



**United Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

## 2021-22 International Mayors Forum

**Dates: 24 – 27 January 2022**

**Time: 8:00 PM to 10:30 PM – Korea Standard Time (KST)**

**6:00 AM to 8:30 AM – New York (EST)**

### Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has confronted the world with unprecedented challenges, exposing and exacerbating existing inequalities, weaknesses in public service delivery systems, lack of policy coherence and lack of coordination between the different levels/bodies of governments. Women, youth, poor and other vulnerable groups are among the most severely affected by the pandemic, which, as of 30 September 2021, had killed nearly 4.8 million.<sup>1</sup> Urban dwellers are also experiencing rising inequality and social exclusion, unemployment, food insecurity and extreme poverty—a situation that the COVID-19 pandemic has not only unveiled but also aggravated in both developed and developing nations.

Local authorities were also particularly affected by this situation as cities and urban agglomerations were among the hardest hit at early stages of the crisis. As a matter of fact, it was estimated that 90 per cent of all reported COVID-19 cases during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic have been identified in urban areas, where all sectors have been deeply impacted.<sup>2</sup> Local governments are playing a critical role in providing access to basic services in normal times and ensuring that the supply of these public services is continuous and uninterrupted in times of adversity. Given their closeness to the communities concerned and their knowledge of the reality on the ground, they are also very effective frontline responders in crisis response and recovery. Paradoxically, local authorities have too often limited financial and human resources at their disposal to carrying out these responsibilities.

Beside the challenge of restoring life to normal, local governments who were often already struggling to maintain their services due to limited financial resources before the crisis, are now facing additional challenges on multiple fronts. For instance, cities and urban areas are rapidly becoming more sensitive to environmental problems and vulnerable to weather- and climate-related extreme events, which are getting more frequent and severe with climate change. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 90 per cent of major disasters over the last two decades have been climate-related disasters.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, they are themselves major contributors to climatic disruption and land and environmental degradation, which are making these human settlements and their population more vulnerable to the environmental problems and extreme events they are contributing to trigger.

The world's cities are accommodating more than half of the world's population on only 2 to 3 per cent of the earth's land. Unsustainable patterns of consumption and production found in cities can

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<sup>1</sup> <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> - Accessed on 30 September 2021

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2020) Policy Brief: COVID-19 in an Urban World. Available at [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sq\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid\\_urban\\_world\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sq_policy_brief_covid_urban_world_july_2020.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> UNISDR (2015) The Human Cost of Weather-Related Disasters. Available at [https://www.unisdr.org/files/46796\\_cop21weatherdisastersreport2015.pdf](https://www.unisdr.org/files/46796_cop21weatherdisastersreport2015.pdf)

have significant negative consequences. On the energy front, for instance, cities are consuming the largest part (78 per cent) of global energy. They also generate over 70 per cent of the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, rapid and uncontrolled urban expansion is exacerbating the environmental impact of cities, exerting pressure on fresh water supplies, sanitation, the living environment, and public health. Figures from 2016 showed that air pollution was affecting 90 per cent of urban dwellers, causing 4.2 million deaths.

Cities and urban settlements are also essential to sustainable development. They are at the core of major global frameworks, starting with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted in March 2015, which calls for supporting cooperation and mutual learning among local governments for disaster risk reduction. Six months later, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted with Goal 11 specifically aiming at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, followed by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted in December of the same year. Nearly a year later, the New Urban Agenda placed even more emphasis on the role of cities in achieving the SDGs, which makes a lot of sense knowing that about two thirds of the 169 SDG targets can only be achieved through the substantial involvement of local actors, particularly those in urban areas.<sup>5</sup>

Assessing the global COVID-19 related spending in 2020, the Global Recovery Observatory (GRO) recorded that over the USD 14.6 trillion announced by the 50 largest economies, USD11.1 trillion was earmarked for immediate rescue efforts, 1.9 trillion was to be allocated to long-term recovery, and 341 billion to green recovery initiatives.<sup>6</sup> The GRO report doesn't mention how much of the COVID-19 related funds had been earmarked for cities but there is little doubt about their potential to support a swift and green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and accelerate the implementation of these existing international agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Cities have long been key players in socio-economic development and are also acting as catalysts for many aspects of sustainable development. They are incubators for knowledge generation and production, innovation in science and technology, as well as in governance, social development and even art and culture. They also play a leading role in generating national employment, productivity, and economic development, with over 80 per cent of GDP coming from cities.

