

UNESCO Cities Platform

World Cities Day 2023

FINANCING A SUSTAINABLE URBAN FUTURE FOR ALL



CONCEPT NOTE

Cities are key actors in achieving sustainable societies. Affirming the need to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, Sustainable Development Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the essential nature of inclusiveness and localization on the path towards sustainable urban development.

From climate change to social inequality and digital transformation, it has been increasingly recognized that cities are on the frontlines of contemporary development issues. As hubs of knowledge and resources, cities are the incubators for innovative, participatory, and long-term solutions to these challenges. Over the last few years, we have witnessed an increasing vulnerability of urban settlements in the face of numerous, diverse hazards and disasters. This further demonstrates the need to invest in adequate infrastructure and people-centered urban planning, by way of education, culture, sciences and cutting-edge technologies, to enable cities to explore their potential to the fullest with regards to resilience, inclusiveness, and sustainability.

To this end, in 2019 eight UNESCO city-focused networks and programmes joined force with the creation of the UNESCO Cities Platform (UCP). Aimed at reinforcing the impact of the Organization’s action at the city-level, the Platform combines UNESCO’s various fields of expertise with a comprehensive, cooperative and multilevel approach to sustainable urban development.

Since 2019, through its Cities Platform, UNESCO has annually celebrated World Cities Day. 2023 is another milestone, as we are halfway through the 2030 Agenda timeline. The theme of WCD 2023 “Financing sustainable urban future for all” offers an opportunity to promote UCP’s mission and objectives to improve urban sustainability by unlocking further investments in locally led initiatives.

More than ever, cities need to develop adequate strategies and tools to locally meet the Sustainable Development Goals. While cities have the potential to leverage their local resources to revitalize urban spaces and design a more inclusive and sustainable urban environment, cooperation is needed to boost capacity-building at the urban level. Financing a sustainable urban future will enable cities to fulfill this potential and improve their preparedness and resilience to multifactorial challenges and crises.

Furthermore, building upon the celebration of World Cities Day 2023 and leveraging the exposure offered by the 42nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the UCP will organize a special event during the Partnerships Hub on 16 November. Under the theme “Together, Building Sustainable Cities for All”, this event will provide insights on UNESCO’s work on sustainable urban development as well as testimonies from partners on the impact of their effective collaborations with UNESCO in various development fields, particularly on climate change and digital transformation.

Through a variety of events and activities to be organized by UCP member programmes and networks on World Cities Day 2023, UNESCO will, once again, illustrate how UCP’s broad and crosscutting scope of action provides multi-level stakeholders and partners with numerous collaboration opportunities. Driven by a shared vision of a sustainable urban future, the Platform and cities around the world are active agents for change towards a more sustainable future for all.

A message from the Director-General for World Cities Day 2023



31 October

Take a moment to read the message from **Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO**, in celebration of World Cities Day 2023.

To read the message, please visit:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387301.locale=en>

Launch of the UNESCO Cities Platform presentation video



31 October

On the occasion of WCD 2023, a new video presentation of the **UNESCO Cities Platform** will be released on the Platform's website. Providing an overview of its vision and member programmes, this short presentation will illustrate **UNESCO's crosscutting approach to localizing sustainable development**, thanks to the Organization's comprehensive mandate and expertise across education, culture, sciences, communication and information.

To watch the video, please visit: <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-cities?hub=70318>

Announcement of the new UNESCO Creative Cities



31 October

➤ By the **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)**

The **UNESCO Creative Cities Network** will announce the results of its **2023 Call for Applications**. Across seven creative fields - Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music, the Network brings together cities that are committed to placing culture and creativity at the heart of the local implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the **MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration**, notably by sharing knowledge and good practices and forging international cooperation.

For more information: <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>

Lifelong Learning Festival



30 October
to
5 November

➤ By the **UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)**

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the **UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning** will host the Lifelong Learning Festival in Shanghai, highlighting the achievements and progress made by learning cities worldwide. It will showcase the **transformative power of lifelong learning** in promoting sustainable development, fostering global citizenship, and improving health and well-being at the local level, with a global impact. The event is also part of the **#IamALifelongLearner** campaign.

For more information: <https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/articles/lifelong-learning-festival-unesco-global-network-learning-cities>

Global Media and Information Literacy Week



24 to 31
October

➤ Organized by the **Media and Information Literacy Cities (MIL)**

The **2023 Global Media and Information Literacy Week** will include several highlights. On 30 October, a session under the theme of **the UNESCO MIL Cities Paradigm, Agenda 2030 and Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG): Strategies, Experiences and Metrics for the Cities of the Future**, was organized by the members of the UNESCO MIL City Alliance. Subsequently on 6 November, the **Arab Region Initiatives for MIL Cities** will be organized by UNESCO Field Offices in the Arab Region. Further building on the momentum of the Urban October celebrations, a special session will be held during the **3rd Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination** on 30 November next.

For more information: <https://www.unesco.org/en/weeks/media-information-literacy>

News item on Key results of the Third Consultation on the implementation of the 2011 Recommendation



31 October

➤ By the **World Heritage Cities Programme**

In relation to the theme of World Cities Day 2023, “Financing sustainable urban future for all”, the **World Heritage Cities programme** will highlight key results of the Third Consultation on the implementation of the **2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape**, particularly on “**Ensuring inclusive economic benefits of urban heritage**”. Best practices from the **World Heritage Canopy Platform** related to this year’s theme across different regions will also be presented on the same occasion.

For more information: <https://whc.unesco.org/fr/villes/#>

The UNESCO Cities Platform is comprised of the **UNESCO Creative Cities Network** (UCCN), **UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities** (GNLC), **International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities** (ICCAR), **Media and Information Literacy Cities** (MIL), **Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate**, **World Heritage Cities Programme**, **Disaster Risk Reduction Programme** (DRR), and **UNESCO/Netexplo Observatory**.

Please contact us:



unesco.for.cities@unesco.org



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