Cities of Opportunities:

Connecting Culture and Innovation

Dialogue, Network, Learn and Exhibit at the World’s Premier Conference on Cities

May 2019
Images from the Ninth Session of the World Urban Forum

Photos: © UN-Habitat
Words of welcome!

The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum will take place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 8–13 February 2020.

UN-Habitat and the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the City of Abu Dhabi welcome you to the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 10).

With half of humanity already living in towns and cities, it is projected that in the next 50 years, two-thirds of us will be urbanised. The Abu Dhabi Forum will take this discussion to a new level in what promises to be an event that will have an impact for years to come on the urban debate. The host city Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates government and UN-Habitat are joining forces to ensure that the meeting makes a lasting contribution to new ideas and new solutions in line with the theme - Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif,
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Welcome!

With two-thirds of our global population expected to live in cities by 2030, and cities producing as much as 80 per cent of global GDP, urbanization will provide the greatest opportunity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, provided a unique opportunity to set the New Urban Agenda (NUA) on the path to prosperity and equitable growth. The NUA calls for a comprehensive approach to achieve Sustainable Development Goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda.

H.E. Falah Al Ahbabi,
Chairman, Abu Dhabi Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities

Ahlan wa sahlan!
The World Urban Forum (WUF) was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies. Today, it is the world’s premier conference on managing growing towns and cities.

Organized and convened by UN-Habitat, the Forum is one of the most inclusive international gatherings on urban challenges. This, combined with high-level participation, makes it unique. The World Urban Forum aims to raise awareness of sustainable urbanization among stakeholders and constituencies, including the general public, improve collective knowledge of sustainable urban development through inclusive open debates, sharing lessons learned and the exchange of best practices and good policies; and increase coordination and cooperation to advance sustainable urbanization. Since its inception at the first meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002, the Forum has grown in size and stature as it travelled to stunning new destinations every two years – Barcelona, Spain 2004, Vancouver, Canada 2006, Nanjing, China 2008, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2010, Naples, Italy 2012, Medellin, Colombia 2014. In 2018 WUF took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and was attended by more than 24,000 people – the theme was Cities 2030 – Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda.

The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10) will take place in the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center (ADNEC).

For more information on the WUF10 preparation please visit: www.unhabitat.org/wuf
Abu Dhabi will host the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10) four years after the New Urban Agenda was approved at Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, held in 2016 in Quito, Ecuador.

For the first time, culture, creativity and innovation will be at the center of the global conversation about the livability, vitality and sustainability of cities. Creativity and cultural diversity have always been key drivers of urban success. Our cities require public spaces for innovation and collaboration where people can tinker and experiment. We already know that the skills in demand in the next 10-15 years require fluency of ideas, creativity, ability to think systemically, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. How will we plan our cities around that reality? While technology shapes the invisible infrastructure of smart cities, culture and creativity are necessary to protect the quirkiness that gives cities their own character that connects and inspires humans. For many more reasons, at WUF10 culture will be a key driver for urban sustainability and a strategic asset for creating cities that are more inclusive, innovative and sustainable.

The World Urban Forum operates as a forward thinking, open-ended think tank, providing a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue, collaboration, and Public-Private cooperation. It is a platform designed to raise awareness of sustainable urbanization, to improve collective knowledge and increase cooperation between stakeholders. As the host city, we aim to make WUF10 the best attended and most diverse since the World Urban Forum was established in 2001.

Hosting the WUF10 is a significant opportunity for Abu Dhabi to showcase its achievements as a global hub for innovation and cultural exchange, connecting East and West. As the home of over 190 nationalities, Abu Dhabi offers a special combination of features in its urban identity as an open, progressive Arab city. The city pursues ‘Sustainable Abu Dhabi’, a holistic approach to sustainable development that rests on four pillars – economic, environmental, social and cultural. Abu Dhabi Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities (DPM) will develop strategic partnerships with civil society, government and the private sector to deliver four long-term initiatives (one per pillar) that will deliver content for four sessions at WUF10. Finally, WUF10 will have special significance for residents of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) because it will take place one year before the nation’s golden jubilee, and on the same year that Dubai will host Expo2020.

