

# HabPost

Updates from  
UN-Habitat

UNHABITAT

www.unhabitat.org

unhabitat-info@un.org

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## Our priorities in 2021



# Editor's note

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this first issue of HabPost in 2021! We leave behind a challenging year full of adjustments, lessons learnt, and achievements. We kick off this new year with a vision for 2021 and we hope with fresh ideas to rise to the new challenges lying ahead. Impact, focus, visibility – these are some of the key words that we will, as a whole, need to embrace and strive for at a time when our mandate is more relevant than ever. Find out in this issue what are the priorities – painted in broad strokes – for each of our divisions in the months coming ahead.

Happy reading,

**The HabPost Team**



## On the menu

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**Upcoming events and  
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**Missions**

**Learning**

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## Alerts

### COVID-19

- As of 25 January 2020, there were over 97 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including over 2.1 million deaths, reported to WHO. Monitor the situation [here](#).
- In Kenya, UNON foresees triggering Phase 2 of the return to office plan – which allows up to a maximum of 40 per cent occupancy – in February 2021. The decision will be guided by the state of the pandemic and measures put in place by the Kenyan government.
- Kenya is proposing to vaccinate 40 per cent of its population by 2022, while the UN has announced it will do its best to secure vaccines for all personnel.
- WHO warns of [catastrophic moral failure](#) due to unequal Covid-19 vaccine policies across nations.
- In his first act as president of the United States, Joe Biden [signed executive orders](#) on COVID-19, climate, and immigration, and is directing the government to re-join the WHO.
- [EU nations](#) have tightened entry rules and mandated further tests and quarantine measures to prevent the spread of mutant COVID-19 variants.
- Want to learn from astronauts how to cope with isolation? It's right over [here](#).



## ► A word from the Executive Director

**Dear Colleagues,**

Let me first and foremost thank every UN-Habitat personnel – staff members, consultants, UNVs, and interns alike – for your contributions in 2020. Despite the continued challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain dedicated to our work and will continue to engage with local governments to deliver positive impact on the ground.

The secret to my own unwavering enthusiasm for our work partly lies in passion, or how I like to call it, Vitamin P. And while passion is a necessity, I firmly believe that true inspiration comes from people: the people working beside us, the people dedicated and committed to UN-Habitat and to our mandate.

At the end of last year, we held a Senior Manager retreat to take stock of our accomplishments

for the year and look at the five broad areas our divisions and offices would need to be driven by in 2021. This includes better coordination from the OED, a solutions-oriented and future-focused MACS, an impact-oriented RPD with strong co-creation and implementation of normative guidance and technical support, a GSD that strengthens communities of practice with normative guidance acknowledged and practiced worldwide, and a client-oriented ERSKI to better position UN-Habitat both politically and as a thought leader in sustainable urbanization. We are determined to be better coordinated, work together better, and plan well for the future with an overall motto of “Doing less, better” in 2021.

I intend to stand with all of you and lead this organization well into the next UN-Habitat Assembly in 2023. Let us all make this commitment together for only then will I have the much-needed dose of Vitamin P!



We look forward to a year of green recovery in line with our Strategic Plan 2020-2023. Together, we can do it.

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

## Feature Story

# Our priorities in 2021

At the 2020 year-end Senior Managers retreat, colleagues put their minds together to reflect on the achievements, weaknesses, and lessons learned during the past year. What significant gains were achieved as a team? How did personnel embrace and adapt to change brought about by COVID-19? These are some of the questions to which answers were sought in preparation for a challenging year 2021.

The retreat paved the way for an outcome-oriented Senior Managers meeting that took place earlier this month to lay down the broad priority areas for the year and start reflecting on the work needed to realize them. The discussions took account of the overall drivers of our work as an organization, namely:

	Governance
	Our new organization structure
	Financial sustainability
	Operational efficiency
	Talent development
	Our value proposition
	Project management for impact on the ground
	Securing core funding from Member States
	Impact communications

In this issue of HabPost, we invite you to have a look at the priorities of each leading office and division against this backdrop.

## 1 Office of the Executive Director

The Office of the Executive Director (OED) will focus its efforts to better accompany the organization in the delivery of its mandate, its resource mobilization efforts, and in the running of its operations. This means strengthening UN-Habitat's normative role by ensuring that normative guidance is embraced by Member States, localized and implemented by local governments, and measured to determine impact. It also means repositioning the agency as a leader and centre of excellence, making its mandate known, making it more visible, and knowing the message that we need to spread. The OED will also work to ensure that the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 is implemented and monitored, making sure that we are fit-for-purpose.

