IMPLEMENTING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Responses to questionnaires from
UN Regional Economic and Social
Commissions in preparation for
2022 Quadrennial Report

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QUADRENNIAL REPORT 2022 OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA 2016-2036
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSIONS

UN-ESCAP

Question 1. Has the urban development focus in your Regional Commission's work evolved during the reporting period and how?

UN-ESCAP has focused on urban development since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016. In November 2017, ESCAP convened along with UN-Habitat a Regional Partners Forum (@Quito+1), to engage cities, institutions and networks across Asia Pacific to accelerate solutions towards sustainable urbanization.

Following input received at the forum, ESCAP, UN-Habitat and partners developed forward-looking normative guidance, captured in *The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities, 2019,*[1] which identified four key thematic pillars of sustainable urbanization: Urban and Territorial Planning; Urban Resilience; Smart and Inclusive Cities; and Urban Finance. These thematic pillars, which also contribute to the New Urban Agenda, provided the structure for the 7th Asia Pacific Urban Forum, held in October 2019, and has been the focus for ESCAP's capacity building work.

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) is another key platform ESCAP organizes which has focused on sustainable urban development in the region. The annual intergovernmental forum is part of the formal follow up and review process for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and has incorporated the voice of local authorities. The 2018 APFSD included the focused review[2] and a roundtable on regional progress on SDG11, and engaged representatives of local government and city networks.[3] ESCAP also produces an annual SDG Progress Report and maintains the **SDG Helpdesk**, which acts as a one-stop online service providing access to tools, knowledge products, expertise, advice and opportunities for peer-learning and regional cooperation through thematic areas, covering all SDGs topics.

ESCAP has scaled up its urban development activities, with Sustainable Cities one of four integrated priority areas of the Environment and Development Division, along with Climate Action, Protecting Ecosystem Health, and Air Pollution. New initiatives on localizing SDGs, building the capacity of mayors, air pollution and addressing plastic pollution in urban areas and smart cities have all been launched, and guidance to cities has continued to be developed, including for the development of Voluntary Local Reviews.

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1   UNESCAP & UN-Habitat (2019) The Future of Asian and Pacific Cities 2019: Transformative Pathways Towards Sustainable Urban Development (Link)
2   https://www.unescap.org/resources/sdg11-goal-profile
3   https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/APFSD%20Roundtable%20SDG%2011%20Report_1.pdf

Question 2. What are the major progress *milestones or achievements of strategies and programmes* contributing to sustainable urban development that were designed and implemented in your region? Which aspects of the New Urban Agenda are these initiatives supporting?

7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-7): The forum is a regional platform for policy makers and stakeholders at all government levels held every four years to exchange on urban solutions. APUF-7 was held in October 2019 in Penang, Malaysia, co-organized by UN-ESCAP, UN-Habitat, Urbanice Malaysia, Penang Island City Council and the State Government of Penang. More than 5,000 participants attended APUF-7, during which a number of organizations made voluntary commitments to promote sustainable urban development, which will be reported at the 8th Asia Pacific Urban Forum in 2023. Commitments were made by 11 specific organizations and partnerships at APUF-7, including: the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to provide US$2.5 billion annual financing for urban infrastructure projects from 2020 to 2024; United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC) to support at least 50 cities and provinces to develop SDG aligned local plan, climate change action plans, local disaster plans and/or participatory design and construction of public spaces by 2022; the European Union International Urban Cooperation programme to support cooperation on sustainability in 30 cities by 2023; and the Pacific Island Forum Partners to achieving the outcomes of the Pacific Urban Forum by 2023.

The Penang Platform for Sustainable Urban Development: Established in 2019 at APUF-7, the Penang Platform brings together an alliance of partners, led by ESCAP and UN Habitat, to address these multi-faceted issues through a holistic CITI pathway: **Collaborate** to accelerate implementation of the SDGs in cities, **Integrate** the use of tools, models, research and evidence of good practices, **Transform** access to innovative sources of urban financing through new partnerships, and **Increase** political commitments for sustainable urbanization. The Platform will support collaboration among partners to take forward all aspects of the NUA and particularly the development pathways identified in 2019 **Future of Asian Pacific Cities** report.

The Asia-Pacific Mayor's Academy: Launched at APUF-7, the Academy supports newly appointed mayors with access to expertise, greater awareness of regional resources and a support network to assist in the acceleration of urban sustainability initiatives, across all aspects of NUA. The Academy's approach includes courses held on an annual basis, coupled with ongoing peer-learning. The Academy has brought together partner institutions including ESCAP, UN-Habitat, UN University Institute for Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), UCLG ASPAC, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), to deliver a comprehensive curriculum on urban development to fellow mayors. To date, more than 20 mayors have completed the academy in two classes and developed initiatives for their communities informed by the course and feedback from expert faculty.

ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF): An annual event co-organized by UCLG ASPAC and the ASEAN Secretariat to discuss local actions for sustainable and inclusive growth, exchange experiences and share urban solutions. Participants include mayors, representatives of local governments and local government associations from all ASEAN member states. The 5th ASEAN Mayors Forum, *Driving Local Actions for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth,* was held in August 2019 co-organized in Bangkok with ESCAP, while the 2021 AMF, *Enabling Environment on Climate Resilience: Local Governments and Cities Commitment to Tackle Climate Change* was held virtually in June 2021.

UCLG ASPAC Congress: UCLG ASPAC organizes a biennial Congress gathering key development actors around relevant themes. The 7th Congress was held in September 2018 in Surabaya, Indonesia with the theme *Innovation-Driven Development for Sustainable Cities,* while the 8th Congress, *From Steady Recovery to Sustained Prosperity in Post COVID-19 Asia Pacific* was a hybrid event hosted by the City of Zhengzhou in April 2021.

Asia Low-emissions Development Strategies Partnership (LEDS): The Asia LEDS Partnership is a regional network comprised of individuals and organizations from the public, private, and non-governmental sectors active in designing, promoting, and/or implementing low-carbon development in their countries and cities. The partnership, a regional platform of the LEDS Global Partnership shares solutions and has delivered trainings to local and national stakeholders. The 2021 Asia LEDS Partnership Forum, *Advancing NDC implementation and strengthening Long Term Strategies* was held virtually over a two-week period August-September 2021. ICLEI serves as the secretariat for the partnership, ensuring that low-carbon solutions are accessible to local authorities, including through the network's comprehensive knowledge platform.

CityNet: the largest association of urban stakeholders committed to sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region. Established in 1987 with the support of UNESCAP, UNDP and UN-Habitat, the network of cities has grown to include over 173 municipalities, NGOs, private companies and research centers, to exchange knowledge and build commitment to establish more sustainable and resilient cities. CityNet manages the Urban SDGs Knowledge Platform (LINK) in partnership with **ESCAP** to share knowledge and solutions.

Question 3. Please provide examples of strong practices in the *effective implementation* of the New Urban Agenda in the following areas, or as relevant for your region:

1. **Building governance structures and coherent policy frameworks**
2. **Planning and management of territorial spatial development in urban areas**
3. **Promoting green, climate resilient and healthy cities, including through COVID-19 recovery efforts**

In October 2021, ESCAP, UN-Habitat and the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization convened the 2nd Regional Partners Forum (@Quito+5) to discuss developments in the region, including on national reporting, Voluntary Local Reviews, progress against commitments made at APUF-7 and to collect relevant case studies contributing to the thematic pillars in *The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities* report. The following sections highlight some of the case studies [4]collected and their relevance to the implementation of the NUA.

1. **Building governance structures and coherent policy frameworks**
Mainstreaming climate action through urban and territorial planning with the Urban Sustainability Assessment Framework (USAF) in India
The Urban Sustainability Assessment Framework (USAF), developed by UN-Habitat in India is designed as a decision support tool for municipal commissioners and urban practitioners to **support sustainable and resilient urban planning policy and governance of cities across India**. The spatial lens of this framework supports urban territorial planning while prioritizing climate adaptation and mitigation at all stages of the advocated process. The framework builds in a monitoring process across standardized indicators, across twelve sectors; namely, governance and data management, finance and economy, housing and property, water, sanitation, waste management, clean energy, resilience, environment, public space-safety-urban form, transport, and social infrastructure. The performance of these sectors is measured using national and international benchmarks. With its focus on mitigating climate change via reduction of GHG emissions, at every step of this process, metrics, studies, climate-focused frameworks, and low-carbon tools have been at the heart of the overall approach. The USAF has currently been applied to five cities in India and UN-Habitat is now supporting stakeholders to institutionalize the USAF at the national level and at sub-national/state level across India.
Sihanoukville for all: promoting a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive City, Cambodia
Promoted by the UNCT Cambodia, funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security and led by OHCHR and UN-Habitat, the project conducted a comprehensive assessment to launch Siha-

noukville as a smart sustainable and inclusive city, with **strong governance and policy foundations.** The initiative positioned the "people", and especially women, girls, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups, at the heart of the smart city vision. It aims to promote a Novel Alliance between Citizens and Local Authorities through 13 initiatives that can be grouped in three pillars:

· **People-focused Smart Planning & e-governance through Innovative digital Participation:** aimed at involving citizens in participating at the decision-making process, focused on a transparency and equal e-governance system to allow citizens obtaining information and being included in the city life.
· **Smart services through crowdsourced data and information:** aimed at collecting useful data information to re-design citizens services (transportation, land management, housing, health care, etc) through a collaborative approach which directly involve the local communities.
· **Digital empowerment to reduce the digital divide and foster human rights:** aimed at providing equal opportunities to benefit the digital transformation by promoting an adequate.

