Collaborative Action to unleash the potential of cities to accelerate sustainable development and improve quality of life for all

Summary of SDG Cities Events at World Urban Forum 2022

1. SDG Cities Breakfast
28th June 2022 0830-1000 CET

The SDG Cities Breakfast brought together partners and collaborators of the Global flagship initiative, SDG Cities, in order to share experiences and aspirations of the initiative and discuss next steps. The SDG Cities Global Flagship Initiative aims to support 1000 cities to accelerate the implementation of SDGs by 2030 by supporting them with digital tools and technical support hubs working in four interlinked tracks of urban data, inclusive strategic planning, strengthened local institutions and investment in SDG impact. It also recognizes exceptional efforts and achievement of cities through SDG Cities Certification.

UN-Habitat Executive Director, Maimunah Moh'd Shariff, opened the event and emphasized the interest of various UN Members States, mayors and UN-Habitat partners to initiate a process to achieve the global endorsement of SDG Cities Certification at the UN General Assembly, which will both motivate and recognize exceptional efforts of cities to deliver the SDGs. Dyfed Aubrey, UN-Habitat's Inter-Regional Advisor and SDG Cities lead provided an update on the progress of the global initiative and announced that the digital tools for each track are well advanced and are being piloted in Latin America, Africa, Arab States, Europe and Asia. He also noted that the City Investment Facility (CIF) with its three components, an investment portal, project preparation facility and investment vehicles, is now established and being co-managed with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). By World Cities Day, 31 October 2022, all tools will be complete and tested, enabling the flagship initiative to move to scale. Mr David Jackson, Director of Local Development Finance at UNCDF, reaffirmed the commitment of UNCDF to the SDG Cities initiative and outlined additional services being offered through UN-Habitat and UNCDF's fused offering for cities, which includes bond issuance, debt financing and own source revenue strengthening.

City leaders provided feedback. Hon. Mayor of Ennour Kassarine, Tunisia, Ms. Fatma Mahmoud, who is currently piloting SDG Cities data and strategic planning tools highlighted the challenges

she faces of implementing SDG priorities with limited local resources. She expressed the need for the SDG Cities Initiative to foster partnership and engagement with technical actors and financiers. The Hon. Mayor of Kumasi, Ghana, Mr. Samuel Pyne, described challenges of waste management and congestion as the city continues to expand. He recognized the support of UNCDF under the Investment Track to decongest the city by financing a bus rapid transit system. The Hon. Deputy Mayor of Vitoria Gasteiz, Basque Country, Spain, Ms Ana Oregi, highlighted the challenge of channeling investment into its project pipeline. Successful investment in high impact initiatives is key to the city's mission of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Hon. Mayor of Mafra, Portugal, Mr. Helder Silva, highlighted the need for SDG Cities to provide a platform for learning exchange and technical assistance between participating cities. Ms. Bharathi Suppiah, manager from Penang State Government Malaysia, a SDG Cities pilot city, expressed the determination of Penang to advance in the achievement of all four SDG Cities Certification levels.

National institutions also provided feedback. The Advisor from Ministry of Local Development Egypt, Mr. Khaled Abdelhalim, highlighted the need to ensure policy coherence at national, governorate and municipality levels. UN-Habitat responded by emphasizing the importance of integrating national and local priorities during the strategic planning process (Track 2). Dr. Ramesh Singh, Secretary from Ministry of Urban Development, Nepal, noted that new policies have been developed at the national level in response to recent disasters, but now need to be implemented locally through SDG Cities. The director of Federal Ministry for Urban Development Germany, Dr. Oliver Weigel emphasized the importance of exporting urban development practices and re-importing knowledge from other parts of the world. Ms Sayli Mankikar, who leads the Climate Centre for Cities India, offered to contribute to climate related indicators within the SDG Cities Framework. Hon. Wali and General Director of the Ministry of Interior, Kingdom of Morocco, Mr Khalid Safir, described the certification process being undertaken in Moroccan municipalities, and offered to share the human settlements analysis methodology being applied, that assesses the distribution of public services and infrastructure across all human settlements levels, in order to identifying gaps and needed investments to ensure equitable distribution of services. Urbanice, an entity of the Malaysian housing ministry has established a national SDG Cities Programme and looks forward to incorporating the tools availed by SDG Cites Global Initiative and making use of the SDG Cities Certification.

