



Wicked Problems: The New Urban Agenda and Smart Cities

The mind of Technocracy is clearly seen in the first line of this story: Any problem caused by technology can be fixed with more technology. It never occurs to a Technocrat that many problems cannot be fixed with technology. □ TN Editor

Technological fixes such as smart cities make a system more complex, resulting in “wicked problems” that require ever more extensive technological remedies.

In October 2016, at the [World Urban Forum 8](#) in Quito, Ecuador, [UN Habitat](#) launched its third planning cycle with [Habitat III](#), now known as the [New Urban Agenda](#). The agenda defines the work of the global urban community until 2036, by which time humanity will be well on its way to an estimated 2050 population of 10 billion — two-thirds of which will be

urban dwellers. The New Urban Agenda established an ambitious and aspirational plan for how the world will manage the intensified process of what French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, writing in 1970 termed, "[planetary urbanization](#)."

Habitat III was part of a larger process within the community of experts and practitioners working on the great problems of the 21st century: climate change, energy transition, food and water insecurity, demographic shifts (growth, aging and urbanization), pandemics, ecological degradation, economic stress and political instability, among others. Prior to Habitat III, their ambitions constituted what is known as the post-2015 development agenda. The year 2015 was significant because it marked the renewal and reinforcement of several key development agendas. The first was United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Relief's re-worked disaster risk reduction platform, the 2015 [Sendai Framework](#), followed by the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) in September 2015, the [Paris Climate Agreement](#) in December 2015 and, ultimately, Habitat III in October 2016.

Replicating Power Structures

Many see the New Urban Agenda as the key to humanity's ability to weather a perfect storm of global crises. As the roadmap for surviving the 21st century, it carries an immense burden, and those working to make its vision for inclusive and [sustainable](#) urbanism a reality must contemplate a wide array of wicked problems. At Quito, however, it became clear to many observers that the New Urban Agenda was a mile wide in ambition, but not even an inch deep with concrete plans for implementation. Session after session deferred the tedium of substantive action by insisting that the work ahead was to figure out how to implement the fine words of the document. That work would be undertaken in Kuala Lumpur, at the [World Urban Forum 9](#) in February 2018.

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Urban Agenda. The forum focused on the SDGs, especially [Goal 11](#), which aims to “make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.” It was an appropriate focus for a gathering of the world’s city-engaged human development experts and practitioners, providing a place to compare notes, promote best practices and network. This, however, is not the full story.

The plausible, if skeptical, take is that World Urban Forum 9 was about reproducing a development agenda deeply entrenched in the Washington Consensus values of market liberalization and institutional commodification. The presence of experts who ostensibly control the knowledge behind the agenda added a whiff of legitimacy. The [program](#) featured a dizzying array of workshops that had the common narrative of “hearing from the audience” and fostering “participatory development.” However, the content and many of the messages appeared to be driven by funder or grant mandates. Left wanting, in many cases, were those who came to learn something practical: how to provide water in informal settlements, how to prepare for climate change or how to improve waste disposal.

Many sessions had a neo-colonial atmosphere as representatives from the privileged global minority — heads of agencies, NGOs, research institutes, graduate programs, corporations and financial institutions — chaired sessions and monopolized talk time. It was a scene profoundly reminiscent of the global development process of the past half-century.

SMART CITIES

A new development at World Urban Forum 9 was the emergence of [smart cities](#) as a meta narrative for the New Urban Agenda’s implementation. The forum featured a proliferation of sessions about smart city technologies, plenary speakers dropped the term as the gold standard in sustainable and inclusive urban planning, and many exhibition booths featured strident declarations about the intersection of green, smart and inclusive — all underpinned by the vast potential of technology. Considering that Habitat III’s New Urban Agenda scarcely mentions smart cities, the term’s ubiquity at World Urban Forum 9 merits some contemplation.

Smart cities have abruptly appeared on the agenda for a combination of reasons. First, the world's urban pontificators — a faddish lot — need a flashy concept to embody the implementation solution for the New Urban Agenda. Second, in its ambiguity the smart cities concept has become a canvas onto which many agendas are splattered. This versatility makes smart cities more a convenient placeholder for a normative vision of 21st-century urbanism than a substantive solution that can be implemented. Third, and perhaps most importantly, smart cities are where the big money is flowing. Cisco Systems, Microsoft and Google, among many other corporate players, are all committing to smart cities, and they stand to capture a growing piece of the speculative capital that sloshes around the global markets.

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New UN-Habitat Head Vows To

Tackle Rapid Urbanization Challenges

The new UN-Habitat leader “will be guided by the principles of the new urban agenda and the UN’s universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in tackling urbanization challenges.” The UN intends to set urban policy for the entire planet. □ TN Editor

The new head of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) has vowed to prioritize strengthening the housing agency to effectively tackle the challenges of rapid urbanization.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, said she will be guided by the principles of the new urban agenda and the UN’s universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in tackling urbanization challenges.

Sharif added that the UN housing agency has innovative solutions that have been tried elsewhere with success.

“I want to make the agency more responsive to the needs of countries by helping them in addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization and at the same time harness the benefits of good urbanization,” she told journalists in Nairobi.

“It is time to strengthen UN-Habitat and ensure we can effectively support countries to implement the new urban agenda in collaboration with all the United Nations system, all levels of government and stakeholders,” she added.

The new urban agenda is the outcome document agreed upon at the UN-Habitat 3 cities conference in 2016. It guides the efforts around urbanization of wide range nation states, city and regional leaders, international development funders, UN programs and civil society for the next 20 years.

According to Sharif, tackling challenges in the cities was urgent since they are centers of economic growth and contribute to 70 percent of

global GDP. If urbanization is well planned, it will lead to the achievement of SDGs, she said.

“While working on the new urban agenda, it will mean we have created jobs, this way she shall be curbing poverty, we shall improve on sanitation and we shall have handled the climate change challenge. All these are SDGs we shall have achieved to mention just a few.”

Shariff said she has formed a task force to help re-strategize and harmonize its operations in Kenya, noting that the task force will help program activities in line with the government’s vision and other development plans.

“We intend to scale up the good experiences in close collaboration with other stakeholders,” Sharif said, noting that the UN agency is ready to offer expertise in supporting the government to realize its goal of availing one million houses within a specified period.

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Smart Cities Have Little Real Value To Offer The New Urban Agenda

Technology-driven Smart City dogma invaded World Urban Forum 9 in Kuala Lumpur and delivered mostly empty rhetoric. Technology is rightly likened to a Ponzi scheme that will ultimately result in the collapse of cities and societies. □ TN Editor

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UN's New Urban Agenda In Latin America Calls For Paradigm Shift

The main outcome of Habitat III held in October 2016, was “the adoption of the final New Urban Agenda (NUA) document as the new mandate for the development of cities and human settlements during the next 20 years.” The U.N. is now meddling with Latin America to impose its Technocratic tyranny on unsuspecting city-dwellers. □ TN Editor

An action plan for implementing the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in Latin America and the Caribbean envisions the city as a “macro-level public good” where citizens’ economic, social, cultural and environmental rights are guaranteed.

The ‘Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC): 2016-2036’ (RAP) was published by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UN-Habitat and the General Assembly of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI). The guiding principles and strategic objectives (2016-2036) of the RAP include: inclusive cities; sustainable and

inclusive urban economies; urban environmental sustainability; and effective and democratic governance.

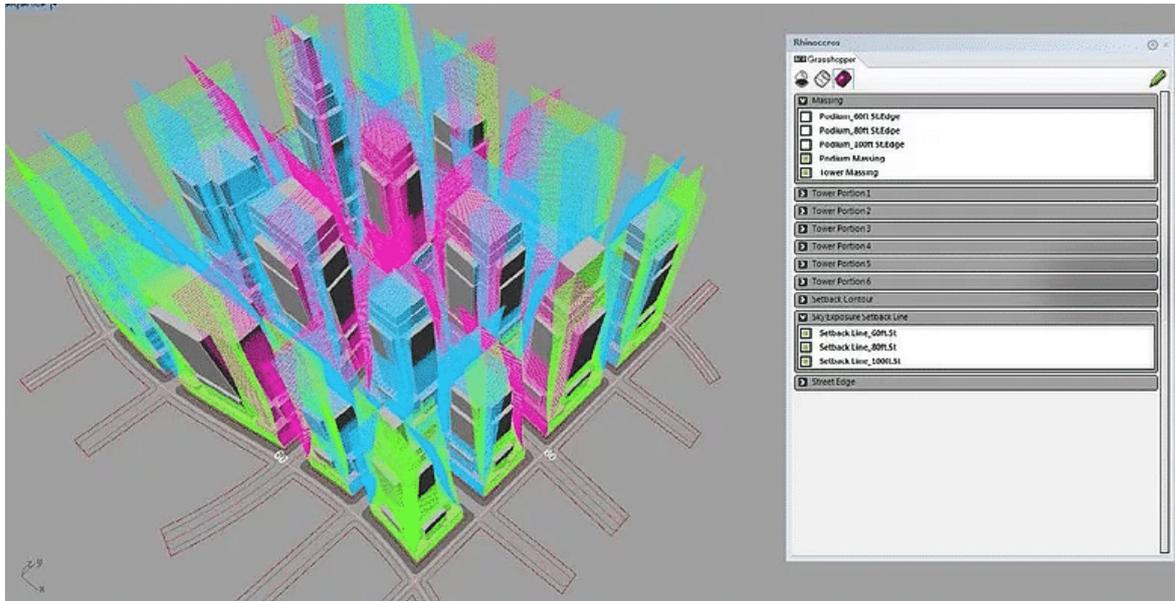
The RAP argues that current regional policies have failed to successfully address unsustainable urban trends. Therefore, structural changes are required that place sustainability and equality at the center of the urbanization process. It provides a road map of potential actions, interventions and evidence-based policy guidance for LAC countries towards achieving sustainable urban development, and establishing a more equitable urban paradigm.

The RAP contains six action areas, namely: national urban policies; urban legal frameworks; urban and territorial planning and design; urban economy and municipal finances; local implementation; and monitoring, reporting and revision mechanisms. These action areas and their strategic objectives comprise the key components necessary for implementing the NUA in LAC. The document describes enabling conditions and essential elements for each area, and how each is aligned with specific SDGs and related targets.

While aimed at implementing the NUA in the region, the RAP will also enable the building of synergies with other global agreements and agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, among others. The RAP was designed for the region as a whole, but it can also be used to evaluate needs and actions at the subregional, national and local levels.

[Publication: [Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the NUA in LAC: 2016-2036](#)]

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AI-Based Zoning Posed As The Answer For Smart And 'Equitable' Cities

Technocrat Smart City architects are turning to AI and systems-theory to automate property zoning. Dr. Parag Khanna was right when he said the *'globalization is the system'*. □ TN Editor

Zoning codes are a century old, and the lifeblood of all major U.S. cities ([except arguably Houston](#)), determining what can be built where and what activities can take place in a neighborhood. Yet as their complexity has risen, academics are increasingly exploring whether their rule-based systems for rationalizing urban space could be replaced with dynamic systems based on blockchains, machine learning algorithms, and spatial data, potentially revolutionizing urban planning and development for the next one hundred years.

These visions of the future were inspired by my recent chats with Kent Larson and John Clippinger, a dynamic urban thinking duo who have made improving cities and urban governance their current career focus. Larson is a [principal research scientist at the MIT Media Lab](#), where he directs the City Science Group, and Clippinger was formerly a Research Scientist at the [Human Dynamics Group](#) at the MIT Media Lab and is

now a cofounder of [Swytch.io](https://swytch.io) which is developing a utility token called Swytch.

One of the toughest challenges facing major U.S. cities is the price of housing, which [has skyrocketed over the past few decades](#), placing incredible strain on the budget of young and old, singles and families alike. The average [one-bedroom apartment is \\$3,400 in San Francisco](#), and [\\$3,350 in New York City](#), making these meccas of innovation increasingly out-of-reach of even well-funded startup founders let alone artists or educators.

