

**Mr. Wu Hongbo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs,  
Secretary-General for the Third International Conference on Financing for  
Development**

**Video Message  
High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities: Connecting People, Environment  
and  
Technology co-convened by the United Nations and Toyota City**

*15 January 2015, Toyota City, Japan*

Distinguished participants.

On behalf of the United Nations, welcome to this High-level Symposium on Sustainable Cities: Connecting People, Environment and Technology.

I extend my deep appreciation to Mayor Ota and his team for their generous support in hosting this important event.

Toyota City has valuable experience to share with the world. Its work in advancing urbanisation through innovative technological solutions, sustainable transport systems and collaboration with the private sector, is most impressive. I am confident participants will benefit from the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

I also extend my appreciation to the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), which, under my Department's purview, works tirelessly in supporting sustainable regional practices in many countries. They have provided valuable support and advice in the preparation of this Symposium.

Distinguished Participants,

The world is witnessing an unprecedented trend in urbanisation.

By 2050, the global urban population will have increased by 2.5 billion, with close to ninety percent of this increase taking place in Asia and Africa.

The challenges are many. They include unsustainable consumption and production, environmental degradation, stresses on social services and lack of economic opportunities for many.

But cities are also the centres of our hope for the future – of economic growth, innovation, education and culture.

Cities worldwide generate eighty percent of global gross domestic product.

Making the most of this potential is critical to a sustainable future for post-2015, and for achieving the global sustainable development goals.

At Rio+20 – the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – member States emphasized the importance of cities and metropolitan areas implementing sustainable urban planning policies and designs.

We must therefore sharpen our focus on implementation.

That is why this Symposium is so timely, focusing on practical experiences ... on human-centred strategies ... on smart technologies ... on resilience and urban environmental sustainability ... and on investing in the sustainable future of cities.

We must learn from each other and we must listen. What measures have proven effective? What are the lessons learned? It is the purpose of this Symposium to share experiences and address these questions.

It is our action today that makes a difference for generations to come.

We must work together to ensure we achieve the future we want. I wish you a productive Symposium.

Thank you.