

**Speech at the closing ceremony of the World Habitat Day 2022 in Balikesir,
Republic of Türkiye****Date: 3 October 2022**

Honorable Mr Yucel Yilmaz, Mayor of Balikesir,

Your Excellency, Madame Martha Peralta Delgado, President of the UN-Habitat
Assembly,

Distinguished delegates,

Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and gentlemen,

All good things must come to an end. I have spent the last week admiring the good works of the people of Balikesir, which continues to impress me. Let me convey my thanks to the volunteers and the staff of the Mayor's office as well as the citizens of Balikesir for making this a truly memorable World Habitat Day.

I am also inspired by what I have heard and what I have seen. I must apologize that I could not join in on the roundtable sessions but modern technology means that I will have a chance to listen to all of the conversations as they have been recorded and shared live through the web. My thanks to the speakers, moderators, translators and also to UN Web TV for making it possible for us to reach our global audience.

Mr Mayor,

You will be glad to know that World Habitat Day 2022 had active participation of 78 different nationalities. We had 402 registered, 123 in person and 279 virtual. We have 161 participants from Africa, 59 from the Americas, 134 from Asia and 48 from Europe. We also had gender parity with 202 women and 199 men participating. All of these are based on registered numbers and does not include those who have been walking in as we saw this morning. The UN-Habitat team working with the mayor’s office will be producing a report and will update the UN-Habitat Executive Board on the full impact of World Habitat Day in their November meeting.

Distinguished delegates,

Sustainable development is a journey that starts with ourselves. As the winner of the Scroll of Honour from Nigeria said, what will our future self make of us and the actions we have taken or not taken today? If you think the planet earth is worth saving, then we must take action. To do that, we need to work with others. We need ‘us’ to make things happen as the Kenyan saying goes: if you want to go fast, go alone but if you want to go far, go together.

From today’s round-table sessions, let me share with you the top five ideas that have benefited from our expert review:

One: The new social contract can emerge from **MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE** and increased **PARTICIPATION**. We need to build **TRUST** between the different levels of governments, the civil society and the private sector.

Two: We need radical innovation to shape the new social contract through new processes and strategies for climate, energy, finance, housing, driven by human rights.

Three: Human right is the essential pillar for new approaches to build urban resilience and sustainable cities. The new social contract has to be ethical, practical and enforceable. The New Urban Agenda is an essential tool to guide the new social contract, together with the SDGs

Four: Radical innovation and local solutions are developed from what is needed on the ground. It needs to inform policymaking. We must re-imagine the city we want today and a planet we want to leave behind for future generations.

Five: Youth are our future however we need to manage the current conflict of generation. - The intervention of local governments is needed to provide a space for participation and build skills to empower the youth. - Ethnosport is essential to engage youth to preserve cultural and traditional values that are owned by young people.

Finally, let us embrace technology and innovation for enhanced data-information for policy makers, more efficient and environmental-friendly basic service provision, and more inclusive cities.

To build bridges over the gap of poverty, equity and three Cs - Covid, Conflicts and Climate - we need to all levels of government to work together. We need local governments to be better resourced. Without local action, we cannot scale up the impact of our work. Without involving the local community in developing action plans, mayors cannot translate policy into action. Without giving young people an opportunity to participate and lead, actions cannot build capacity and leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me once again seek your support to promote, to record and to share your knowledge, energy, and ideas on the Urban October platform. Let me also ask that you support the World Urban Campaign, which aims to reach out to 1,000 cities to speed up the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The time to act is now.

Thank you, Mayor Yucel,
Thank you, Mme Delgado,
Thank you, Türkiye!