



Today 55% of the world’s population lives in urban areas and that figure is expected to reach 68% by 2050¹. As the complexities of urban life grow, communities and local leaders are at the forefront of finding sustainable solutions to poverty and inadequate housing, hunger and health, clean water, energy, environmental degradation and climate change, infrastructure, transport, education, migration, violence and gender equality. These and other challenges are interconnected with similar issues in rural areas and municipalities of all sizes, where activists and civil society organizations partner with governments and the private sector to ensure that communities are inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a blueprint for action, advocacy and partnership, and a compass to ensure that no one is left behind, including those who are poor and vulnerable. Women and young people are seizing opportunities to participate fully and prominently as leaders in these efforts, and there are numerous examples of local action contributing to achieving national frameworks and bringing about global impact. The SDGs were designed with direct participation from more than 10 million people globally over a three-year period and were launched in 2015 with the support of all 193 UN Member States. Civil society is key to promoting understanding of these ambitious Goals and achieving them by 2030.

Against this backdrop, this year’s UN Civil Society Conference², reflecting Salt Lake City’s leadership and demonstrated commitment on sustainability issues, will focus on SDG 11, “to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030”. The agenda will explore the interlinkages among all 17 Goals, including critical issues relating to gender.

The three-day conference, co-hosted by the UN Department of Global Communications, Salt Lake City, and the NGO Executive Committee, will feature opening and closing plenary sessions, interactive thematic sessions, NGO-sponsored workshops, exhibits and a youth hub. Speakers and attendees will include leaders and other representatives from NGOs, UN agencies, academia, faith traditions, the public and private sectors and youth from around the world.

Proposed Thematic Sessions

1. Inclusive Communities – Leaving No One Behind
2. Climate Change – Communities in Action
3. Peaceful Societies – Recovering from Conflict and Nurturing Peace
4. Creating Opportunities and Economic Success for Youth [Youth-led Session]
5. Infrastructure and Natural Resource Use
6. Emerging Technologies and Innovation
7. Impact Investing: Closing the SDG Financing Gap
8. Local and Regional Governments Leading the Way to Sustainable Communities
9. Enhancing the Role of Civil Society to Monitor Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11
10. Building Inclusive Communities Through Education
11. Civil Society Partnerships for the UN We Need

An outcome document will be drafted by civil society under the leadership of the Conference’s Chair, submitted for global consultations leading up to and during the conference, and presented at the closing plenary for adoption.

¹ According to the [UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)

² The UN Civil Society Conference was formerly called the UN DPI-NGO Conference