As the first Arab city to host a WUF, efforts are being made to raise the profile of urban stakeholders from the region. To ensure that the region’s concerns will be considered at WUF10, DPM and the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States have organized the first Pan-Arab Urban Development Symposium in March 2019. The voice of Arab urbanism is inspiring the world with examples of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable human settlements for all. One of the priorities at WUF10 will be to create an open environment where people can share with the world the best of multi-stakeholder, cross-agency, and international initiatives. Abu Dhabi and UN-Habitat will demonstrate to the world that cities are the solution to some of the toughest common challenges and that implementation efforts are in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Public-private cooperation is key to addressing issues and opportunities presented by urbanization.
THE THEME
Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation

As urban challenges become more complex with rapidly changing economic, social, political and technological and demographic contexts, advancing cross-sector partnerships and collaborative solutions is an important objective for WUF10. Promoting global and regional partnerships, through the exchange of knowledge, will permit to advance a sustainable development agenda based on culture, creativity and innovation.

Urban culture comprises material - physical infrastructure, streets, palaces, places of worship, opera houses, museums, places of entertainment, marketplaces; and nonmaterial - beliefs and lifestyles, of urban residents.\(^1\) The consideration of urban cultures in sustainable urbanization can serve as a strategic tool for city promotion and development and are increasingly becoming an essential component in urban economic development and regeneration. The idea of using culture as a motor of economic growth in part reflects the transition from manufacturing cities to sites of more flexible, design-, knowledge-, and service-based activities.

This is evidenced by the growth of services sectors and development of knowledge-based economies and creative industries in the framework of the so called fourth industrial revolution.

Many city authorities all over the world are using culture-related activities to market themselves internationally, to promote civic identity, sense of place, and to boost economic growth and generate employment. Current trends in many parts of the world suggest that culture will play an increasingly important role in the competitiveness and identify of cities and nations. Of significance among these trends are: culturally-driven redevelopment of inner-city areas; preservation of historic buildings as well as reviving of traditional crafts for enhancing the global tourism of cities; including the gentrification of inner-city residential areas. All these have the potential to contribute immensely to the wellbeing of cities.


(More to be found on [www.unhabitat.org/wuf](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf)).
Who is attending WUF
Today, WUF is by far the world’s premier conference on cities. This is largely because it is one of the most open and inclusive gatherings of its kind on the international stage. It brings together national leaders, slum dwellers, ministers, women groups, mayors, youth, academics, diplomats, community and business leaders, parliamentarians, local government groups, urban activists, citizen, and more; in short, all who share our vision for better and smarter cities of the future.

How it works
To accommodate the ever-growing numbers of participants, the Forum’s meetings are divided into dialogue sessions, special sessions, roundtables, youth, gender and business assemblies, networking events, caucus meetings, training seminars and an exciting array of side events, exhibition, cultural events and much more.

Partners, wishing to apply to host a networking, training or side event will be able to do so in due course through the Forum website.

On the first day the Assemblies will take place
In keeping with an established tradition for one day, young people from countries around the world will gather for the World Urban Youth Assembly, while others will join in parallel the Gender Equality Action Assembly and the Business Assembly. All Assemblies will have specific topics touching the theme and emerging interest of each constituency. The Recommendations from the Assemblies are expected to inform the participation and contributions of the related groups across the successive programme of sessions during the whole week.

World Urban Youth Assembly
The World Urban Youth Assembly will enable young people to debate matters of concern to them for consideration at the Forum. The idea is to ensure that the views of young people on the topic or on current global trends are taken into account. This applies especially to their concerns about living in decent equitable, inclusive cities and cities for all with better employment prospects.

Gender Equality Action Assembly
The Gender Equality Action Assembly will bring together partners to discuss progress and challenges in the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan. During the discussions, focus will be on the challenges, progress, strategies for action and emerging issues pertinent to promoting gender equality and women empowerment in sustainable urban development.

