



# UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY

# SDG CITIES EVENTS REPORT

5-9 June 2023



## Executive Summary

The second UN-Habitat Assembly took place from the 5th – 9th of June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. As the highest global decision-making body on sustainable urbanization and human settlements, this general assembly is convened once every four years and leads discussion and actions on the UN-Habitat mandate of sustainable urbanisation and human settlements. The overarching theme “A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises” guided deliberations throughout the week. Sub-themes encompassed during the assembly included universal access to affordable housing, urban climate action, urban crises recovery, and localization of the SDGs. Throughout the week, the SDG Cities Global Initiative held events concerning the sub-theme of localization of the SDGs. Namely, the events were Women Led Cities: Supporting and Enhancing Creative Multilateralism of Diverse Women’s Leadership of Businesses, Cities and Grassroots Organizations to Address Inequality and Gender-Based Violence and Make Cities Safe, Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable”, “Towards a multilateral collaboration and knowledge exchange system to accelerate SDGs implementation in cities” and “SDG Cities Certification: Facilitating multilateral cooperation from data integration to finance to accelerate achieving SDGs in Cities.”



**1. Side event: Women Led Cities: Supporting and Enhancing Creative Multilateralism of Diverse Women’s Leadership of Businesses, Cities and Grassroots Organisations to Address Inequality and Gender-Based Violence and Make Cities Safe, Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable**

**Speakers**

1. **Ms. Maimunah Sharif**, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
2. **Ms. Luiza Helena Trajano**, CEO, Magazine Luiza, Chair of the Board ‘Grupo Mulheres do Brasil’ and associated companies
3. **Hon Ms. Rohey Malick Lowe**, Mayor of Banjul, The Gambia

4. **Ms. Hon Maria Gabriela Aguilera Jaramillo**, Minister of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador
5. **Ms. Violet Shivutse**, Chair and Africa Regional Representative, Huairou Commission
6. **Ms. Ticiana Rolim Queiroz**, Founder and President of Somos Um and Director at C. Rolim Engenharia
7. **Ms. Samina Anwar**, Lead IncluCity, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)



## Executive Summary

On the **5th of June 2023**, UN-Habitat's SDG Cities Global Initiative in collaboration with the Huairou Commission, Ellaimpacta Alliance, and UNCDF, held the side event: **Women Led Cities: Supporting and Enhancing Creative Multilateralism of Diverse Women's Leadership of Businesses, Cities and Grassroots Organizations to Address Inequality and Gender-Based Violence and Make Cities Safe, Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable**". Women-Led Cities (WLC) is a window of the SDG Cities Global Initiative. It fosters multilateral collaboration between women city leaders, women community leaders and women business owners, from grassroots to multi-national corporations, to promote the growth and development of women in positions of leadership. With the overall vision to achieve gender parity in leadership and end violence and harassment against women.

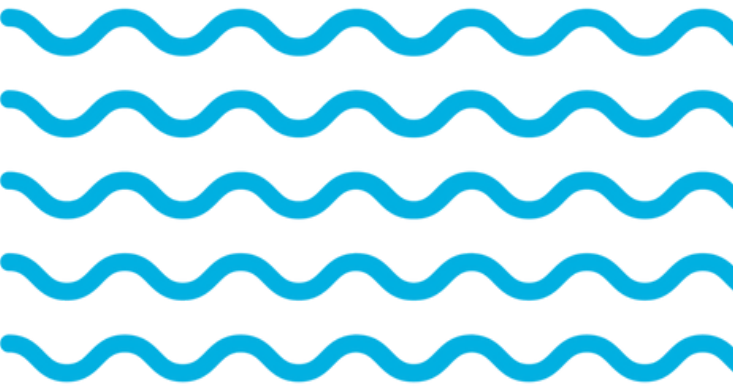
The event launched the pilot year of the WLC initiative and was moderated by UN-Habitat's Angela Mwai ( Chief, Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit) and BlendLab's CEO Liane Freire with a dynamic group of women leaders on the panel. Mrs. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, (Executive Director, UN-Habitat), Ms. Luiza Helena Trajano, (CEO of Magazine Luiza), Ms. (Hon) Rohey Malick Lowe, (Mayor of Banjul, the Gambia), Ms. Maria Gabriela Aguilera Jaramillo (Minister of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador), Ms. Violet Shivutse (Chair and African Regional Representative, Huairou Commission), Ms Ticiana Rolim (Founder and President of Somos Um and Director at C. Rolim Engenharia), and Ms. Samina Anwar (Lead, Inclusive Cities Financing, UNCDF).

