HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Since 2015, SDG 11 has catalyzed collaboration and partnerships between diverse groups of stakeholders across local, regional, and national governments. However, cities and regions continue to struggle with providing adequate housing, services, and infrastructure, and suffer from the increasing global incidence of natural disasters. Although cities are often characterized by stark socioeconomic inequalities, social exclusion, extreme poverty, unemployment, poor environmental conditions, and high production of greenhouse gas emissions, their potential for growth and development makes them strong drivers for positive change. Their density and economies of agglomeration act as strings that connect all Sustainable Development Goals together, linking economy, energy, environment, science, technology and social and economic outcomes. With nearly 54% of the world's population living in cities today—and potentially two-thirds by 2030—this critical mass of urban dwellers has an enormous potential for change both in urban and rural areas.

Progress, but more to be done

Over 880 million people live in slums. Though the global urban population living in slums decreased from 28.4 per cent to 22.8 per cent between 2000 and 2014, the absolute number of people living in slums increased from 807 million to 883 million.

Nine out of ten people living in cities breathe unsafe air, resulting in millions of deaths. Ninety percent of the global urban population breathe air that does not meet WHO air quality guidelines and this air pollution is killing millions: in 2016 alone, it is estimated 4.2 million people died as a result of high levels of ambient air pollution.

Managing solid waste remains a major environmental challenge, even when collected, waste is often not treated and disposed of in sustainable and environmentally-sound ways.

Disaster risk reduction strategies are urgently needed. Housing damage attributable to disasters has risen since 1990, as well as deaths from small and medium-scale disasters. Over 90 per cent of deaths attributable to internationally-reported disasters occurred in low- and middle-income countries.

Public open spaces are making a difference. Parks, boulevards, gardens, playgrounds, and streets account for more than half of the built-up areas in cities worldwide, playing a vital role in the social and economic lives of many.

More needs to be done to make cities more inclusive and accessible. Safety is a chief concern, especially for vulnerable populations such as women and girls, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Here is what we need to do

Know

- ❖ Inadequate housing negatively impacts urban equity and inclusion, urban safety and livelihood opportunities, and health. Adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services are needed by hundreds of millions.
- ❖ Air pollution affects everyone, regardless of geography or social status. Despite the advancements in technologies in monitoring of air pollution, there are still many gaps in global monitoring to better understand risks to human health and ecosystems.
- ❖ The interlinkages of SDG 11 with other goals and development agendas, such as the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework, are extensive. For example, the goal on poverty is linked to access to land, slums and inadequate housing; health is often affected by 'place'; and gender equality can benefit from access to public spaces, basic infrastructure, and participation in local governance and decision-making.

Plan

- ❖ Promote consultation and coordination among multiple stakeholders, including line ministries from all sectors, local authorities, metropolitan authorities, national statistics offices, the private sector, academia and civil society for successful implementation.
- ❖ Strengthen governance structures and normative frameworks for disaster risk reduction in urban areas, including improving and enforcing land use plans and building codes. Disaster risk assessments should be a prerequisite for infrastructure and housing investments
- ❖ Promote inclusivity and accessibility for different social groups, such as women and girls or persons with disabilities.

Act

- ❖ Implement inclusive, sustainable and safe housing construction to meet urban population growth needs.
- ❖ Integrate urbanization into national development planning.
- ❖ Treat and dispose of solid waste in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner. Increase awareness to ensure that urbanization is integrated into national development planning from a strategic and multi-sectoral perspective.
- ❖ Leverage finance to meet the interconnected and interdependent nature of SDG 11, including through governance structures, institutional capacities, and engagement with public-private partnerships.