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In Focus: SDG 11

“Housing & sustainable urban development in a world marked by Covid-19 and climate change”

6 October 2021

Hybrid meeting (Room Tempus 3, Palais des Nations, Geneva/virtual)

CONCEPT NOTE

Draft 30/09/2021

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 2021: Tackling challenges from 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 [Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing](#), the study [“#Housing 2030: effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region”](#), the [Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the [New Urban Agenda](#), 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 cities, city networks and other stakeholders to

provide their perspectives on the RAP and share how they contribute to achieve sustainable urban development through 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, 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 SDG11. The event is a platform for an illuminating and refreshing dialogue on how cities and their networks as a well as relevant organizations and stakeholders address global challenges that are traditionally discussed by States in multilateral fora. *In Focus: SDG 11* aims at better linking intergovernmental debates on issues related to SDG11 with what cities and their networks 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 SDG11 event is *Affordable housing & sustainable urban development in a world marked by Covid-19 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. What kind of 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 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?
4. What recommendations would you like to make to States attending the UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and the 82nd session of the Committee on Housing, Urban Development and Land Management?

Draft Agenda:

Opening session (9.30-9.50)

Moderator: **Doris Andoni**, Chair, UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

- **Olga Algayerova**, Executive Secretary, UNECE
- **Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Executive Director, UN-Habitat
- **Beatrice Ferrari**, Canton of Geneva, Board member, Geneva Cities Hub

What are the major challenges ahead? Panel discussion (9.50-10.40)

Moderated by: **Graham Alabaster**, Chief, UN Habitat Geneva Office

- **Daniela Grabmullerova**, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Regional Development, Czechia
- **Ricardo Rio**, Mayor, City of Braga, Portugal; Rapporteur on SDGs of the European Committee of the Regions
- **Kristian Mjoen**, Executive Manager, Centre for Sustainable Development, Trondheim Kommune, Norway
- **Marlene Simeon**, PLATFORMA Director, Director of Operations, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
- **Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi**, Lecturer in City Diplomacy, Columbia University and Sciences Po Paris; Consultant, Association Internationale des Maires Francophones (AIMF)
- **Brian Evans**, Chief Urbanist, City of Glasgow

General debate (10.40-12:25)

Moderated by: **Kamelia Kemileva**, Co-Director, Geneva Cities Hub

Interventions by city networks, NGOs, UN entities, etc.

- **Michaela Kauer**, Director, Brussels Liaison Office, City of Vienna; Eurocities
- **Andrea Colantonio**, Senior Urban Development Specialist, European Investment Bank (EIB)
- **Michele Acuto**, Director, Melbourne Centre for Cities
- **Barbara Steenbergen**, International Union of Tenants (IUT)
- **Tony Mulhall**, Senior Specialist, Land and Resources, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

- **Stefan Kuhn**, Deputy Regional Director, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability Europe
- **Martina Otto**, Head of Secretariat (OIC), United Nations Environment Programme
- **Andreas Jaeger**, Covenant of Mayors EU

- **Stefano Marta**, Coordinator, Territorial Approach to the SDGs, Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, OECD
- **Helena Monteiro**, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
- **Victoria Jimenez**, Head of Sector for Urban Development, Union for the Mediterranean
- **Nathalie Roebbel**, Head, Urban Health, Social Determinants of Health, World Health Organization (WHO)
- **Pascale Fressoz**, Alliance Internationale pour les Objectifs de Développement Durable (AIODD)
- **Cristina Bueti**, Counsellor on Internet of Things and Smart Sustainable Cities (ITU-T Study Group 20), International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Claire Lamont**, Senior Corporate Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- **Joanne Irvine**, Programme Officer, Migration and Sustainable Development Unit, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- **Ellen Woodsworth**, Women Transforming Cities International
- **Raymond Saner**, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, CSEND

Concluding remarks (12:25-12:30) **Doris Andoni**, Chair, UNECE CUDHLM

Registration

To register, please register for the “In Focus: SDG 11” at <https://indico.un.org/event/36512/>. Registration is open until **27 September 2021**. Please check whether you will be attending in person or online.

Date and Venue

The event will take place from 9.30 – 12.30 on 6 October 2021.

In-person: participation: Room Tempus 3, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.

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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