Also represented was the city network, United Cities and Local Government, (UCLG). Mr. Salim Korkmaz, General Coordinator from UCLG Middle East and West Asia, elaborated on the need to ensure policy coherence and described how this is being done in Turkey.

The breakfast meeting reinforced the interest of cities, national authorities and city networks to engage with the SDG Cities Global Initiative and its importance in localizing global and national development priorities alongside addressing local priorities. It also reinforced the aspiration of all to have in place a globally recognized SDG Cities certification process.

2. SDG Cities: Accelerating the Localization of the SDGs for a Sustainable Urban Future.
29th June 2022. 1530-1630 CET

The SDG Cities Flagship Programme aims to be a catalyst to support cities to localize SDGs. The programme has a systematic value chain approach starting from data collection, disaggregated at district and neighborhood level, to strategic and spatial plan preparation, to SDG projects identification, preparation and financing. In parallel the initiative strengthens local institutions in areas of inclusive, accountable governance, planning, revenue and service delivery as core local capacities needed to advance SDGs. SDG Cities incorporates a certification system to recognize the exceptional efforts and achievement of cities.

Ms. Norliza Hashem, Chief Executive from Urbanice Malaysia, implementing the Malaysia SDG Cities Programme, pledged to integrate 155 Malaysian cities into the SDG Cities Global Flagship Programme. She emphasized the need to tailor the SDG cities tools to national and local contexts. The Metropolitan Chief Executive of the City of Kumasi, Ghana Mr. Osei Assibey Antwi, introduced their sound and cost-effective management of the environment, including a household toilet construction campaign, a waste management strategic plan, and composting plants to produce agricultural manure to create 500 jobs. Hon. Governor of Caldas, Colombia, Mr. Luis Carlos Velasquez, emphasized that the State's emphasis in supporting rural areas, requires ensure effective rural-urban economic linkages at the territorial level. Hon. Deputy Mayor of Vitoria Gasteiz Spain, Ms. Ana Oregi, highlighted the city's aspiration to be a people-centred city that achieves carbon neutrality by 2030. It is one of 100 European cities working towards carbon neutrality by 2030 and is thus a laboratory city for testing policies. Hon. Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, Mr. Mohamed Sefiani, indicated the city's goal to be ecologically sustainable, to support citizens - especially women and the youth, and to achieve carbon zero by 2030. Ms. Bharathi Suppiah, manager from Penang State Government, Malaysia described the Penang Bay Initiative and committed to SDG Cities programme given the alignment of Penang Bay's priorities and SDG Cities at the global level.

The event demonstrated that while cities and regions have unique priorities, SDG Cities provides an excellent systematic approach to help achieve these, whilst also sharing knowledge between cities with common priorities.

3. Financing the SDGs in Cities: UNCDF/UN-Habitat Fused Offering for Cities.
29th June 2022 1230-1400 CET

Panelists
Hon. Mr. Samuel Pyne, Mayor of Kumasi, Ghana; Hon. Mr. Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco; Mr. Alawi Ahmadi, Project Resource Mobilization Coordinator, Tanga Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority, Tanzania; Mr. Lars Gronvald, Team Lead for Urban Development, DG INTPA Unit F4, European Commission; Mrs. Assumpta Tibamwenda, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Local Government, Uganda; Mr David Jackson, Director, UNCDF; Ms. Samina Anwar, Advisor, UNCDF; Mr Raf Tuts, Director, UN-Habitat; Dyfed Aubrey, Inter-Regional Advisor, UN-Habitat.