## 2 Global Solutions Division

The priorities of the Global Solutions Division (GSD) are based on the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and the Work Programme and Budget 2021:

- Under the sub-programme *Reduced spatial Inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum*, the emphasis will be on the adequate provision of basic services for all, enhanced access to public space, housing for all and housing affordability, dissemination of the Participatory Incremental Planning Toolkit, and urban regeneration.
- The sub-programme *Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions* will seek to collaborate with the UN system on the development of National Urban Policies and will prioritize work on land-based finance mechanisms and smart cities.
- The sub-programme *Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment* will focus on the urban dimension in Nationally Determined Contributions, the Resilient Settlements of the Urban Poor (RISE-UP) Programme, advocacy around the Innovate for Cities Conference (I4C), and SOLUTIONSPlus — promoting electric mobility solutions in cities.
- Migration, sustaining peace, and building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19 will be the priorities of the sub-programme *Effective urban crisis prevention and response*.

The Division will further consider in its work social inclusion issues and cross-cutting areas to respond to spatial inequality, promote safer cities, and use innovation and digital technology to help the youth. Similarly, efforts will continue to support the SDG Cities Flagship Programme and launch the Cities and Pandemics report.

## 3 External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division

The External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division (ERSKID) will put together a work plan with the unifying objective of strengthening UN-Habitat's visibility and political relevance of our mandate and mission. This links the reporting and alignment of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 with data and knowledge management, development of significant policy statements, and strengthened communications and advocacy around the future of cities. To ensure that UN-Habitat delivers on its mandate, ERSKI will facilitate the implementation, monitoring, reporting, and alignment of projects with the strategic plan 2020-2023.

Given the global economic consequences of the pandemic, ERSKI will look at innovative approaches to mobilize resources and unleash new sources of funding. This year will further be an opportunity to maximise the benefits of partnerships through broad engagement, strategic outreach and relationship management. ERSKI will be leveraging stronger communications systems to improve access to information by Member States, as well as internally.

To position UN-Habitat as an agile and effective organization, ERSKI will lead efforts to embrace digital transformation for programming, for visibility of new normative work, and for partnerships. The Division will strengthen use of data and reporting to inform choices and decisions, and will invest in efforts to work collaboratively, effectively, efficiently, and to highest standards of excellence.

## 4 Management Advisory and Compliance Service

The overall objective of the Management Advisory and Compliance Services (MACS) is to function as the backbone of the agency, ensuring its smooth operations and optimizing the use of resources under the current austerity measures. MACS aims to become more of a solutions-oriented and future focused division, while ensuring full compliance with UN regulations and rules, administrative instructions, and other policies. The team will continue efforts to improve business and procurement processes, review Human Resources processes for efficiency, and revisit Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This year will also mark the development of an overarching IT strategy, and colleagues will continue their efforts to address historical issues.

## 5 The Regional Programmes Division

The Regional Programmes Division (RPD) aims to be an impact-oriented division looking to strengthen co-creation and implementation of normative guidance and technical support. Internally, RPD is deploying concrete plans and protocols for substantive collaboration with GSD and ERSKI, while externally colleagues are working to strengthen Country Offices and Multi-country Offices, build closer ties with Member States, and ensure strong engagement at the country-level through the UN Country Teams. RPD plans to redouble advocacy efforts and seeks to develop proposals contributing to a better and more resilient recovery. The Division will be developing a global process and roadmap towards the 2022 High-Level Meeting to review the New Urban Agenda.



