

SDG CITIES GLOBAL CONFERENCE

29 – 31 OCTOBER 2021

Overview

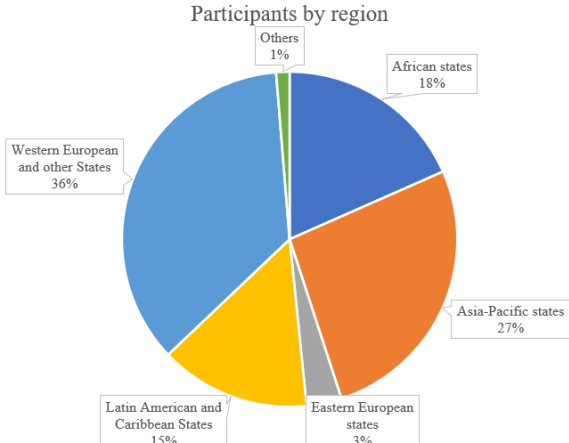
With 55% of the world's population living in urban areas and an additional 2.5 billion urban residents expected in the next 30 years, and with 65 percent of SDG targets being relevant to cities, it's no surprise the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities. Mitigating climate change, adapting, and building resilience to the enormous climate related risks the world is increasingly facing, and recovering from pandemic in a way that is just and green, and that puts our planet and its most vulnerable people first, requires a renewed vigour and global joint action towards accelerating the achievement of the SDGs in cities. SDG Cities is a global collaborative action of diverse actors that aims to support and recognise exceptional efforts of over 1000 cities to implement the SDGs.

The first SDG Cities Global Conference was jointly hosted by UN-Habitat and the Municipality of Shanghai, together with the Global Sustainability Index Institute. The Conference was hosted virtually on 29 – 31 October 2021 as a key Urban October event, coinciding also with the World Cities Day. The goal of this Conference was to bring together diverse actors to explore how cities can be supported to accelerate the achievement of SDGs at scale through collaborative action. The Conference included eight formal sessions and one side event, covering the following topics: urban data and monitoring, Voluntary Local Reviews, the SDG Cities Flagship Initiative, investment in urban impact, digital transformation of cities, achieving health and wellbeing in cities and SDG-oriented project design. The Conference was attended by 620 participants from all over the world who joined for one or more session. These included city leaders, leaders of city networks, civil society organisations, academics, private consultancy companies, development banks and international financial institutions.

Participation

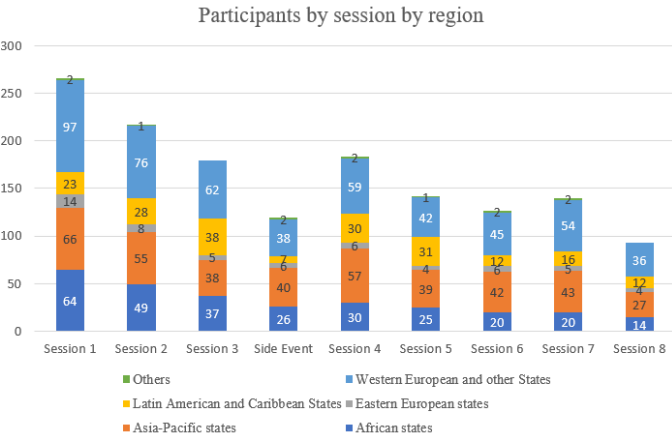
620 participants joined the Conference for one or more sessions from 88 countries/territories, including Western European and Other States (36%); Asia-Pacific (27%); Africa (18%); Latin America and Caribbean States (15%); Eastern Europe (3%).

UN Regional Group	Number participants	Percentage
African states	114	18.4%
Asia-Pacific states	165	26.6%
Eastern European states	21	3.4%
Latin American and Caribbean States	90	14.5%
Western European and other States	222	35.8%
Others	8	1.3%
Total	620	



Number and percentage of participants breakdown by region

On average each participant has spent 72.5 minutes in the Conference - roughly one full session. The first day achieved the greatest participation, with less participation on the second and third days over the weekend.



Regional Group	DAY 1 29 October				DAY 2 30 October		DAY 3 31 October		
	1	2	3	Side Event	4	5	6	7	8
African states	64	49	37	26	30	25	20	20	14
Asia-Pacific states	66	55	38	40	57	39	42	43	27
Eastern European states	14	8	5	6	6	4	6	5	4
Latin American and Caribbean States	23	28	38	7	30	31	12	16	12
Western European and other States	97	76	62	38	59	42	45	54	36
Others	2	1	0	2	2	1	2	2	0
Total	266	217	180	119	184	142	127	140	93

Number of participants by session and region

Conference Sessions

1. Opening and Setting the Scene – Climate, COVID 19, SDGs and Cities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QM079sLY3kU>



*Moderator:
Dr. Shipra Narang Suri,
Chief: Urban
Practices Branch,
UN-Habitat*



*Keynote Speaker:
Prof. Ed Glaeser,
Harvard University*



*Mr. Rafael Tuts, Director:
Global Solutions
Division, UN-Habitat*



*Mr. Liu Qianwei, Chief Engineer,
Shanghai Municipal Commission
of Housing and Urban-Rural
Development and Management*



*Ms. Emilia Saiz, Secretary
General: United Cities and
Local Government*



*Dr. Greg Munro, Director, Cities
Alliance*



*Dr. Eduardo Lopez, , OIC,
UN-Habitat External
Relations Strategy,
Knowledge and Innovation
Division*



*Prof. Marcos Troyjo, President,
New Development Bank*

The first session of the conference was moderated by Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of Urban Practices Branch of UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat's opening statement, delivered by Mr. Rafael Tuts, Director of Global Solutions Division, noted that the growing number of the global population in urban areas, currently estimated at 55%, is expected to increase to around 90% by the end of the century. He emphasised that recovering from COVID-19 in cities requires adopting green and just approaches that reduce social inequalities that have contributed to pandemic vulnerability. He also called for stepped up efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change in cities. Both these priorities require renewed action to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in cities. The opening statement of Shanghai was delivered by Mr. Liu Qianwei, Chief Engineer at the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and

Management. He promoted the SDG Cities Flagship programme and Voluntary Local Reviews as instruments to implement development cycles that accelerate the realization of sustainable development goals in cities.

Following opening statements from the hosts, Dr. Edward Glaeser, Professor at Harvard University, delivered a keynote speech on the survival of cities. He started by outlining a clear correlation of urbanisation and wealth creation, noting that “the path to prosperity runs through city streets.” He also noted that in developed economies, people who live in dense, compact areas have much smaller carbon footprints than those in sprawling urban areas and rural areas. Much can be therefore gained by ensuring cities tower to the skies rather than sprawl. However, cities, being nodes for global trade that enable the entry of people, ideas and trade, also enable the entry and spread of viruses.

While the plague of Athens in 450 BC killed 25% of its population the city soldiered through and grew. Over the centuries cities have always managed to soldier through crises – with civil society playing an important role – and ultimately continue to grow. This is because, despite risks, the poor will continue to migrate to cities in hope for better opportunities. The wealthy west of the 19th century learnt and took action to reduce vulnerability by investing in city water and sewerage infrastructure, but unfortunately did not invest in their colonised cities. In New York, COVID-19 cases were least prevalent in the densest (and wealthiest) parts of the city, meaning mobility, not density has been the greatest cause of contagion. Pandemic unequally affects the poor.