Getting the smart city governance foundations right, via an inclusive approach, is seen as vital for letting a host of public and private sector driven smart city solutions flourish in the Sihanoukville.

2. Planning and management of territorial spatial development in urban areas

Liuzhou, China: Managing the transition from an industrial to an environment-focused city
Liuzhou's recent urban development represents an integrated, inclusive and ecological transition from an old machinery and automobile industrial city into an innovation-based economy. The long-term efforts in the areas of environment (green and blue infrastructure), mobility (affordable public transport and e-vehicles), and culture (museums and cultural heritages) have been integrated via the city´s spatial planning. The implementation of an integrated approach in sustainable urban development was made possible through a wide range of cross-sectoral governance initiatives, involving the public and private actors, as well as citizen participation. Liuzhou's ecological transition is part of China´s pilot low-carbon city initiative and lighthouse program of the National Circular Economy Action Plan, which focuses on localizing the SDGs. Liuzhou has focused on a number of key, integrated strategies to achieve this transformation including Ecological restoration of the Liujiang river, improvement of the wastewater treatment and landscape planning through ecological concepts and public services and; optimization of a '15-minute community life circle' in spatial planning considerations, which reduces the need to use private vehicles.

Improving equitable land tenure via the Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR) in Lao PDR
Challenges related to land tenure in Lao PDR include pressure on land from population growth and expanding urban areas and limited land registration and titling. A further challenge for equitable land policy is a male-dominated decision-making process due to cultural norms regarding women's participation. The SALaR project, implemented by UN-Habitat, aims to promote tenure security improvement, especially for women and marginalized groups, at the village level. Three major interventions were included: a) implementation of land tools; b) capacity building; and c) enhancing partnerships among land stakeholders. The tools and capacity developed through the project will be able to be applied in the future in the rapidly growing urban areas in Lao PDR.

Improved transport planning in Kaysone Phomvihane, Lao PDR
The project aims at improving road infrastructure and advancing public transport systems for sustainable urban development and livability. With the support of the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II, Kaysone authorities have worked together with the UN-Habitat team during 2020 in developing a City Diagnostic Report and a City Technical Proposal to advance the development of a City Sustainable Transport Master Plan (CSTMP), which is strongly integrated with land use planning. Innovation was demonstrated via methods to overcome the limitations of Covid-19 to carry out participatory actions to gather data and information.

The Xiamen Model as an example of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), China

In Xiamen, on the east coast of China's Fujian Province, Marine Functional Zoning (MFZ) has been established as a low-cost and effective way of dealing with the conflicts over the use of marine resources. It also supports the development of maritime activities and promotes the research and monitoring of marine resources. Various environmental concerns are considered within MFZ, which reduces negative impacts of large-scale sea dredging and mainstreams large-scale aquaculture rehabilitation and beach restoration. On the development side, it facilitates the creation of alternative employment options that support many in the fishing industry and other members of the local community. Innovative urban and territorial planning has emerged in a number of situations, such as wetland and mangrove restoration that help to improve coastal defenses, and the Yuanboyuan Expo Garden which was constructed in a way to help deal with local flooding and drainage issues.

3. **Promoting green, climate resilient and healthy cities, including through COVID-19 recovery efforts**

ESCAP Report on Integrated COVID-19 recovery and sustainable urban development

In 2020, in the midst of the global pandemic, ESCAP produced a discussion paper entitled "Future of Asia and the Pacific Report: Transformative Pathways Towards Sustainable Urban Development – post Covid-19.[5] This paper adds an urban health focus into framework developed in the "Future of Asia and the Pacific Cities" Report (2019)[6] and integrates health related recommendations and pathways across the four thematic areas: Urban and Territorial Planning, Urban Resilience, Smart Cities and Urban Finance. It offers long-term health strategies to build back Asia-Pacific cities that are heathier, more equitable and, ultimately, stronger for all residents.

Development Account 13th Tranche Project: Building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19

The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of local governments across 16 cities globally to design, implement and monitor sustainable, resilient and inclusive COVID- responses, recovery and rebuilding plans. The project is funded by UNDESA implemented by regional commissions, including UNESCAP for the Asia-Pacific region, with support from UN-Habitat and UNCDF. Four pilot cities from Asia-Pacific region is Pune (India), Hoi An (Vietnam), Subang Jaya (Malaysia), and Suva (Fiji). Through this project, ESCAP has provided various capacity development opportunities such as global and regional workshops, implementation of diagnostics of urban economic resilience, organization of local stakeholder engagement workshops. Cities have been able to identify strengths and weakness of their respective urban resilience and are working on drafting recovery plans that promote green, sustainable recovery. For example, Pune is focusing on informal sectors and ensuring their access to basic services in building urban resilience. Hoi An prioritizes rebuilding tourism sectors while Subang Jaya and Suva are setting out broader recovery plans through digitalization, diversification, and green economy.

Mangrove ecosystem reforestation initiatives in Bauang Municipality, Philippines

Bauang Municipality is home to 80,000 inhabitants and rapidly urbanizing. While this is creating strong opportunities for economic growth and municipal revenue generation, it is putting substantial pressure on the natural resources in the municipality. In 2017, a large area of mangroves was placed under protected area status, which involved raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity and environmental assets to the local population, supporting livelihoods based on eco-tourism rather than a heavy reliance on fishing, and robust measures such as patrols by rangers. The municipality has been able to make significant progress in protecting this important ecosystem, while also supporting new job creation during the challenging Covid-19 period.

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5   ESCAP (2020) Future of Asia and the Pacific Report: Transformative Pathways Towards Sustainable Urban Development – post Covid-19 (Link)
6   UNESCAP & UN-Habitat (2019) The Future of Asian and Pacific Cities 2019: Transformative Pathways Towards Sustainable Urban Development (Link)

Nature-based Solutions for Resilience in Ormoc City, Philippines

The population of Ormoc City was around 215,000 in 2015 and is expected to double by 2040. It is vulnerable to flood, storm surge, and landslide as well as strong typhoons. In October 2018, Ormoc initiated a Local Climate Action Plan using the climate and disaster risk assessment tool of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development and greenhouse gas inventory tool of Climate Change Commission. The plan emphasizes taking opportunities provided by the increasing rainfall through harnessing and capturing water as an additional resource. It also captures the discussions on addressing urban heat through introducing nature-based solutions in the open and public spaces of the city.

Enhancing the climate and disaster resilience of vulnerable urban human settlements in Lao PDR

With support from the Adaptation Fund (AF), UN-Habitat is implementing this project from 2017 to 2021 with a focus on 1) institutional strengthening to reduce vulnerability in human settlements; 2) building capacity at the human settlement and community levels for climate resilience; and 3) enhancing climate and disaster resilient infrastructure systems in 189 communities across the three southern provinces of Sekong, Saravane and Attapeu. The project has improved existing infrastructure and provided new resilient infrastructure, such as water storage and irrigation systems to provide secured water supply and management, enhanced food security and economic conditions, which, in turn, will reduce poverty. Increased resilience of natural livelihood capital, such as land and water, will also improve the coping mechanisms of the most vulnerable people and reduce human and material losses during extreme weather events.

Question 4. Please provide examples of achievements in terms of *strengthening and promoting the means of implementation* of the New Urban Agenda at the regional scale regarding the following areas, or as relevant for your region:
1. **Financing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**
2. **Building capacities to report on the implementation of the urban agendas**
3. **Use of technology to support sustainable urban development**
4. **Facilitating engagement and participation of local authorities in development programming**

A number of initiatives have been active in the region to support means of implementation of NUA. The Penang Platform continues to play an active role in supporting cities and other relevant agencies to strengthen and promote NUA. In September 2021, and in advances of the 2nd Regional Partners Forum in October, UN-Habitat conducted an information session for Asia Pacific country focal points for NUA reporting as part of its coordinated efforts to support national reporting. At the Regional Partners Forum, relevant case studies and initiatives were shared. The following sections include select initiatives supporting NUA.

1. **Financing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

As mentioned in Question 2, The Penang Platform for Sustainable Urban Development is an important forum for sharing knowledge and building partnerships related to municipal financing as well as other aspects of NUA implementation. The Asian Development Bank also plays an important role in catalyzing financing in the region, as demonstrated by its commitment to provide US$2.5 billion annual financing for urban infrastructure projects from 2020 to 2024. Several other case studies highlighted during the recent Regional Partners Forum provide insights into various aspects of financing the NUA across the region:

Rediscovering Land Pooling to help Finance Urban Infrastructure in Nepal

As observed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), who carried out a study in 2020 into the potential for reinvigorated and more strategic land pooling in Nepal,[7] the use of land pooling for more planned urban development has stagnated since the early 2000s. With the recent municipal govern-

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7   Faust, A. et al (2020) Land Pooling in Nepal: From Planned Urban 'Islands' to City Transformation. Asian Development Bank SE Asia Working Paper Series (Link)

ment decentralization in Nepal there is an opportunity to improve the enabling environment for land pooling, including: updating and strengthening the legal and regulatory framework for land pooling; Integrating land pooling in urban and regional planning; and building consensus, resolving disputes early, and developing mechanisms for non-consenting landowners.[8]

Own Source Revenue Financing for LED Public Lighting in Quezon City, Philippines

QC's annual capital funds for infrastructure investments are derived from national and local taxes. In replacing streetlighting with more efficient LEDs, QC preferred to raise capital for investments from tax revenue, rather than by issuing debentures, which would entail additional interest costs to the municipality over time.[9] The main sources of revenue for infrastructure are the Internal Revenue Allotment, which is a national tax, and Business and Real Property taxes, which both come from local taxes.

PPP for Resilient Water Supply in Shanghai, China

The Shanghai Zhuyuan Youlian No. 1 wastewater treatment project (ZY1WWTP) is the first me-ga-ton wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in Shanghai, with advanced primary treatment capacity of 1.7 million m3/day. The savings generated through the PPP arrangement are reflected in the ser-vice fee, which was about 40% below the government's own projected cost of CNY0.38 per cubic meter. The indirect subsidies through fixed investments and the provision of land from the govern-ment also enabled the JV to offer a relatively low service fee.[10]

Leasing Model for Electric Buses and Charging Infrastructure in Shenzhen, China

The Shenzhen Bus Group (SZBG) used 100 percent financial leasing to purchase 1,000 new bat-tery-electric buses, leasing the buses over the course of the agreed upon period and then purchas-ing them at a designated price.[11] Since the leasing period equals the total life of the buses, this ar-rangement turned the high-cost procurement into more manageable annual rental/lease payments. Leasing the e-buses from the manufacturers, with the ability to own them after 8 years, greatly saved operators' upfront investments, and reduced the need for debt financing.

Breathe Better Bond for climate smart infrastructure investment

Air pollution is at crisis levels across many cities in the Asia Pacific and must be addressed in con-junction with efforts to reduce GHG emissions. The Breathe Better Bond is a debt instrument for lo-cal governments to finance air pollution reduction projects in emerging market cities that also reduce GHG emissions - for example in clean energy, waste management, transportation, fuel switching, and other sectors. It uses a blended capital structure to provide credit enhancement for cities at the margins of access to global capital markets, and a results-based payment mechanism to ensure that cities raising capital and investing in projects that achieve desired pollution reduction targets receive tangible near-term fiscal benefits.[12]

The Water and Sanitation Pooled Fund in Tamil Nadu, India

The Water and Sanitation Pooled Fund (WSPF) in Tamil Nadu issued a pooled bond to facilitate access to long-term domestic capital markets for small and medium Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to finance water and sanitation services. This enabled a grouping of 13 ULBs to overcome high trans-action costs and mobilize funds through a single bond issuance.[13]

2. Building capacities to report on the implementation of the urban agendas

UN Habitat and partners have played a significant role in encouraging countries in the Asia Pacific to prepare **voluntary national reports**. In September 2021, UN Habitat hosted a Quadrennial Report Update session, to enable speakers from Lao PDR and Turkey, who had submitted reports at that stage, to share their insights and experience. UN Habitat also outlined lessons drawn from the NUA National Reports process globally, as well as providing some pointers for new reports.

In October 2021, at the 2nd Regional Partners Forum @Quito +5, partners discussed progress on implementation of the NUA across the region and to learn more about reporting on the imple-mentation of urban agendas. A deep dive session was held during the Forum, to provide national

8   C40 Finance Facility (2017) Explainer: How to Finance Urban Infrastructure (Link)
9   *Makumbe, P. et al (2019) Proven Delivery Models for LED Public Lighting: Municipal Financing Delivery Model Quezon City, Philippines, Case Study (Link)*
10   ADB. (2010), Wastewater treatment: case Study of Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Shanghai. Asian Development Bank. Link.
11   WRI (2019) Financing electric and hybrid-electric buses: 10 questions city decision-makers should ask. Working Paper (Link)
12   Climate Finance Lab – Breathe Better Bond (Link)
13   World Bank (2016) Case Studies in Blended Finance for Water and Sanitation (Link)

government representatives and other stakeholders with practical advice on how to prepare their voluntary national report submissions. Recently, there has been a greater uptake on national report preparation. Indonesia has since submitted its national report and Thailand is in the advanced stages of drafting its national report.

The progress on Voluntary Local Reviews in Asia Pacific

Following the seventh Asia Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-7) in 2019, the need was identified to provide cities with guidance on the development of VLRs. ESCAP, together with UN-Habitat and the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization (PPSU) developed the **Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews** (Link) as a practical framework to be used by local policy makers to review progress made against the SDGs. The guidelines build on existing resources and are fully compatible with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (UNDESA) Global Guiding Elements for Voluntary Local Reviews of SDG implementation (Link). They provide practical tools, checklists, and templates that local governments and other stakeholders can use when conducting a VLR through a complimentary process with a country's VNR reporting. ESCAP has also developed an e-learning portal (Link) to provide tailored guidance on VLRs. The portal also aims to act as a platform for local and national stakeholders to engage and share experiences and lessons learnt from their VLR journey with their peers.

Following its launch in October 2020, Subang Jaya city in Malaysia has applied the guidelines to develop its own VLR which was shared at the 2021 HLPF. Subang Jaya's efforts, along with other Malaysian cities undertaking their first VLRs, was also acknowledged in the country's second VNR report. In Indonesia, Surabaya city is currently preparing to launch the country's first VLR report (also based on the guidelines). Indonesia's third VNR report accommodates results from the VLR report and notes how the process has been encouraged by the integration of SDGs into the mid-term development planning of the city government. Other cities including Dhulikhel, Nepal; Singra, Bangladesh; Naga, Philippines; and Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand are in the process of completing their first VLRs based on the regional guidance produced by ESCAP, UN-Habitat and the PPSU.

3. **Use of technology to support sustainable urban development**

ESCAP's use of satellite data for air quality and plastic waste management initiatives

ESCAP has an air quality monitoring programme to analyse satellite data from South Korea's GEMS satellite, in tandem with Pandora ground sensors to triangulate and ground truth the data.[14] Working with several municipalities in Thailand and other countries, the program is providing much needed evidence on air pollution sources, which can then be addressed via government action. Satellite data is also informing ESCAP's **Closing the Loop program** to reduce and tackle marine plastic pollution and to protect marine resources.[15]

Iskandar, Malaysia: Blueprint to Transition to a Low Carbon and Resilient Society

The Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) recently launched a new, central body responsible for data gathering, management, monitoring and analysis, known as *Iskandar Malaysia Urban Observatory (IMUO).* This will be a 'single window' that integrates data from various authoritative sources and transforms them into actionable information for better policy making and well-informed decision making. It is also notable that, in setting the momentum for Digital Economy in Iskandar Malaysia, IMUO collaborates with its partners in developing smart technology that will be utilized in Smart City Solutions through various pilot projects currently underway for making this city smarter.

Enhanced Waste Management via a Digital Solution in Battambang, Cambodia

Throughout the "Localizing the 2030 Agenda in Asian & Pacific Cities" Project implemented by UN ESCAP and UN-Habitat, the city government in Battambang has been gathering information, analyzing data, and disseminating knowledge with a focus on sustainably managing its solid waste. Digital solutions can have a great impact in improving the effectiveness of such data management and the use of social media can improve community awareness on effective solid waste management (SWM) approaches through outreach programs on recycling. As such it was decided by the municipality that a mobile application, called *Green Cambodia (Link)*, developed through a USAID funded

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14   ESCAP (2020) Introduction to Geostationary Environmental Monitoring Spectrometer (GEMS) and Pandora Asia Network (Link)
15   Find out more about Closing the Loop at the project webpage (Link)

project I4DI/T4GC, should be piloted in Battambang for enhanced waste management. It provides a digital platform to map waste collection routes, a market- place for trading recyclable materials, and a way to flag problems with waste collection service delivery.

A people-centred approach via the Smart City Guideline for Chengdu High-Tech Development Zone, China

Chengdu High-Tech Development Zone (CDHT) is aiming to build the International Innovation Center and World First Class High-Tech Park. Several communities of CDHT have already started implementing smart city plans. The main themes revolved around smart community security systems, smart parking, smart elder-care, virtual, remote legal and family counselling support, etc. UN Habitat provided high-quality technical assistance to a city partner, which helped them to mainstream people-centered approaches, environmental considerations, inter-connection and livability into the development of smart city solutions. This resulted in a guideline that has been jointly developed: the *Smart City Guideline for Chengdu High-Tech Development Zone.*

D-Agree - An AI-based solution to support participatory urban planning in Afghanistan

In 2019, Nagoya Institute of Technology and Kyoto University, in partnership with Kabul Municipality, developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered platform, called **D-Agree**, to support information-centric participation in urban planning and to provide support for stakeholders to reach consensus in urban development decisions across several cities in Afghanistan. D-Agree, is a large-scale online debate support platform based on AI facilitation, where its AI-based tool extracts the discussion structure based on IBIS (issue, idea, pros, and cons) from the human opinions posted on the D-Agree platform, as well as data collected from other social media. From September 2019 until the fall of Kabul in August 2021, more than 15,000 citizens participated in planning activities hosted by D-Agree and generated more than 71,000 opinions related to urban-related thematic areas.

Singapore's updated 2021 Cybersecurity Strategy helps to secure smart city innovation. To adapt to a rapidly evolving strategic and technological environment, the city-state updated its Strategy in 2021. Potential disruptive technologies such as edge computing and quantum technologies are on the horizon. Threat actors are also becoming more sophisticated and taking advantage of increasingly ubiquitous connectivity, such as Internet of Things (IoT) sensors – which are an important aspect of many smart city solutions - to launch more cyberattacks.[16]

4. **Facilitating engagement and participation of local authorities in development programming**

It is important to note the new role of UCLG ASPAC as regional stakeholder focal point for local governments for ESCAP, helping to channel the feedback and inputs of local authorities into development programming. As well as this a number of studies highlighted at the recent Regional Partners Forum demonstrate progress in this regard:

Fiji Resilient Informal Settlements (FRIS) Program – Focus on local municipality participation

Via FRIS, UN-Habitat has been working with the Government of Fiji to support the most vulnerable communities in Fiji to build adaptive capacity against climate change and disaster risk. A total of 16 communities, identified as vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, were selected for the Project. FRIS uses a participatory approach to work together with the target communities as well as the municipalities on conducting vulnerability and risk assessments and climate action plans. The assessments were carried out using a participatory tool developed by UN-Habitat and included household surveys, participatory risk mapping, house assessments, focus group discussions, validation workshops and walk-troughs, leading to detailed climate action plans for each community.

Surabaya's innovations in waste management, Indonesia

The Jambangan Recycling Center in Surabaya processes both organic and inorganic waste. To process organic waste, black soldier fly larvae is used, a faster composting process that other common ones. After only 12 days, residue from this composting process can be used for animal feeds. Inorganic materials are converted through a variety of systems, including a waste-to-energy plant that supplies enough energy to process 20 tons of waste per day, creating a self-sustaining loop. The city is also developing former landfill sites and informal dump sites into eco-parks to promote eco-tourism and green initiatives. Former landfills and unmanaged areas have been transformed

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16   Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (Link)

into Harmoni Park, the Urban Forest of Gunung Ayar, and Wonorejo Mangrove Forest. This has turned bleak areas of pollution into family-friendly spaces and green landscapes that are important for recreation, health, biodiversity and natural systems, that also contribute to carbon sequestration and resilience to disasters such as flooding. To implement these measures, cooperation between the community and the project implementers was vital. Some projects are explicitly community-led, bringing wider ownership and understanding of environmental concerns.

Turkey's commitment to linking urban and territorial planning to municipal budgeting

The New Urban Agenda asks for commitment from municipalities to promote inclusive, implementable and participatory urban policies that are linked to transparent and accountable finance mechanisms. The linkage between urban and infrastructure planning and municipal budgeting is therefore an important part of meeting the NUA and turning sustainable urban development plans into reality. In Turkey, there is a clear target to increase the alignment between the priorities of the local administrations' strategic plans and resource allocations. With practical guidance provided by "Institutional Strategic Planning Guidelines for Municipalities", published to assist municipalities throughout the stages of preparing and implementing as well as monitoring and assessing these plans, municipalities are better able to base their budgets and allocation of resources for projects on their institutional strategic plans.

Question 5. Please showcase how interlinkages between the New Urban Agenda and global development agendas have been created or strengthened in your region in the following areas, or as relevant:

1. **New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of Agenda 2030, the SDGs and other global agendas**
2. **Reinforcing urban policies, tools, advocacy and knowledge in regional initiatives**
3. **New Urban Agenda reaffirming the leading role of cities and local authorities in sustainable development**
4. **Asserting the role of city diplomacy in regional affairs**

1. **New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of Agenda 2030, the SDGs and other global agendas**

In the Asia Pacific region there has been a continuum of activities and events to support the follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), ratified by governments at Quito in 2016. These include the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) in Delhi in December 2016,[17] the first Regional Partners Forum (RPF1) in 2017, the first Quadrennial Report in 2018, and the seventh Asia Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-7) in 2019. Most recently, the 10th World Urban Forum, held in Abu Dhabi in early 2020, resulted in a range of **declared actions**; strategic level goals that will result from the implementation of new initiatives from a variety of institutions and actors.[18] In 2020, UN-Habitat worked with Surabaya in Indonesia to host the Global Observance of the World Habitat Day 2020, which focused on Housing For All as the central topic.[19] There have also been a range of partner-led follow-up events. For example, the Eighth UGLC ASPAC congress took place in Zhengzhou, China in 2021, to convene a broad range of partners to discuss localization of the SDGs, municipal financing options and many other relevant topics.[20]

As part of this continuum of review and knowledge exchange, the 2nd Regional Partners Forum @ Quito +5 provided a regional contribution to the review of the progress made in Asia and the Pacific towards localizing the SDGs and achieving the NUA, and to identify important areas of focus for continued and accelerated sustainable development. Showcasing activities of different levels of Governments, other relevant stakeholders and entities of the United Nations system, the Forum will contribute to the second quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on the Follow-up to the Implementation of the NUA, to be presented at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly in September 2022. There is also a focus on the objectives and strategic priorities to consider in plan-

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17   This resulted in the New Delhi Declaration available here (Link)
18   The WUF10 Declared actions can be found here (Link)
19   UCLG ASPAC, 2020, Surabaya: Host of the World Habitat Day 2020 (Link)
20   Material from the UCLG ASPAC Congress can be found here (Link)

ning APUF-8, particularly to support synergies between sustainable urban development and policy pathways for Covid-19 recovery across the Asia Pacific.

2. Reinforcing urban policies, tools, advocacy and knowledge in regional initiatives
The Penang Platform for Sustainable Urban Development
The Platform will continue to support collaboration among partners to take forward the development pathways identified in *The Future of Asian Pacific Cities* report, which will lead to more safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities across the region. It will connect cities with tailored technical assistance, generating action-oriented research and evidence on urban solutions, and enhancing access to innovative financing models. The fourteen founding members of the Penang Platform are 100 Resilient Cities (Now the resilient Cities Network), Penang Island City Council, CityNet, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, European Union International Urban Cooperation Programme (IUC), Huairou Commission, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies Japan (IGES), The Rockefeller Foundation, United Nations Development Programme, UN-Habitat, ESCAP and Urbanice Malaysia.
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The ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) catalyzes innovation and partnerships
The ASCN was set up in 2018 to synergize regional smart city development and facilitate smart city projects, with the first batch of 26 cities nominated by national Governments. In the light of the opportunities and challenges posed by rapid urbanization and digitalization, the primary goal of the ASCN is to improve the lives of ASEAN citizens, using technology as an enabler. By focusing on our people, it adopts an inclusive approach to smart city development that is respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms as inscribed in the ASEAN Charter. The networking of Smart Cities across ASEAN also contributes to enhancing mutual understanding across cultures.[21] The ASCN aims to facilitate cooperation on smart cities development, catalyze bankable projects with the private sector, and secure funding and support from ASEAN's external partners. Various partnerships have been established through ASCN, connecting ASEAN cities with private sector solution providers and dialogue partners who are ready to invest and support. The Concept Note for the ASCN can be downloaded **here.**

3. New Urban Agenda reaffirming the leading role of cities and local authorities in sustainable development
Cities have become more visible and have played a more active role in sustainable development. Through the Asia Pacific Local Government Coordination Group, which includes the regional city networks inputs are now offered to the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development through a Local Government Statement at the forum. Countries such as Malaysia and Cambodia have convened national urban forums that strenghten the role of cities and local authorities and bring together national and local actors in formulating national urban policies, in support of NUA and the 2030 Agenda.
Through the APUF, the Penang Platform and various capacity building initiatives of both UN entities and regional networks, awareness of the NUA and the role of cities in contributing to national strategies on climate and sustainable development. The emergence of Voluntary Local Reviews also has provided the opportunity to integrate NUA in their strategies and reviews of progress. For example, Subang Jaya, Malaysia's VLR, completed in 2021, highlighted the integration of both NUA and SDGs in a systemic approach.

4. Asserting the role of city diplomacy in regional affairs
Cities are increasingly visible in regional and global affairs. Subang Jaya's VLR was presented at the High Level Political Forum in July 2021, and the mayor has been one of a number of advocates for city-level action in regional and global events on the role of cities in promoting sustainable urban development.
The ASEAN Mayors Forum, co-organized by UCLG-ASPAC and ASEAN has brought mayors from across Southeast Asia to share experiences and highlight innovations being implemented at the

21   ASEAN Smart Cities Network homepage (Link)

local level. Local action has become a key focus of ASEAN, which developed during the reporting period the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy, launched the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, and convened the first ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Forum in October 2021.

