**UNESCO Media Advisory**

**Culture and science must be given greater role in developing the cities of the future, argues UNESCO at Habitat III Conference**

Paris/Quito, 12 October—UNESCO will take part in the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III, Quito, Ecuador, 17 to 20 October), where it will focus on three issues: the role of culture in the development of sustainable cities, ensuring that the megalopolises of tomorrow get the water they need and the mobilization of cities in the fight against racism and discrimination.

According to UN-Habitat, the world’s one million cities are home to 3.9 billion inhabitants, more than half the human race. Urbanization is an ongoing trend, and it is estimated that two thirds of the global population will live in cities by 2050. Urban settlements moreover generate 70% of the world’s GDP and are catalysts of economic, social and cultural development.

Habitat III will bring together some 15 Heads of State, 150 housing ministers, and hundreds of mayors, including those of Paris, Bogota and Johannesburg, as well as representatives of national and local governments and civil society. Together they will seek to adopt a new urban agenda for the next 20 years.

With the presentation of the [Culture for Sustainable Urban Development](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/culture-for-sustainable-urban-development/) report ((18 October, Cine Alfredo Pareja, 10am to 1pm), UNESCO will highlight the strategic role of culture—heritage and creative industries—in attaining sustainable development. The report examines, for example, the contribution of creative industries to both social cohesion and cultural diversity in urban environments. It also highlights the conservation and tourist management challenges facing urban areas inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, which make up nearly one-third of the 1,052 sites on the List.

Taking part in the presentation will be Roland Ries, Mayor of Strasbourg (France), Luis Tejada, head of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and Professor Richard Sennett of New York University and the London School of Economics. Francesco Bandarin, Assistant UNESCO Director-General for Culture will moderate the session alongside Oumar Cissé, Executive Secretary of the African Urban Management Institute (IAGU).

UNESCO will also present the publication [Water, Megacities and Global Change](http://en.unesco.org/events/launch-publication-water-megacities-and-global-change-habitat-iii) (18 October, Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana Benjamín Carrión, 10am to 10.45am). The publication examines issues such as the growing demand for water, pricing and purification in monographs focusing on 15 megalopolises: Beijing, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Ho Chi Minh Ville, Istanbul, Lagos, London, Los Angeles, Manilla, Mexico, Mumai, New York, Paris, Seoul and Tokyo.

UNESCO will organize a [debate](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/programme_habitat3_iccar_panel.pdf) on inclusion and non-discrimination in collaboration with its International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), Canada’s National UNESCO Commission and the municipalities of Quito and Montevideo (Centro de Convenciones Antonio Espejo, 17 October, 4pm to 6.30pm). Participants will include the following mayors: Daniel Martínez, Montevideo (Uruguay), Denis Coderre, Montreal (Canada), Christian Doligosa Sorongon, New Lucena City (Philippines), and William Bell, Birmingham (Alabama, USA).

The United Nations have been organizing conferences on habitat and urban development every 20 years. The previous editions took place in Vancouver in 1976 in Istanbul (1996).

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[More about UNESCO at Habitat III](https://en.unesco.org/sustainable-cities)

To follow the debates: @unesco, #culture4cities, #Habitat3

Journalists wishing to have advance access to the publications UNESCO will present at Habitat III should contact

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