The Business Assembly
The business community constitute our vital partners, and many will be playing a pivotal role in Abu Dhabi. Their sessions will enable industry captains and business leaders to meet and discuss matters of mutual concern with mayors, police officers, community representatives, urban planners and all who share the common to discuss the main theme of the Forum in relation to their work.

Photo: © Andrea Posada
**WUF10 Draft Programme at a glance**

8 - 13 February 2020

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<th>Monday, 10 February</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucus meeting</td>
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<td>08:00-08:30</td>
<td>Joint opening of the Assemblies</td>
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<td>08:30-09:00</td>
<td>Opening of the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum [Ceremonial and Formal Opening]</td>
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<td>09:00-09:30</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
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<td>09:30-10:00</td>
<td>Roundtable 1</td>
<td>Roundtable 3</td>
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<td>11:00-11:30</td>
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<td>19:00-19:30</td>
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**Side Events**

**Special Session 1**

**Special Session 2**

**Parallel Closed Events**

**Training Events**

**Photo:** © iStock
### World Urban Forum 10 (WUF10)

**Time**
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<tr>
<td><strong>Caucus meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Caucus meeting</strong></td>
<td>From WUF10 to WUF11 and opening the call for Expression of Interest for WUF12</td>
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<td><strong>Dialogue 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dialogue 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lunch break</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Special Session 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Coffee Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Networking Events</strong></td>
<td><strong>Special Session 6</strong></td>
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**Event Highlights**
- Joint opening of the Assemblies
- Joint closing of the Assemblies
- World Urban Youth Assembly
- Gender Equality Action Assembly
- Business Assembly
- Press Conference
- Side Events
- Lunch break
- Caucus meeting
From the second day the following main events will take place:

**Dialogues**
The dialogues are the high-profile events at the Forum and will set the tone for consideration during that day and throughout the week’s gatherings and well after the Forum. They intend to collect inputs on key aspects of sustainable urbanization directly related to the main theme and the sub-themes. Six dialogues are planned for the Forum and will explore and deepen the knowledge especially on the sub-themes.

The draft sub-themes for the WUF10 Dialogues

**Dialogue 1: Urbanization, Culture and Innovation**
This dialogue will explore how urbanization affects and is affected by culture and innovation: perspectives from different parts of the world, regional specific.

**Dialogue 2: Driving Sustainable Urbanization through Innovation and Culture**
This dialogue will examine the role that innovation and culture can play in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and internationally agreed goals and targets relevant to sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

**Dialogue 3: Tradition and Modernity: A Creative Convergence for Better Cities**
This dialogue will explore how cities can maximize tradition and modernity to sustainable outcomes (economic, social and environmental).

**Dialogue 4: Frontier Technologies and Cities**
The dialogue will promote further debate on the increasingly pervasive role of frontier technologies in transforming urban areas and responding to urban issues with perspectives from different regions of the world.

**Dialogue 5: Urban Planning and Heritage Preservation/Regeneration**
This dialogue will examine the role that urban and territorial polices can play in preserving cultural heritage, including promoting cultural infrastructure, sites, museums and assets. How can urban planning leverage cultural heritage for regenerating revitalizing urban areas?

**Dialogue 6: Partnerships, networks and global initiatives supporting culture and innovation in cities**
This dialogue will explore that nature of the global partnerships and global initiative that are supportive of cultural and innovation in cities.

**Special Sessions**
A number of special sessions on topics of importance of importance of the Forum or the host region; or topical issues of the day will be organized by UN-Habitat and the host city.

**Roundtables**
An array of roundtable meetings will be held by peer groups - ministers, mayors, parliamentarians, partner universities, business entities, urban researchers, Habitat professionals, women and youth groups, civil society organizations and others. They will deliberate on a set of subjects that revolve around the linkages between sustainable urbanization and the development agenda in relation to the theme. The roundtables provide the opportunity for focused discussions, sharing of lessons learned, exchanging of urban solutions, collecting key reflections and the way forward to the implementation of the topic discussed. Most of these meetings are open to the public, access to some, such as the ministerial sessions, mayors and parliamentarians could be restricted.

**Networking events**
Networking events will have a duration of two hours long and should focus on strengthening partnerships, calling for new alliances or launching joint initiatives on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. They are an opportunity to share ideas and commitments in an effort to advance the sustainable urban development in cities and towns around the globe.

**Side events**
The topic of a side event is related to the overall WUF 10 theme and will have a duration of one hour. A side event could include book launches, receptions and presentation to showcase concrete examples, projects, research, data, knowledge and initiatives of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to advance the sustainable urban development in cities and towns.

**Caucus meetings**
Caucus meetings will be informal meetings held between peers every morning before the main events take place and will mainly focus on the topics of the day.
**Training events**

UN agencies, partners universities, local governments, capacity development institutions and other stakeholders will provide training on a range of topics of three hours each. Training events should focus on developing skills and knowledge of the trainee by providing the “how to” approach to development challenges with innovative tools, methodologies and instruments to support and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Each session can accommodate 40-50 people.

*Further information with the call Institutions to host training events will be found in due course on the Forum website: [www.unhabitat.org/wuf](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf)*

**The Exhibition**

An international World Urban Forum exhibition, open from the first to the last day of the Forum, covering over 18,000m² (indoor between hall 7 to 10 and outdoor at Centre Plaza) will showcase some of the world’s premier institutions, United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations with many innovations in urban development in relation to the main theme. Promising a very exciting glimpse into the future of our urban world. The exhibition at each session of the Forum is a favorite highlight and is open to the public and participants. Complimentary standard booths of 9 m² will be set aside for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on a first-come, first served basis.

Those wishing to exhibit will need to book well in advance.

*Further information will be soon available on the same website: [www.unhabitat.org/wuf](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf)*

**ADNEC and surrounding hotels**

Registration
Participants must individually register for the Forum. Online registration is free of charge and will commence in due course on the Forum website. Those attending are expected to meet their own travel, accommodation and living expenses. Every participant is advised to have a valid travel health insurance.

Visa
Before you travel to the UAE, please check your visa requirements and make sure you have a valid visa if needed, or if your passport needs to be valid for a minimum period. Holders of non-standard passports and travel documents may also have different entry requirements: https://www.mofa.gov.ae/EN/ConsularServices/Pages/Visa-Information.aspx

Hotel
With regards to information on hotel booking for WUF10, we advise prospective participants to use on-line search websites for information on hotels in Abu Dhabi and look out later for more information on the WUF10 website.

Transport
The most commonly used public transport is by taxi and bus. More information on the public transport system with transport network maps for Abu Dhabi is found at the following link: https://dot.abudhabi.ae/en/info/bus_transportation

Venue
Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center - ADNEC
Khaleej Al Arabi Street
Abu Dhabi
UAE - United Arab Emirates
www.adnec.ae

More Information
You will find more information on the Forum website as it becomes available. We encourage you to frequently check to be up-to-date with information around WUF10 at www.unhabitat.org/wuf.
From WUF 1

Note:
In 2016, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development was held in lieu of the Eighth Session of the World Urban Forum.
to WUF 10

WUF 2
2004
Cities: Crossroads of cultures, inclusiveness and integration?
Attendance: Over 4,300

WUF 4
2008
Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development
Attendance: Almost 8,000

WUF 6
2012
The Urban Future
Attendance: Over 8,200

WUF 9
2018
Cities 2030, Cities for All
Attendance: Over 23,000

WUF 10
2020
Cities of Opportunities - Connecting Culture and Innovation
Attendance: Over 23,000

Cities of Opportunities - Connecting Culture and Innovation

WUF 1
2002
Sustainable Urbanization
Attendance: Almost 1,200

Naples, Italy
Barcelona, Spain
Abu Dhabi, UAE
Nanjing, China
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Nairobi, Kenya

First Announcement // WUF10 / 15
SEE YOU AT WUF10