



PROVISIONAL OUTLINE

- OBSERVANCE OF “WORLD CITIES DAY” -

**The 16th Annual Session of
Global Forum on Human Settlements
&
Sustainable Cities And Human Settlements
Awards Ceremony
(GFHS 2021)**

Theme:

**Accelerate Green Transformation and Innovation
towards Healthy, Resilient and Carbon-neutral Cities**

Date: October 27 - 29, 2021

Format: Online Forum+ Live Streaming

I. Introduction

While being mired in the unprecedented predicament created by COVID-19, the world is confronted with non-conventional safety challenges brought by climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. Consequently, the intertwined multiple crises are causing unimaginable calamity and imminent threats to mankind. It is high time that the international community learn from the crisis, promoting a nature-based green recovery and embarking on a green transformation towards inclusive, low-carbon, resilient and sustainable development.

A green transition is sweeping the world. 2021 is the beginning of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems around the world. Ecosystems are the cornerstone of a healthy planet and social well-being, and there has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems than now.

Meanwhile, the world is entering the era of carbon neutrality. More than 100 countries and many leading cities have committed to achieve net zero emissions by the middle of the century. China, the world's second largest economy, has pledged to peak greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2060. It is imperative that countries supercharge their effort in fostering innovation, catalyze green changes and spur sustainable development that ensures safety, efficiency, equity, inclusiveness and resilience.

Despite being the major contributors to climate change, carbon emission, resource consumption, environmental pollution and ecological degradation, cities are the global battleground for addressing the above-mentioned challenges, sustaining economic growth and achieving sustainable development. Bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 outbreak, cities will see the five trends - decoupling, decarbonization, decentralization, digitalization, glocalization - manifest distinctly in post-pandemic urban development.

To meet the goals of the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and the “Paris Agreement”, we must prioritize cities, accelerating green transition, leading high-quality development with innovation, implementing integrated urban planning, and adopting nature-based solutions and climate-friendly design strategies. Essentially, we need to step up investment in urban green infrastructure, to scale up efforts in maintaining ecological balance and integrity, to improve resource and energy efficiency, to strengthen the adaptability and resilience of buildings and communities, to ensure a just transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, to enhance the urban governance capabilities of all stakeholders, and to drive innovation on how cities are planned, invested, developed and managed, thereby making make cities and human settlements healthy, resilient, carbon-neutral and sustainable.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed at the One Planet Summit that "2021 must be the year to reconcile humanity with nature", and "we begin a new year under the sign of hope". 2021 is a crucial year for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and accelerating carbon neutral actions at both local and national level. Against this important background, **the 16th Annual Session of Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS 2021)** - one of the most important events focusing on sustainable cities and human settlements - will be taking place from October 27 to 29 as an observance of World Cities Day, with the theme being **Accelerate Green Transformation and Innovation towards Healthy, Resilient and Carbon-neutral Cities**.

The forum will be organized in a format combining online and offline participation, to address how cities can use green recovery as a golden opportunity to kick-start a green transformation and drive innovation at all levels and across all sectors, thus enhancing urban safety, resilience and inclusiveness, boosting green growth, and achieving coordinated, healthy, and high-quality sustainable urban development.

Dignitaries from numerous countries, senior officials from UN and concerned international organizations, green city mayors, business leaders, and well-known experts and scholars will be giving keynote speeches and joining thematic discussions. Webcasting and simultaneous translation between Chinese and English will be available to foster interactive dialogues with stakeholders across the globe, and it is expected to reach out to approximately a hundred thousand of interested persons.

II. Institutional Framework

Co-organizers:

Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)

Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

In Collaboration With

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission in Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)
Asian Development Bank (ADB) African Development Bank (AfDB)
UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) Swedish Energy Agency (SEA)
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
International Ocean Institute (IOI) International Science Council (ISC)
International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment (iiSBE)
International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction (CIB)
Architecture 2030 Habitat For Humanity International (HFHI)
Global One Belt One Road Association (GOBA)
World Ocean Council (WOC) Universal Peace Federation (UPF)
World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO)

III. Objectives

1. **To facilitate effective conversation and action:** the forum aims to provide a valuable global platform for high-level dialogue and for sharing innovative approaches, strategies, technologies and successful experience on green recovery and transition.
2. **To strengthen urban safety, inclusiveness and resilience:** the forum seeks to offer practical solutions to how healthy, resilient and carbon-neutral cities should be planned, designed, financed, developed, governed and managed, so as to enhance safety, resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability in diverse urban systems.
3. **To foster partnership on sustainable development:** the forum is designed to strengthen capacity building, cultivate new type partnerships, foster urban innovation, accelerate effective actions, and to drive progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda and Paris Agreement.
4. **To highlight best practices:** the forum is expected to recommend a batch of best practices that can serve as role model on green transformation and innovation and sustainable urban development.

IV. Scope and Key Issues

1. Healthy, smart and resilient cities and communities
2. Renewable energy systems and carbon neutral cities
3. Circular economy and zero-waste cities
4. Nature-based solutions for climate-resilient cities

5. A sustainable blue economy to support the green transformation of cities
6. Urban hydrology and integrated water resources management
7. Green financing for carbon-neutral cities
8. Local pathways to net zero emissions and a resilient future
9. International Green Model City Initiative: creating global pilot demonstration areas of carbon neutrality
10. Blockchain technology and smart city governance
11. World hemp investment and sustainable development
12. Towards future-proof buildings and neighbourhoods
13. Pursuing a resilient, inclusive, gender-equal and green economic recovery

V. Content

1. Forum discussion: opening ceremony, keynote speech, high-level dialogue, mayors' panel, thematic sessions, recommendations and summaries
2. Closed-door meeting on investment and cooperation
3. Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Awards Ceremony 2021
4. Releasing conference outcome document

VI. Invited Participants

Dignitaries from numerous countries, senior officials from the United Nations and other international organizations, city mayors and senior government representatives from developed and developing countries, business leaders, planners and designers, practitioners from the sectors of environmental protection, building and construction, energy, transportation, blue economy, tourism, investment and trade, well-known experts and scholars, civil society representatives, outstanding women and children.

VII. Contact

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Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS)

More information: <http://www.gfhsforum.org/Events>

Registration: <http://gfhsforum.mikecrm.com/pkgIUTe>