

PRESS RELEASE

Turkey's First Lady honoured as a Champion of UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities programme

Ankara, Turkey 2 June 2021 – The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, the UN agency focused on sustainable urbanization, has honoured Turkey's First Lady, Ermine Erdogan as a Champion of the Waste Wise Cities global programme.

"I would like to acknowledge the impressive achievements of the Zero Waste Project which was initiated in 2017 under the patronage of the First Lady," said UN-Habitat's Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, during her official visit to Turkey.

Between 2017 and 2020, the country saved 397 million tons of raw material, 315 million kilowatts per hour of energy, 345 million cubic meters of water, 50 million barrels of oil, and 2 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

"The Zero Waste project therefore plays a crucial role in Turkey's contributions to the fight against global climate change and is pivotal to preserving the country's natural resources and environment for future generations," Ms Sharif said

The UN-Habitat Waste Wise Cities programme was launched at World Habitat Day in 2018 by President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and UN-Habitat's Executive Director to address the increasing global waste management crisis.

UN-Habitat's recently released Report on [*Cities and Pandemic: Towards a more just, green and healthy future*](#), which highlights how COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting the urban poor, also draws attention the need for better waste management in cities.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director explained that: "Reducing waste, rejecting wastefulness and being mindful of living sustainably is key to emerging from this global pandemic."

The Republic of Turkey has a long history of partnership with UN-Habitat. Istanbul hosted Habitat II in 1996 that resulted in the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. In 2010, UN-Habitat conferred the Rafik Hariri UN-Habitat Memorial Award to then Turkish Prime Minister Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan in recognition of his work as Mayor of Istanbul.

Turkey was a member of UN-Habitat's Management Council from 2011-2014 and supported a slum reclamation project in Mombasa. The Executive Director's visit to Turkey at the invitation of the First Lady provides an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations.

"I see a lot of opportunities to learn from Turkey particularly how they have urbanized with minimal informal settlements. I look forward to working with the Union of Municipalities of Turkey and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. UN-Habitat is also actively contributing its expertise on sustainable urbanization and we will continue to work closely with the UN Country Team here," the Executive Director said.

For more information about the UN-Habitat Waste Wise Cities Programme, please see:

<https://unhabitat.org/waste-wise-cities>

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