For decades it has been argued that communications technology will overcome the need for physical proximity, and indeed technology such as Zoom has aided the survival of some industries, while those dependant on social interaction - restaurants etc. – have experienced a severe blow. However, using data on performance, opportunity and proximity, Prof Glaeser demonstrated that we are a “social species that get smart by being around smart people.” Business, he believes, will continue to depend on social and physical interaction. Finally, investing in water, sewerage and health is key to strengthening resilience of cities. Prof Glaeser recommended an empowered global alliance that monitors and invests seriously in health worldwide, and in this regard, SDGs are an important way to underscore that we are all in this together. The age of urban miracles is not over. Cities are amazingly resilient and will always innovate. Amazing things will continue to come from people that are empowered by proximity.

The panel discussion that followed began with a contribution from Ms. Emilia Saiz, Secretary General at United Cities and Local Government. She expressed that the crisis the world is currently facing today is not only solely a health crisis, but a universal convergence of health crisis with climate and inequality emergencies, which the world has been facing for a long period of time. Ms. Saiz suggested that the public service provision is going to be a key factor in addressing these crises. She stated that “it’s not only about technical solutions but about the will to overcome inequality and if we want to do this, we need local service provisions with more capacities and more empowerment.”

Ms Saiz was followed by Dr. Greg Munro, Director at Cities Alliance, who emphasized that rapid urbanization has come with an environmental cost, as many cities are overcome by the pressure of development resulting from urbanization. He noted that the capacity for planning is limited and very few secondary cities have adapted strategic planning for infrastructure, land development, land finance and long-term strategic planning. He concluded his statement by saying that cities benefit from knowledge tools availed by organizations such as UN-Habitat and World Bank.

The final panel speaker was Dr. Eduardo Moreno, OIC, UN-Habitat External Relations Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, who stated that local neighbourhoods or small cities are extremely important places when it comes to addressing the pandemic, building government mechanisms, and responding to economic and health crises. Dr. Moreno discussed UN-Habitat's *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future* report, which incorporated analysis from 1700 cities in the world in terms of how prepared they were for the pandemic, the socio-economic impact they faced, and the responses they implemented. The analysis associated vulnerabilities in cities with overcrowding, inadequate services and mobility, and noted greater severity in unplanned, informal areas. The report calls for a new social contract for cities, that helps overcome inequalities that have made certain urban communities extremely vulnerable.

The Q&A that followed centred around the question how new complex forms of vulnerability can be addressed that are often place, economy, action or mobility based. Ms Saiz emphasised the importance of mapping vulnerabilities and placing vulnerability at the centre stage of change. Dr Munro also stressed the importance of knowing your city, through mapping where

the greatest needs are and emphasised the need to put the poorest people at the centre of city development strategies.

A statement was then delivered by Prof. Marcos Troyjo, President of the New Development Bank. He emphasized that mitigating and adapting to climate change at the city level is paramount, and must be integrated into urban investments. For example one of NDB's investment projects in Shanghai has reduced 52 thousand tonnes of carbon in Shanghai each year. The sustainable development goals are part of NDB's DNA and urban projects should protect livelihoods and infrastructure and be enhanced through innovation. So far NDB has expanded development impact in more than 46 cities in the BRICS and has approved 80 projects (30 billion USD). Banks must also help cities overcome the COVID crisis; NDB has provided emergency assistance to cities that were hit the hardest by the pandemic and has committed ten billion dollars to pandemic related emergency assistance relief.

Finally, Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, the UN-Habitat SDG Cities Coordinator provided an overview of the SDG Cities Programme (<https://www.sdg-cities.org/>) and emphasised that in order to get greater SDG results it is crucial to focus on the communities that are left behind. In this regard he highlighted the importance of data to facilitate a deeper understanding of needs and recognized the crucial role of partnerships and global collaboration to boost transformation.

2. Global Urban Monitoring Framework and its local application

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_83M2nENb-Y



*Moderator:
Dr. Robert Ndugwa, Head of Data
and Analytics Section, UN-Habitat*



*Dr. Kevin Johnson, Managing
Director of Geografia, Australia*



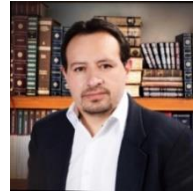
*Mr. Ed Steane, Executive Director
of Greater Sydney Region*



*Ms. Amutshilani Setoboli, Chief
Housing Officer, Ministry of
Infrastructure and Housing
Development, Botswana*



*Dr. Cheng Jian, Director, Shanghai
World Cities Day*



*Mr. Bernardo Del Castillo,
Technical Expert of City Policy
Formulation, UN-Habitat
Bolivia*



*Mr. Abdelhakeem Alroshoodi,
Director of Urban Planning,
Qassim Urban Observatory, Saudi
Arabia*



*Ms. Erin Bromaghim, Director of
Olympic and Paralympic
Development in the Mayor's
Office of International Affairs,
City of Los Angeles*

This session, moderated by Dr. Robert Ndugwa, Head of Data and Analytics Section, UN-Habitat, shared experiences of cities in generating action-oriented data and introduced the Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) and its localisation. The UMF, developed through a collaboration of UN entities, governments and diverse partners responds to UN Statistical Commission's request to UN-Habitat to harmonise existing urban indexes and tools. It provides a universal framework to efficiently and effectively track the progress of cities in their efforts to achieve the SDGs as well deliver on the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement. Through adoption by both cities and the UN System, it aims strengthen the engagement of UN country operations at local levels.

The session commenced with a presentation from Dr. Kevin Johnson, Managing Director at Geografia Australia, who briefly introduced the UMF which encourages participation and innovation and enables the collection of high-quality data. He also underlined the adaptability of the framework to the local context and its flexibility in using a variety of different data sources, including traditional surveys and emerging data gathering methods, such as GIS data, satellite imagery, and cell phone data. Dr. Johnson concluded by emphasising that the UMF is designed to be adapted, borrowed, refined, and possibly improved for specific projects.

Mr. Ed Steane, Executive Director at Greater Sydney Region, reported on experiences from urban monitoring in the Greater Sydney Region. This covers three areas: think (thought leadership), plan (strategic plan), and do (precincts & collaboration). The region produces five-year reviews of both the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the Five Districts Plans, and currently focuses on experience of COVID-19, local issues and climate change. Four performance

indicators that are in line with the UMF are being monitored: (1) Job, education, housing, (2) 30-min city, (3) Walkable places, (4) Addressing urban heat. Mr. Steane looks forward to understanding how the UMF can track performance and enable comparison with other cities, as well as identifying particular challenges for the region.

Ms. Amutshilani Setoboli, Chief Housing Officer at Ministry of Infrastructure and Housing Development Botswana, shared her experience of using the City Prosperity Index (CPI), (a predecessor of the UMF) in Botswana and piloting the project in two cities (Gaborone and Francistown). She stressed the importance of structure and the need for a mechanism to collect, validate, store and disseminate administrative data in order to succeed. For her, the CPI plays a key role on Botswana's way towards urban prosperity. Ms. Setoboli further highlighted plans to establish an urban observatory to continually monitor data.