Housing is not enough to satiate the modern knowledge economy worker though. There is an expectation that any neighborhood is going to have a laundry list of amenities, from nice and cheap restaurants, open spaces, and cultural institutions to critical human services like grocery stores, dry cleaners, and hair salons.

Today, a zoning board would simply try to demand that various developments include the necessary amenities as part of the permitting process, leading to [food deserts](#) and the curious [soullessness of some urban neighborhoods](#). In Larson and Clippinger's world though, rules-based models would be thrown out for "dynamic, self-regulating systems" based around what might agnostically be called tokens.

Every neighborhood is made up of different types of people with different life goals. Larson explained that "We can model these different scenarios of who we want working here, and what kind of amenities we want, then that can be delineated mathematically as algorithms, and the incentives can be dynamic based on real-time data feeds."

The idea is to first take datasets like mobility times, unit economics, amenities scores, and health outcomes, among many others and feed that into a machine learning model that is trying to maximize local resident happiness. Tokens would then be a currency to provide signals to the market of what things should be added to the community or removed to improve happiness.

A luxury apartment developer might have to pay tokens, particularly if the building didn't offer any critical amenities, while another developer

who converts their property to open space might be completely subsidized by tokens that had been previously paid into the system. “You don’t have to collapse the signals into a single price mechanism,” Clippinger said. Instead, with “feedback loops, you know that there are dynamic ranges you are trying to keep.”

Compare that systems-based approach to the complexity we have today...

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UNESCO Promotes Multi-Pronged Approach To Resilient Cities

UN technocrats are obsessed with control and micro-management of

people in cities, and the implementation of the seventeen so-called 'Sustainable Development Goals'. Other global institutions like the World Bank, are intimately involved as well. □ TN Editor

By 2050, the world will be two-thirds urban, placing cities at the frontline of global challenges and opportunities. Migration is a major factor of urbanisation, contributing significantly to economic development and cultural diversity. As people and assets concentrate in cities, these become increasingly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, disasters and conflicts. Yet if planned and managed well, cities will become an engine for sustainable development.

For cities to be inclusive, safe and resilient, governments, mayors and local stakeholders need urban policies that integrate the soft power of culture, education, science and social integration, as suggested in the [New Urban Agenda](#) adopted at the Habitat III conference in 2016.

UNESCO's participation at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7-13 February 2018, demonstrated this with five events engaging international and local voices on how cities can forge a sustainable future.

Cities in post-conflict and post-disaster situations face numerous challenges and were the focus of the networking event on "[Culture, Reconstruction, Recovery](#)" led by UNESCO and the World Bank. "Culture should be placed at the core of reconstruction and recovery processes by embedding cultural and natural heritage as well as intangible heritage and creativity into integrated strategies that rely on both people-centred and place-based approaches," said Sameh Wahba, World Bank Global Director for Urban and Territorial Development, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience.

Experts stressed that urban regeneration strategies need to use culture as a key resource, asset, and tool, and build on the "3-Ps" approach (people, places, policies) set out in the UNESCO Global Report, [Culture Urban Future](#).

The training event on "[Creativity for Sustainable Cities: Leveraging Culture for Social Inclusion, Economic Development, and enhanced resilience](#)" co-organized by UNESCO and UN Habitat highlighted the

importance of cultural heritage, living heritage, and culture and creative industries in the shaping, implementation and assessment of culture-engaged urban development policies. “Culture is a key element to humanizing cities” said Christine Musisi, Director for International Relations in UN-Habitat.

Virginio Merola, Mayor of Bologna (Italy), underscored that the major responsibility of mayors and local authorities is to enhance the “urban commons” and use culture to build the conditions for people from diverse social, cultural and generational backgrounds to live together peacefully. The importance of measuring the actual contribution of culture to urban development processes was underlined, to build not only on its economic value but also on its impact on education, people’s well-being, resilience and social inclusion.