## Vacancies

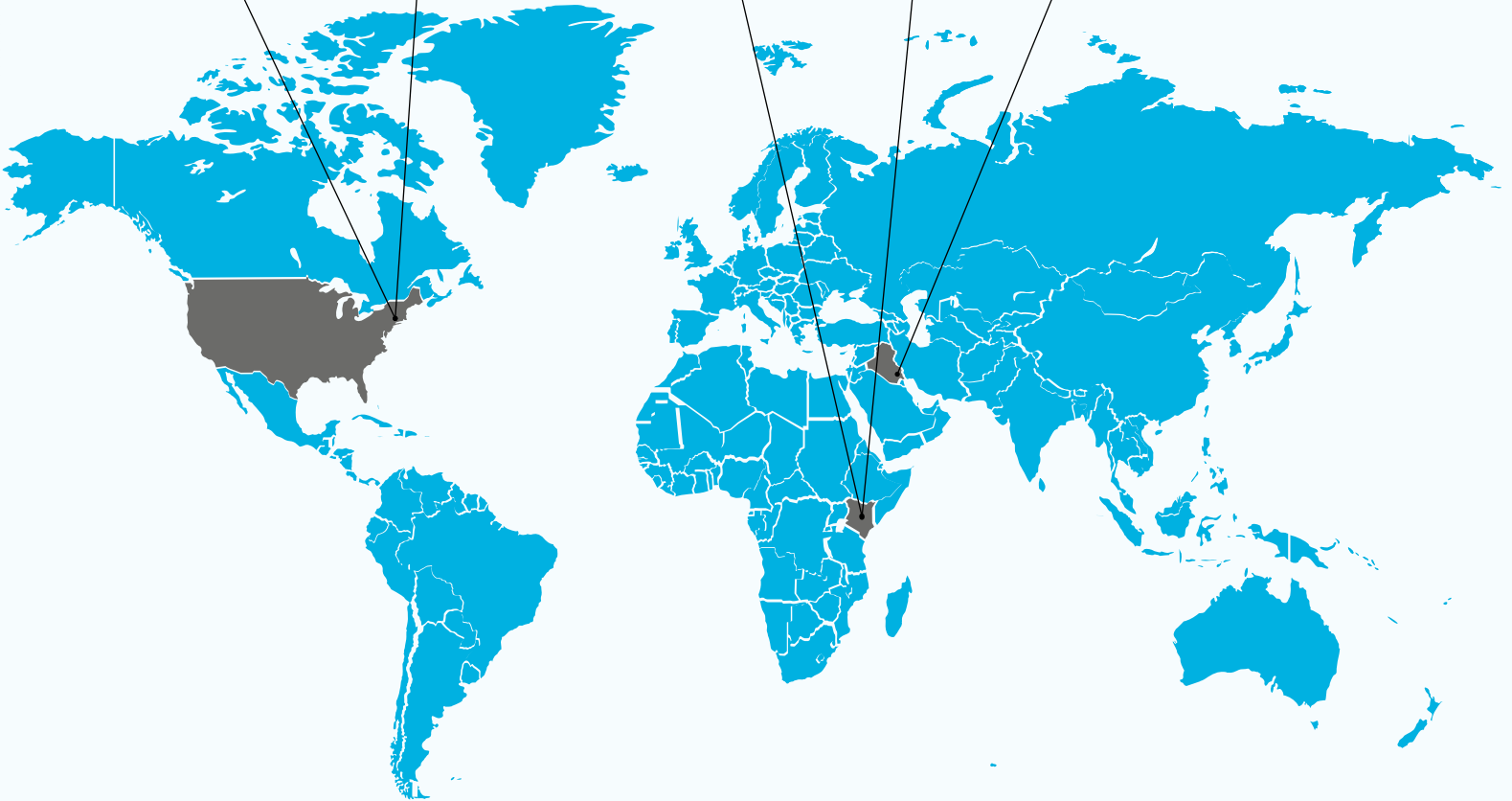
**Role**  
Intern, Programme Support  
**Duty Station**  
New York, USA  
**Deadline**  
1 February 2021  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
Intern, Programme Support/  
Communication  
**Duty Station**  
New York, USA  
**Deadline**  
1 February 2021  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
Programme Management Officer,  
Human Settlements, P4  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
24 February 2021  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
Intern, Office of the Deputy Executive Director  
**Duty Station**  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
8 February 2021  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
Urban Planner, UNV  
**Duty Station**  
Basrah, Iraq  
**Deadline**  
31 January 2021  
[Apply Here](#)



## Other organizers



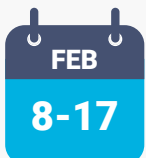
### 8th Africa Water Week



**When?** 8-12 February 2021

The 8th Africa Water Week will focus on the theme: Water Security for Development and Human Health. The Africa Water Week represents a political commitment at the highest level where governments, regional institutions, international partners,

the private sector, the scientific community, civil society, and the media from all over the world, and in particular Africa, meet to discuss and collectively seek solutions to Africa's water and sanitation challenges. [More information](#)



### 59th Session of the Commission for Social Development



**When?** 8-17 February 2021

The 59th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD59) will take place from 8 to 17 February 2021 at the United Nations Headquarters in

New York. The Commission is the advisory body responsible for the social development pillar of global development. [More information](#)

## The New Urban Agenda gets a helping hand!

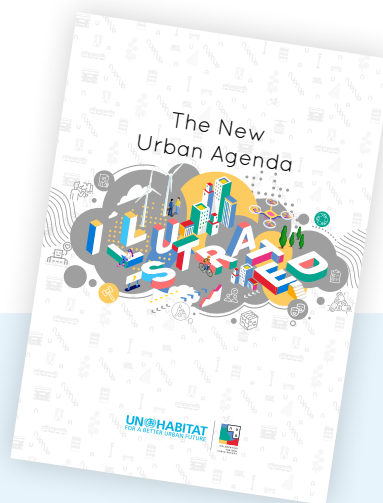
and study the content. The aim is to address higher level policy decisions for the growth and development of cities around the world.

And if you prefer interactive learning over documents, navigate your way to the online [New Urban Agenda Crash Course](#), where you are free to explore topics in your own way, and learn about what you want.

The handbook unpacks the propositions of the New Urban Agenda and highlights their synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets. It enriches the global framework with concrete references, visual illustrations, examples from all over the world and practical propositions for action.