Dr. Cheng Jian, Director at Shanghai World Cities Day Coordinator Centre, then introduced the Shanghai Adapted Index. The Index is aligned to the UMF and aims to help cities assess and reflect their development achievements and challenges in order to adjust their priorities. The index takes account of the differences between cities, based on scale, geography and GDP. It covers 41 areas, and a theme index that assesses a specific urban trend each year. It utilises data derived from different sources such as Open Data, survey data, big data and geographic data, which could generate baseline analysis for the flagship initiative, SDG Cities. Mr. Bernardo Del Castillo from UN-Habitat Bolivia then spoke about the monitoring and evaluation framework for Urban Policy in Bolivia. The CPI has now covered 26 cities in Bolivia, and presented spatial and urban information for Santa Cruz de la Sierra. He spoke about the measurement of non-traditional socio-economic indicators and the monitoring for the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2018 in the main cities of Bolivia.

Mr. Abdelhakeem Alroshoodi presented the Qassim Urban Observatory, founded 12 years ago which provides data on 13 cities in Saudi Arabia. Mr. Alroshoodi underlined the importance of using data, indicators, and a universal framework to seek common ground for urban monitoring that provides a scientific analysis on the achievement of SDGs. He introduced the report "The Urban Development Status in Qassim Region" which has been the first voluntary report to measure sustainable development goals, focusing on Goal 11, of its kind for Middle Eastern cities.

The final contribution was made by Ms. Erin Bromaghim, Director of Olympic and Paralympic Development at Los Angeles. She stressed that mapping the progress on the SDGs helps to identify the gaps that may exist and to be more data-driven and transparent. Her city, Los Angeles, is the first city in the world to report data on the SDGs at the indicator level using an open-source platform. It regularly reports on 159 localized SDG indicators. The platform has also been adopted by many other cities within and outside the United States. Data sources include earth observations, official national statistics, municipal data and community generated data. Ms. Bromaghim concluded by emphasizing that the focus of the team is not just getting more and more data but using and analysing the data to help them do a better job as public servants, as well as build data models that can be applied by other cities globally.

3. Voluntary Local Reviews and their role in accelerating SDG implementation locally

Youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WX1mEFjBr8>



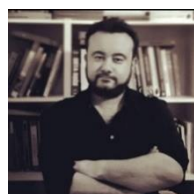
Moderator:
Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat



Prof. Deng Zhituan, Shanghai Academy of Social Science



Mr. Nicolas Gharbi, Principal Advisor for City Diplomacy and International Affairs, Madrid, Spain



Mr. Sami Serkan Nebioğlu, Foreign Affairs Specialist, İzmir, Turkey



Ms. Mariana Cammisa, Strategic Coordination and Monitoring Manager



Dr. Ville Taajamaa, Focal point for Agenda 2030, Espoo, Finland



Dr. Edlam Abera, Chief, Urbanization Section, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

This session explored the role Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) can play in the process of locally implementing the SDGs. The session sought to go beyond the presentation of VLR experiences and explored how VLRs can contribute to wider processes of SDG localisation through its linkage with the Global Urban Monitoring Framework and programmes to accelerate the

implementation of the SDGs, including the SDG Cities Initiative. The session was opened by the moderator Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat who stated that local governments are central for a pandemic recovery that is resilient and inclusive, and that VLRs and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) are increasingly becoming the tool of choice of local governments to report on their SDG progress. Dr. Narang Suri posed the challenge of how to make sure that VLRs feed into concrete and transformative action.

Following this, Dr. Deng Zhituan, Professor at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, delivered the keynote speech and introduced the Shanghai VLR. The report, completed in October 2021, relied on cross-departmental collaboration, and identified Shanghai's overarching goal to be a modern socialist international metropolis with world influence. Dr Zhituan then stated that Shanghai is trying to build a VLR evaluation framework, which combines macro level overview of Shanghai's Response to SDGs in general and a more detailed process of reviewing specific SDG targets. Shanghai has three SDG related ambitions: to be a "city of prosperity and innovation", a "city of happiness and humanity", and a "city of green and resiliency". In order to reach these goals, seven priority targets for review in the VLR reports were defined in 2021. Prof. Deng concluded by sharing Shanghai's intention to make voluntary local reporting part of its regular strategy to continuously promote sustainable development.

The panel discussion that followed included representatives from different cities who shared their experiences with VLRs. The discussion started with a contribution from Dr. Ville Taajamaa, focal point for the Agenda 2030 in Espoo, Finland, who explained that VLRs in the city of Espoo takes stock of "where we are" and explores "where we want to be". As a next step, the SDGs will be embedded not only in the city strategy but also in the departmental strategies. He further elaborated on the coordination between VLR process at Espoo and the Voluntary National Review, highlighting the active and supportive role of the Prime Minister Office in this regard. He concluded with the pragmatic advice that a good indicator is one that is used.

Ms. Mariana Cammisa, Strategic Coordination and Monitoring Manager, Buenos Aires, Argentina, emphasised the importance of coordination at both national levels (vertical) and across Argentinian cities, (horizontal) through the "cities for climate partnership". She reported that Buenos Aires has already produced three VLRs and sees them as a tool for accountability. According to Ms. Cammisa VLRs offer the opportunity to learn both from the own process and from the global process. Regarding the Voluntary National Review, she

recommends increasing the coordination across national, subnational and local governments.

Mr. Nicolas Gharbi, Principal Advisor for City Diplomacy and International affairs in Madrid, Spain, shared that Madrid has committed to prepare a VLR, and that the VLR plays a dual role, first, as a tool to deliver good policies to the citizens, and secondly, to advocate on the strategic importance of local and regional governments. The municipality is trying to focus on three aspects: data, the capacity for financing infrastructure and social services, and the capacity of partnership. According to Mr. Gharbi, the commitment to VLRs gives agency to the SDG localisation agenda and creates horizontal coherence with other cities. However, interdependence and subsidiarity between the different levels of government exist, and as such localising SDGs falls beyond the scope of simply the will of a particular city.

Mr. Sami Serkan Nebioğlu, Foreign Affairs Specialist in İzmir, Turkey, stated the implementation of the VLR in İzmir has started. VLR, he states, is an important tool to localize the implementation of the SDGs. He suggested that a special attention should be given to culture, as culture can be seen as being central to each SDG. Thus, İzmir plans to evaluate in the second VLR, how culture can be mainstreamed in the VLR. Mr. Nebioğlu further stressed the importance of peer learning and creating working groups with local stakeholders.

The final panellist was Dr. Edlam Abera, Chief of the Urbanization Section, at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. She sees VLRs as an instrument for applying a local lens across all development efforts, sectoral policies and strategies. She noted that across Africa, both local and national governments are interested in developing VLRs.. She further stressed the importance of ownership and engagement of citizens and stakeholders in the discussion and process of VLR. This should be institutionalised as an integral component of SDG implementation. According to her, the UN needs to do more with member states to localize SDGs across borders, sectors and in policy making. Dr. Abera concluding by emphasising the need to scale up VLR implementation and to mainstream data and localisation as a way of life beyond SDGs. Shipra Narang Suri wrapped up the session by emphasising that VLRs can be understood as a learning process. She also underlined the internal and external role of VLRs, as pointed out by many city representatives, and closed the session by stating that is not about creating new structures, but about integrating the VLRs within existing structures. The work of local governments should be facilitated rather than increasing the burden on them.