UNESCO’s event on [“Building Urban Resilience”](#) focused on how cities cope with the provision of water related services and natural hazards. Water services, for example, can be acutely affected by climate change. There are many replicable best practices and solutions for water management and policies, and disaster risk reduction. Dr Nicola Tollin, part of the UNESCO Chair of Sustainability at the Technical University of Catalonia, President of RECNET and Executive Director of the International Programme on Urban Resilience, RESURBE, demonstrated the need to bridge local and international climate action at the urban level, with projects that use nature-based solutions for water management and generate environmental, economic, social and climate co-benefits.

The [VISUS methodology](#), a science-based assessment methodology for school safety was also presented, along with the UNESCO [International Hydrological Programme](#)’s examples of knowledge sharing and exchange on water within the framework of the [Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate \(MAWaC\)](#), which are all useful tools and resources for enhancing the resilience of cities

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Taking On The World: Meet UN-Habitat's First Asian Female Head

Maimunah Mohd Sharif was formerly a city planner, but now she is the premier city planner for UN-Habitat, which curates the United Nations New Urban Agenda. A devout Muslim, the fact that Sharif would accept such a position demonstrates that Sustainable Development (aka Technocracy) is compatible with Islam. □ TN Editor

If there is one quality that defines Datuk Maimunah Mohd Sharif - the newly elected head of UN-Habitat - it is her determination to make a positive, tangible difference in people's lives.

The former president of the Seberang Perai Municipal Council (2011-2017) and until recently mayor of Penang Island City Council says she was always vocal about all the ways that she believed the UN could change things, and now she is in the position to "walk the talk".

It's a proud achievement for Maimunah to be the first Asian woman to take the helm of the UN agency with the mission of improving life in fast-growing cities, which will be home to two-thirds of the world by 2050.

Maimunah is excited to have the opportunity to "create sustainable, fair and inclusive cities for all".

Just over a month into her four-year term as executive director, she admits that she's still settling into her new job and learning "how the UN system works". She's still firming up her vision and mission which will inform her work at the UN.

"I know what I want, to make UN Habitat relevant. How can we help cities and local governments implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and World Urban Agenda that have been laid out.

"How can we ensure that every citizen enjoys good quality of life," says Maimunah, who was awarded the Global Human Settlements Outstanding Contribution Award by the Global Forum on Human Settlements last October in Quito, Ecuador for her contributions to sustainable planning in Seberang Perai.

[Maimunah](#) may have just stepped into office but she's been a vocal commentator on the UN Settlements programme for years. As the Seberang Perai municipal council president, she was invited to sit on the Global Task Force for Local and Regional Governments in 2016 where she advocated for dialogue with local governments.

She urged the UN to provide platforms for local and regional governments and their networks within the UN as national and global sustainability can only be achieved when local and regional governments are empowered.

A town planner by training, Maimunah started her career at the Municipal Council of Penang Island in 1985.

In 2003, she was promoted to Director of Planning and Development where she was directly involved in development control of Penang city

projects and landscape development.

She also led a team in planning and implementation of the Urban Renewal Projects in George Town. In November 2009, she became the first General Manager to establish George Town World Heritage Incorporated and manage the George Town World Heritage Site which was inscribed by Unesco in July 2008.

She then became the first woman to be president of the Seberang Perai Municipal Council in 2011.

Now, Maimunah is ready for her new challenge, emboldened by the support from her team in Nairobi, Kenya where she will be based for the next four years.

“It’s been very good, so far. I touched down in Nairobi on Dec 22 and stepped into my office the next day.

“I’ve been meeting my team and the heads of departments as well as our stakeholders. I’ve received tremendous support. In fact, when I delivered my address at the town hall meeting on my second day of work, the hall was overflowing ... and I was told that the attendance was unprecedented.

“Hopefully, this is a sign of the support I will receive,” says the affable Maimunah.

Chance Of A Lifetime

Maimunah didn’t apply for her UN post, nor did she expect the appointment. She learnt that United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres had nominated her for the position in December last year.

“They asked me if I was aware of the vacancy and if I had applied for the post before nominations closed on Oct 21. I didn’t know anything ... on Oct 21, I was busy handling the landslide in Penang. I was then told of my nomination and went through a 90-minute interview via video-conference,” she relates.

On Dec 20, Guterres informed the General Assembly of his nomination

and there was a vote.

“I was watching the session live from my home. It was 4am Malaysian time and I was excited. The vote was unanimous!” she says.

Maimunah is honoured to receive such a show of confidence.

“I have spoken about sustainable urban development at conferences. I suppose they have been listening to what I have to say,” she says.

It didn't take long for Maimunah to agree to take on the challenge. But first, as always, she consulted her husband and their two daughters.

Women, she says, can achieve wonders as long as they have the support from family. *(Ed. note: This is an Islamic requirement)*

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Cities 2030: Implementing the New Urban Agenda

The United Nations promotes Technocracy through its programs of Sustainable Development, New Urban Agenda and Agenda 2030. It has also sworn to overthrow capitalism and Free Enterprise altogether, and a key part of their strategy is to transform cities throughout the world. □
TN Editor

In October 2016, the **New Urban Agenda** was unanimously adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), serving as a new vision for our cities and municipalities for the next 20 years. UNDP demonstrated its full support to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda with the official launch of its [Sustainable Urbanization Strategy](#).

A year later, UNDP welcomed its **Strategic Plan 2018-2021** with the endorsement of Member States, providing strategic guidance to UNDP's policy and programmes for the next four years. The new Plan sets out the direction for a new UNDP to support countries to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and achieve the goals of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

The Plan recognizes that rapid urbanization and changing demographic patterns are challenging conventional thinking on development pathways, and that addressing urban challenges requires cross-cutting, integrated applications of expertise and investment, customized for each country and circumstance and driven by global best practices and international standards.

Through **four out of the six Signature Solutions** of the Strategic Plan, UNDP sees unique opportunities to scale up its offer of services on sustainable urbanization for example:

- **“Signature Solution 1”**- Keep people out of poverty, which involves a mix of solutions that improve rural and urban livelihoods, strengthen gender equality, build social protection

and provide basic services;

- **“Signature solution 2”** - Strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance, including at municipal and sub-national levels;
- **“Signature solution 3”** - Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies, which will help countries avoid crises and return quickly to stable development after crises occur, especially in large urban settlements; and
- **“Signature solution 5”** - Close the clean energy access gap and enhance energy efficiency, which will also help countries reduce the impacts of air pollution, particularly in urban areas.

Under the guidance of the new Strategic Plan and the six signature solutions, UNDP is further evolving and adapting to become more innovative and efficient to remain a development partner of choice and to respond effectively to new and emerging needs in an increasingly urbanized world, and to serve the half of the global population that now resides in urban areas.

In line with the Secretary-General’s reform agenda for the UN Development System, the Plan also calls for **new ways of working to help sectors to work better for sustainable development**, and enabling them to **prevent crisis and recover faster**.

UNDP is positively responding to the call from the UN reform for greater coherence and collaboration across the UN System. As a knowledge and partnership connector dedicated to development that leaves no one behind, UNDP collaborates with other UN agencies, international finance institutions, national and local governments, private sector and women and youth organizations across the world to offer more coherent policy advice on urbanization at the global, regional and country levels and support a new generation of UN Country Teams.

At the **9th World Urban Forum** (WUF9) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, UNDP is showcasing its results, partnerships and forward thinking about sustainable urban development, and demonstrating its commitment as a trusted partner in the implementation of the NUA in the years to come. Collectively, the effort of the UN System, with the lead of UN-Habitat,

will weave a powerful and impactful WUF9, empowering the engagement of all relevant urban stakeholders towards achievement of the NUA and Sustainable Development Goals.

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World Urban Forum Commits To Global, Harmonized Definition of Cities

With a Muslim woman now in charge of UN-Habitat and the New Urban Agenda, Islam has a direct path to potentially influence every city on earth. With many Islamic nations already committed to 'green finance', or Fintech, and Sustainable Development, it is little wonder that they

would try to dominate at every turn. □ TN Editor

Today at the World Urban Forum in Malaysia, the Commission takes stock of what was achieved under the three commitments put forward by the EU and its partners 15 months ago.