Discussion
Presently, the connection between the New Urban Agenda and the financing agenda has not yet been solidified, however the fused offering between UNCDF and UN Habitat aims to establish and reinforce this link. Cities and local governments have been recognized as vehicles for sustainable development, yet their effectiveness depends on effective plans and projects being financed. Five elements of the financial ecosystem have thus been identified to enable cities and governments to accelerate the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. These include the need for effective intergovernmental fiscal transfers, improved own source revenue mobilization, domestic capital market reform, city friendly investment funds, and a guarantee fund for cities. These components are inter-related and create an ecosystem for sustainable financing, ensuring that external investment is balanced with strengthened local revenue and capital markets, and further reinforced with mechanisms to defray sovereign credit rating risk, which may otherwise stand as a barrier to authorizing sub-national financing. The fused offering for cities thus enables the upstream stages of data, planning, and investment pipeline identification to downstream processes of financing projects in developing economies, completing the SDG Cities offer to support a continuous process from SDG data to impact.

4. SDG Cities: Women-led businesses supporting Women-led cities
29th June 2022 12:30 - 14:00 CET

Panelists
Hon. Mayor of Gazientap, Turkey, Ms Fatma Sahin; Hon. Mayor, Bogota, Colombia, Ms Claudia López; Anamarina DeCastro, Co-Chair Nexus Global Movement, Latin America; Global Shapers Movement; Liane Freire, CEO BlendLab, Brazil; Angela Mwai, Chief, Human Rights Social Inclusion Section, UN-Habitat.

Discussion
SDG Cities includes six implementation windows, one of which is the Women-Led Cities initiative which facilitates women-led businesses and women-led cities to work together to champion women leadership and delivers local impact. Women are significantly underrepresented in all areas of leadership; yet when women lead cities, they are uniquely placed to facilitate inclusion and the equal role of women in decision making, in the local economy and in the workplace. Funding, education, and engagement are key elements for empowering and providing women with equal opportunities. The Women-Led Cities initiative is a movement within the SDG Cities Initiative, where women-led businesses support women mayors to bring about local transformation. Through the SDG Cities building blocks of data, strategic planning, local institutional strengthening and investment in impact, they accelerate making cities safer, with improved living conditions and improved business and entrepreneurship opportunities for women, and with increased opportunities for women to engage in local decision making. Through this powerful chain, women business leaders support women mayors, and women mayors support economic and representational roles for women. It thus generate greater equality while contributing to building new generations of women business and political leaders.

Through the initiative women business and women local political leaders will now have a platform to share experience, identify and strengthen their unique transformative roles, and share and build mechanisms to overcome the many oppositions and challenges faced as they continue to work and compete in male-dominated environments. Moving forward, a WUF 11 Declared Action will be submitted, and will describe how this initiative will support implementation of impact projects, addressing demographic issues, and strengthening local institutions within a foundation of gender analysis and human rights analysis.

5. Mobilizing and Equipping Multi-Faith Organizations to be Key Implementation Partners for SDG11 Through UN-Habitat's Flagship Programme SDG Cities
30th June 2022 12:15 -13:45 CET

Panelists
Chris Elisara, World Evangelical Alliance, Dyfed Aubrey, UN-Habitat, Klaus Cristiansen, Swiss Impact Investment Association. Introductory Remarks by Maimunah Moh'd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat.

Discussion
SDG Cities includes six implementation windows, one of which focusses on faith communities that work together to drive local transformation and channel funding and finance from global global to local levels. By including faith communities as an implementing window, SDG Cities is better able to achieve its objective, to realize the potential of cities to drive the achievement of the SDGs, by working with cities, other levels of government, communities [including faith communities], business sector and development partners to connect the value chain of data; evidence-based policy; institutional capacities; and, impact, including through faith-based investment. The event kickstarted the dialogue between Faith Based Organisations and SDG Cities on co-designing how FBOs can be successful SDG Cities implementation partners, particularly in the area of faith-based investment. The session concluded that:

- Faiths can contribute to data streams.
- Faiths can contribute to grassroots planning process.
- Faiths can contribute to accountability and focused legacy outcomes.
- Faiths can contribute projects and project development.
- Faiths can contribute impact investment and blended finance.