4. SDG Cities: Collaborative action to unleash the potential of cities to accelerate the global achievement of SDGs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgPf0HyopZQ>



Moderator:
Mr. Roland Schatz, CEO, Global Sustainability Index Institute



Dr. Dayor Dieudonné Musibono, Presidential Advisor, SDG Office, DRC



Ms. Ana Oregi, Deputy Mayor, Victoria Gasteiz, Spain



Mr. Bader Al-Munaifi, Deputy CEO, KPC Kuwait



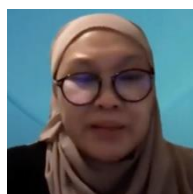
Mr. Jagdeep Singh Deo, Chairman of Housing, Town and Country Planning, City of Penang



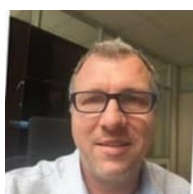
Ajay Davessar, SDG Cities Advisor, UNGSII



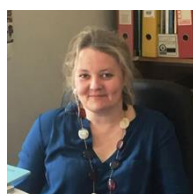
Gareth Presch, Founder, CEO World Health Innovation Summit, World Health Service



Ms. Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive, Urbanice Malaysia



Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, Coordinator of SDG Cities Global Initiative, UN-Habitat



Ms. Lucy Slack, Secretary General, Commonwealth Local Government Forum



Ms. Carol Lopez, Board Chair of Sister Cities International



Mr. Salim Korkmaz, General Coordinator, United Cities and Local Government MEWA



Mr. James Donovan, CEO ADEC Innovation and Founder/CEO of Global CEO Alliance



Mr. Paul Hilton, East Asia Advisory Sector Leader of Mott MacDonald

Building on foundations of effective data and evidence-based development strategies, SDG

implementation requires updated local legislation, spatial plans and infrastructure investment to drive tangible impact. This in turn requires effective local institutions and access to finance. The session shared the experience of cities in implementing SDGs and discussed how local impacts can be amplified at scale through national, regional and global networks of like-minded cities working together. Given the role of business in shaping the world's cities, the session further elaborated on the importance of mainstreaming SDGs within the business community as agents of transformation. The session also outlined how the SDG Cities Initiative can support end-to-end processes of SDG implementation at the city level and engage diverse actors in this process.

This session was moderated by Mr. Roland Schatz from the Global Sustainability Index Institute. In his introduction he expressed that the finance is there for SDGs, as well as the know-how and spirit for the global achievement of SDGs, but often the actual achievement of SDGs are held up through the details – including the ability to file projects for investment. He emphasized the importance of collaboration to achieve goals. The session began with interventions by the Presidential Advisor of Democratic Republic of Congo, Dr. Dayor Dieudonné Musibono and city representatives, followed by a city leaders dialogue, a presentation on the SDG Cities Global Initiative, dialogues with city networks and interventions from the private sector.

Learning from Cities

The first speaker, Dr. Musibono, summarised the vision of the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the implementation of the SDGs in the nation's cities. He described some of the key challenges in DRCs cities, particularly insufficient infrastructure investment to meet the needs of growing urban populations. This has resulted in the expansion of informal settlements, which in turn has made urban dwellers vulnerable to both climate change and pandemic impacts. He highlighted the President's prioritization of relevant actions to fight climate change through improved transport and clean energy.

Dr. Musibono's intervention was followed by Ms. Ana Oregi, Deputy Mayor at Vitoria Gasteiz, who outlined the city's path towards achieving the SDGs. This has so far included the city's engagement in Localising Agenda 21 in 1998, joining the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, being declared the European Green Capital in 2012, and being awarded Global Green City in 2019. The city is now focussing on advancing more broadly the achievement of SDGs and is doing so through collecting data and initiating an inclusive,

comprehensive, participatory strategic plan through a multi-stakeholder process.

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is a State-owned enterprise responsible for Kuwait's main source of revenue, oil. KPC is committed to establishing a sustainable future for the city state. Mr. Bader Al-Munaifi, Deputy CEO, KPC Kuwait, underlined the importance of equality, and described KPC's efforts to ensure fair income, gender equality, including women leadership, and supported career opportunities to individuals with disabilities. He also emphasised the need to support health initiatives. KPC sponsored the construction of Al Ahmadi hospital in Kuwait and more recently has established vaccination centres and supported awareness campaigns to mitigate the pandemic. To conclude, he presented Kuwait City's efforts to reduce pollution, promote clean energy and to conserve marine biodiversity.

Mr. Jagdeep Singh Deo, Chairman of the Housing, Town and Country Planning from the City of Penang, emphasized the importance of working collaboratively with multiple sectors to become more sustainable and resilient. The Penang Bay redevelopment was one of nine projects selected from over 100 submissions showcased at the City Investment Platform event at the last World Urban Forum. It is a partnership with people, private sector and state government which began with a public ideas competition. The development is underway with a series of projects along the coast have that combine environmental sustainability and economic development, and are responsive to climate change and the need for greater resilience to pandemics.

A year ago in Davos, Noida (university city) and Sikim in India were identified as SDG Cities. Ajay Davessar described how several Indian cities are now being identified and a multitude of SDGs need to be achieved. Increased understanding that the SDGs are now the only way forward has led to greater action by city leaders to promote the achievement of SDGs. New projects, such as high-rise affordable housing in Sikim, take a holistic approach to sustainability, by reducing consumption, collecting water and ensuring responsible waste management. Such projects are designed to contribute to social, economic and environmental dimensions of the SDGs. UN-Habitat's City Investment Facility will have a key role in leveraging investment into such projects.

Ms Norliza Hashim of Urbanice Malaysia identified three key priorities of the Malaysia SDG Cities Programme, related to national vision: inclusive growth and development; enhanced access to quality services to reduce disparity; and, increased environmental performance to

reduce adverse climate impacts. Malaysia SDG Cities also promotes innovation, smart technology and the achievement of net zero carbon emissions. Already there are seven SDG Cities in Malaysia, two of them are undertaking their Voluntary Local Reviews. Collaboration has been and will continue to be key to achieving SDG Cities and in this regard, WUF 9 and the Asian Pacific Urban Forum supported by Urbanice has managed to bring together important partnerships and learning. Through diverse global and local partnerships, achieving high ambitions for achieving SDGs may be possible.

SDG Cities Global Initiative

Mr Dyfed Aubrey, UN-Habitat's SDG Cities Coordinator outlined the SDG Cities Global Initiative. While most cities will not achieve all the SDG targets, they can develop a vision for 2030, measure their current SDG performance and prioritise investment and action in a way that fills the gap between where they are now and where they need to be by 2030. This involves focussing on parts of the city that are most left behind. SDG Cities supports a series of actions starting with data collection and analysis, leading to inclusive visioning and strategic planning, followed by identifying and developing SDG impact projects, and matchmaking them with sources of finance. In parallel the initiative builds local institutional capacity in key areas of inclusive governance, planning, municipal finance, and service delivery, which are key to enable cities to deliver the SDGs. With the ambition of impacting on a thousand cities and a billion lives, the flagship initiative reaches scale by deploying digitised tools and facilitating global collaboration of diverse partners. The Initiative recognizes exceptional efforts of cities by awarding SDG Cities Certification. www.sdg-cities.org.

City Networks

Ms. Lucy Slack, Secretary General at Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CGLF), presented three priorities to enable achieving SDGs at scale: First, cities require a networked approach that look at cities as a whole - not just through technical lenses say of planning and financing. CGLF works with other Commonwealth organisations such as architects, planners and academics, enabling to bring in various areas of support. The Commonwealth has launched a call for action on the sustainable development of cities, and in this regard CGLF is working towards a partnership with UN-Habitat - SDG Cities. Secondly, cities need direct support. The Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network helps link cities so that expertise from one city can benefit another. Thirdly, recognising "SDG implementation is what local government does," a crucial part of the jigsaw involves connecting the development aspirations of local authorities

with viable sources of finance.