Significant progress has been achieved under the [three commitments](#) since they were presented at the UN Habitat III conference in October 2016, in order to harness the power of rapid urbanisation. City-to-city cooperation is now flourishing across continents, important steps have been taken towards a single definition of cities at global level and the EU is showing the world the way to sustainable urban development with the ongoing implementation of its [Urban Agenda for the EU](#).

Speaking from the World Urban Forum in Malaysia, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“Much like the fight against climate change, the EU is ready to lead the way for clean, safe and prosperous cities around the globe. Europe and its partners are delivering fast on these three concrete commitments, which contribute to shaping the cities of tomorrow.”*

The [three commitments](#) contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#). They are part of the [New Urban Agenda](#), also presented 15 months ago. Each of these commitments has a specific scope, expected achievements and deliverables. This is what has been achieved since end 2016:

Commitment to deliver the New Urban Agenda through the Urban Agenda for the EU

3 action plans out of 12 have already been drawn up under the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#), on urban poverty, the integration of migrants and air quality. They include policy recommendations, good practices and projects to be replicated across the EU and in the world. All the action plans are expected to be completed by end 2018.

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Beyond the thematic action plans, the very methodology of the Urban

Agenda for the EU can inspire reforms in the way cities are governed across the globe; it puts an on an equal footing cities, businesses, NGOs and representatives from Member States and EU Institutions, for an integrated and balanced approach to sustainable urban development.

Commitment to develop a global, harmonised definition of cities

To facilitate monitoring, benchmarking and eventually policy-making, it is important that the same definition of cities is used globally. The EU has been working on such a definition, which will be presented to the UN in March 2019, in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation ([FAO](#)), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)) and the [World Bank](#).

So far, the Commission has gathered estimates of the [level of urbanisation of each country](#) in the world and provided free access to this data to facilitate the comparison with national definitions. At the occasion of the World Urban Forum, the Commission, via its [Joint Research Centre](#), is publishing [the global city centres database](#); it contains data for all 10,000 urban centres scattered across the globe. It is the largest and most comprehensive data on cities ever published.

A survey is currently being carried out in 20 countries to gather feedback on the global definition. Pilot projects are ongoing in 12 countries to compare the global definition with the national ones and assess the differences. In the course of 2018, the Commission and its partners will work on a free online tool to help countries test this definition on their territories.

Commitment to enhance cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development^[1]