Question 6. What qualitative or quantitative data, indicators and statistics are being collected and analyzed by your Commission with specific focus on sustainable urban development? Where relevant, include experiences on advancing the use of National Guidelines for reporting on urban development; the online Urban Agenda Platform; and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework indicators.

ESCAP collects information from the global SDG database to inform the annual SDG progress report for the Asia and Pacific region. The 2021 SDG report shows that there is insufficient data and indicators, across all of the SDGs, especially for SDG 11.[22] The report states that the region has made almost no progress on sustainable cities and communities since 2000. the region is likely to miss all targets by 2030 if it stays on its current trajectory. ESCAP is not currently collecting data under the Global Urban Monitoring Framework. The biggest challenges for the region are the impact of disaster on people, economies and infrastructure, air pollution, road safety and the lack of access to basic services for people living in slums.

However, only 50 percent of targets could be measured under this goal and it is very important to implement more specific and measurable indicators and in data collection.

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22   ESCAP (2021) Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021 (Link)

QUADRENNIAL REPORT 2022 OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA 2016-2036
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSIONS

UN-ESCWA

Question 1. Has the urban development focus in your Regional Commission's work evolved during the reporting period and how?

The unprecedented urbanization boom that the Arab region is undergoing presents challenges which require careful management to meet the needs of growing urban populations and achieve sustainable urban development. These challenges include increasing urban poverty; overstretched infrastructure especially; declining environmental quality; and rising crime levels. Inequality and violence against women are also associated with challenges emanating from urbanization. ESCWA, noting the impact of urbanization on development in the Arab region has been expanding its focus on urban development. During the reporting period, particularly in 2019, ESCWA studied the importance of inclusive urban safety and the role of technology[23] in achieving it and introduced it in the recommendations of its two committees on technology and women. ESCWA also embarked on exploring the 4th Industrial revolution and the potential of smart technologies in addressing challenges and creating opportunities in the region to achieving sustainable development, including sustainable urban development[24]. In 2020, ESCWA further explored the area of Technology and Innovation for the Development of Land Transport in Arab Countries[25].

Since the end of 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic altered significantly urban life and highlighted the timely need to explore the resilience aspect of cities. Accordingly, ESCWA expanded its focus to cover urban resilience, particularly, urban economic resilience and recovery during and after COVID-19 in the Arab region[26] noting that safety and resilience are two complementary concepts lying at the core of the 2030 Agenda though Goal 11 and the NUA (Articles 53 and 66).

Building on the momentum of local-sub-national and national communication for sustainable development, ESCWA's focus on urban development expanded to supporting Arab cities in developing their voluntary local reviews (since 2021) in an attempt to inform the Voluntary national reviews and ensure this national-local dialogue.

23   https://www.unescwa.org/publications/technology-tool-make-cities-safe-and-combat-violence-against-women
24   https://www.unescwa.org/publications/impact-fourth-industrial-revolution-development-arab-countries
25   https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/technology-innovation-development-land-transport-arab-countries-english_1.pdf
26   https://www.unescwa.org/events/building-urban-economic-resilience-during-and-after-covid-19

Question 2. What are the major progress *milestones or achievements of strategies and programmes* contributing to sustainable urban development that were designed and implemented in your region?
Which aspects of the New Urban Agenda are these initiatives supporting?

ESCWA has been progressing in advancing sustainable urban development in the Arab region following an inclusive process. Two major programmes to mention are the "Interregional Cooperation for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)" and "Building Urban Economic Resilience During and After Covid-19".

The Interregional Cooperation for the Implementation of the NUA (2020-2023) project is being implemented in nine cities, two of which are from the Arab region, namely, Amman (Jordan) and Agadir (Morocco). It aims to improve policy coherence amongst member states for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA. Throughout this project, ESCWA generated localized knowledge on the New Urban Agenda in the form of manuals and e-learning material in support of strengthening capacities of national and local authorities and relevant stakeholders. Also, through this project, ESCWA in close coordination with UN-Habitat is supporting the two Arab cities in developing their Voluntary Local Review (VLR), making them the first cities in the Arab region to undertake their VLRs, thus join the global momentum in advocating for local reviews to inform the national reviews. Beyond their reporting role, VLRs have proven to be powerful accelerators of the SDG localization process worldwide. VLRs can enhance data innovation, stakeholder inclusion and participation, policy coherence, strategic planning, and multilevel governance. Interaction between the local and national levels is also strengthened through the VLR -VNR interlinkages.

The project on "Building Urban Economic Resilience During and after Covid-19" is being implemented in 16 cities including 3 from the Arab region namely, Alexandria (Egypt), Beirut (Lebanon) and Kuwait (Kuwait). It assists cities and their local governments in becoming more economically resilient by drawing a baseline for their performance about urban economic resilience and designing recovery plans that tackle the challenges and gaps identified in these resiliency areas. The project generates knowledge products and tools to assist global, national, sub-national and local communities in achieving urban economic resilience[27].

The above advocates for core concepts in the NUA including building resilience through an inclusive process that leaves no one behind and using smart digital solutions as means of implementation. It focuses on the role of local governments as active players in achieving sustainable urban development and calls for local level reviews in support of monitoring and following up on the progress made in implementing the NUA.

Question 3. Please provide examples of strong practices in the *effective implementation* of the New Urban Agenda in the following areas, or as relevant for your region:

1. **Building governance structures and coherent policy frameworks**
2. **Planning and management of territorial spatial development in urban areas**
3. **Promoting green, climate resilient and healthy cities, including through COVID-19 recovery efforts**

a. Building governance structures and coherent policy frameworks:
Multilevel governance is key to the effective implementation of the NUA. Cities are locally responsive and well positioned to put communities' specific needs at the center of the response and development, and on the other, they are channels for the local implementation of national priorities. National governments set national policy agendas, but their effective implementation highly depends on localization mechanisms, by listening to cities, planning along with them and by systematically including communities into decision-making.
ESCWA has been advocating for inclusive sustainable urban development in the Arab region through partnerships with relevant UN and non-UN entities. This includes the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), United

27   (https://urbanresiliencehub.org/economicresilience/

Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and others. It is also strengthening multi-level governance, dialogue, and coordination between national and local governments on issues related to sustainable urban development. For example, at the level of the project on the Interregional Cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, ESCWA is supporting the implementation of the first two voluntary local reviews in the Arab region in an attempt to highlight the role of local authorities in attaining sustainable development added to the centrality of local development informing the national development. The implementation of the project follows an inclusive approach granting local and national governance structure. In the case of Amman (Jordan), focal points from Greater Amman Municipality and the Ministry of Local Administration are involved. In the case of Agadir (Morocco), focal points from the municipality of Agadir and the Ministry of Interior are involved. ESCWA is also following a comparable inclusive approach in building urban economic resilience of Arab cities. The related project, being implemented in Alexandria (Egypt), Beirut (Lebanon) and Kuwait (Kuwait) and ensures multi-level governance, dialogue, and coordination at the national and local levels.

There are different examples in the Arab region that shows increased awareness about the need for strengthened coherent policy frameworks. For example, in 2020, Egypt produced the semifinal version of its National Urban Policy (NUP). The draft was shared for input with the Ministry of Housing (GOPP), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Planning and with experts in different fields. In 2021, a related inclusive public consultation Programme was designed. The development of the NUP was recognized during the feasibility phase as vital for directing efforts towards achieving sustainable urban development and to localize the NUA. The NUP of Egypt focused on 5 pillars namely, managing urban growth, connectivity within and between cities, balanced urban and territorial development, urban governance and land management, and local economic development. In Lebanon, the 2018 National Urban Policy diagnosis report recommended developing two thematic mainstreaming guides on housing and transport in development to inform the formulation process of Lebanon's NUP and the development of national housing and transport strategies. In addition, two orientation workshops were conducted to raise awareness of relevant stakeholders about the NUP development process. The first workshop targeted urban planning experts, practitioners, academia, and civil society and the second targeted representatives from different local authorities ensuring multi-level governance and dialogue for the formulation of the NUP. This multi-level governance and specifically consultation processes are core to policy formulation. During WUF10, held in February 2020, the Future Saudi Cities Program Launched the State of Saudi Cities Report 2019 (SSCR2019) which represents the overall strategy guiding Saudi Cities and its race to achieve the Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program (NTP2020) as well as the NUA and SDGs, especially Goal 11. The report was informed by the bottom-up evidence- based reports (Profiles and CPI reports for 17 Saudi Cities) highlighting the multi-level governance and dialogues at the level of urban related policies and strategies.

b. Planning and management of territorial spatial development in urban areas
Adopting a territorial approach to sustainable development anchored on multilevel governance participation and inclusion is core to reinforcing the capacities of local and regional governments and advancing the localization of the SDGs and the implementation of the NUA in the Arab region.
Among the good practices fostering territorial spatial development in the establishment of urban observatories aimed at providing the urban knowledge platforms needed for evidence-based urban planning, management, monitoring and decision-making. Two examples to mention are Amman and Beirut Urban Observatories managed by Greater Amman Municipality[28] and the Beirut Urban Lab[29] respectively.
The Beirut urban observatory is a shared information platform at the scale of municipal Beirut, which intends to support, coordinate and monitor damage and repairs in the most affected areas (e.g. Mar Mikhail, Gemmayzeh, Geitawi, Karantina, Badawi, and Bachoura) after Beirut blast which occurred on 4 August 2020. It provides lessons on inclusive and participatory recovery efforts that can ben-

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28   *https://www.ammancity.gov.jo/ar/main/index.aspx*
29   *https://beiruturbanlab.com/en/Details/814*

efit other post-disaster contexts. Building on the Beirut Built Environment Database[30], a platform of shared geolocalized information was developed to assist in providing visibility to damage assessment and recovery efforts within the historical development trends and the layers of information available about the neighborhoods surrounding the Beirut Port. The platform's goals are to facilitate coordination among multiple stakeholders, as well as to produce and disseminate maps, data analysis, and findings that inform city dwellers about ongoing reconstruction processes and support an integrated and inclusive framework of urban recovery. The Amman Urban Observatory (AUO) is part of the GAM organizational structure. It is responsible for collating and analysing city data for reporting purposes in-line with global development agendas[31].

c. Promoting green, climate resilient and healthy cities, including through COVID-19 recovery efforts

The Arab region during the reporting period witnessed various initiatives aimed at transitioning into a climate resilient, green and healthy city.

To start with, Amman city is a leading example in transitioning into a climate resilient and a green city. Since 2016 the city was on the path for a paradigm shift with the introduction of the concept of resilient city in its planning efforts. The city has launched its resiliency strategy which includes major areas of intervention, allowing the implementation of its vision through 5 main pillars of resiliency that has been identified through stakeholders' engagement and participatory approach to ensure that no one is left behind. The main pillars are the following: An Integrated and Smart City 2. An Environmentally proactive City 3. An Innovative and Prosperous City 4. A Young and Equal City 5. A United and Proud City. Each one of these pillars was reflected into actions and programs. As a follow up of the second pillar, an environmentally proactive city, the Amman climate action plan has been prepared and launched in 2019, setting the city on the path for climate neutral by 2050, with many projects identified in the areas of sustainable mobility, solid waste management, green buildings, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. The city has proceeded with its efforts by joining the framework for green cities which enables the municipality to receive financing for the projects identified under the green city action plan. Collectively these efforts which are undergoing will contribute to a sustainable and resilient city.

Qatar[32] has been witnessing a major Shift towards Green Buildings in the context of promoting green development and in line with the role of Qatar National Vision 2030 to transform Qatar from depleted natural resources- based economy such as oil and gas to a knowledge-based economy. The Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC), affiliated to its Qatar Foundation, was established in 2009 to rally and involve all sectors, stakeholders and the local community to support the green environmental issues and shift towards green buildings. Examples of green buildings initiatives include the Qatar National Convention Center, obtained the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) gold-certification, which was designed in a way that takes into account the standards of sustainability and environmental preservation. Other examples include Msheireb City and Lusail City, where all buildings are ecofriendly. Overall, Qatar ranks second in terms of the share of green and eco-friendly buildings in the Middle East and North Africa[17].

At the normative level, in 2020-2021, ESCWA in close collaboration and coordination with UN-Habitat, UNCDF and the UN RCs, developed a global compendium of practices on local economic and financial recovery[33], guiding principles and practices for urban economic recovery and resilience, urban economic recovery and resilience: Diagnostic and Planning Tool[34] added policy advocacy on building urban economic resilience at the global and regional levels. Moreover, ESCWA in collaboration with UN-Habitat developed, in 2021, a technical paper on "Smart Sustainable Cities and Smart Digital Technologies for Urban Resilience: Lessons from the Pandemic". It focused on urban economic resilience of cities as one of the four main dimensions of urban resilience; captured good related practices in the Arab region; tackled the socioeconomic challenges of the pandemic, as well as its impacts on Arab cities and possible opportunities for building back. In addition, the

30   https://www.beiruturbanlab.com/en/Details/561/built-environment-database
31   https://www.amman.jo/site_doc/Observatory.pdf
32   Qatar VNR 2021
33   https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/03/global-compendium-of-practices-covid-19.pdf
34   https://urbanresiliencehub.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Resilience-Diagnostic-Planning-Tool-Feb2021.pdf

paper explored the smart digital solutions that could help achieve both resilience and inclusion during pandemics and highlighted how such solutions would assist Arab cities in reducing existing vulnerabilities while maintaining and improving local resilience. It provided guidelines on how smart digital solutions and future technologies could be harnessed in the urban context of the Arab region to develop urban recovery and resilience strategic plans in times of pandemics.

Question 4. Please provide examples of achievements in terms of *strengthening and promoting the means of implementation* **of the New Urban Agenda at the regional scale regarding the following areas, or as relevant for your region:**
  1. **Financing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**
  2. **Building capacities to report on the implementation of the urban agendas**
  3. **Use of technology to support sustainable urban development**
  4. **Facilitating engagement and participation of local authorities in development programming**

a. Financing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda
ESCWA through its various urban related project focused on local reporting on the NUA, building resilience and technology for the NUA is contributing to financing the implementation of the NUA. It is also supporting Member States in financing the implementation trough the involvement of donors in its various activities.

b. Building capacities to report on the implementation of the urban agendas
ESCWA, through its development project focus on the "Interregional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban agenda Project" that is being implemented in the Arab region strengthens the capacities of Member States includes activities related to building capacities for the implementation of the New urban Agenda. In support of the capacity building efforts, ESCWA localized the Illustrated Handbook on the NUA to Arabic. It also localized the crash course on the NUA (2 modules: Core dimensions of the NUA and Means of Implementation). These learning materials will be used as part of the capacity building workshops on the NUA conducted for the region. Also, ESCWA together with all UN RCs, UN-Habitat and UNCDF are in the process of developing e-learning material on building urban resilience and recovery.
At the level of capacity building on the urban monitoring framework, ESCWA in partnership with UN-Habitat organized the first regional webinar on the NUA and its urban monitoring framework in 2021. This aimed to strengthen the capacities of local and national authorities on the topic.

c. Use of technology to support sustainable urban development
ESCWA has been focusing on the role of technology in achieving sustainable development, particularly sustainable urban development at different fronts. Below are normative examples:
  - In 2020-2021, ESCWA in close collaboration and coordination with UN-Habitat, UNCDF and the UN RCs, developed a Diagnostic and Planning Tool (DPT)[35] which provided a framework for the concept of urban economic resilience noting that it added policy advocacy on building urban economic resilience at the global and regional levels. The DPT consists of 5 resilience areas and 16 resilience performance indicators designed to measure the city performance and suggest areas for improvement. One of the resilience areas focuses on Infrastructure and connectivity and addresses various technology aspects. The DPT may be used by city governments for their self-assessment to inform and facilitate their planning for recovery and longer-term resilience building thereby the realization of the NUA;
  - In 2021, ESCWA in collaboration with UN-Habitat developed, in 2021, a technical paper on "Smart Sustainable Cities and Smart Digital Technologies for Urban Resilience: Lessons from the Pandemic". It focused on urban economic resilience of cities as one of the four main dimensions of urban resilience; captured good related practices in the Arab region; tackled

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35   https://urbanresiliencehub.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Resilience-Diagnostic-Planning-Tool-Feb2021.pdf

the socioeconomic challenges of the pandemic, as well as its impacts on Arab cities and possible opportunities for building back. In addition, the paper explored the smart digital solutions that could help achieve both resilience and inclusion during pandemics and highlighted how such solutions would assist Arab cities in reducing existing vulnerabilities while maintaining and improving local resilience. It provided guidelines on how smart digital solutions and future technologies could be harnessed in the urban context of the Arab region to develop urban recovery and resilience strategic plans in times of pandemics.

- In 2021, ESCWA organized a webinar on "Geographic information systems for population and housing census in Iraq". The webinar assessed the infrastructure of the geographic information systems (GIS), which would facilitate the adoption of such technology in planning for the ne round of Population and Housing Census (PHC) in Iraq and foster the implementation of the NUA[36].

- In 2019, ESCWA studied the importance of inclusive urban safety and the role of technology[37] in achieving it and introduced it in the recommendations of its two committees on technology and women. ESCWA also embarked on exploring the 4th Industrial revolution and the potential of smart technologies in addressing challenges and creating opportunities in the region to achieving sustainable development, including sustainable urban development[38].

