7	Aissata Camara	39	Godfrey Nyamrunda
8	Daria Cibrario	40	Helen Odera
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12	Filiep Decorte	44	Jeremiah Ougo
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15	Carmen Sanchez-Miranda Gallego	47	Ariel Partush
16	Amie Garrett	48	Vanessa Pinto
17	Stephanie Gerretsen	49	Adriana Plata
18	Radoslaw Gorecki	50	Wojciech Porczyk
19	Mukuki Hante	51	Valentina Ricca
20	Norliza Hashim	52	Eduardo Teran Rueda
21	Deogratias Kalimenze	53	Siraj Sait
22	Wataru Kawasaki	54	Diana Sancho
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24	Lucia Kiwala	56	Yoel Siegel
25	Christine Knudsen	57	Joanna Śliz
26	Atsushi Koresawa	58	Vanna Sok
27	Katarzyna Kowalska	59	Pen Sophal
28	Monika Kusina	60	Ly Sovann
29	Anna Kvashuk	61	Naomi Tsur
30	Netanel Lapidot	62	Amiel Vasl
31	Fernanda Lonardoní	63	Daniel Wasik
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Endnotes

- ¹ Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation. https://wuf.unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/WUF10_final_declared_actions.pdf
- ² See appendix 1 for list of speakers and appendix 2 for speaker biographies.
- ³ UN-Habitat. 2017. New Urban Agenda. A/RES/71/256* Paragraph 41, p.14.
- ⁴ New Urban Agenda. Paragraph 92, p.24.
- ⁵ Agenda Hábitat Sostenible del Ecuador 2036. <http://habitatsostenible.miduvi.gob.ec/portfolio/habitat-2036/>
- ⁶ United Nations. 2020. Policy brief: COVID-19 in an urban world. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/sg_policy_brief_covid_urban_world_july_2020_final.pdf
- ⁷ Presentation by Mr. Filiep Decorte, Chief (oic), Programme Development Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat.
- ⁸ The 15-minute city refers to a city where "all citizens are able to meet most or all of their needs within a short walk or bike ride from home." See C40 Climate Leadership Group. 2020. How to build back better with a 15-minute city. <https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-build-back-better-with-a-15-minute-city?>
- ⁹ António Guterres. 2019. Remarks to High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2019-09-24/remarks-high-level-political-sustainable-development-forum>
- ¹⁰ UN-Habitat Urban Agenda Platform. urbanagendaplatform.org
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- ¹⁵ Spanish Urban Agenda. 2019. <https://www.aue.gob.es/>
- ¹⁶ Spanish Urban Agenda. 2019. Strategic goal 10: improving intervention instruments and governance. https://www.aue.gob.es/recursos_aue/03_oe10.pdf
- ¹⁷ Israel Ministry of Construction and Housing. Israel national report for Habitat III. <http://uploads.habitat3.org/hb3/Israel-National-Report-Final-1.pdf>
- ¹⁸ Israel Ministry of Construction and Housing. Special report: Implementation of SDG11 in Israel: Challenges and Future Prospects. https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/reports/sdg11_israel_report_2019/he/documents_tichnun_ironi_sdg11_israel_report_2019.pdf
- ¹⁹ See, for example, Guidelines for voluntary local reviews (UCLG and UN-Habitat, 2020). https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclg_vlrlab_guidelines_2020_volume_i.pdf
- ²⁰ See the UN Sustainable Development Knowledge platform: Voluntary National Reviews Database. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>
- ²¹ UN-Habitat 2020. World Urban Forum Alumni Network brings together former host countries and cities to create a lasting legacy. <https://unhabitat.org/story-wuf10-alumni>
- ²² UN News. 2020. Ai Weiwei sculpture celebrates pedal power, as Urban Forum continues in Abu Dhabi. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1057201>
- ²³ UN-Habitat 2020. As a living legacy to WUF10 in Abu Dhabi, officials plant the evergreen Ghaf tree. <https://unhabitat.org/as-a-living-legacy-to-wuf10-in-abu-dhabi-officials-plant-the-evergreen-ghaf-tree>

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