

High Level Meeting

Side event on Road to Katowice – WUF11 Friday 29 April 2022

Concept note

Road to Katowice

Side event on Road to Katowice organised by the Government of Poland, City of Katowice and UN-Habitat at the High-Level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda.

Date: 29 April 2022

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Venue: UNHQ Conference 9 in New York, USA

Context

The High-Level Meeting (HLM) is an important building block in a series of events to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The next such event is the Eleventh Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11) that will be held from 26-30 June 2022 in Katowice, Poland.

WUF11 comes at a time of convergence of multiple crises facing the world. As the global community emerges from the devastating impacts of a once-in-a-generation pandemic, it also continues to grapple with the climate emergency, the economic crisis, and new, continuing or protracted conflicts, which have left no one and no place untouched.

The crisis in Ukraine is evolving fast and in unpredictable ways and has already had a significant impact on the neighbouring countries, including Poland, which has taken in almost 2.5 million refugees so far, in addition to the 1 million economic migrants from Ukraine it was already hosting, who have made an important contribution to the national economy. The strong pre-crisis linkages, both social and economic (ex. construction sector), offer a solid basis for an effective response and support from Poland for the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine and the refugee flow have a strong urban dimension. The viability of places to sustain populations not only depends on direct security risks but also access to housing, basic services (water, electricity, schools, health facilities), and livelihoods. The fast-escalating numbers are challenging the carrying capacity of cities and communities, which will become more acute as time goes by. If the conflict becomes protracted, the very strong initial solidarity responses will need to be complemented with more durable solutions that integrate the displaced within hosting communities, without overstressing housing markets and services while maintaining social cohesion.

Drawing upon the outcome of the the High-Level Meeting, constituencies can also utilize WUF11 to discuss and deliberate on the means of implementation for the New Urban Agenda during and beyond their assemblies. All these issues must be discussed at length among national and local governments, civil society actors, and the international community. The Eleventh session of the World Urban Forum offers an effective global platform to drive these conversations.

Objectives of the Event

- To build awareness about the World Urban Forum in Katowice (WUF 11) as the premier platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities of sustainable urbanisation within the larger global context today
- Present the opportunities for the constituencies of the New Urban Agenda to draw upon the outcome of the HLM and discuss the means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda during the constituent assemblies taking place at the WUF11 and further meetings
- Raise awareness of the WUF11 by highlighting the engagement opportunities and roles of member states, local governments, civil society, grassroots organisations, academia, and the private sector, among other relevant stakeholders
- To share initial ideas towards contextualisation of the discussions foreseen to be held at WUF 11 in relation to the war in Ukraine and its impact on Ukrainian cities and towns, as well as on the wider region
- To create buy-in/ mobilise support for a one-day Ukraine reconstruction and recovery conference, to be held as part of the WUF 11

Structure of the Event

- Welcome remarks and framing – Ambassador Marek Rohr-Garztecki
- Opening Remarks – Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat
- Presentation on WUF – Polish Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy
- Panel discussion on the role of cities/city leaders' crisis response, post-crisis recovery and reconstruction, humanitarian aid
- Brief Q&A
- Closing remarks - UN Deputy Secretary-General (TBC)

Moderated by UN-Habitat