## Key Points

UN-Habitat's Angela Mwai, Chief, Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit, introduced the initiative, illuminated the need for WLC and introduced the eminent and diverse women speakers and yielded the floor to Silvio José Albuquerque e Silva, Brazilian Ambassador to Kenya who opened the event stating, "Business success and genuine commitment to the fight for opportunities and social equalities are not incompatible." UN-Habitat Executive Director, Mrs. Maimunah Mohd Sharif then shared reflections on her time as the first female mayor of her hometown in Penang, Malaysia. and stressed that "A city planned for women is a city planned for all". She and Ms. Luiza Trajano Trajano, prominent businesswoman and philanthropist from Brazil, had met for the first time in person in the days leading up to the event for formal signings, agreeing to put 'Women Led Cities' into action. Lastly, during her speech, the final opener and champion of WLC, Ms. Trajano, CEO of Magazine Luiza and companies, introduced two proposed WLC backed changes to make in the world: to eradicate violence against women, and to fill 50% of public and private administrative positions with women at the top. She further stated, "we are hands on, so that we can understand how the [Women-Led Cities] movement can be scaled up as quickly as possible, so that we really change the world."







Throughout the event, a dynamic discussion took place on why women leadership is important, reasons behind the current state of few women political leaders, world mayors and fortune 500 women CEOs, and why there is a greater proportion of women working in the informal sector and how this makes them vulnerable. Ms. Rolim (Founder and President, Somos Um), Ms. (Hon) Aguilera (Minister of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador), Ms. Shivutse (Chair, Huairou Commission) and Ms. (Hon) Lowe (Mayor of Banjul, the Gambia) elucidated the plight of women mayors and CEOs in leadership, specifically focussing on the harmful effects of patriarchy and socio-political and cultural obstacles to ensuring the implementation of laws and policies to safeguard women's rights. Furthermore, the important role of grassroots women as key partners and not just beneficiaries was highlighted.

Further discussion on the role Women-led Cities could play to be a driver of change and the implementation of the SDG's took place. With queries on the role finance can play to effectively manage urban infrastructure for better and safer cities for women and how to nurture new generations of women leaders. Ms. Anwar, (IncluCity Lead, UNCDF) Ms. Aguilera (Minsiter of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador), Ms. (Hon) Lowe (Mayor of Banjul, the Gambia), and Ms. Shivutse (Chair, Huairou Commission) agreed that Women-Led Cities was a much-needed unique blended approach to bring women leaders of cities and businesses together rooted in local implementation, development, and investment plans. The sentiment that women have been relegated historically from leadership positions and now is the time to change that, sustainable development must be designed with women perspectives was shared. Moreover, the Women Led Cities' initiative aims to imbue a new sense of voice to the marginalized and encourage the upcoming generation of girls to claim their place of influence in a rapidly changing world. In doing this, the initiative strives to demonstrate the huge and often neglected potential of women in leadership to foster positive transformations in sustainable and inclusive urban development.

### **Next steps**

During the Women-led Cities event and the Bilateral between Ms. Sharif and Ms. Trajano, next steps for Women-led Cities were envisioned through two proposals. The first is to eradicate violence against women, and the second is to fill 50% of public and private administrative positions with women at the top, coined the "jump to 50". The 'Women Led Cities' initiative will continue to be carried out in coming months, with funding agreements and pilot cities set to be finalized, and execution of the initial implementation to begin in late 2023, into 2024. The initial goal for the rollout was to reach at least 200 cities in 20 different countries, 10,000 women-owned businesses, and 50 gender responsive infrastructure projects, by raising at least USD 1 billion. Moving forward, the pilot will start in five cities for the safety, better living and economic empowerment of women.