However, for cities to contribute more effectively to our sustainable recovery from the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate the achievement of the international sustainable goals and agreements, cities must be able to fuel their own sustainable recovery and development. To do so, efforts should be forward-looking, and address the pre-existing and new weaknesses and issues that were revealed or prompted by the pandemic, in order to *building back*— or, shall we say, *building forward*— *better* and foster a healthy, green, inclusive, resilient, innovative low-carbon recovery and development. This will also require rethinking our cities, their density, the way we plan and manage them, make them more inclusive, and improve access to adequate and affordable housing, water and sanitation, urban mobility, and other public services, to name a few. We also need to reconsider how we design our urban infrastructure, buildings, and

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations (2021). Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary General. Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> As reminded by the OECD, it is estimated that 65 percent of the 169 SDG targets could not be reached without the substantial involvement of local and regional governments. <https://www.oecd.org/about/impact/achievingthesdgsincitiesandregions.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Global Recovery Observatory (2021). Are we building back Better? Evidence from 2020 and Pathways to Inclusive green recovery Spending. Available at: [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35282/AWBBB\\_ES.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35282/AWBBB_ES.pdf)

public spaces to reduce their environmental impact, adapt them to climate change and make them more resilient to natural disasters and supportive of sustainable lifestyles.

In this vein, UNOSD is convening mayors and local leaders and stakeholders to take part in this 2021-22 edition of the International Mayors Forum to discuss strategies and measures to enhance local governments' knowledge and skills around a series of essential topics to build back better and greener from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, while also accelerating progress for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

## Objectives and Contents

The general objective of the International Mayors Forum is to provide a platform for policy dialogue and knowledge sharing through presentations and discussions on key aspects related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals —particularly Goal 11—, and other international frameworks and agreement such as the Paris Agreement at local level as a means to achieve a better understanding of progress, gaps, challenges, lessons learnt and specific mechanisms that can accelerate the sustained transformation needed to make societies inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

More specifically and given the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021-22 International Mayors Forum aims to examine the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the current crisis on cities and local governments and identify potential solutions for sustainable responses. It also aims to provide local governments and local actors with useful knowledge and information to support a swift and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 crisis and to contribute to *Our Common Agenda*, which is, as the UN Secretary General insists, “an agenda for action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing (international) agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals”.<sup>7</sup>

The 2021-22 edition of the International Mayors Forum follows and builds upon previous editions of the Mayors Forum —particularly last year's edition, which was meant to gather more than one hundred mayors, leaders and representatives of local governments from around the world in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the 2020 Mayors Forum had to be rescheduled and turned into a series of weekly virtual meetings, namely the [2020 International Mayors Forum preparatory webinar series](#), held between mid-September to the end of October 2020, which culminated in the formal [2020 International Mayors Forum that also took place online on 2 December 2020](#). Drawing on the UN Secretary-General's policy brief [COVID-19 in an Urban World](#), the 2020 edition of the Mayors Forum focused on strengthening the capacities of local governments for a "green, resilient and inclusive economic recovery... steer growth towards a low-carbon, resilient pathway and advance the Sustainable Development Goals... (and) building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities." Hence, the 2021-22 International Mayors Forum is in continuity with last year's edition of the International Mayors Forum and its webinar series, through exploring further and/or complementing some of the themes that have been discussed a year ago. At the same time, it also seeks to discuss additional issues that have arisen since last year and/or that require urgent attention —for instance, climate change—, and for which the Forum will try to identify simple and practical solutions within the reach of cities and local communities.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations (2021). *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary General*. Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf)

