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UN-Habitat announces the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum returning to Africa after 20 years

Nairobi, 9 September 2024 – The twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12), one of the largest United Nations non-legislative events, will be held from 4 to 8 November 2024 in Cairo, Egypt. Organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in collaboration with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, this event will be held under the patronage of the Prime Minister, along with the Ministry of Local Development and the Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities of Egypt.

A historic return to Africa

For the first time since 2001, the World Urban Forum returns to Africa. As the continent faces rapid urbanization, the significance of this global event cannot be understated. Africa's population is projected to nearly double over the next 30 years, with 6 major cities expected to house more than 10 million people by 2035. The African cities of Luanda, Dar es Salaam, Cairo, Kinshasa, Lagos, and Greater Johannesburg are set to become some of the world's largest metropolitan hubs, according to the EIU African Cities 2035 report.

With Africa emerging as the fastest urbanizing region, WUF12 will focus on building strong coalitions to address key global challenges posed by the global housing crisis and climate change.

Global participation and impactful dialogue

The five-day event is expected to attract thousands of participants from all over the world, including representatives from national, regional, and local governments, businesses, community leaders, urban planners, and civil society organizations. To date, over 6,500 attendees from 160 countries have registered for the Forum. WUF12 will feature more than 500 events, an extended Urban Expo, and Cairo Urban Week – a programme of activities connecting WUF12 to the city and its communities. The main sessions of WUF12 will be livestreamed in all six UN languages, as well as in International and Arabic Sign Languages.

Housing on the agenda

The overarching theme of the twelfth session is "It all starts at home: Local actions for sustainable cities and communities." This theme broadens the concept of "home" beyond the physical structure, emphasizing the cultural, social, economic, and environmental dimensions of life in cities. The Forum will focus on how cities can be leveraged to

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accelerate global progress towards sustainable development, promote comprehensive urban policies and informal settlements transformation, improve governance and participation, and form coalitions and partnerships.

Key topics to be discussed include:

- Adequate housing for all and informal settlements transformation
- Cities and climate crisis
- Partnerships and coalitions to bridge global goals to local realities
- Unlocking local financing for sustainable development
- Harnessing technology to enhance quality of life without leaving no one behind
- Building safe homes in the face of destruction and displacement.

“At the Forum, we will address crucial challenges, such as housing, land use, urban planning, governance and participation. We will listen to diverse stakeholders and tackle key issues: how to ensure affordable housing for all, transform informal settlements, recover and rebuild, and enhance climate resilience,” said Anacláudia Roszbach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat. “We need to build strong coalitions for better solutions to challenges posed by the global housing crisis,” she added.

A call to action

WUF12 is not just about discussions but is also an invitation to take home innovative solutions, best practices, and inspiration. It is a call to participants to lead transformational change locally, together, and now.

To register, visit: www.wuf.unhabitat.org.

About the World Urban Forum

Established in 2001 by the United Nations, the World Urban Forum is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization, designed to examine the impacts of rapid urbanization on cities, communities, economies, and climate change. Since its inception, WUF has been hosted in cities across the world, with the first session held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2002.

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About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit unhabitat.org.

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