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## 2. Side event: Towards a multilateral collaboration and knowledge exchange system to accelerate SDGs implementation in cities

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### Speakers

1. **Mrs. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Executive Director of UN-Habitat
2. **Mr. Ni Hong**, Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) of China
3. **Mr. Nga Kor Ming**, Minister of Local Government Development, Malaysia
4. **Ms. Catalina Velasco Campuzano**, Minister of Housing, City and Territory, Colombia
5. **Mr. Guilherme Simões**, National Secretary for Peripheries, Brazil
6. **Mr. Zhang Xiaohong**, Deputy Mayor of Shanghai, China
7. **Mr. Cheng Jian**, Director of Shanghai Coordination Center of World Cities Day
8. **Mr. Dyfed Aubrey**, Inter-regional Advisor of UN-Habitat
9. **Ms Norliza Hashim**, CEO of Urbanice, Malaysia
10. **Ms Akosua Asabea**, Mayor of Kyebi, Ghana
11. **Ms Iris Cristina Arroyo Herrera**, Mayor of Puriscal, Costa Rica



The side event titled, **“Towards a multilateral collaboration and knowledge exchange system to accelerate SDGs implementation in cities”** at the second UN-Habitat Assembly was successfully convened on **7th of June, 2023**. This meeting was co-hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People’s Republic of China, Shanghai Municipal People’s Government China and UN-Habitat. This event focuses on a new form of multilateralism that uses data measurement, best practices, and capacity development to support cities in achieving their sustainable development goals. Representatives from different cities discuss their experiences and challenges in localizing the SDGs. The event also introduces the Shanghai Adapted Index, the Shanghai Manual, and the Global Award for Sustainable Development as tools to facilitate effective urban sustainability implementation at the local level.[XW(1)] How the SDG Cities Programme help different cities all over the world to address sustainable development needs according to their own characteristics was also highlighted at the meeting.

In the opening remark, Mrs. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, stated that the world is currently facing multiple crises, including climate change, environmental pollution, and biodiversity loss, which exacerbate inequalities among nations and regions. UN-Habitat has prioritized adequate housing, climate adaptation, localizing sustainable development goals, and improving urban crisis management as key areas of focus. UN-Habitat welcomes representatives from around the world to explore innovative approaches to localize the SDG concepts in the local cities.

Hon. Minister Ni Hong from the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China expressed that China has always been an active participant, promoter, and contributor to global human settlements and sustainable urban development. China is willing to share its experiences with the world and work together with UN-Habitat to promote the implementation of global development initiatives. China will fully leverage platforms such as World Cities Day and the Global Award for Sustainable Development Cities to play a positive role in realizing a sustainable urban future.

Hon. (Mr.) Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Local Government Development of Malaysia, shared that Malaysia commits to the 2030 Agenda with the MADANI policy focusing on sustainability, innovation, and good governance. Malaysia is in Phase 2 of its National SDG Implementation, promoting SDG Roadmaps for cities and advocating for Housing For All. With a vision for urban growth and environmental protection, Malaysia aims to increase forest coverage and improve waste management. The country fully supports UN-Habitat’s work and calls for transformative actions in sustainable development.

Hon. (Ms.) Catalina Velasco Campuzano, Minister of Housing, City, and Territory, Columbia, stated that in terms of SDG cities, we may possess knowledge about the goals and objectives, but there are often areas where we lack sufficient understanding. Colombia explores digital monitoring and governance, focusing on data collection and decision-making using the City Prosperity Index (CPI), urban observatories, and the National Sample of Cities approach. These tools provide valuable insights into the development status of cities, enabling informed decision-making for sustainable urban development.



Hon. (Mr.) Guilherme Simões, the National Secretary for Peripheries, Brazil, discussed the strategic objective of fighting social inequality. He stressed the importance of global dialogue, cooperation, and addressing urgent issues like hunger and inequality. The disproportionate impact of national disasters on the most vulnerable was highlighted, emphasizing the need to prioritize their needs. With around 50% of Brazil's population living in informality, urgent action is required. His emphasis on the need for renewed efforts to combat social inequalities and promote sustainable development was widely shared.

