

SPECIAL SESSION 7

Building Urban Resilience to COVID-19 and Climate Change through Innovative solutions

Thursday 17 March 2022, 11:45 – 13:15 Beirut time

Background and objective

Cities around the world have been the epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic, accounting for an estimated 90% of confirmed cases. They have thus been dealing firsthand with the devastating loss of lives and the pandemic's serious socio-economic impact. Cities facing long-standing development gaps and challenges have been particularly hit hard, confronting increased pressures posed by diminished revenue and financial resources, weak local governance systems and structures, lack of digital access and connectivity, ill-equipped or under-resourced frontline healthcare workers, poor infrastructure, and inadequate housing.

Despite the adverse effects and emergence of devastating vulnerability, cities offer opportunities and continuous innovative responses to confront stresses and strengthen adaptive capacity and resilience. Local governments and communities of Arab countries are building urban resilience as a pillar of the recovery from the pandemic and confronting climate threats. This session highlights city-level innovative solutions to build resilience. It introduces four successful responses in Arab cities with diverse challenges, contexts, and typologies (income levels) - high, middle, and conflict- to support in recovering and building resilient cities through focusing on four thematic areas: climate risks reduction, water management, infrastructure, health management.

The key objective of the session is to explore innovative solutions from different cities that can be scalable, replicable, and adopted by governments and communities to build back better and recover from the pandemic and climate change impacts.

Questions to be addressed

1. What are the pillars of integrated urban resilience innovations?
2. What opportunities of innovation have the COVID-19 and Climate crises brought?
3. What emerging gaps have you faced during the implementation?
4. How can these gaps be filled? What recommendations to city councils, governments, and communities can be given?

Moderator

- **Mr. Elie Mansour**, Head of Urban Planning and Design Unit, UN-Habitat, Lebanon.

Opening Remarks

- **Mr. Riad Meddeb**, Director ad-interim of UNDP Global Centre for Technology, Innovation and Sustainable Development (GC-TISD), Singapore.

Panelists

- **Dr. Raza Siddiqui**, CEO of Arabian Healthcare Group and Executive Director of RAK Hospital, UAE.
- **Mr. Salaheldin Agab Sulfab Ahmed**, Director of Kassala Gash River Training Unit, Sudan.
- **Mr. Belal Shqarin**, Director of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment, Jordan.
- **Ms. Marwa Barakat**, Consultant Specialized in Urban Planning and Development, UNESCO, Cairo.

This Special Session will be organized virtually via Zoom. To join, please register using [this link](#). In-person participants of AFSD can attend the meeting in Room 300A, 3rd floor.