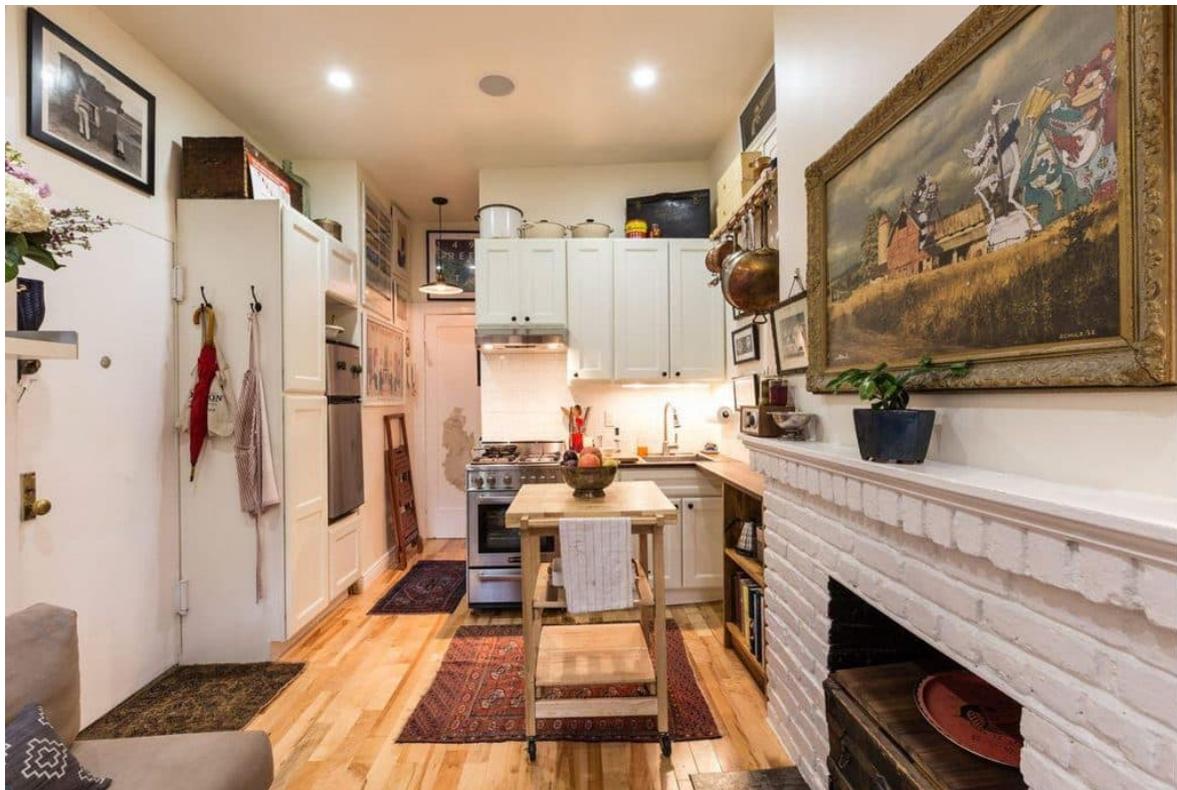
The EU's International Urban Cooperation ([IUC](#)) was launched in 2016 to support this commitment and develop city-to-city cooperation around the globe.

There are currently 35 pairings under the programme, involving 70 cities (35 EU and 35 non-EU). They include Frankfurt (Germany) and Yokohama (Japan); Bologna (Italy) and Austin (USA) and Almada

(Portugal) and Belo Horizonte (Brazil). All partnerships are working on local action plans on joint urban priorities, such as access to water, transport or health, sharing knowledge and best practices to reach their common goals.

A new call was launched at the World Urban Forum to create at least 25 new pairings; cities can apply [online](#) until 9 March.

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WUF9: Micro Homes And Communal Living Bring ‘Kampung Spirit’ Back To City

Living

The New Urban Agenda and leaders at the World Urban Forum say that the future of city living is micro housing where 250-400 square feet and a place at the communal table. This is what is meant by the buzz-word 'densification'. □ TN Editor

The trend for communal living and micro housing that is appearing in cities worldwide is not just for millennials or singles anymore.

Two full-scale prototypes of the 21st-century housing concept which opened to the public here today at the World Urban Forum (WUF9) Village drew the attention of families and retirees too.

"When we talk about communal living, we would have single occupancy in mind because families would not have much time to interact with others, and we felt it would be more accepted by the younger generation.

"However, we did receive enquiries from older couples as well as they are open to the concept of creating a community," Think City Sdn Bhd programme manager Joanne Mun told reporters at the installation on Medan Pasar here.

Opened to the public for the first time at 10am today, Mun said about 200 visitors had dropped by to see the micro housing installations.

"It is encouraging to see the interest shown by the public as we had received many positive feedback. We would like to see more people come over to give their input," she said.

She added the shared-living concept proposed by the Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL) and Think City aims to bring back the "kampung spirit" to the city, where members of the community are always open to helping each other out.

"City life is very fast-paced and people are usually too busy, which reflects less interaction between neighbours.

“Apart from creating a community, this concept is also to look into adaptive use of vacant buildings. In the last three years alone, we have seen many big corporations and small businesses moving out of the city, leaving many commercial spaces vacant,” she said.

Mun said the two micro houses on display, shortlisted from six design applications, were selected based on 10 different criteria.

“The design had gone through a fair process and was reviewed by a panel. Some of the criteria that was looked into include affordability, buildability, efficiency, layout, and to be able to address two key points — ability to be installed and uninstalled, as well as a standalone pavilion exhibition.

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