For any further information or feedback on the handbook, contact Raphaëlle Vignol at [raphaelle.vignol@un.org](mailto:raphaelle.vignol@un.org)

The handbook provides a snapshot of issues and challenges in the urban development sphere: key topics related to sustainable urban development are explained briefly, with suggestions to further explore



"The illustrated guide breathes colour, clarity and, through the provision of best practices, a welcome dose of pragmatism... It gives greater sense, structure and substance to the issues, challenges and solutions laid out in the NUA while forging neat alignment with the SDGs."

A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration representing various fields of study and learning. It includes a laptop with a graduation cap on top, a microscope, a lightbulb, a rocket, a DNA helix, a brain on a tablet, a certificate, a palette, a clock, and various gears and musical notes.



# Innovation corner

## Inspire and be inspired!

### Call for innovation stories

The Innovation Unit, in partnership with the Urban Basic Services Community of Practice, is calling for impact stories on innovation. The Innovation Unit is encouraging colleagues to share the work being done on innovative interventions in different parts of the organizations to inspire and foster innovation at UN-Habitat. Send yours!

The submissions, which need to be received by 1 February, will be reviewed and the top three stories will be awarded various prizes including a certificate of acknowledgement from the Executive Director. More information about the call and how to participate can be found [here](#).

### On the road to Digital Cooperation

The third roundtable of the Urban Innovation Series on Digital Cooperation discussed ways UN-Habitat can contribute to the implementation of the Secretary General's roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The event featured a presentation

from the Secretary General's office, and UN-Habitat followed up with a presentation on how we can further the digital cooperation agenda, with an emphasis on local governments. The discussions focused on:



How UN-Habitat can bring to light the key challenges related to connectivity and the use of digital technologies in urban environments



How UN-Habitat can provide guidance to national and local governments to adopt new technologies and put forward the digital capacity building needs of local governments



The capacity of UN-Habitat in the areas of digital, data, and innovation

## Engage

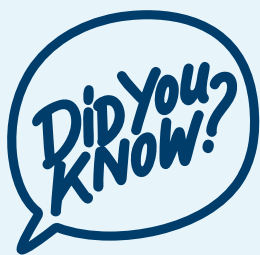


Scan the QR code to connect to the team's platform and access all the information on the roundtables, including the recordings.

To learn more about the Innovation Unit and Innovation at UN-Habitat, read the [Innovation Unit's Brochure](#) and [Innovation Guidance Note](#) highlighting ways of fostering innovation in urban programmes and projects.

## Or contact the following colleagues for more information:

Eduardo Moreno Lopez ([eduardo.moreno@un.org](mailto:eduardo.moreno@un.org))  
Melissa Permezel ([melissa.permezel@un.org](mailto:melissa.permezel@un.org))  
Pontus Westerberg ([pontus.westerberg@un.org](mailto:pontus.westerberg@un.org))  
Isabel Wetzel ([isabel.wetzel@un.org](mailto:isabel.wetzel@un.org))  
Abdinassir Sagar ([abdinassir.sagar@un.org](mailto:abdinassir.sagar@un.org))



## A UN-Habitat project is among the finalists in the UN Secretary-General Awards!

The project *Youth-led COVID-19 Emergency Response* is among the finalists in the UN Secretary-General Awards. The Awards honour and recognize significant performance of UN Secretariat staff members and teams who go beyond the call of duty in the discharge of their duties or advance projects with great impact and innovative potential. As personnel of the UN, you can vote for your favourite nominee on [Unite Spark](#).

The project, which was rolled out in Kenya, Somalia, and Ecuador, involves 34 youth-led organizations, local and national governments, and the private sector. In Kenya, youth groups in informal settlements set up handwashing facilities, which resulted in over 2.5 million handwashes. They also distributed facemasks, worked to support the prevention of domestic violence, and facilitated children's education at home. UN-Habitat supported the creation of the Emergency Youth-

led COVID-19 Coalition, which created murals that combined LGBTQ, migration inclusion, and COVID-19 prevention messages.

### How it works

Voting will be done pairwise, which means that voters will compare two nominations at a time, select one, and continue to vote until they have considered all pairwise combinations in each award category. Voting will continue until 18:00 Nairobi time on 2 February 2021.

### Learn more

A story about the project is available on our website at <https://unhabitat.org/youth-led-covid-19-response-with-un-habitat-nominated-for-un-secretary-general-award>, and a short video is available [here](#).



Do also listen to the podcast episode about the work done in Nairobi's informal settlement of Mathare! Plug into <https://soundcloud.com/un-habitat-worldwide/habtalk-episode-2>.



## 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:** Christina Mihoko Deakin, Melissa Permezel, Raphaëlle Vignol, Susannah Price

