Press Release for Immediate Release

World Urban Forum Unites Around Inclusive and Accessible Cities

UNHabitat, New York, Amman, and Sao Paulo, welcome Abu Dhabi, Barcelona, Helsinki and other leaders to the Cities For All (C4All) Global Campaign

Abu Dhabi, February 14th, 2020

A historic signing ceremony took place during the World Urban Forum Stakeholders Roundtable on Persons with Disabilities on Monday, 10th February 2020 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center.

Abu Dhabi Department of Community Development (DCD), the cities of Barcelona, Helsinki, Banjul, and Almaty, along with civil society organizations such as Special Olympics Saudi Arabia, Accessible AD, SEDRA, Direct Access, Access-Ability, Lima Como Vamos, Redescol Colombia, and Ohana Indonesia, join the Cities4All (C4All) Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities during the tenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10). This ceremony was organized by World Enabled and co-hosted by the DIAUD Network, and World Blind Union.¹

¹ For More info about #C4All Global Campaign: www.cities4all.org
Dr. Bushra Al Mulla, Acting Executive Director of the Community Development DCD, Abu Dhabi explains that the Department “seeks to fulfill all the needs and aspirations of People of Determination by empowering them in various aspects of life. She also highlighted on the importance of economically empowering those able to work from this segment which comes as part of the department’s firm belief in the ability of people of determination to achieve excellence and success in various fields. She finally affirmed that the Department of Community Development is actively collaborating with all government departments and entities in Abu Dhabi to empower and integrate people of determination through the National Policy to empower People of Determination.”

The ceremony gathers commitments of global leaders to building inclusive and accessible cities for persons with disabilities and older persons. This event unites leaders in human rights, international development, smart cities, as well as in urban planning, policy, and design. Founding cities of this compact include Berlin, New York, Chicago, São Paulo, Rio, and Amman among others.

“The Global Compact of the Inclusive and Accessible Cities makes visible our serious commitment to an inclusive city that is truly for all. Helsinki’s mission is to be the most functional city in the world. The city looks forward to practical, determined steps to achieve this goal for all.” said, Jan Vapaavuori, Mayor of Helsinki
An estimated 550 million persons with disabilities and older persons around the world now live in towns and cities, and these groups are estimated to represent over 2 billion persons in cities worldwide by 2050. More than 1 billion people in the world live with disabilities and a growing population of older residents (currently 58% of the estimated 900 million globally) are being denied basic rights such as education, transportation, employment, among others. By 2050 close to 70% of the world population will live in cities.

Miquel Rodriguez Planas, Commissioner of Agenda 2030, City of Barcelona adds that “Barcelona is glad to be part of the Cities for All Global Compact, as this initiative is totally aligned with our goal to become one of the most accessible and inclusive cities in the world. Right now 91% of our subway stations are accessible, and we will work to have 100% of them accessible.”

The Cities For All (C4All) Global Campaign on Inclusive and Accessible Cities operationalize the commitments agreed in the Compact by creating a clear implementation framework that will promote best practices, and provide clear guidelines and technical support for city leaders and urban development actors. The Cities 4 All Global Campaign and Compact were launched in Berlin in December 2018.

“Accessibility is more than just tangible ramps and high-tech installations, it’s about rewiring our community to think differently and act inclusively,” said Dr. Heidi Alaskary, CEO of Special Olympics Saudi Arabia. “That’s why we signed the “cities for all compact.” We look forward to working together to offer greater opportunities to build equitable communities.”

The Cities For All (C4All) Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities is a declaration that aligns 6 key principles (non-discrimination, accessibility, participation, inclusive policies, capacity building, data for development) which are based on commitments to accessibility, universal design and inclusion found in The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations New Urban Agenda, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the WHO’s Age-friendly Cities and Communities Initiative. It affirms the rights of 1 billion women, men, girls and boys with disabilities and the increasing share of the global population aged 60 or older that experience barriers to their equitable participation in society. This global call for action lays at the core of the #Cities4All campaign.
Signatories: Dr. Bushra Al Mulla - Acting Executive Director, Department of Community Development, Abu Dhabi; Sanna-Mari Jantti - Director of Strategic Initiatives, City of Helsinki; Miquel Planas - Commissioner 2030 Agenda, City of Barcelona; Rohey Malick Lowe - Lord Mayor, Banjul City Council; Lyazzat Kaltayeva - Almaty City Municipality, chair of the Central Asian Disability Forum; Reem Al Fahim, Sedra Foundation CEO; Dr Ally Dunhill, co-founder Accessible AD; Dr Heidi Alaudeem Alaskary - CEO Special Olympics Saudi Arabia; Steve Deren - founder, Direct Access; Shivani Gupta - founder, AccessAbility; Mariana Alegre - Executive Director, Lima Como Vamos; Henry Murillo - Redescol Colombia; Risna Utami - Ohana Indonesia

About WUF10

The World Urban Forum is a non-legislative technical Forum, convened by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) since 2002. It is recognized as the foremost global arena in the field of sustainable urban development and human settlements. WUF10 is jointly organized with the Abu Dhabi Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities and UN Habitat. The Forum draws participation of local and national leaders, government officials, civil society, academia, private sector, grassroots and other policy and decision makers from around the world.

In addition, the WUF Stakeholder roundtable on Persons with Disabilities included the following speakers Penny Abeywardena, NYC Commissioner for International Affairs; Malgorzata Jarosinska-Jedynak, Minister of Funds and Regional Policy of Republic of Poland (TBC); Dr. Heidi Alaudeem Alaskary, Chief Executive Officer at Special Olympics Saudi Arabia; Alby Bocanegra, Vice President, Urban Tech Partnerships of Mastercard; Gilberto Chona, Lead Specialist of the Inter-American Development Bank; Dr. Bushra Al Mulla, Acting Executive Director of Community Development Sector, Abu Dhabi City; Risnawati Utami, founder of OHANA Indonesia, CRPD Committee member; Henry Murillo Salazar, representative of RIADIS – Latin American Network of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families; Abdulmumuni Ujah Sulayman,
Chair of Disability Community Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria; Ombati Elizabeth Nyabiage, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP); Rubi Mahmood, Division Director for the Office of Students of Determination at Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK); and Elkin Velasquez, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-HABITAT

About World Enabled
World Enabled is a global education, communications, and strategic consulting group. We support companies and governments with the full implementation of legal mandates for inclusion and diversity. Our work and research initiatives further innovative approaches to inclusive urban development. With our international partners, we help build inclusive societies where people with disabilities and older persons can fully develop their talents and reach their full potential. [www.worldenabled.org](http://www.worldenabled.org)

About WBU
WBU was the first DPO (Disabled Persons Organization) to sign the compact when it was launched in 2018 and are committed to mobilize organizations of persons with disabilities to the community of practice with cities and urban stakeholders. WBU is committed to mobilize our members to ensure their countries sign the compact. We are leading a delegation of persons with disabilities here at the WUF10. [http://www.worldblindunion.org/](http://www.worldblindunion.org/)

About General Assembly of Partners Partner Constituent Groups (GAP-PCG)
The GAP structure was made up of 16 Partner Constituent Groups (PCGs). The original 13 groups were formed out of merging the Habitat II Partners (Local Authorities; NGOs and CBOs; Trade Unions; Professionals; Academics and Researchers; Human Solidarity Groups; Indigenous People; Parliamentarians; Private Sector; Foundations; Financial Institutions; Youth; and Women) and the Agenda 21 Major Groups (Children & Youth; Business & Industry; Farmers; Indigenous Peoples; Local Authorities; Non-Governmental Organizations; Scientific & Technological Community; Women; and Workers & Trade Unions). Thereafter, three new groups applied to join the GAP and were approved by the Executive Committee: Media, Older Persons, and Persons with Disabilities.

GAP is mentioned in paragraph 128 of the UNHabitat New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256*) as an independent entity that contributed to the process of Habitat. Thereafter, the stakeholder groups have actively participated during World Urban Forum 9, and now in World Urban Forum 10 organizing the official Stakeholder Roundtables.