



24 April 2015 – Yesterday, the 25th session of the [UN-Habitat Governing Council](#) concluded in Nairobi, Kenya. The session addressed the broader subject of sustainable urbanization and human settlement, and witnessed the launch of the new Urban Data web portal, which you can now use.

“Our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a message to the Governing Council.

Mr Ban emphasized the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that urbanization will contribute to sustainable development.

These include e.g. inadequate urban planning; low levels of employment (especially among

young people); the contribution of cities to global warming due to urban sprawl and the excessive dependence of urban settlements on cars and fossil fuels.

## **Urban Data goes open with launch of new portal**

The 25th Governing Council saw the launch of a new UN-Habitat web portal, called [Urban Data](#), featuring a wealth of city data based on its extensive research into some of the most pressing urban trends of recent decades.

You will be able to use Urban Data to explore data from a number of cities and regions around the world and compare indicators such as slum prevalence and city prosperity.

Furthermore, an online interactive tool is at your disposal to generate basic infographics that can be saved and downloaded for use in your own work or research.

## **In anticipation of three upcoming agreements**

In addition to this launch, UN-Habitat also released [a new report on its work and activities](#). The report emphasizes the organization’s work in developing global norms and supporting innovative models. These assist national governments and local authorities to increase their knowledge on sustainable urbanization and to improve national and local policies on housing and urban development.

Both developments underpinned the theme of the Governing Council: “The contribution of United Nations-Habitat to the post-2015 development agenda”, looking forward to the adoption of three new agreements:

- the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs, September 2015);
- the [Climate Change Agreement](#) (COP21, December 2015);
- and the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III, October 2016)

## Looking ahead to Habitat III

[Habitat III](#) , the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, will take place in Quito, Ecuador.

The Conference’s objective is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development and to [rethink the Urban Agenda](#) .

In preparing for the event, a [wealth of urbanization aspects](#) are being addressed. An example of this is women’s empowerment. At a [recent event running up to Habitat III](#) , Dr Joan Clos, UN-Habitat Executive Director, reinforced the organization’s position that in order for urbanization to be an engine for economic growth and social development, women’s empowerment and gender equality needs to be at the centre of the New Urban Agenda.

In looking ahead, this echoes Mr Ban’s underlining to the Governing Council of SDG 11, dedicated to making cities and human settlements “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” for all.

To stay abreast of the path to Habitat III, you can subscribe to the [Conference’s Newsletter](#).

### ***Related articles***

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- [Promoting urban revitalization through planning of public spaces](#) (26 March 2015)