By doing so, it also aims to provide local governments and local actors with knowledge and tools that will help them take action and make a contribution to achieve *Our Common Agenda*, in the light in particular of its recommendations and “key proposals across the 12 (critical) commitments” made by Member States in the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations<sup>8</sup> and found in the Report of the Secretary General, meant to “put us on a path towards a breakthrough for a greener, safer and better future”.<sup>9</sup>

## **Methodology**

The Forum will consist of several interrelated modules, each covering concepts and issues of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, Goal 11 in particular, and its interlinkages with other related SDGs and other internationally agreed agendas, such as the Paris Agreement. It will consist of formal presentations by international experts, scholars, mayors, practitioners and local actors followed by Q&A and discussions.

The Forum will take place in an online format using the Cisco WebEx platform.

## **Target Audience**

This Forum aims to engage mayors, sub-national government officials and representatives, and national institutions concerned with SDG implementation at local level in developed and developing countries. The Forum will also be open to non-government experts working in the areas of SDG implementation at the national and local levels. It will also welcome academia, youth, and other interested stakeholders to ensure an inclusive and integrated discussion on accelerated local solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Schedule and venue**

The online International Mayors’ Forum is scheduled to take place on **24-27 January 2022** from **8:00 PM to 10:30 PM – Korea Standard Time** or **6:00 AM to 8:30 AM – New York (EST), USA** Time. Please note that the dates and format may be changed subject to the evolution of the situation regarding COVID-19.

## **Language**

The Forum will be conducted in English.

## **Registration**

Participation in the Forum is free. To register, please click on the **Registration Links** below.

Day 1: [Registration Link](#)

Day 2: [Registration Link](#)

Day 3: [Registration Link](#)

Day 4: [Registration Link](#)

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<sup>8</sup> UN (2020). Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. Available at <https://undocs.org/A/RES/75/1>

<sup>9</sup> United Nations (2021). Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary General. Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf)

## Organizers

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD).

## Contact Information

For any questions or comments please contact [Mr. Jean D'Aragon](mailto:daragon@un.org), Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD at [daragon@un.org](mailto:daragon@un.org); and [Ms. Nana Urakami](mailto:nurakami@uncrd.or.jp), UNCRD at [nurakami@uncrd.or.jp](mailto:nurakami@uncrd.or.jp)

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### Draft Agenda

(subject to changes and adjustments)

#### Day ONE – Monday, 24 January 2022

Time	Activities
<b>Opening of the International Mayors' Forum</b>	
<b>20:00 – 20:05</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Jean D'Aragon</a>, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD (Facilitator of the Forum)</li></ul>
<b>20:05 – 20:20</b>	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mr. Liu Zhenmin</b>, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (video) – tbc</li><li>• <b>H.E. Ms. Han Jeoung Ae</b>, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea (video)</li><li>• <b>Hon. Mr. Park Nam-Chun</b>, Mayor, Incheon Metropolitan City (video)</li></ul>
<b>20:20 – 20:30</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Chun Kyoo Park</a>, Head of Office, UNOSD</li><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Kazushige Endo</a>, Director, UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), Nagoya, Japan</li></ul>
<b>20:30 – 20:35</b>	<b>Outline of Mayors Forum – Introduction of participants/Mayors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Jean D'Aragon</a>, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD</li></ul>
<b>20:35 – 20:45</b>	<b>Whole-of-Government Approach and Effective Institutions for SDGs Localization – Opening Statement (10 min.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Bokyun Shim</a>, Head of UN Project Office on Governance, DPIDG/UN DESA</li></ul>

## 2021-22 International Mayors Forum

### 20:45 – 21:00 Governance as an SDG accelerator at national and subnational levels

- [Lichia Saner-Yiu](#), Professor Organisation Development & Institutional Learning, President of the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)

