

In Focus: SDG 11

“Housing and sustainable urban development in a world marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change”

6 October 2021

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Context

Cities play a crucial role in the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and in achieving the *Sustainable Development Goals*, especially SDG 11: “Sustainable cities and communities”. Their role has even become more important in a world deeply impacted by two interrelated emergencies: Covid-19 and climate change.

Today, cities stand at a crossroads. “*There is an urgent need to rethink and transform cities to respond to the reality of COVID-19 and potential future pandemics, and to recover better, by building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities*”, according to the United Nations Secretary General (see [Policy Brief on Covid-19 in an Urban World](#)). Hence, the right choices have to be made to ensure sustainable cities and communities.

The UNECE Regional Action Plan (RAP) *Place and Life in the UNECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes* has been drafted with these objectives in mind. The RAP is expected to support UNECE member States tackle the challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in the region, city, neighbourhood and home.

Inspired by and anchored in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the [Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) the [New Urban Agenda](#), the [Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and](#) the report “[#Housing 2030: effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region](#)”, the RAP proposes a series of aims, policies, goals, targets and related actions to achieve adequate, safe and affordable housing and sustainable urban development. This RAP should be endorsed at the [UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management](#) on 6-8 October 2021.

The *In Focus: SDG 11* event will be held ahead of the UNECE Housing Ministerial Meeting. It will therefore constitute an opportunity for UN partner agencies, other international organizations, cities and their networks, academia and other stakeholders to provide their perspectives on the RAP and share how they contribute to the implementation of the RAP to achieve sustainable urban development and adequate, safe and affordable housing in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the face of the climate emergency. Outcomes of

the event will inform the discussions of the UNECE Housing Ministerial Meeting and foster cooperation between all relevant stakeholders (States, UN agencies, other international organizations, cities, city networks, NGOs, academia, private sector) to create synergies and promote the effective implementation of SDG11 and other relevant urban-related SDGs.

In Focus: SDG 11

Since 2018, UNECE has been organizing *In Focus: SDG 11* event each year to focus discussions on achieving SDG 11. The event is a platform for a discussion on how cities and their networks as well as other relevant organizations and stakeholders address global challenges and support the States in implementing multilateral agreements. *In Focus: SDG 11* aims at better linking intergovernmental debates on issues related to SDG 11 with what cities and their networks and other relevant organizations are doing on the ground.

Theme

This year, together with the [Geneva Cities Hub](#) and UN-Habitat, UNECE is organizing the event on 6 October 2021, ahead of the UNECE Housing Ministerial Meeting. The theme of the SDG 11 event is *Affordable housing and sustainable urban development in a world marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change*. The theme corresponds to the theme of the 2021 UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management “*Affordable, adequate, and resilient housing in liveable cities, including cities which face extreme weather conditions*”. Outcomes of the event will inform discussions during the Ministerial Meeting.

The event will address the following questions:

1. Which challenges do cities face in relation to affordable, adequate, safe and resilient housing in a world marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change?
2. What support and from whom do cities need to address these challenges and how do they partner with their national governments and other stakeholders in relation thereto?
3. What are the innovative projects, policies and partnerships that enable cities to tackle these challenges?

Draft Agenda

Opening session (9.30-9.50)

Moderator: Ms. Doris Andoni, Chair, UNECE CUDHLM

- Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE
- Mr. Sami Kanaan, Vice-Mayor of Geneva, President, Geneva Cities Hub
- Mr. Graham Alabaster, Head of Geneva Office, UN-Habitat

Panel discussion (9.50-10.40)

Interventions by representatives of cities and cities' networks, UN entities, other international organizations, NGOs and academia.

Open debate (10.40-12:25)

Concluding remarks (12:25-12:30)

Format

Participants will deliver an oral presentation of 4-5 minutes (no PowerPoint presentations are envisaged). The presenters will be contacted ahead of the event by the moderators to be provided more information.

The presenters should submit the topic/title of their intervention by 17 September 2021 COB.

Languages

The event will be held in the English language with French and Spanish interpretation.

Registration

To register, please sign up for the UNECE "In Focus: SDG 11" at <https://indico.un.org/event/36512/>. Registration is open until 27 September 2021.

Date and Venue

The event will take place from 9.30 – 12.30 on 6 October 2021 at the Palais des Nations.

On-line connection

Participants will be able to follow the meeting online and will be recorded.

Contact

For more information, you may contact:

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