Hon. (Mr.) Zhang Xiaohong, the Deputy Mayor of Shanghai, China, emphasized the commitment to building cities that prioritize the well-being of the residents, with a focus on safety and convenience. Mr. Zhang stated that China actively supports UN-Habitat's initiatives in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He then presented several notable achievements resulting from the collaboration between China and UN-Habitat, including the Global Award for Sustainable Development Cities (Shanghai Award), the Shanghai Manual, the Global Urban Monitoring Framework - Shanghai Adapted Index, and the United SDG Cities Flagship Programme. These cooperative efforts encompassed the economic, social, and environmental aspects of urban development, providing a reference for key stakeholders with solutions and practices in sustainable city development.

Following the opening remarks by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, the Ministers from China, Malaysia, Colombia, and Brazil, and the Deputy Mayor of Shanghai, Cheng Jian from the Shanghai Coordination Center of World Cities Day delivered a comprehensive overview of the Shanghai Adapted Index, the Shanghai Award, and the Shanghai Manual. These initiatives highlighted Shanghai's commitment to sustainable urban development and provided valuable tools and resources for cities to assess and improve their sustainability efforts. Following Cheng Jian's presentation, Dyfed Aubrey, the Inter-regional Advisor of UN-Habitat, shared systematic approaches aimed at facilitating the local implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During his presentation, he introduced the SDG Cities Flagship Programme as a cyclical process that can be flexibly adjusted to align with the existing planning and election cycles of city authorities. The objective of this initiative is to impact 1000 cities and positively transform the lives of 1 billion people. It is specifically designed to empower cities, enabling them to effectively pursue their sustainable development goals and make substantial contributions towards a more sustainable future. In the subsequent session, local representatives from Malaysia, Kyebi of Ghana, and Caldas of Colombia actively participated in a discussion. They shared their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated with localizing SDGs. The exchange of experiences and insights provided a valuable platform for learning and collaboration among cities facing similar sustainability challenges.





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**3. Side Event: SDG Cities Certification: Facilitating multilateral cooperation from data integration to finance to accelerate achieving SDGs in Cities.**

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**Speakers**

1. **Hon Ms María Gabriela Aguilera**, Minister of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador
  2. **Representative of Mr Martin Adjei-Mensah Korsah**, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development, Ghana
  3. **Ms Norliza Hashem**, Chief Executive Officer of Urbanice Malaysia
  4. **Ms Dyan Currie**, Chief Planner, Brisbane City Council, Australia
  5. **Ms Marta Gomes**, Councilor, City of Mafra, Portugal
  6. **Mr Roland Schatz**, Chief Executive Officer, Global Sustainability Index Foundation, Switzerland
  7. **Ms Monica Palumbo**, Partner of Deloitte Climate and Sustainability
  8. **Mr Yücel Yılmaz**, Mayor of Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, Türkiye
  9. **Mr Jian Liu**, Director of, Early Warning and Assessment Division at, UNEP ,
  10. **Mr James Donovan**, CEO, ADEC Innovation
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On the **8th of June 2023** the SDG Cities Global Initiative held the side event: **SDG Cities Certification: Facilitating multilateral cooperation from data integration to finance to accelerate achieving SDGs in Cities**. This event was held in collaboration with the Metropolitan Municipality of Balikesir, Turkiye, Government of Caldas, Colombia, Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development, Ghana, and Geneva Agape Foundation (Ecosoc), Switzerland .

With moderation from Mr. Dyfed Aubrey (UN-Habitat Inter-Regional Advisor and SDG Cities Lead), the event brought together experts from around the globe to discuss the following important queries on SDG Cities Certification:

1. Panel 1: The Value of SDG Cities Certification in motivating and recognizing exceptional efforts of cities in achieving the SDGs, and reinforcing policy coherence across global, national and local levels.
2. Panel 2: The value of SDG Cities Certification in fostering strengthened linkages of cities with finance.
3. Panel 3: Reaching scale through digital tools and technical support hubs.

