



On the occasion of this year's [World Habitat Day](#) , the Executive Director of UN-Habitat Dr. Joan Clos has called for improved accessibility and mobility in urban areas for more efficient of the world's cities and towns.

The United Nations has designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day. The purpose of World Habitat Day is to reflect on the state of the world's towns and cities and the basic right of all to adequate shelter. It is also intended to remind the world that all have the responsibility to shape the future of cities and towns.

This year, the global celebrations will be held on 7 October in Medellin, Colombia and according to Dr. Clos, the United Nations chose the theme Urban Mobility because mobility and access to goods and services is essential to the efficient functioning of our cities and towns as they expand.

“Mobility is an important part of city design as it contributes, not only to the liveability of a city in terms of reduced congestion and pollution, but also to the economic potential, allowing the efficient movement of people and goods. Mobility is at the core of equitable access to basic goods, services and activities – such as work, education, medical care, shopping, socializing – and to enable people to participate in civic life,” Dr. Clos said.

Furthermore, accessible cities encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transportation and draw more and more travellers out of cars and onto trains, buses, bike paths, and sidewalks, he added.

Dr. Close said that by optimizing urban densities and minimizing land zoning we start to make the city work for its citizens; proximity of goods and services exploits the urban advantage and encourages investment and opportunity.

Compact, well-designed cities can also be cleaner and have less impact on their environment per resident than more spread out areas, he explained.

In his message on World Habitat day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: “Getting mobility right can mean the difference between a struggling city and a thriving one,” Mr. Ban said. “Mobility is not a question of building wider or longer roads. It is about providing appropriate and efficient systems that serve the most people in the best, most equitable manner.”

The theme for this year’s World Habitat day “Urban Mobility”, is also the topic of [the Global Report on Human Settlements \(GRHS\) 2013: Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility](#) which was [launched](#) in an abridged version in New York on Monday 23 September in the run up to the General Assembly.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) will present Tuesday, October 9, 2013 at 11:30 the report "The State of the European Cities in Transition: Effective Taking stock 20 years of reform." The event is organized at the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union, rue Belliard 41-43, 1040 Brussels.

**Additional links :**

[World Habitat Day](#)

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[Global Report on Human Settlements 2013](#)

[Secretary General's message](#)

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