Ms. Carol Lopez, Board Chair of Sister Cities International, emphasised that unbalanced capital flows to cities are always a challenge and noted the huge price tag of achieving infrastructure and service delivery as needed to achieve the SDGs. Efforts must be accelerated to reduce poverty, increase education and ensure clean energy to reach the targets set by the 2030 Agenda; in other SDG areas, progress is stagnating. The mismanagement of natural resources is a key obstacle that must be overcome. Ms. Lopez spoke about the importance of quality data and statistics to measure progress towards achieving the SDGs and provide insight into how city expenditure contributes to the achievement of goals. Cities further need to be able to link to sources of finance. The former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon noted that the “Battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities.” Local authorities are in the heart of this agenda. Ms Lopez stated that Sister Cities International looks forward to its partnership with UN-Habitat on SDG Cities, through which it can enable member cities to deploy tools and foster accelerated action towards the achievement of SDGs.

The final speaker of the session was Mr. Salim Korkmaz, General Coordinator at United Cities and Local Government MEWA. He noted that cities with data are better able to localise and prioritise the achievement of SDGs, yet data is not often available at the local level. People also need to be aware of SDGs if they are to be supported. UCLG-MWEA has a three-pronged strategy: focalising, vocalising and localising. It has worked with 15 member cities in reviewing over 2000 pipeline projects to assess their alignment with SDGs, and is working with five member cities to undertake the Voluntary Local Review. Mr. Korkmaz outlined his expectation of SDG Cities. He believes it will support coordination between cities and facilitate them to share experience; build VLR momentum towards tangible impact and create a continuous learning environment; engage continuity of progress beyond the political mandates of mayors; provide national and international recognition of the efforts of cities, and hopefully improve their access to finance; and, strengthen policy coherence at different levels of government.

The Engagement of Private Sector

The last part of the session was centred around dialogue with the private sector. Mr. James Donovan, CEO at ADEC Innovation and Founder/CEO of Global CEO Alliance, stated that a sustainable future can only be resolved by science-based strategies and a value data-driven proposition. The private sector makes up 70% of the global economy. Adec Innovations, with

4500 staff in 18 countries, has been advancing sustainability by leveraging data. Mr Donovan recognises that Environment Social and Governance (ESG) investment can only be undertaken through a data driven scientific approach. While seeing the potential of cities to drive a sustainable future, he also noted challenging realities of cities that sometimes include short leadership terms, limited technical capacity and limited financial resources. Mr Donovan noted that there is a wall of money from the private sector that needs to be spent on climate change mitigation and SDG impact, however it not have a clear pathway due to lack of clear data. Capital and a value proposition is needed. Adec Innovations offers private sector and NGOs with ESG sustainability strategy, ESG metrics and management reporting; technology solutions and impact capital. The scale of ESG transition should not be underestimated but often falls apart in the detail. However, through data platform diverse data sources can be analysed to support a scientific approach to identifying vulnerability and prioritising action. Incentives, investment , ingenuity and unprecedented levels of cooperation to generate the change we need. Business need to be and are a crucial part of this. We are one community and must work together.

Mott Macdonald is a international consultancy corporation. Paul Hilton leads the Global Future Cities Asia Programme that works in 13 projects in 9 cities in 6 countries. He argued that new investment is key but also, we need to make use of and optimise existing financial resources – nudging what already exists towards something better. The private sector is hugely innovative and resourceful but responds to rules; SDGs need to be valued so that they can be integrated into business case drivers, and in that process be optimised.

5. Investing in Urban Impact

: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sucs8vm4JfA>



Moderator:
Ms. Alice Gugelev, Director,
Global Development Incubator



Fireside Chat
Ms. Carole Crist, Former First Lady
of Florida



Keynote:
Mr. Leslie Maasdorp, VP for
investments/CFO, New
Development Bank



Mr. Vinicio Stort, Executive
Director, Banco de Desenvolvimento
de Minas Gerais



*Ms. Liane Friere, CEO,
BlendLab*



*Ms. Nana Francois, Director, Faith
Investment*



*Mr. Goshtasb Mozafari,
Secretary General,
Asian Mayors Forum*



*Mr. Matt Benson, Director, Think
City*



*Ms. Lorie Rufo, Specialist,
Climate Investment Funds*



*Ms. Natalie Su Wen Oh, Think City;
Mr John Safrance, Emerging
Markets Infrastructure Fund, Mr
Mark Atterton REALL; Mr: Sergio
Marcondes, BlendLab*



*Mr. Christophe Dossarps CEO,
Sustainable Infrastructure
Foundation – SOURCE Platform*



*Mr. David Jackson, Director, Local
Development Finance, UN Capital
Investment Fund*



*Mr. Sharmaarke Abdullahi, OIC
of Resource Mobilisation
Section, UN-Habitat*

The annual financing gap to achieve SDGs in cities worldwide is in its trillions. Momentum is building in the financial sector to increase investment in SDG impact and studies show that the potential funding available for SDG impact outweighs the financing gap. Investment is needed in small and intermediary cities as they must accommodate a significant share of expected urban growth in coming decades, to achieve the transformative impacts of urbanization. Attracting investment in cities must go hand-in-hand with optimizing local revenue systems and ensuring accountable local public financial management.

By sharing the experience of major funds, development banks, family offices, philanthropies

and project preparation facilities, the session explored mechanisms to effectively channel finance into cities in emerging and developing economies. It also highlighted systemic bottlenecks that need to be addressed, including the need for greater support in upstream project preparation, to unlock finance.

The session identified work streams that could be explored in the lead to World Urban Forum 11 (June 2022) to further unlock financing for sustainable urbanization, including mechanisms to cascade finance into small cities and urban communities, and the potential to develop investment standards for urban SDG projects. The session also introduced the Cities Investment Facility and Feasibility Fund that aim to facilitate a greater flow of capital towards local impact. It was moderated by Ms. Alice Gugelev, Director of Global Development Incubator.

Opening

The session was opened by a fire-side chat with Ms. Carole Crist, Former First Lady of Florida and CEO of CLG Global Advisors. Ms. Crist highlighted the importance of a bottom-up approach for addressing the challenges at the local level and facilitating the cooperation between the public and the private sector. Through collaboration, local actors can advocate and give voice to shared concerns and demand action of city leaders. Ms. Crist then emphasised that the role of philanthropy is to divert capital to areas that not only leverage financial returns, but also shoulder some social responsibilities, bring benefits to the general public and serve the society. Ms. Crist pointed out that the young generation has a stronger awareness about the SDGs and it is important that the young generation engage in philanthropic work and that family wealth management should carry a sense of social responsibility in order to advance the realisation of the SDGs.

Keynote

Mr. Leslie Maasdorp, VP for investments/ CFO New Development Bank (NDB), continued to reflect the role the importance of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and how the traditional model of the MDBs can be modified to better mobilise capital for sustainable development. First, it is important to focus on a creditworthy portfolio. Second, to reach impact at scale, development banks should invest in impactful portfolios or platforms, instead of solely financing individual projects. Instead of funding the whole project, institutional should play more catalytic role in facilitating the investment of others. Thirdly, leveraging the financial system requires harmonising policies in areas such as pricing, ESG, transparency and

procurement. Mr. Maasdorp further highlighted the importance to review the fundamental of the financial structure of the MDBs, which at times are too risk-averse and remain with spare capacity on their balance sheets. Mr. Maasdorp concluded by discussing the leadership role of MBDs in responding to global crisis and in providing pathways for sustainable finance. He emphasised that it is time for the MDBs to re-define their toolbox and work towards more SDG-compliant outcomes.