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### 21:00 – 21:15 Capacity building programme for implementation of smart cities for inclusive and sustainable society in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era

- [Mr. Kazushige Endo](#), Director, United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)

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### 21:15 – 21:30 Local and Regional implementation of SDGs: An introduction to Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

- [Mr. Amson Sibanda](#), Chief of National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA

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### 21:30 – 21:45 Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Regional Specificities: Linking Africa's Agenda 2063 with the 2030 Agenda

- [Ms. Edlam Abera Yemeru](#), Chief, Urbanization Section, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) – tbc

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### 21:45 – 22:00 Country/City Experience: [Voluntary Local Review 2021 Yokohama](#), Japan

- [Hon. YAMANAKA Takeharu](#), Mayor, City of Yokohama (5-min. video); [Mr. Ken Akaoka](#), Executive Officer for Global Partnership & Network, Office of the City of Yokohama Representative to the Americas

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### 22:00 – 22:30 Discussion, and closing of the meeting

## Day TWO – Tuesday, 25 January 2022

### Time

### Activities

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#### 20:00 – 20:05 Opening of the session and introduction of participants

- [Mr. Jean D'Aragon](#), Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD

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#### 20:05 – 20:15 Urban Resilience: The need for an Integrated Approach – Opening Statement (10 min.)

- [Mr. Shu Zhu](#), East Asia Regional Director, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, East Asia Secretariat, Seoul, Republic of Korea

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**20:15 – 20:30 Green Growth as a Driver for an Environmentally Sustainable and socially Inclusive Recovery at National and Subnational Levels**

- [Mr. Stelios Grafakos](#), Principal Researcher/ Economist in GGGI's Office of Thought Leadership

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**20:30 – 20:45 Green Recovery and the City**

- [Mr. Nick Godfrey](#), Director, Coalition for Urban Transitions, World Resources Institute (WRI) – tbc

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**20:45 – 21:00 Country/city experience: Climate Actions of Suwon City**

- [Mr. Tae-young Yeom](#), Mayor of Suwon City, Republic of Korea

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**21:00 – 21:15 Sustainable Mobility: New Policy Approaches**

- [Ms. Nancy Vanduycke](#), Economic Advisor of the Transport Global Practice at the World Bank Group; Founder and Manager, Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All) Initiative, World Bank

**21:15 – 21:30 Country/region/city experience: Metropolitan Transport Planning**

- [Hon. Mr. Jonathan Cote](#), Mayor of New Westminster, Chair of the TransLink Mayors Council, Metro Vancouver, Director, and Chair of Metro Vancouver's Regional Planning Committee, British Columbia, Canada

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**21:30 – 21:45 Circular Economy as a Means for Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery, and the SDGs and the Paris Agreement Implementation at City Level**

- [Ms. Sarah O'Carroll](#), [The Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#), United Kingdom

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**21:45 – 22:00 Global/Region/Country/City Experiences: Urban Reforestation, Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Restoration**

- [Mr. John-Rob Pool](#), Implementation Manager, Cities4Forests and WRI's Natural Infrastructure Initiative, World Resource Institute

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**22:00 – 22:30 Discussion, and closing of the meeting**

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Day THREE – Wednesday, 26 January 2022

Time	Activities
20:00 – 20:05	<b>Opening of the session and introduction of participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Jean D’Aragon</a>, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD</li></ul>
20:05 – 20:15	<b>Integrated Planning for Sustainable Urban Development – Opening Statement (10 min.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mr. Curt Carrigan</b>, Chief, Sustainable Urban Development Section Environment and Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)</li></ul>
20:15 – 20:30	<b>Country/City Experience: Planning for a greener and more resilient Bangkok</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mr. Sopon Pisuttiwong</b>, Deputy Governor, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), Thailand (video)</li></ul>
20:30 – 20:45	<b>Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Mr. Kazushige Endo</a>, Director, UN Centre for Regional Development, Nagoya, Japan</li></ul>
20:45 – 21:00	<b>Urban Climate Policies and Practices in Latin America and Korea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ms. Hyejung Kim</b>, Urban climate change expert, Managing director at SusIF<sup>10</sup></li></ul>
21: 00 – 21:15	<b>Region/Country/City Experience: Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in cities of Asia Pacific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia</b>, Head, UNDRR Office for Northeast Asia (ONEA) and Global Education and Training Institute (GETI)</li></ul>

<sup>10</sup> Hyejung Kim, Former consultant with the Climate Change Unit in the Division of Sustainable Development and Human Settlements of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the author of “Technologies for adapting to climate change: a case study of Korean cities and implications for Latin American cities”, Project Document (LC/TS.2021/54), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021. Available at [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/46992/S2100001\\_en.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/46992/S2100001_en.pdf)

21:15 – 21:30 **Green Fiscal Policies for Low-Carbon Recovery – Challenges, Solutions and Impact at Local Level**

- [Ms. Jacqueline Cottrell](#), Green fiscal policy expert/consultant, Freelance Associate, Green Budget Germany

21:30 – 21:45 **Region/Country/City Experience: Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform and Green Recovery in Asia-Pacific Cities**

- [Mr. Michael Williamson](#), Chief of Sustainable Energy Development Section, Energy Division, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Asia (UN ESCAP)

21:45 – 22:00 **Region/Country/City Experience: A Pilot Project addressing Decarbonization and Social Justice in Informal Settlement Upgrading in Buenos Aires**

- [Ms. Jorgelina Hardoy](#), Senior Researcher, *Instituto Internacional de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo – America Latina* (IIED – AL), Buenos Aires, Argentina

22:00 – 22:30 **Discussion, and closing of the meeting**

#### Day FOUR – Thursday, 27 January 2022

Time	Activities
20:00 – 20:05	<b>Opening of the session and introduction of participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mr. Jean D’Aragon</a>, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD</li> </ul>
20:05 – 20:15	<b>UN Ocean and Water Conferences – The Role of Cities in achieving SDGs 14 &amp; 6, Opening Statement (10min.) -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ms. Lotta Tahtinen</a>, Chief of Outreach and Partnership Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), UN DESA</li> </ul>
20:15 – 20:30	<b>Financing for Development – Mobilizing Financial Resources for Public Services and Achieving Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Urban Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ms. Caroline Lombardo</a>, Chief, International Tax and Development Cooperation Branch, Financing for Sustainable Development Office, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – tbc</li> </ul>
20:30 – 20:45	<b>Impact Investment in Cities- Innovations to Finance SDGs Implementation at Local Level</b>

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- [Mr. Raymond Saner](#), Professor, Organisation and International Management, Basle University

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**20:45 – 21:00 Region/Country/City experience: Local Governments Alternative Financing for COVID-19 Response and Recovery and Accelerate SDGs Delivery**

- [Ms. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi](#), Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC) – tbc

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**21:00 – 21:15 A Diagnostic Tool to Assess Asset Management Needs of Local Governments**

- [Mr. Daniel Platz](#), Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Financing for Development Office, UN-DESA

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**21:15 – 21:30 How to Design an Asset Management Action Plan**

- [Mr. Daniel Platz](#), Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Financing for Development Office, UN-DESA

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**21:30 – 21:45 Country/city experience: Asset Management Action Plan (AMAP), Yumbe District Local Government, Uganda SDGs**

- **Mr. Noah Ewaru**, Mayor of Moroto Municipal Council, Uganda – tbc

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**21:45 – 22:15 Discussion**

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**Closing**

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**22:15 – 22:20 Closing Remarks**

- [Mr. Jean D’Aragon](#), Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD

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**22:20 – 22:30 Farewell remarks**

- [Mr. Chun Kyoo Park](#), Head of Office, UNOSD
  - [Mr. Kazushige Endo](#), Director, United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)
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