- In 2019-2020, ESCWA and the Islamic Development Bank in cooperation with UNECE organized training workshop on GIS for the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States[39,40.]. They tested the applicability and the maneuverability of the GIS tool towards officials representing the Ministries of Transport in the Arab region in terms of data filling, updating and analyzing and displays of query results, and seek the feedback of the participants on the feasibility of the approach. In 2020, ESCWA further explored the area of Technology and Innovation for the Development of Land Transport in Arab Countries[41].

d. Facilitating engagement and participation of local authorities in development programming

Through its various urban development projects, ESCWA and its partners ensured the full engagement and participation of local authorities. At the level of the project on building urban economic resilience, the local authorities in the three Arab cities implementing the project, namely, Alexandria, Beirut and Kuwait are being fully engaged in the performance diagnosis on urban economic resilience of their cities. Local and national authorities added to experts in the field are contributing to the development of urban recovery plans. At the level of the project on "Interregional Cooperation for the Implementation of the New urban Agenda Project, the commission is advocating for local-subnational and nation communication and governance. It is calling for the local development dialogue to inform the one at the national level. Both projects aim at empowering local authorities and providing them with the tools and knowledge that enables them to lead sustainable development within their cities and communities.

36   https://www.unescwa.org/events/webinar-7-geographic-information-systems-population-and-housing-census-iraq
37   https://www.unescwa.org/publications/technology-tool-make-cities-safe-and-combat-violence-against-women
38   https://www.unescwa.org/publications/impact-fourth-industrial-revolution-development-arab-countries
39   https://www.unescwa.org/events/2nd-training-gis-integrated-transport-system-arab-states
40   https://www.unescwa.org/events/training-gis-integrated-transport-system-arab-states
41   https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/technology-innovation-development-land-transport-arab-countries-english_1.pdf

Question 5. Please showcase how interlinkages between the New Urban Agenda and global development agendas have been created or strengthened in your region in the following areas, or as relevant:
1. **New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of Agenda 2030, the SDGs and other global agendas**
2. **Reinforcing urban policies, tools, advocacy and knowledge in regional initiatives**
3. **New Urban Agenda reaffirming the leading role of cities and local authorities in sustainable development**
4. **Asserting the role of city diplomacy in regional affairs**

a. New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of Agenda 2030, the SDGs and other global agendas
The NUA and its follow-up and review provide opportunities to better understand and implement the urban and territorial dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is regarded as an accelerator of the achievement of global development agendas. Accordingly, ESCWA is generating evidence-based and practical guidance for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and related dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. Through its normative work, ESCWA considers the interlinkages between Goal 11 and related goals and targets. It also explores how technology can be harnessed to implementing the SDGs including Goal 11 and how smart and digital solutions help achieving urban resilience. ESCWA is also fostering national, subnational, and local dialogue. These issues lie at the core of intersection between the NUA, the SDGs and related development agenda.

b. Reinforcing urban policies, tools, advocacy and knowledge in regional initiatives
ESCWA is developing a series of tools in support of development with the aim to reinforce urban polices. It developed in partnership with all UN RCs, UNHabitat and UNCDF the "Diagnosis and planning tool for building urban economic resilience". ESCWA is also developing learning and capacity building material on the NUA. It also developed the Arab SDG Monitor which provides a comprehensive overview on the performance of Arab countries with regard to all SDG's; the SDG Knowledge and Learning platform, which provides many online courses and training materials related to agenda 2030 and specific SDGs. ESCWA also organized webinars, workshops, and Expert group meetings on topics relevant to sustainable urban planning and the New Urban Agenda and other relevant topics. All events are archived through the SDG events platform.

c. New Urban Agenda reaffirming the leading role of cities and local authorities in sustainable development
ESCWA produced knowledge products (performance diagnosis reports for selected Arab cities, regional policy papers, local briefs and recovery plans) reaffirming the leading role of cities and local authorities in sustainable development. ESCWA is also supporting the development of the first VLRs in the Arab region to further highlight the leading role of cities and local authorities and reaffirm the need for local priorities and needs to inform the national ones.

d. Asserting the role of city diplomacy in regional affairs

Question 6. What qualitative or quantitative *data, indicators and statistics* are being collected and analyzed by your Commission with specific focus on sustainable urban development? Where relevant, include experiences on advancing the use of National Guidelines for reporting on urban development; the online Urban Agenda Platform; and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework indicators.

The Arab Sustainable Development Report offers a situation analysis of sustainable development in the Arab region and the state of implementation of 17 SDGs with all their interlinkages. It quantitatively and qualitatively analyses where the region stands in relation to the global targets and identifies the structural barriers to transformative change.
Some of the indicators being collected and analyzed for Goal 11 which is the main goal for sustainable urban development are:

- · 11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
- · 11.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people
- · 11.5.2 Direct economic loss in relation to global GDP, including disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services
- · 11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)

In addition, ESCWA led data collection to capture urban economic resilience in selected Arab cities. This focused on different areas namely:
- Business environment
- Labor market conditions
- Economic Governance
- Basic service infrastructure and connectivity
- Financial environment

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSIONS

UN-ECE

Question 1. Has the urban development focus in your Regional Commission's work evolved during the reporting period and how?

UNECE has had a focus on urban development since its establishment in 1948. Since the adoption of the NUA, it has worked to assist member States at all levels of government with its implementation.

UNECE supports member States' national, regional and local governments and other key stakeholders in the review of progress in achieving the SDG 11 as well as SDGs 3, 5, 7, 9 and 12 and build their capacities for the implementation of measures to accelerate achieving the Goals through technical assistance projects, thematic studies, trainings, exchange of experiences and best practices, and policy advice on innovative financial mechanisms for smart sustainable cities; affordable climate-neutral decent housing for all, housing finance, land administration and management, including informal settlements; and urban strategies and programmes that integrate climate change measures and promote climate neutrality of buildings.

UNECE supports local governments in the assessment of the achievement of the SDGs and development of the evidence-based policies through the application of the key performance indicators on smart sustainable cities, indicators on urban economic resilience and the other UN system wide urban monitoring frameworks; and in the preparation of smart sustainable cities profiles and SDG Volunteer Local Reviews (VLRs) based on the assessments.

To review the achievement of urban related SDGs, UNECE started convening annually the roundtable "In Focus: SDG 11" which brings together UN agencies, cities' networks, other international organizations and networks to exchange experiences in supporting national and local governments in achieving urban related SDGs. See on the roundtable in 2021 at https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/358326.

Furthermore, since 2020, UNECE convenes Forum of Mayors which provides a platform for Mayors from the UNECE region to exchange information on experiences and best practices on city level policies and practices. The second Forum of Mayors (Forum of Mayors 2022) will take place on 4-5

April 2022 and will be held back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region. See more at https://forumofmayors.unece.org/.

To help local governments to overcome economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNECE started implementing a project on "Post COVID-19 Recovery in Informal Settlements in the ECE Region" and a "Rapid response" project on building urban economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic". These projects support several cities in developing economic recovery plans related to COVID-19 which should support in particular for the most vulnerable groups of population living in informal settlements.

It continues to place growing importance on adequate and affordable housing. In 2020-2021, a study "#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region" was developed by UNECE, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Housing Europe. The study aims to: (a) provide an analysis of housing affordability challenges and existing policy instruments for improving housing affordability in the ECE region; (b) facilitate the exchange and dissemination of good practices in improving housing affordability among countries and cities of the ECE region; and (c) identify the needs of policymakers to further develop and implement policies addressing housing affordability.

Based on the analysis in the #Housing2030 study, the "Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and home" was developed and was endorsed by the UNECE Ministerial Meeting in October 2021.

Question 2. What are the major progress milestones or achievements of strategies and programmes contributing to sustainable urban development that were designed and implemented in your region? Which aspects of the New Urban Agenda are these initiatives supporting?

Over the last 2.5 years UNECE has worked to foster and establish thematic multi stakeholder alliances to better leverage knowledge and financing capital to improve livelihoods and sustainability which is at the at the core of the New Urban Agenda. Through the _UNDA12th tranche project Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region (2020-2023),_ UNECE is developing data-driven urban assessment and sustainable urban infrastructure planning and financing strategies in 5 cities[42] across Central Asia and Western Balkans. It is thanks to the establishment of partnerships with local authorities, national ministries, multilateral development banks and agencies, local and international NGOs, the private sector, think thanks, academia and civil society at large that in 2021, the subprogramme successfully developed and launched three Smart Sustainable City Profiles (SSCPs): a) Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan b) Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and c) Grodno, Belarus. Multi-stakeholder alliances such as the ones mobilized by the development of SSCPs have a higher chance to deliver tangible quality of life increases, such as the Bishkek example later showcased

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42   Grodno (Belarus); Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan); Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan); Tbilisi (Georgia); Podgorica (Montenegro)

Question 3. Please provide examples of strong practices in the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the following areas, or as relevant for your region:
a. Building governance structures and coherent policy frameworks
b. Planning and management of territorial spatial development in urban areas
c. Promoting green, climate resilient and healthy cities, including through COVID-19 recovery efforts

a.   #Housing2030 initiative[43] and Regional Action Plan 2030[44]
The New Urban Agenda advises that urban planning practice should put humans and human rights at the forefront of urban sustainable development. A national housing strategy is a key part of a broader national urban policy and should be formulated alongside other relevant policies to sustainably shape more affordable and inclusive housing outcomes.

#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region Report[45] was developed within a joint international initiative of UNECE, UN-Habitat and Housing Europe. It explores housing affordability challenges and existing policy instruments for improving housing affordability in the UNECE region and facilitates the exchange and dissemination of good practices in improving housing affordability among countries and cities of the region.

