

THE TRANSFORMATIVE COMMITMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

We make these three transformative commitments in the New Urban Agenda: leaving no one behind and fighting against poverty; urban prosperity and opportunities for all; and ecological and resilient cities and human settlements.

SUB-CHAPTER ON
**Foster Ecological And Resilient Cities And Human
Settlements**

FOSTER ECOLOGICAL AND RESILIENT CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

67. The New Urban Agenda can be a turning point in the ecological sustainability and resilience of cities and human settlements. We recognize that there is an unprecedented opportunity through planning, technological, and business model breakthroughs to tackle the equally unprecedented threats to urban life from unsustainable production and resource consumption, pollution levels, disaster risk, and climate change.
68. The New Urban Agenda aims to achieve ecologically sustainable cities and human settlements, strengthening resilience in urban areas with varying characteristics and locations, while changing the root causes of prevailing perception of cities as a significant source of negative ecological impacts to a source of solutions to sustainability issues. The Agenda reiterates the ecological and social function of land and promotes a change in the consumption and production patterns, ensuring that they will not exceed the ecosystem's regenerative capacity.

Ecosystems and Cities

69. We commit to facilitate urban development in a manner that preserves rapidly diminishing natural resources while promoting economic development, access to modern energy services, food and water security, health, air quality, more attractive and liveable urban landscapes, and increased human well-being.
70. We will ensure that sources of critical resources which are part of a city's basic services and daily consumption (e.g. clean water, food, access to modern energy services) are secured and protected by policy at all levels of governance. We also commit to enact national and territorial policies that safeguard against environmental degradation and to mainstream ecology in the institutional setting, allocating responsibilities for environmental governance to appropriate institutions at all levels of government.
71. The provision of a well-connected network of open and green public spaces in central and peripheral urban areas, facilitating linkages with and access to the surrounding natural environment, can improve public health and contribute to the quality of life and well-being of all people, through increased leisure and physical activity, while protecting and improving the urban ecosystem and the services it provides, and mitigating climate change risks such as urban heat island, among others.
72. We acknowledge that the practices and attitudes of residents and users of urban space – both individuals and organizations – strongly determine the extent of environmental impact. We resolve through policy and regulation to increasingly internalize externalities as a driver of behavioral change. We will also use school curriculums and public awareness campaigns as additional tools.
73. We commit to decentralization of basic resources, recognizing that a heavy reliance on distant sources of energy, water, food, and materials has made some cities vulnerable to sudden disruption of supply.

Sustainable consumption and production

74. The consumption and production patterns of cities are a critical element of achieving global resilience and sustainability. We therefore commit to strengthening the crucial linkages and efficient management of resources like land, water, energy, materials, food, as well as the reduction and management of waste and the mitigation of emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants, taking into consideration the full-range of resource requirements vis-à-vis the environmental impact and sustainability. We support the development of transparent frameworks for public and private entities to report on their environmental footprints to ensure sustainability.
75. We call for an integrated system of water planning and management that considers urban-rural linkages, minimises conflicts and ecological risks, maximises positive synergies and mutual benefits, at the local and regional scales. The sustainable use of water should be promoted through a holistic water cycle approach, rehabilitating water resources within the urban area, reducing and treating water waste, increasing water storage, and providing safe and healthy drinking water within short distance in cities and human settlements, emphasizing measures to avoid conflicts and minimize the impacts of climate-related disasters especially floods and droughts and sharing experiences among cities. Human resources capacity development should be a transversal component of the above-mentioned activities, focusing on water utilities and decision-makers.

76. We commit to the sustainable management of waste, reaffirming the three Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle), setting zero landfill targets, and converting to energy only the inevitable residual waste. These measures will reduce pollution, lessen contamination of water bodies and groundwater, and contribute to addressing spatial, technical, and economic waste management challenges in urban areas, while contributing to creation of jobs.
77. A shift towards a low-carbon energy system in urban areas should be promoted, consistent with the agreement to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C, including through cooperation and partnerships at all levels of government and among cities and utility providers.
78. We recognize that renewable energy and energy efficiency are essential to the achievement of sustainable consumption and production, and that their joint deployment can create new jobs, improve public health, reduce the costs of energy supply, and enable the fastest and greatest carbon gains. We call on governments at the national, subnational, and local level to coordinate on energy target setting and implementation, so that deployment is achieved expeditiously and cost-effectively.

Resilience to Disasters and Climate Change and other shocks and stresses

79. Strengthened resilience of city systems enables households, communities, institutions and states to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard, including shocks or latent stresses, in a timely and efficient manner. A resilient city helps to protect its residents, their cohesion as a community, and their habitat by responding, adapting, and transforming whilst taking advantage of reduced risk exposure in ways that restore, maintain, and even improve its essential functions, structures, and identity.
80. We commit to substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and resilience to disasters. This should include the conduct of pre-disaster risk assessments in urban areas in order to develop a thorough understanding of disaster risks across the various dimensions of hazards, vulnerability, exposure of people and assets, and improve capacity of local and national governments, city administrators, development planners, and decision-makers on disaster and climate risks, to implement risk-informed development at the city and community level.
81. We commit to significantly reduce the number of deaths and people affected and, displaced, and to substantially decrease the direct economic losses in cities and human settlements relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. This should take into consideration appropriate land use and urban planning, enforcement of building codes, early-warning systems, business continuity plans and contingency plans for critical infrastructure. Low-risk zones should be prioritized for future urban developments and extensions in order to most efficiently protect them from rising sea levels, flooding, tsunamis, earthquakes, and other hazards.
82. We commit to ensure the effective planning, management, and conservation of urban deltas, coastal and other environmentally critical areas and hotspots that combine socio-economic and natural/environmental dynamics in different regions of the world. This is important to address global issues, such as the provision of drinking water and sanitation, rising sea level, food security, and uncontrolled urban development, which are often concentrated in these areas, in order to achieve all ecological, economic, and social sustainability in addition to urban resilience.
83. We finally emphasize the need to shift from reactive to more proactive approaches, while also committing to ensure timely and effective local disaster response to address the immediate needs of inhabitants following a disaster, as well as the integration of the “Build Back Better” principles in the post-disaster recovery process to integrate the lessons from past disasters to future planning and resilience-building measures.