



GREEN CITIES

to build back better for SDGs
– A new powerful venture

Friday, 18 September 2020

12.00–14.00 (GMT-4) / 18.00–20.00 (GMT+2)



Background

The world is becoming more and more urbanized. Today, 55 percent of the world's population resides in urban areas and by 2050 the urban population is expected to rise to 68 percent mainly in low-income countries. Cities already consume almost 80 percent of the total energy produced in the world and absorb up to 70 percent of the food supply. To address these challenges, cities are being called upon to take a more active role in contributing to national governments' efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Population growth and rapid urbanization imply dietary shifts and an increasing demand for basic goods and services, as well as growing competition for natural resources to ensure access to healthy diets for all. Local administrations are finding it more and more difficult to meet the needs of urban and peri-urban populations and the COVID-19 pandemic has added new challenges, such as food system disruptions, loss of jobs and food insecurity, worsening conditions especially for the most vulnerable.

Rationale, Objectives and Beneficiaries of FAO's Green Cities Initiative and Action Plan

Maintaining sustainable food systems and having more green spaces (including urban and peri-urban agriculture and forests) are essential for cities, making them more resilient towards the impacts of climate change and COVID-19, ensuring that health-related episodes do not disrupt food systems and lead to food, nutrition and environmental crises. There is a need to rethink urban and peri-urban planning, so cities become greener, more resilient and regenerative. In response to this need, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is launching a **Green Cities Initiative**, building on its experience of integrating agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and sustainable food systems in urban and peri-urban settings. The success of this initiative lies in the active participation of stakeholders through a broad partnership.

The main **objective** of the FAO Green Cities Initiative and its action programme is to increase people's well-being through **better access to improved products and services** provided by urban and peri-urban forestry, agriculture and food systems on a sustainable basis.

The FAO Green Cities Initiative will improve the livelihoods and well-being of urban and peri-urban populations in at least **100 cities (15 metropolitan, 40 intermediary and 45 small cities) around the world over the next three years, while 1000 cities are expected to join by 2030**. The initiative is focused on improving the urban environment, strengthening urban-rural linkages and the resilience of urban systems, services and populations to external shocks. While ensuring access to a healthy environment and healthy diets from sustainable food systems, it will also contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The initiative supports the development of local government and community capacities, as well as those of national governments to implement and scale up coherent and context-specific strategies, policies and investment plans towards sustainable green spaces and food systems. The initiative contributes to achieving the SDGs related to eradicating poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2), improving health and well-being (SDG 3), ensuring availability of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6), decent employment and economic growth (SDG 8), including for women (SDG 5), and sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12), while making cities and communities more sustainable (SDG 11).



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Objective of the event

The action-oriented, High-Level event will present an integrated approach to urban and peri-urban planning aimed at:

- improving the quality and quantity of urban and peri-urban forest and green spaces to maximize the provision of ecosystem good and services to city dwellers;
- increasing the adoption of sustainable and climate-resilient practices and technologies to increase local food production, promote short supply chains, while reducing the urban and peri-urban environmental and climate footprint; and
- promoting sustainable and inclusive urban food systems through green agro-processing hubs, efficient food distribution, improved food environments and management of water resources and food waste along circular economy principles.

The event will highlight initiatives that are scaling up innovation and accelerating action, including the Milan Food Policy Pact, the New Urban Agenda, the World Sustainable Urban Food Centre of Valencia, the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative and other strategic partnerships. The event will also feature testimonials from metropolitan, intermediary and small cities from around the world that are in line with the FAO Green Cities Initiative. It will also be an opportunity for all stakeholders, including national and local governments, UN Agencies and international organization and city networks, development organizations and donors to join the Initiative as active partners, while ensuring that urbanization becomes an opportunity for cities to be more sustainable and resilient, helping achieve the SDGs and leaving no one behind.

Target Audience

UN Ambassadors; UN partners; FAO Permanent Representatives; city leaders; financial institutions; donors; governmental, technical, research and educational institutions; media; general public.

Outline of the Event

TIME	PROGRAMME	PRESENTER
18.00 – 18.50	High-level opening	
	Welcome and introduction	Ms Lana Wong
	Keynote address: "FAO's vision for Green Cities and innovation"	Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO
	Opening remarks	
	Mr Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme	
	Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme	
	Li Yong, Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization	
	Mr Jürgen Rigterink, Acting President, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	
18.51 – 18.54	Short summary	Mr René Castro Salazar, Assistant Director-General, FAO
	Testimonials from Cities	
18.55 – 19.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Souad Abderrahim, Mayor of Tunis (Tunisia) • Mr Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan (Italy) • Mr Daniel Quintero, Mayor of Medellín (Colombia) • Mr Wen Guohui, Mayor of Guangzhou (People's Republic of China) • Mr Manuel de Araujo, Mayor of Quelimane (Mozambique) • Mr Bruno Covas, Mayor of São Paulo (Brazil) • Ms Kate MacKenzie, Director of the Food Policy, Office of the Mayor of New York (United States of America) 	
	Call for action	Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO
19.31 – 19.37	Supporting statements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr David Miller, Director of International Diplomacy, C40 Cities • Ms Emilia Sáiz is Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) • Mr Dan Lambe. President, Arbor Day Foundation • Mr Gino Van Begin is the Secretary General of ICLEI • Mr Vicente Domingo, Director, CEMAS • Mr Enrique Cesar Lopez Veiga, President, Port Authority of Vigo • Ms Alexandra Rodriguez, Head, Participatory Urban Agriculture Programme of Quito (AGRUPAR) 	
19.38 – 19.48		
19.49 – 20.00	Closing remarks	Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO