

# Hab Post

Updates from  
UN-Habitat

UN HABITAT  
www.unhabitat.org  
unhabitat-info@un.org

ISSUE 25 | 25 FEBRUARY 2021

## ROAS responds to COVID-19



# Editor's note

Dear Reader,

One year into our Strategic Plan 2020-2023, and roughly a year into COVID-19, we wanted to share with you the latest implementation report of one of our regional offices – the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) – and highlight what was accomplished in the region in the fight against COVID-19. Check out our highly visual feature story to know what was done in the field, as well as our interview with Erfan Ali, the Regional Representative for ROAS.

Remember, you can monitor the global COVID-19 situation [online](#). Also remember to stay alert even as vaccines are being rolled out – Japan has for instance confirmed last week the emergence of a [new variant of COVID-19](#). And while [Africa's confirmed death toll from COVID-19](#) has passed 100,000 – only a fraction of other continents – deaths are rising sharply, particularly in the south. So be cautious, and be safe.

Happy reading,

**The HabPost Team**

## On the menu

**Alert**

**Feature story**

**UN-Habitat in motion**

**Success Stories**

**Urban Agenda Platform**

**Insider**

**Innovation corner**

**Vacancies**

**Upcoming events and**

**corporate calendar**

**Missions**

**Learning**

**Did you know?**

## Alerts



### VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR



Last week, our colleagues in Myanmar shared with us their experience and concerns in the face of the deteriorating situation in the country. These past few weeks have been marked by an escalation of tensions and violence, and unfortunately by the tragic loss of several lives last week.

I express heartfelt concern following recent events and extend my thoughts and condolences to the families of the victims and to those injured.

I would like to assure our colleagues that the UN-Habitat family is committed to supporting and standing with them during this difficult time. Senior Management is working closely with UN Headquarters and the UN Country Team in Myanmar to safeguard the safety and security of all UN personnel. As an organization, we are also committed to addressing the humanitarian and operational issues in our country programme.

I encourage all colleagues in Myanmar to be cautious while carrying out their duties and in their private lives.

For any assistance and support in relation to the situation in Myanmar, please do reach out to our Emergency Director, Ms. Christine Knudsen ([christine.knudsen@un.org](mailto:christine.knudsen@un.org), +254 717 083 025) or the Country Programme Manager, Mr. Bijay Karmacharya ([bijay.karmacharya@un.org](mailto:bijay.karmacharya@un.org), +959 421 170 787).

**Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**  
**Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**



---

## Survey

# Take the HabPost survey!



It is almost a year since we launched HabPost — time sure flies.

If you have been reading us, chances are you have an idea or two on how to make HabPost better. Or maybe you think it's fine as is — so let's hear it!

It will take you two minutes; it will help *us* for months.

[Take the survey](#)

Scan the QR code



Thank you!

**The HabPost Team**



▶ Feature Story

# ROAS responds to COVID-19

In 2020, the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) adopted its regional Strategic Plan covering the period 2020-2023. The Plan serves as a roadmap for achieving inclusive and sustainable urban development in the Arab region, and puts forward an integrated vision for addressing the most critical urban issues of the area.

We all know that creating a strategic plan document alone does not guarantee execution. If we want the plan to work, we need to track its implementation. We need to pause, take a step back, and look at what we've accomplished. This will inform our actions in the future and provide us — and others — with a measure of success.

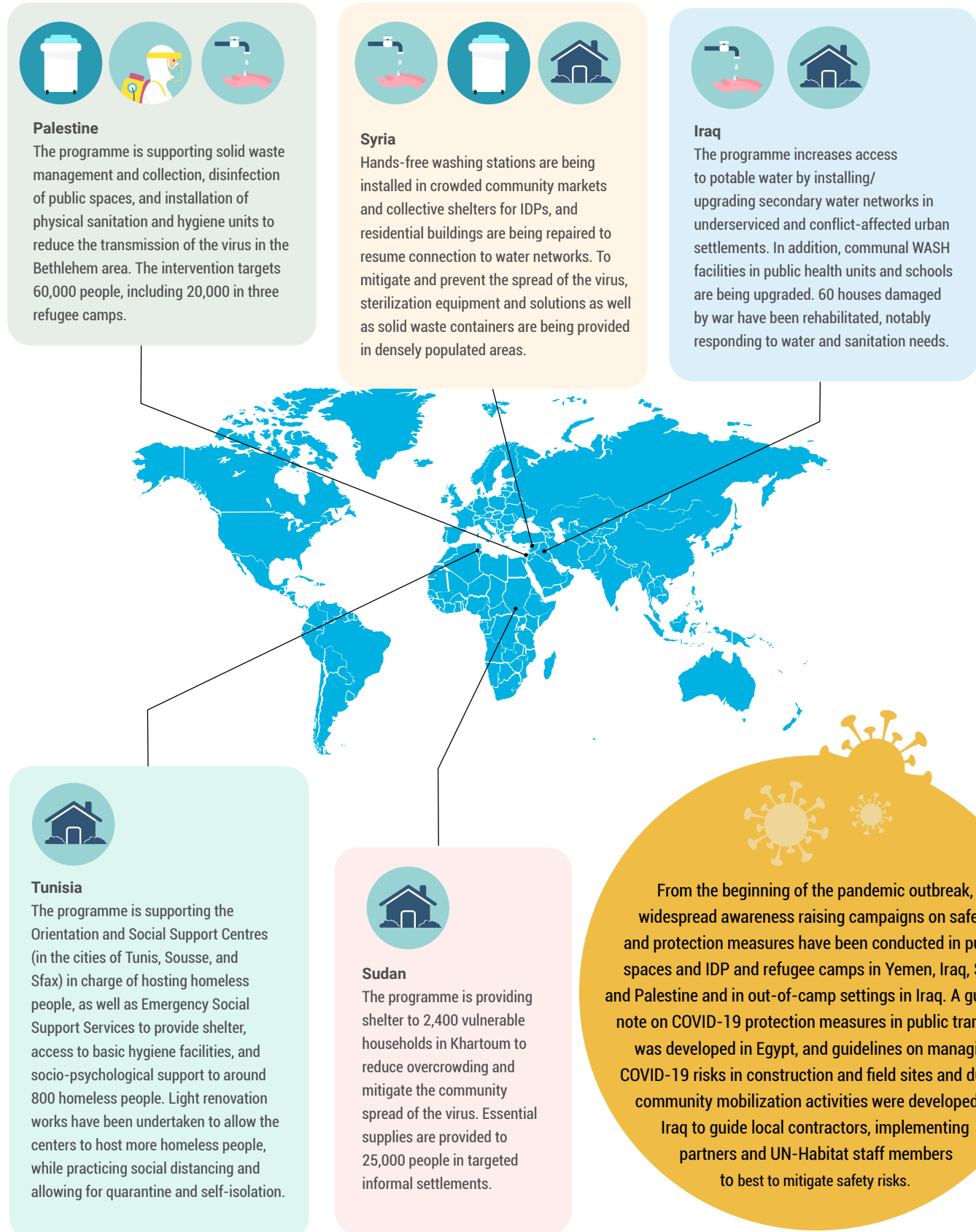
To do just that, ROAS released a couple of weeks ago its 2020 overview of progress in implementing its Strategic Plan. 2020 was a year of adjustment and learning as the effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic started to settle in and as the world as we knew it was put on hold. So naturally, COVID-19 is a main (uninvited) guest to the overview.

The response to COVID-19 in the Arab region was guided by UN-Habitat's [COVID-19 Response Plan](#), and efforts spanned across the humanitarian and socio-economic spectrum. It was also evident that the response needed to include a guidance and knowledge-sharing component to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in urban settings.

## Regional response

At the regional level, UN-Habitat supported the response of five countries through targeted short to medium term interventions – mainly in the shelter and water sectors – focusing on the most vulnerable areas and disadvantaged communities. The key results of the regional programme “Supporting COVID-19 Response in Disadvantaged Urban Areas in The Arab Region” are as follows:



## Country-level response

UN-Habitat is actively contributing to the UN-wide response at the country level by supporting efforts by national governments to respond to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. In many countries including Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, Kuwait and Tunisia, UN-Habitat has been supporting the development of a System Response Plan for the UN Country Team to support efforts by national governments to recover in the short to medium-term. Other responses at the country level include:



### Egypt

Over 15,000m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water is being produced each day in Luxor using the Riverbank Filtration technology, providing water to over 110,000 vulnerable inhabitants. An estimated additional 180,000 inhabitants are expected to benefit from this initiative in early 2021 in the Assiut and Sohag governorates, while 5,000 inhabitants will see their access to sanitation improved in the Damietta governorate.



### Lebanon

UN-Habitat designed and installed the country's first public handwashing stations, placed in some of the most densely populated and vulnerable urban communities in the Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates. Awareness sessions targeting vulnerable Lebanese, refugees, and migrants were held to highlight the importance of water use and proper sanitation in reducing the risk of contracting COVID-19. About 4,500 residents of Beirut – Syrian and Palestinian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese alike – received hygiene protection kits along with directions for use.

UN-Habitat further formulated and published the Unions of Municipalities' COVID-19 Rapid Assessment Report covering 34 Unions of Municipalities and 5 individual municipalities – or 52 per cent of all municipalities in Lebanon – and over three million Lebanese, 700,000 Syrian refugees, and 180,000 Palestinian refugees. The report helps outline the challenges local authorities face in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, identifies the most critical support required, and formulates recommendations to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.



### Palestine

A rapid assessment was conducted to provide better support to local authorities using data for decision-making, policy, and advocacy. The analysis provided insights for the preparation of the Land and Water Settlement Commission Recovery Plan to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. UN-Habitat Palestine also supported the Ministry of Local Government Business Continuity Plan by devising detailed response actions in alignment with the Ministry's work in supporting and providing guidance and financial means to local authorities, and enabling them to sustain the delivery of critical services to their citizens.



### Yemen

UN-Habitat and the Taybah Foundation for Development trained a group of volunteers on COVID-19 awareness raising among IDPs. Volunteers conducted awareness sessions among IDPs in Al Alili camp, Al Hudaydah Governorate. 6,600 beneficiaries have been reached through the campaign and hygiene kits were distributed to 3,000 beneficiaries in the neighbouring villages of Qataba and Al Hyma.



### Kuwait

UN-Habitat is disseminating Personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers and people with special needs, in collaboration with the Kuwait Red Crescent. Awareness materials and social media campaigns are utilized to raise public awareness on means to combat the pandemic.



► **Interview**

## Interview with **Erfan Ali**, ROAS Regional Representative

We talked with Erfan Ali, Regional Representative for the Regional Office for Arab States, to get a sense of what it was like to operate this past year.

HAB POST | February 25 2021

**Q** Your office has just completed the **Regional Office for Arab States 2020 Overview**. What would you like colleagues to take away from this report?

The report provides an overview of UN-Habitat's work in the Arab region during 2020. It outlines how we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and provides snapshots of our projects and interventions which enabled us to do more to advance sustainable and inclusive urban development in Arab cities. Key results are highlighted under each of the four domains of change of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan, and so are feature stories that demonstrate UN-Habitat's relevance and articulates its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Q** UN-Habitat is one of many organizations working in the Arab region. What difference does it make on the ground, where do you see its catalytic role?

UN-Habitat's comparative advantage lies in its ability to work at the local level and bring various stakeholders to the table. Our technical expertise, as well as results and impact on ground, have positioned UN-Habitat in the Arab region as a trusted partner to governments as well as other stakeholders. Despite the challenging context, the diversity of our portfolio in Arab countries enables us to draw on various experiences, share lessons learned, and bring successes from one country to another, while mainstreaming innovation and leveraging our partnerships.

**Q Can you share with us what your beneficiaries say – perhaps an example?**

I recall a lady, Mrs. Um Ali, who lost her husband after an ISIL-related attack and was forced to live in a camp due to the damage caused to her house. She was unable to repair the damage due to her limited income. She’s expressed joy that her home was included in the rehabilitation plan under the UN-Habitat COVID-19 response activities implemented in Heet, in the Anbar Governorate of Iraq, and said that there was a real difference in her life compared to what it was before the extension of the water network.

**Q ROAS has continued to deliver but also expanded its portfolio in the past year. How was this made possible despite COVID-19 and protracted conflicts, what has been the role of the rest of the agency in these efforts?**

During 2020, ROAS was able to capitalize on its ample experience and recognized position in the region to work with multiple partners to support the emergency COVID-19 response and long-term sustainable urbanization. Those partners include central, regional, and local governments, UN entities – through joint programmes and projects to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and intergovernmental organizations such as the League of Arab States. UN-Habitat also established new partnerships with the private sector and philanthropic organizations such as

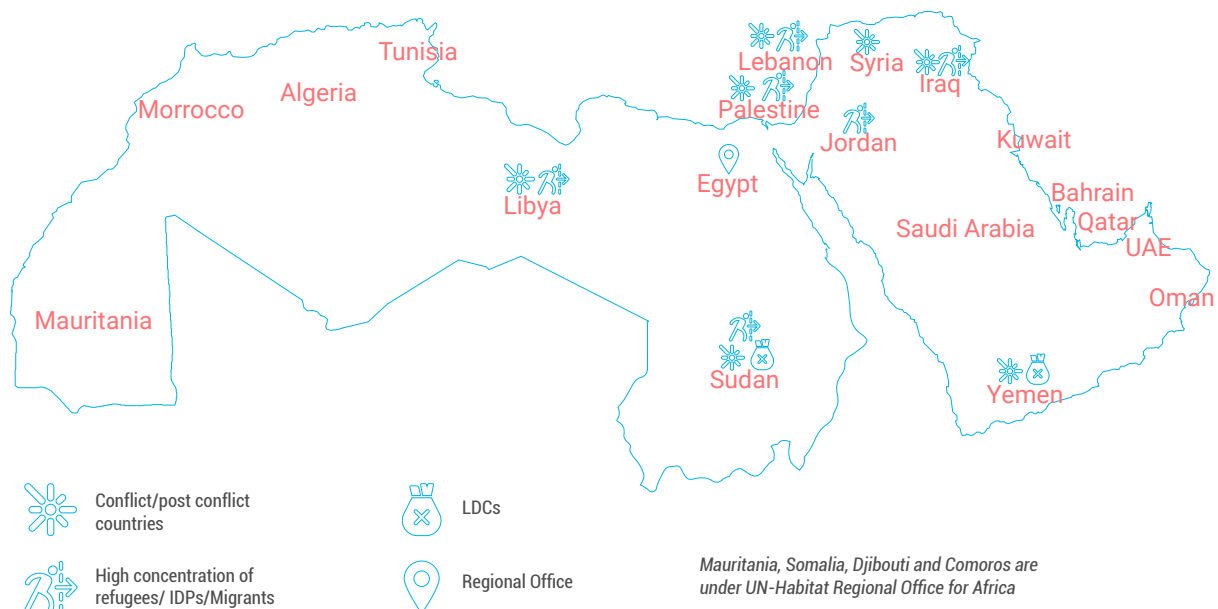
Alwaleed Philanthropies to support the regional COVID-19 response. And given the importance of International Financial Institutions in development funding, our partnership with the Islamic Development Bank was strengthened to support the research and development of knowledge products on the topics of informal settlements and climate change.

In most of our country programmes, we worked closely with the thematic sections at Headquarters to operationalize the corporate and normative tools on ground. Through a whole of house approach, UN-Habitat was able to effectively respond to emergencies such as the Beirut port blast, capitalizing on the technical capacities, knowledge and tools developed throughout the agency.

**Q Any closing remarks for our colleagues reading you? We thought we would ask your secret for your constant energy. We know the ED’s is vitamin P – P for “passion” – do you mind sharing yours?**

My vitamin “P” is people who are the drivers of our energy and for whom we continue working at the country level. Believing in the role and capacity of UN-Habitat to help vulnerable people and achieve impactful results is very important. It’s also crucial to try and think differently and understand how to integrate the normative and operational interventions, and how to address operational obstacles and bureaucracy within the framework of our rules and regulations.

ROAS currently has operational projects in **16 countries** and **13 operating** country offices





# Urban Agenda Platform Insider




## Chapter 2: The National Reports

As part of the follow-up to and review of the New Urban Agenda, Member States are requested to report on implementation to track progress, assess impact, and ensure accountability to and transparency for citizens – ensuring coherence at the national, regional, and global levels. Reporting is done through National Reports, due every four years.

The National Reports serve as a basis for the qualitative and quantitative analysis of progress made in the implementation of both the New Urban Agenda as well as internationally agreed goals and targets relevant to sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

The reporting is to be based on the activities of national, subnational, and local governments, supplemented by contributions from the United Nations system, regional and sub-regional organizations, major groups, and relevant stakeholders.



**Deadline for submission of the first set of National Reports**  
**31 March 2021**

With the deadline fast approaching, UN-Habitat held a second online webinar in February 2021 for Member States to discuss the preparation of their National Reports.

Most of the reporting of the New Urban Agenda will draw on the system of indicators and data available from the [New Urban Agenda Monitoring Framework](#), guided by the [New Urban Agenda Reporting Guidelines](#).

The National Reports will be uploaded by Member States on the online [Urban Agenda Platform](#).



Any questions?

Please email [urbanagendaplatform@un.org](mailto:urbanagendaplatform@un.org) for more information.



## Innovation corner

### How do you make digital rights real in cities?

This is one of the questions the Innovation Unit has been grappling with these past few months. Answering it means localising the connection between human rights and digital rights in cities.

Some great ideas on this emerged at the recent virtual meeting of the Commission for Social Development. This year's theme focused on the role of digital technologies in social development and on the well-being of all, and allowed UN-Habitat, UNHCR, the Italian Innovation Fund and Local Authority Representatives to propose practical ideas to implement digital rights in cities including:

- **Establishing a guiding framework** for the city based on human rights, participatory democracy, and citizens engagement
- **Gathering socio-spatial data** by mapping a city's access to the internet
- **Developing policy frameworks** such as a digital strategy and data privacy policies
- **Re-purposing current tools** such as procurement processes to bring human rights and digital rights together and promote transparency, inclusion, and the responsible use of digital technologies
- **Creating places and spaces in cities** for those who don't have access to digital technologies. In the City of Tirana, they have turned library spaces into technology hubs that welcome citizens!
- **Developing agreements with providers** such as data sharing agreements with utilities
- **Getting leaders to champion digital rights.** The City of Amsterdam has the first-ever Deputy Mayor for the Digital City!
- **Getting the private sector involved by** creating opportunities to engage with local businesses so they can be brought on board.



For more information on these ideas and more, get in touch with the Innovation Unit. Don't forget to consider the principles for digital development as you too engage with digital technologies in your work: <https://digitalprinciples.org/>

**Vacancies**

**Role**  
Senior Research Assistant, Social Affairs, G7  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
21 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Inter-Regional Adviser, P5  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
03 April 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Intern, Housing Research Analyst  
**Duty Station**  
Pristina, Kosovo  
**Deadline**  
04 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Intern, Inclusive City Planning and Development  
**Duty Station**  
Pristina, Kosovo  
**Deadline**  
04 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Intern, Multimedia/Communication and Information Management  
**Duty Station**  
Pristina, Kosovo  
**Deadline**  
04 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Senior Programme Officer, P5  
**Duty Station**  
Sana'a, Yemen  
**Deadline**  
05 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)



**Role**  
Intern, Architectural Drawing  
**Duty Station**  
Bogota, Colombia  
**Deadline**  
02 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Information Systems Assistant, G6  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
04 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Associate Coordination Officer, NOB  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
05 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Senior Programme Officer, P5  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
20 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Intern, Urban Planner, Nairobi River Regeneration Initiative  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
01 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

**Role**  
Programme Management Officer, NOB  
**Duty Station**  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
**Deadline**  
11 March 2021  
[Apply here](#)

# Upcoming events and corporate calendar



## Other organizers

**MAR**  
**1-4**

### 7th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

The aim of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is to advance integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, which are mutually reinforcing. To that end, the Regional Forum provides a multi-stakeholder platform for follow-up and review of progress and challenges in the implementation of the two Agendas, while strengthening learning and advocating effective policy measures and actions. The Regional Forum makes important contributions to bolstering multi-stakeholder engagement and synergies, and promoting concerted efforts to implement and achieve the development objectives of the two Agendas. [More information](#)

**MAR**  
**15-16**

### 13th International Smart City Expo, DIFC Dubai

The conference aims to provide a platform where public business managers, directors, urban administrators, and international authorities responsible for developing urban policies can offer their services for the development of smart cities. The conference program covers Smart City Vertical Applications such as Smart Grid, Smart Transportation, Smart Health, Smart Building Management Systems, Enterprise IoT, Fog computing, Big Data Analytics, and Smart Governance. [More information](#)

**MAR**  
**15-18**

### 5th Water Sensitive Cities Conference

The conference will highlight the potential of water sensitive cities. Some of the topics include integrating urban land use planning with water system planning to create opportunities for water sensitive solutions through urban development processes, debating centralised and decentralised approaches and how they are best integrated, and building the authorising environment for water sensitive cities. [More information](#)



## Key dates



### 25 February

- Second Meeting of the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) 2021

### 3 March

- Programme Management Committee Meeting



## Learning

### Get Prince2 certified!

UNON is offering a five-day online Prince2 certification training (Foundation & Practitioner) to two participant cohorts in 2021. The cohorts are planned for 19-23 April 2021 and 20-24 September 2021.

The April cohort will be an Interactive Virtual Training which will be conducted in a virtual/online environment. The training will contain both self-paced online learning material as well as virtual facilitator-led classroom sessions, spread over a five-day period (full time). Depending on the public health situation later in the year, the September cohort may either be conducted in-classroom in the UN complex or via the virtual classroom methodology.

This training will allow participants to learn the [Prince2 methodology](#) and the key aspects required for the certification exam, inclusive of courseware, two exams, training attendance certificate and two international certifications (issued upon passing of each exam).

#### How to apply

You can apply to the programme by filling out [this form](#). The deadline for application is COB on 28 February 2021.

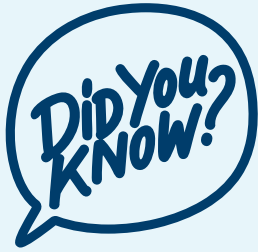
#### Eligibility

All staff are eligible to participate in the programme, but priority is given to those who have completed all of the nine [Mandatory Courses for All Staff Members](#) by close of the application period, and those whose job description includes functions in the area of project and programme management. 50/50 gender parity will be sought among the participants as well as an equal representation of Professional and General Service staff.

A total of three seats will be awarded to UN Habitat staff. Final selections will be made by the Learning Focal Points – Haris Pajtic and Beatrice Ngine.

Get to your keyboards!





## 8 March is International Women’s Day

And on International Women’s Day, we at UN-Habitat will take further steps to involve girls and young women in urban development.

Together with [Global Utmaning](#), UN-Habitat will host a webinar on the launch of [Her City toolbox](#). The toolbox is an open source digital platform to guide urban actors and decision-makers in their efforts to strengthen the participation of girls and young women in urban planning and design processes.

Participatory processes are key for planning a city that works for everyone. If we let citizens that are rarely heard be the experts, our cities and communities will become more inclusive, equal and sustainable. The digital toolbox guides urban actors to implement projects through a step-by-step methodology that facilitates ongoing dialogue between professionals and citizens.

So [join the webinar](#) to learn more about the toolbox, past experiences, and upcoming projects!

**Sign up**

HAB POST | February 25 2021



### Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at [unhabitat-habpost@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-habpost@un.org).

#### Editorial Team

**Advisors:**

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director  
Victor Kisob, Deputy Executive Director

**Leads:** Neil Khor, Amy Wood

**Coordinator & Editor:** Rachad Nassar

**Sub-Editor:** James Ohayo

**Design & Layout:** Peter Cheseret

**Contributors:** Erfan Ali, Christina Mihoko Deakin, Lynne Karago, Salma Mustafa, Abdinassir Shale Sagar, Melissa Permezel