By aiming to progressively realize the right to adequate and affordable housing, the Housing2030 partnership fulfils the vision of **NUA, namely paragraph**:
•   **13.a,** which envisages cities and human settlements "fulfil their social function […], with a view to progressively achieving the full realization of the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living".
•   Housing2030 also support the principles and call to action of the NUA, particularly:
•   **14.a** ("leave no one behind").
•   **15.b** ("Recognize the leading role of national Governments, as appropriate, in the definition and
•   implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies and legislation") **and c** ("Adopt sustainable, people-centred, age- and gender-responsive and integrated approaches to urban and territorial development").
•   **31 and 35** (commitment to the right to adequate housing).
•   **33** (commitment to stimulating the supply of a variety of adequate housing options that are safe, affordable and accessible).
•   **107** (development of policies, tools, mechanisms, and financing models that promote access to a wide range of affordable, sustainable housing options).
•   **111** (commitment to development of adequate and enforceable regulations in the housing sector);
•   #Housing2030 also recognised the crucial role of private sector and civil society, international and regional organisations, as well as development partners and financial institutions in achieving affordable housing for all and encourage the effective participation of all stakeholders, as prescribed in paragraph 48 and 82.

The Regional Action Plan 2030 proposes a series of aims, policies, goals and targets for sustainable urban development and affordable housing in the ECE region and identifies a series of actions to achieve these. The Action Plan is intended to inspire action and provide the basis for plans and activities to focus on the contribution of affordable housing to sustainable urban development in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the face of the climate emergency.

b.   Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the UNECE Region

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43   More information available at the following link https://unece.org/housing/affordablehousing and https://www.housing2030.org/
44   More information available at the following link https://unece.org/hlm/documents/2021/08/session-documents/place-and-life-ece-regional-action-plan-2030-tackling
45   More information available at the following link https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/housing2030-study-e

[46].These Guidelines aim to support local regional governments in the UNECE region in promoting shared value creation for cities and other human settlements.

c.   **UNDA 13th tranche project on building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19** [47]**.** The project will focus on strengthening the capacities of local governments in 16 cities globally to design, implement and monitor sustainable, resilient, and inclusive COVID-19 economic and financial responses, recovery and rebuilding plans. The immediate impact of the project will be the provision of good global practices from other cities which will inform the pilot cities in their activities to develop and implement their immediate response and recovery plans to the COVID-19 pandemic.

•   *Regional Policy Brief on Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19 in the UNECE Region[48]*. This regional policy brief aims to provide an overview of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UNECE region and gain a better understanding of urban economic resilience challenges during and after the pandemic. This policy brief also identify broader urban economic resilience needs of cities arising from the multidimensional impact of the pandemic in the context of recovery plans. And offer policy recommendations, best practice examples, tools and mechanisms for sustainable urban economic recovery.

Question 4. Please provide examples of achievements in terms of strengthening and promoting the means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda at the regional scale regarding the following areas, or as relevant for your region:
        a. Financing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda
        b. Building capacities to report on the implementation of the urban agendas
        c. Use of technology to support sustainable urban development
        d. Facilitating engagement and participation of local authorities in development programming

a.   **UNDA 12th tranche project on Smart Sustainable Cities and innovative financing**: Based on the recommendations included in the SSCP of Bishkek, the UNECE and the Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA) established a partnership with local and national government and academia for the development of a pre-feasibility study on the integrated development of 5 informal settlements in Bishkek, covering a total of 75,000 beneficiaries. The project aims to plan for and identify downstream financing for water supply, sanitation, stormwater management, drainage, district heating, power supply, solid waste management, paved roads, green open spaces, schools, medical facilities and green buildings for job creation based on informal workers' skills. In addition, the project puts tailored capacity-building to operate and maintain such infrastructure at the core. In this context, UNECE's work is estimated to have leveraged an additional USD550,000 in technical assistance from the CDIA and the City of Bishkek. Considering that pre-feasibility studies constitute on average 5 percent of the overall infrastructure cost in the region, the Smart Sustainable City Profile of Bishkek has the potential to leverage USD55 million which would massively contribute to socio-economic, governance, environmental, health and climate mitigation benefits.

UNECE is continuing with the implementation of the sustainable development project and developing SSCPs in Tbilisi, Georgia, Almaty, Kazakhstan and Podgorica, Montenegro. In Podgorica, the UNECE is currently planning the development of a local housing needs assessment in Montenegro, Podgorica through a partnership with the Council of Europe Development Bank, as well as local and national government, local NGOs, private sector and academia. UNECE's approach, both in Bishkek and Podgorica, puts listening of local needs at the core, not limiting to local authorities alone. UNECE believes it is important to make sure that a wide variety of local actors are included in development programming. The relevance of this aspect is particularly important in the UNECE region

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46   More information is available at the following link https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/ECE_HB-P_2021_4-2109985E.pdf
47   More information is available at the following link and on the project web page https://unece.org/housing/urban-resilience-after-covid19 - *https://urbaneconomicresilience.org*
48   More information is available at the following link https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/ECE%20HBP%202021%20INF.5%20Regional%20Policy%20Brief.pdf

because local authorities in the region do not always have structural communication channels and governance frameworks ensuring participatory planning and decision-making, as was reported in Tbilisi, Georgia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Podgorica, Montenegro.

d.   **UNDA 13th tranche project on building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19.** UNCDF has developed the Diagnostic and Planning Tool (DPT)[49] under the frame-work of the UNDA 13th project. The DPT has a two-fold objective: (1) to help cities understand the strengths and weaknesses of their institutional and operating arrangements from the perspective of economic recovery and resilience building as well as to assess the structure and functioning of city economies to get a clear understanding of the economic performance/standing of each city and how this defines vulnerability and resilience; and (2) to define a process for the design and implemen-tation of recovery plans/strategies to address the identified gaps, accelerate better recovery and improve longer-term resilience.

Question 5. Please showcase how interlinkages between the New Urban Agenda and global development agendas have been created or strengthened in your region in the following ar-eas, or as relevant:
        a. New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of Agenda 2030, the SDGs and other global agendas
        b. Reinforcing urban policies, tools, advocacy and knowledge in regional initiatives
        c. New Urban Agenda reaffirming the leading role of cities and local authorities in sus-tainable development
        d. Asserting the role of city diplomacy in regional affairs

a., b. The **Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development[50]** adopted on 9 November 2017 reiterates the importance for governments at all levels and rele-vant stakeholders to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, and the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the Period 2014-2020. We welcome the adoption of the New Urban Agenda by the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development - Habitat III.

The UNECE Regional Action Plan (RAP) _Place and Life in the UNECE – A Regional Action Plan 2021: Tackling challenges from COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes_ has been drafted with these objectives in mind. The RAP is expect-ed to support UNECE member States tackle the challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in the region, city, neighbourhood and home.
Inspired by and anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the study "#Housing 2030: effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region", the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the New Urban Agenda, the RAP proposes a series of aims, policies, goals, targets and related actions to achieve adequate, safe and affordable housing and sustainable urban develop-ment. This RAP was endorsed at the UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management on 6 October 2021.
Since 2018, UNECE has been organizing, In Focus: SDG 11 event each year to focus discussions on SDG11. The event is a platform for dialogue on how cities and their networks as well as relevant organizations and stakeholders address global challenges that are traditionally discussed by States in multilateral fora. In Focus: SDG 11 aims at better linking intergovernmental debates on issues

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49   More information is available at the following link https://urbaneconomicresilience.org/resources/uncdf-urban-economic-recovery-and-re-silience-diagnostic-and-planning-tool/
50   https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/2910

related to SDG11 with what cities and their networks are doing on the ground. The event fosters cooperation between all relevant stakeholders (States, UN agencies, cities, city networks, NGOs, academia, private sector) to create synergies and promote the effective implementation of SDG11 and other relevant urban-related SDGs.

In 2021, cities, city networks and other stakeholders provided their perspectives on the Regional Action Plan and share how they contribute to achieve sustainable urban development through adequate, safe, and affordable housing in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and in the face of the climate emergency.

Question 6. What qualitative or quantitative data, indicators and statistics are being collected and analyzed by your Commission with specific focus on sustainable urban development? Where relevant, include experiences on advancing the use of National Guidelines for reporting on urban development; the online Urban Agenda Platform; and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework indicators.

In 2015, the UNECE, together with 16 other UN agencies created the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Smart and Sustainable Cities. This methodology contains 91 indicators from the Economy, Environment and Society & Culture realms. The KPIs are the starting point for the development of the City Profiles, that is, data-driven assessments measuring smartness and sustainability. As of today, this methodology has been tested in over 150 cities worldwide. The KPIs proved to be a useful tool during the COVID-19 pandemic, the responsiveness, preparedness, and capacity of municipal health systems proved to be a key measure of smartness. In this context, the KPIs include key indicators such the per capita number of public and private hospital beds, the time taken for emergency services to respond to residents, the number of inhabitants covered by health insurance, or the percentage of city dwellers whose health records are registered within the public administration, among many more.