Complementing this keynote, Mr. Vinicio Stort, Executive Director at Banco de Desenvolvimento de Minas Gerais, highlighted the unique role of national and sub-national development banks, being closer to ground and understand the field, in completing the collaboration chain for development financing. Sub-national development banks can generate major investment packages from several projects in small and medium size cities. This not only makes a huge impact on people's lives, but generates returns for investors. Mr. Stort stated that it is critical to join efforts across whole spectrum of financial institutions to make impact in a timely manner.

Finance ecosystems

The second part of the session elaborated further on finance ecosystems for urban impact. Ms. Liane Friere, CEO at BlendLab, stressed the need for a platform to combine resources and the coordinate efforts. Ms. Friere reviewed five different elements of de-risking. First, it is important to bring in the projects into the ecosystem where resources can be joined. Second, on the funding side, we need a hybrid financial architecture with blended finance vehicles that facilitate de-risking. Third, Ms. Friere highlighted the roles of the financial institutions, not only in mobilising but also in leverage the private capital. C financial institutions can also play a catalytic role in bringing in the philanthropic efforts. Fourth, we need to have the mechanism for innovations. Lastly, regulations, standards, coordinated efforts and platforms are needed to ensure the integration of resources.

Ms. Nana Francois, Director at Faith Invest, discussed how faiths can help mobilize capital to achieve the SDGs. Faith institutions own and invest a large amount of capital for development. More specifically, she discussed three ways that faiths act in interaction with communities. First, faith institutions are reimagining their own real-estate to provide room for green spaces and entrepreneurship. In the Global North, it is more common to see the place-based impact investing, focusing on local challenges and identifying the technologies and solutions. In the

Global South, the more common model is to focus on the major gaps in institutional finance. Here faith institutions establish their own banks to capitalise local people to generate local impact. Ms. Francois concluded by saying that faith is bridging the gap between philanthropy and investment.

Mr. Goshtasb Mozafari, Secretary General at Asian Mayors Forum, talked about the limited available resources and the need to identify priorities in order to design a well-planned development strategy, including local budget plans, to better mobilize resources. He recommended three objectives: (1) generating a sustainable environment through the deployment of smart technology; (2) adopting new tools for new urban policy; and, (3) identifying and introducing local investors.

Following Mr. Mozafari, Ms. Lorie Rufo, specialist at Climate Investment Funds, introduced their collaboration with MDBs on small and medium size cities. She pointed out that these cities face several barriers in attracting climate related investments, despite having biggest potential for sustainable, resilient and inclusive impact. These challenges are mainly caused by their inadequate creditworthiness, bankability, etc. The World Bank Climate Investment Funds Cities Program adopts a pragmatic approach, which supports cities from capacity building and technical assistance to develop viable project pipelines, engage MDBs and implement the projects on the ground. She went on to say that climate investment projects can range broadly, from ensuring energy efficiency through mass rapid transit to implementing resilient water supply systems.

The segment was concluded by Mr. Vinicio Stort who emphasised that there is a clear demand for project development and funding in cities as well as an appetite for banks to invest. He further stressed on the need to scale up through greater coordination among cities around the globe, including through the collection and sharing of data.

City Investment Facility

The third segment of the session introduced the City Investment Facility which was recently launched. It aims to bridge the gap between cities and impactful projects that need to be financed, and investors keen to invest in SDG impact. Ms. Alice Gugelev, Director of Global Development Incubator, gave an overview on the three aspects of the facility:

- The City Investment Portal managed by Think City is a global marketplace of de-risked, feasible SDG investment projects; and,
- The City Investment Advisory Platform being incubated by Global Development Incubator assesses pipeline projects in relation to SDG principles and impacts using UN-Habitat's SDG Project Assessment Tools, and provides advisory on maximising SDG impact and on financial feasibility. It generates feasibility reports, investor briefs and early investor outreach;
- The City Investment Vehicles are vehicles that bring together sources of public and private finance including de-risking and legal arrangements that enable investment into SDG impact projects. There are three private sector vehicles: Emerging Markets Infrastructure Fund, Blend Lab, and REALL.

Innovative mechanisms to unlock greater capital flow for SDG investment in Cities

The final segment of the session, entitled “Innovative mechanisms to unlock greater capital flow for SDG investment in Cities in the Global South”, introduced various specialized instruments to finance SDG impact projects in cities. Mr. David Jackson, Director at Local Development Finance, UN Capital Investment Fund talked about the need for blended finance, including equity and debt, and the need for cities to access funds directly so that they can carry out project themselves. He suggested that financiers should start financial engineering to support local governments and to see cities as clients. Among the UNCDF's instruments for financing cities is the International Municipal Investment Fund (IMIF); a unique investment fund, focussing exclusively on supporting cities and local governments in developing countries, to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. It aims to invests in transport, utilities, clean energy, waste management, land use and city planning sectors, amongst others. It invests in commercially bankable projects sponsored by municipalities which expand their fiscal space and accelerate the implementation of SDG11, SDG13 and other related SDGs.

Christophe Dossarps, CEO at the Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation introduced the audience to the SOURCE Platform which provides a comprehensive map of all aspects to consider for the preparation of sustainable infrastructure, for both traditional procurement and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), covering governance, technical, economic, legal, financial, environmental and social issues. According to him, there is a lack of capacity on the subnational level. By providing sector-specific templates covering all the stages of the project cycle, the platform can help cities to develop well-prepared projects.

The session was ended with a contribution from Mr. Sharmaarke Abdullahi, (OIC) UN-Habitat Resource Mobilisation Section, who presented the Feasibility Fund – a philanthropic fund that is currently being mobilised to support small and intermediary cities in developing countries access project preparation support to make their SDG impact projects viable for investment. This initiative is linked to the City Investment Facility where it is connected to relevant sources of finance and provision of technical assistance.

6. Digital Transformation accelerating SDG impact in cities (Global CEO Alliance)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkIGnUjPfQg>



Ms. Michelle Tan, Adec Innovation



Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, Coordinator of SDG Cities Global Initiative, UN-Habitat



Ms. Stacey Duncan, Executive Director, Broome County LDA, NY USA



Dr. Carley Pennink, Assistant Professor, Institute of Housing and Urban Studies, Rotterdam



Dr. Katja Schaefer, Inter-Regional Advisor, UN-Habitat



Mr. Andy Deacob, Acting Managing Director, Global Covenant of Mayors



Mr. Lennart Fleck, Municipal Finance and Local Economic Development Officer, UN-Habitat

The session, organised by the Global CEO Alliance elaborated on the role of digital transformation in local governments in the areas of planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects that have both direct and indirect impact on the SDGs.

Focusing on the crucial role of digital transformation for the implementation of SDGs in cities,

the session was moderated by Ms. Michelle Tan of ADEC Innovations. The speakers outlined how cities face many multifaceted challenges such as poverty and inequality, and that these challenges could be tackled with the help of digital tools. The speakers mentioned the importance of data collection, monitoring and analysis, and underlined the need of clear strategies and coordination.

Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, UN-Habitat SDG Cities Coordinator noted that since there is such a need for cities to be on the frontline of achieving the SDGs, it is key that can access the tools and support they need to meet this demand. Digitisation is key to this. Through the support of the Global CEO Alliance, SDG Cities is able to provide digital data analysis tools, institutional capacity assessment tools and digital capacity development tools that are easily accessible to cities, and supported by remote technical backstopping. Also through other partners, a city investment facility has been created That includes a digital marketplace where sustainable urban projects can be accessed by impact investors worldwide, described in the earlier session. <https://citiesinvestmentfacility.org/>

Dr. Carley Pennink, Assistant Professor at IHS, emphasised the importance of data to provide effective evidence-based decision making. Technology has a role in this. IHS developed a people-centred participatory, evidence-based City Development Strategy tool for Cities Alliance. It includes four phases: Where are we now? Where are we going? How will we get there? How to implement and know we are on track? These process include data analysis, SWOT analysis, situation analysis, visioning, prioritisation, action planning where strategic objectives are translated into spatial objectives, monitoring and evaluation. At each stage it is its key to know which capacities exist and which should be developed. Dr Pennink commented on the SDG Cities value chain and commended the link of data with capacity development and investment planning, and noted that if we are using data and deploying technology we need to ensure the right people are involved. On digital capacities, Dr Pennink questioned who is it for? The COVID crisis has exposed the depth of the digital divide, yet, if this can be overcome, digitisation does indeed increase access to resources that can help cities develop. Related to this, there is a need to build capacity in the use of technology so its benefits can be truly harnessed.

Mr. Andy Deacon, acting Managing Director of the Global Covenant of Mayors shared findings from a scan of hundreds of city climate action plans, that linked climate response with recovery from COVID-19, key themes emerging included digital and IT – in terms of

digitisation of local government services, as well as public transport apps to improve the use of public transport. They also revealed demand for strengthened multi-level governance as needed to improve the implementation of these twin tracks, along with accessing finance. Cities are increasing making their commitment to climate action as well as joining the Global Covenant. The Global Covenant is providing digital technical tools through its online library, and supports the journey from planning to implementation. The Global Covenant of Mayors uses digital tools to assess whether cities are on target to deliver their climate action plans. It has found through a recent study with the World Resource Institute that:

- Mayors are raising their climate ambitions despite COVID-19
- Only 22% of cities are implementing their plans at scale
- Financing, data access, technical capacity and buy in from stakeholders are the top barriers
- Tool use correlates with climate action progress, but tools struggle to enable implementation
- Available tools lack sustained support and are hard for many cities to use.

Data and tools therefore need to be more user friendly and more directly linked to action.

Mr. Deacon's invention was followed by Ms. Stacey Duncan, CEO of the Leadership Alliance, who presented the case of Broome County, which is undergoing a transition from a traditional industrial economy to a knowledge economy. Building also from a strong legacy of research and development, the city is now a lead producer in the energy sectors and is also moving strongly into the knowledge industry, although is challenged with the needed education and skill base. Ms. Duncan also mentioned the high levels of poverty and inequality in Broome County with many living below the poverty level. High costs of living is a key challenge and many areas where housing is provided lacks transportation. She concluded by underlining the importance of mobility for access to employment and the opportunities of digital technology as a tool for access, affordability, choice and information.

The next speaker, Ms. Katja Schäfer, commented that data and the new digital economy shapes our societies, yet the digital divide remains, and digital transformation must be governed in a democratic and inclusive way. Digital transformation in the context of sustainable urbanisation must be people-centred, and evidence based so that it ultimately benefits people. UN-Habitat's People Centred Smart Cities flagship initiative helps to make cities work for the benefit for all, to drive sustainability and inclusivity as well as prosperity within an overall human rights

framework. The programme works with local authorities and within subnational governance structures, to ensure ethical decisions and ensure that no one is left behind. While the principles that are being promoted and developed are in the heart of people, decision makers often need to be supported to articulate these into clear plans. The flagships programme supports people-centred digital transformation strategies for cities. UN-Habitat has recently launched playbooks that provide guidance in this area. <https://unhabitat.org/programme/people-centered-smart-cities>

The session concluded with a contribution by Mr. Lennart Fleck, who leads UN-Habitat's municipal finance work in UN-Habitat. Demonstrating one of the recently developed digital diagnostic tools, being utilised by the SDG Cities Global Initiative, he spoke about the Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis (ROSRA) tool. By entering data on several data streams into the ROSRA, cities are able to get clear, comparative analysis on performance, then able to identify where action is needed to optimise revenue. He recommended that governments optimize their OSR as this allows for governmental accountability, improved creditworthiness, control over spending, and the ability to influence citizen behaviour.

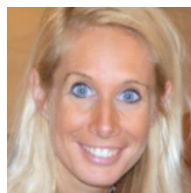
Following this, Ms Tan, the moderator showed a video that introduced another SDG Cities Digital Tool – the Governance Diagnostic tool, which will enable cities to understand how effective their governance systems are and will generate recommendations for improved effectiveness.

7. Health, wellbeing and resilience to pandemic in Cities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Idc8EWM5Upc>



Mr. Gareth Presch, World Health Innovation Summit



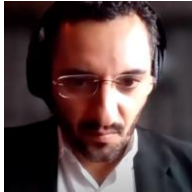
Ms. Isabelle Wachsmuth, Project Manager, World Health Organization



Mr. Jiwu Zhang, Sun Health, China



Dr. Manuela Boyle, Cassia Medical



Mr. Samir Mastaki, Lemonade.care



Mr. James Sanderson, Director of Personalised Care, NHS England, CEO National Academy Social Prescribing, UK



Mr. Claudiu Preda, SDG Hub Brasov, Romania



Mr. Roland Schatz, CEO, Global Sustainability Index Institute

In reference to the recent Cities and Pandemics report, the session explored how SDG acceleration in cities can promote a just, green recovery from the pandemic and further explored new models of health and wellbeing in cities that create value, based on prevention, early intervention and the use of digital empowerment. The aim was to enable people and communities to thrive and improve their health and wellbeing, support existing health services, create new and meaningful jobs while supporting the implementation of the 17 sustainable development goals in cities around the world.

This session addressed the pressing issue of health in cities and was moderated by Mr. Gareth Presch. At the opening, he pointed out the importance and interrelatedness of the SDGs, as without clean water there is no health and without health there is no wealth. Further, he underlined that partnerships and working together are key for sustaining global health solutions. The value proposition of moving from pathogenic to preventative model is clear. In the UK 1GBP invested provides 36GBP return on investment.

Mr. James Sanderson, who heads social prescribing for the UK National Health Service noted that GPs meet patients that seek support in very broad areas that go beyond purely medical problems, and that don't require medical solutions. Also many things that make us well are not necessarily medical. Social prescribing involves talking to people in order to find out what

issues they are facing and which barriers are preventing them from reaching good health outcomes, then creating a plan that addresses issues surrounding their whole life. Loneliness is a particular challenge. At the same time we know that communities provide enormous opportunities to address loneliness. Four areas of social prescribing include music and the arts, whose benefits are well documented; as well as exercise, access to nature, and, information – ensuring people have the right health related information and knowledge. Social prescribing is provided by link workers, and through their work we are seeing a tangible difference. This is not a challenge to traditional medicine, but works alongside it. A global Alliance for Social Prescribing Alliance has formed, and a movement is growing where musicians, artists, creatives and sports clubs are joining hands to improve people's health and wellbeing.