In moving this initiative forward, as part of SDG Cities' strategy for developing its faith community implementation partners, interested partners will be onboarded and connected through an online platform where they can further co-create the Faith window of the SDG Cities Global Initiative.

Training Event
SDG Cities: Effective Local Institutions Track: Training on Diagnostic Tools
30th June 2022, 0900-11:45 CET

Panelists

Mr. James Donovan, CEO and Chairman of Global CEO Alliance and ADEC Innovations; Ms. Michelle Tan, Global Development Head of GCEOA; Ms. Johanna Bautista, Global Development Officer of GCEOA; Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, Inter-regional Adviser of UN-Habitat; Mr. Samuel Njuguna, National Officer on Urban Law and Governance of UN-Habitat; Mr. Yassine Moustanjidi, Consultant of UN-Habitat; Ms. Janene Tuniz, Associate Urban Mobility Officer of UN-Habitat; Mr. Lennart Fleck, Municipal Finance and Local

Economic Development Officer of UN-Habitat; Ms. Nao Takeuchi, Waste Management Expert of UN-Habitat; Mr. Dennis Mwaniki, Spatial Data Expert of UN-Habitat.

Discussion

SDG Cities aims to support 1000 cities accelerate achieving the SDGs, and does so through by supporting cities with digital tools and technical support hubs working in areas of data, strategic planning, institutional development and investment in impact. The Global CEO Alliance (GCEOA) has been supporting the development of the SDG Cities Digital Toolkit since 2021. The Digital Toolkit, now well advanced, will consist of a rapid spatial data collection and analysis tool, enabling communities and local authorities to self-generate a map-based analysis of the city in line with the Global Urban Monitoring Framework, thus provide a sound baseline for the development of City Development Strategies. As well as this, the digital toolkit includes tools for the self-assessment of key capacities of local institutions as needed to drive sustainable development, i.e., planning, governance, own-source revenue, and basic services delivery (waste management, mobility and water utilities). The self-assessment autogenerates analysis based on responses by insitutions to a comprehensive series of questions. The analysis is then fed through a search engine with directs the user to relevant online training resources, and groups local institutions from various cities with similar training needs into learning communities so that they can engage in group training and experience sharing.

GCEOA officially launched the pilot version of the SDG Cities Digital Tools Platform at the training event and a timeline was shared to outline the future capabilities for the platform and partnership. During the quick live demo, the participants were given a demonstration of the tools' capabilities and the opportunity to test the technology themselves and have been invited to share feedback. This event marks the first of more outputs between the partnership between Global CEO Alliance and UN-Habitat. Upcoming updates are to be expected in the next months to come.

Conclusion

Cities are an essential vehicle for localizing and accelerating the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals. SDG Cities provides a systematic approach to supporting cities to achieve this. As well as cities, national governments, city networks, women empowerment movements and inter-faith movements have shown strong interest to partner with the SDG Cities Flagship Programme, and achieve the SDG Cities Certification. UN entities such as UNCDF are also committed deepen cooperation with UN-Habitat to ensure effective linkage from data and strategic plans to financing and delivering impactful initiatives. In 2022, the flagship initiative will move from a piloting stage to working at scale through national programmes, partnerships with global and regional city networks and through movement building. As a key next step, support is needed from national governments as well as city authorities to advocate for an SDG Cities Certification process, recognized by the UN General Assembly, marking exceptional efforts and achievement of cities to accelerate their achievement of SDGs and create a better quality of life for all.