

The path from poverty to prosperity runs through city streets

Shanghai, China, 29 October 2021 – International and local leaders, academics, business leaders, investors and civil society activists today opened the first Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Cities Conference to support cities become economically, socially and environmentally sustainable by 2030.

SDG Cities aims to support 1,000 cities achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability by 2030. It is now in its pilot stage, with a diverse group of large, medium size and small cities from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Participants of the SDG Cities Conference will discuss each stage of a value chain needed to make cities sustainable, including data, evidence-based planning, effective local institutions and investment in impact.

Through joining these elements, UN-Habitat believes that cities can become engines of sustainable development and improve the quality of life of their residents.

Opening the event, Harvard Professor Ed Glaeser said “the path from poverty to prosperity runs through city streets,” and while the pandemic has affected the way that people can interact in cities, cities must, more than ever, be enablers of economic, social and environmental sustainability, and must empower and protect their residents.”

Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments, Emilia Saiz, reiterated that “the crisis of cities is not just pandemic, but a convergence of health, climate and inequality. Addressing this requires the willingness to overcome inequality.”

Responding to concerns over the high costs of making cities sustainable, Marcos Troyjo, President of the New Development Bank (NDB), spoke of the need to empower financial ecosystems to impact at the most local level. Despite being a global development bank, NDB works through a broad range of partners to ensure human and climate impact.

The Conference will announce new pilot SDG cities and the SDG Cities Certification process that recognizes exceptional efforts by cities to become sustainable, leaving no-one behind.

More about SDG Cities is available through this link: <https://unhabitat.org/events/sdg-cities-global-conference>.

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