Ms. Isabelle Wachsmuth agreed with him and reiterated the role of art and culture. She shared her view that humanizing a hospital setting through arts has contributed to an improvement of the overall patient wellness. Artistic expression generates impact by unlocking creativity, not only amongst artists, but educators, policy makers and decision makers. It is an effective way to engage in sustainable development, ensuring facts are accompanied with human expression, leading to greater communication and facilitating pathways towards improved wellbeing. Art programmes are being mapped worldwide, and at the same time the impacts of arts are being measured. This way we can understand the importance of the humanisation of care through the arts. It is also a way to provide an inspirational environment that provides for serenity and healing.

The next speaker, Mr. Jiwu Zhang of Sun Health, China emphasized the positive role digital technology could play for health improvement by formalizing, deploying and monitoring a process and dynamically interacting with people during their daily lives. He mentioned that health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for healthcare, and through digital means we can achieve health equity. He provided an example of an insurance company that incentivises exercise and good health practices by reducing premiums for clients that are taking action to improve their health and wellbeing. Technology, he claims, can reduce health inequality, and to illustrate this he described telemedicine. While medical expertise tends to be concentrated in major cities, people in rural areas that cannot normally access excellent doctors can interact live with a doctor that can provide specialist services to a patient thousands of kilometers away.

After him, Dr. Manuela Boyle of Cassia Medical stressed the relevance of health literacy to enable individuals, cities, communities and neighbourhoods to navigate a health care system, which is organized in a way that enables risks and benefits to be clearly understood. In Australia health literacy is low amongst youth and elderly people. For many the barrier is lack of simple language. She highlighted the need to strive towards health equity, where indigenous communities and migrants are included. Additionally, she agreed with her previous speakers on the importance of people getting involved with their communities. Good city planning can strengthen community and provide access to good health information which will in turn benefit communities.

Mr. Samir Mastaki presented Lemonade.Care, a telemedicine platform that is focused on patient empowerment using active feedback mechanisms and educational resources. It is used by doctors to monitor many patients and enables patients to connect remotely to the medical profession. It improves the quality of care and lowers the cost. According to him, telemedicine is a real social and cultural revolution which allows for remote communication between doctors and patients and facilitates the provision of health services, from diagnosis to therapy. He further instilled on the importance of inclusion in healthcare.

Mr. Claudiu Moni Preda of the Health Hub in Brasov Romania, talked about the need for investments in preventative and natural medicine that produce natural products that can boost our immune systems that are not only affordable, but ethical, and locally customised. The Health Hub will also promote services to people and hospitals. He suggested that cities should be role models in this field and partner with other cities as well as with different organizations to make people more aware of the importance of natural medicine. The Health Hub will also share know-how to other cities that are interested to replicate the model.

The session closed with the closing statement of Mr. Gareth Presch, who stressed that health and well-being are at the centre of our universe, but that actual projects are lacking. Open-Source sharing of know-how generates innovation and progress and is a new model being recognised by the pharmaceutical industry. He hence called for a better understanding of how cities can help each other to overcome the obstacles.

8. SDG Cities Way Forward

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytn2SDPKtlw>



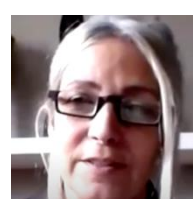
Moderator:
Sania Ansari, CEO Ansari Group



Mr. Roland Schatz, CEO, Global Sustainability Index Institute Foundation



Mr. Reza Pourvaziry, Chair, Urban Economy Forum



Ms. Liane Freire, CEO at Dialog Institute



Mr. Josh Yates, Executive Director at Thriving Cities Group



Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, SDG Cities Coordinator; Inter-Regional Advisor, UN-Habitat



Closing Statement: Ms. Maimunah Moh'd Sharif, Executive Director at UN-Habitat,

Closing Statement: Shanghai Municipality

This session concluded the first edition of the Global SDG Cities Conference with a round of feedback and commitments of partner cities and organizations, to participate in the SDG Cities Initiative. It was moderated by Ms. Sania Ansari who looked back at three days full of fruitful discussion on topics such as the urban monitoring framework, voluntary local reviews, the importance of strengthening local institutions, investments and many more. She also highlighted the launch of the pilot stage of SDG Cities during the conference.

The first speaker, Mr. Reza Pourvaziry, introduced the World Urban Pavilion in Toronto which has been established as a global hub to align city priorities with SDG 11. The pavilion innovates

locally on community regeneration and urban data, promotes SDG Cities nationally, and supports SDG Cities globally in key areas of research.

The next speaker, Mr. Roland Schatz, pointed out that it is still difficult for mayors and city councils to define where they would like to start projects and how they would like to finance them. The SDG Cities Programme helps cities determine what types of initiatives they need to implement to achieve the SDGs. Mr Schatz advised cities to start identifying three SDGs they would like to further work on and to report on their progress at the national level. He further underlined the need for citizen feedback to ensure that the SDGs can be reached within each city.

Mr. Josh Yates, Executive Director at Thriving Cities Group, highlighted the partnership between the Thriving Cities Group and UN-Habitat to host the SDG Cities Task Force. He advised that reaching scale as needed to support 1000 cities achieve SDGs requires two things: 1 - accelerating action everywhere and at every level - enhancing the work of those already involved and bringing others in; and 2, fostering and leveraging connections between all the different dimensions of this work, leveraging the ability of cities to take action while empowering the whole system to work by creating mechanisms to foster shared learning aligned purpose and common action.

Ms. Liane Freire, CEO at Dialog Institute, noted that the conference demonstrated that ecosystems are required to make the SDG Cities a reality. She emphasized the need to channel resources to the right solutions and urged women leaders and investors to join the efforts in combating the current crises at hand. Moreover, she called upon philanthropists to capitalize the trillions that they own to address the challenges being faced in the world and in translating the SDGs to reality.

Mr. Dyfed Aubrey then introduced the SDG Cities certification award system which involves four stages of certification including Silver: commitment to the SDGs; Gold: data and evidence based planning; Platinum: improved institutional capacity to deliver on the SDGs; and, Diamond, measurable SDG impact. He shared a five-minute video announcing the partners pledge for cooperation and collaboration with UN-Habitat, participation, and implementation of the SDGs and announced that eight cities had recently joined the pilot stage of the SDG Cities Programme. He then outlined next steps which include: piloting the SDG Cities Digital

tools and the City Investment Facility and establishing SDG Cities Global Hubs that will support global mobilisation. This will be followed by supporting the development of national SDG Cities programmes that support national groupings of cities and move to scale at the national level; and finally, working with city networks to benefit from the SDG cities tools and certification.

Ms. Maimunah Moh'd Sharif, Executive Director at UN-Habitat, provided closing remarks. She expressed her appreciation to the Shanghai Municipal People's Government, China and urged the advancing of SDGs and implementing the New Urban Agenda in order to enhance the quality of life for all. Ms. Moh'd Sharif called upon UN Member States and cities to host the SDG Cities Hubs to promote and supports the implementation of the SDGs at national, regional and global levels. She then announced the SDG Cities certification process. The final closing statement was made by Shanghai Municipality, who congratulated the success of the 1st edition of SDG Cities Global Conference and was delighted to see the constructive discussions regarding cities responding to climate change, post COVID-19 green recovery, investment for urban development, data and monitoring tools for sustainable urban development.

More information on the SDG Cities Global Initiative can be found at www.sdg-cities.org.