

**Video message by Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

**World Cities Day 2019 – Changing the World: Innovations and a Better Life for Future Generations**

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This year, World Cities Day is focusing attention on how innovation and creative new ideas we can transform our cities and our world today.

And how, if we continue on our usual path, we risk a bleak future.

This year the specific theme of World Cities Day is Changing the World: Innovations and a Better Life for Future Generations.

The most severe global challenges from climate change to inequality, migration to slums negatively affect the largest number of people in our towns and cities.

Without new creative ideas we will see increased global warming, mountains of waste, expanding informal settlements, gridlocked traffic and unplanned urban sprawl.

This is exactly the opposite to the inclusive, safer, sustainable and resilient cities we aim to create by 2030 under Sustainable Development Goal 11.

Our cities are hubs of creativity and innovation. Fresh new ideas can transform the way we live. Innovation can be a simple, ingenious idea or complex frontier technology.

Innovation is not just to solve problems but to find sustainable ways to improve the lives of everyone at scale.

New ideas ensure improved efficiency in the way we manage our resources, the way we move people and goods, deliver our services and construct our infrastructure and buildings.

Waste management and recycling apps, distributed and renewable generation of energy; smart water networks; they all increase sustainability and efficiency.

Cities account for two thirds of global energy demand and are responsible for three quarters of global carbon dioxide emissions. Waste-to-energy technologies improve waste management, create green jobs and generate clean, affordable energy for transport and other uses.

The rapid expansion of the urban population means that 70 per cent of the buildings existing in 2050 are yet to be built. Innovation can help us to deliver zero carbon and resilient infrastructure making for people-friendly cities and ensure equal rights for all.

World Cities Day is a chance for us all to reflect on new, innovative ways to make our cities more sustainable. It will help improve our lives now and preserve the planet for the generations to come.

From Ekertrinburg, I would like to invite you all to explore the exciting opportunities at the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi in February 8-13 2020. I would like to see the commitments made here on World Cities Day fulfilled at Abu Dhabi as we embrace the theme Cities of Opportunities – Connecting Culture and Innovation.

Let us work together to innovate for global change today to ensure we leave no one and no place behind. Let us do it for our future generations, so they inherit a better world than the one we got from the past.

Thank You.

need to build partnerships with businesses, the academia and the civil society with this in mind.

If we do not urgently adjust our systems and frameworks, we will continue to lag behind and risk not fulfilling the SDGs by 2030 and the transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda by 2036.

While addressing a wide range of issues including urban and territorial planning, resilience, smart technologies and finance, APUF has also provided valuable opportunities for national and local governments, the academia and civil society organizations to share precious experiences and good practices and learn from each other.

It is now up to each of us to apply what we have learnt and practice this in our local context.

UN-Habitat is committed to take forward the APUF7 outcomes at the Tenth World Urban Forum next year. Once again, I would like to invite all of you to join us in Abu Dhabi from 8-13 February 2020. At this and other occasions, we would like to see the concrete actions and showcase the impact of all initiatives to implement the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

Let us walk the talk. Let us keep the Asia-Pacific region at the forefront of sustainable development. I have every confidence that, by working together, we will find innovative and feasible solutions along with member states, partners, and the UN System in advancing for a better life for all in an urbanizing world.