**Panel 1: The Value of SDG Cities Certification in motivating and recognizing exceptional efforts of cities in achieving the SDGs, and reinforcing policy coherence across global, national and local levels.**

The first panel comprised of Hon Ms María Gabriela Aguilera, Minister of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador , a representative of Mr Martin Adjei-MensahKorsah, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development, Ghana, Ms Norliza Hashem, Chief Executive Officer of Urbanice Malaysia, Ms Dyan Currie, Chief Planner, Brisbane City Council, Australia, and Ms Marta Gomes, Councillor, City of Mafra, Portugal.

Ms. Aguilera provided an opening speech on the value of SDG Cities Certification. Ms. Gomes of Portugal was keen on SDG Cities Certification, citing that it allowed better organization and uniformity, and the UN was a credible institution to provide such a global certification. The representative from Ghana emphasized the value Ghana placed on SDG Cities Certification and the importance of harmony and having congruence of sustainable development on the local and global levels. Ms. Hashem of Malaysia which was the first country to implement such an initiative on the national level and believes in certification and would like to explore the possibilities of national SDG certification.

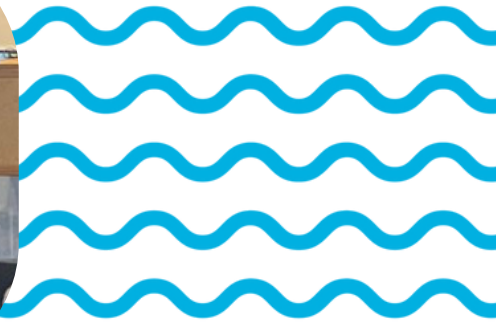




**Panel 2: The value of SDG Cities Certification in fostering strengthened linkages of cities with finance.**

The second panel consisted of Mr Roland Schatz, Chief Executive Officer, Global Sustainability Index Foundation, Switzerland and Ms Monica Palumbo, Partner of Deloitte, Climate and Sustainability.

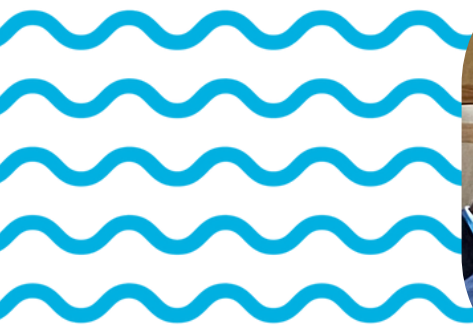
Ms Palumbo of Deloitte brought the issue of measurable metric information, particularly, how to make metrics standardized, reliable and comparable, how the certification system is set up in terms of procedures and roles, and the accountability for mayors and governments. Ultimately, Ms Palumbo believes that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) can provide a framework to standardize Environmental, Social Governance (ESG). Furthermore, Mr Schatz of GSIF stressed that SDG implementation and monetary profit ran in tangent and investment in cities and citizens were paramount.



**Panel 3: Reaching scale through digital tools and technical support hubs.**

The last panel discussion invited comments from Mr Yücel Yılmaz, Mayor of Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, Türkiye, Mr Jian Liu, Director of Early Warning and Assessment Division at UNEP, and Mr James Donovan, CEO, ADEC Innovation on the challenge of reaching the SDG Cities 1000 city goal.

Mr. Yılmaz shared his enthusiasm for an SDG Cities hub that support cities across the Turkic region. He cited a Turkish proverb “A stone does not move unless you join forces” illuminating that SDG Cities Certification is possible if we move forward together. UNEP’s Mr Liu indicated a desire to work together with UN-Habitat and the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality and be an inspiration for cities around the world. Moreover, Mr. Donovan shared that scalability is possible through adequate data collection. Specifically, data and diagnostic tools that would allow cities to self-assess. He also echoed earlier speakers in that SDG Cities Certification allowed diverse communities to speak the same modern language, as data allows comparability. SDG Certification systems allow us to have continuous improvement.



## Conclusion

The SDG Cities Global Initiative team would like to thank all of our partners, donors, speakers and participants for such a fruitful second UN-Habitat Assembly.

We look forward to continued discussions and collaboration that will feed into further development of the SDG Cities Global Initiative programme.

Do not hesitate to reach out should you wish to work with us for the acceleration of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in cities.



## Contact Us



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