

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD HABITAT DAY**

**3 October 2022**

Each year, World Habitat Day focuses attention on the state of human settlements.

This year's theme – 'Mind the Gap. Leave No One and No Place Behind' – puts the spotlight on widening inequalities in living conditions across the world.

A cascade of challenges – from climate chaos and conflicts to COVID-19 – is hitting the most vulnerable populations the hardest.

Rapid and unplanned urbanization is exacerbating many of these challenges.

Today, over one billion people live in overcrowded settlements with inadequate housing – and that number is rising every day.

We need more urgent action and greater investment to provide affordable housing to all – alongside access to electricity, water, sanitation, transport, and other basic services.

To leave no one behind is the core pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This means making cities work for women and children and closing existing gaps: between the haves and the have-nots; within and between urban and rural areas; and within and between developed and developing regions.

Inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements are crucial – and local action is key.

Cities, towns, and communities can spearhead innovative solutions to address inequalities, ensure adequate shelter for all, tackle the climate crisis and drive a green and inclusive pandemic recovery.

This includes pursuing people-centered policies, promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and prioritizing green and resilient infrastructure.

On World Habitat Day, let us pledge to live up to our shared responsibility to one another.

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