

Architecture for Climate Resilience- Learning from Hassan Fathy New Gourna, 29 October 2021

Organized by Hassan Fathy Center for Architecture and Sustainable Development, International Union of Architects, Habitat Professional Forum and World Urban Campaign

Side Event of

World cities Day, Luxor, 31 October 2021

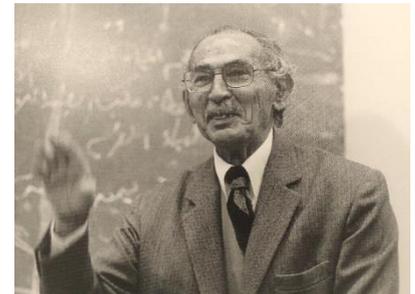
Theme: Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience

<https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/wcd>

News Brief



The world attention is now focused on finding solutions to the impact of ongoing climate change on human habitats including cities where two thirds of the world population live. Urban architecture in our recent past has not been sufficiently concerned with climate resilience as a priority in the planning, design and construction of buildings. Surprisingly, a lone architect, Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy- commissioned in the 1940s to build a village in Luxor, Upper Egypt, had the foresight to plan, design and construct a settlement, now world known as “New Gourna” or Hassan Fathy’s Gourna. Hassan Fathy constructed the village emphasizing building with local materials by local communities, in harmony with the environment and with opportunities for social and economic development. Re-discovered in the 1970s, he was recognized as a pioneer in sustainable earth architecture. His contribution to environmental architecture has the potential to inform current debates on “architecture for climate resilience”, the theme of the upcoming World Urban Campaign (COP26 Learning Event) and the theme of the “World Cities Day” celebrated by Habitat-United Nations (<https://unhabitat.org/>) in Luxor, Egypt, where New Gourna is situated on the West Bank, on October 31, 2019 with a focus on “ Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience”. Given Hassan Fathy’s pioneering contribution to this theme, Hassan Fathy Center for Architecture and Sustainable Development (HF-ASD), the International Union of Architects (IUA), Habitat Professional Forum (HPF) and World Urban Campaign (WUC) will organize two sessions in New Gourna on October 29, 2021: 1) a moderated discussion on the relevance of Hassan Fathy to build climate resilience vernacular and earth architecture in the format of a Urban Thinkers Café , 2) a moderated discussion on Hassan Fathy’s contributions to architecture and the sustainable development goals in the format of an Urban Thinkers Debate. In addition the Center will launch a local campaign around the UN international “The City We Need” and provide other activities in celebration of World City Day. The Center has previously sponsored a commemoration of Hassan Fathy’s Day and organized two webinars in partnership with “Our World Heritage Initiative” to promote the revitalization of New Gourna as a Cultural Destination.



The proposed side event not only highlights Hassan Fathy’s enduring contribution both to urban climate adaptation and sustainable development goals, but also to the efforts by the Egyptian government at the highest level to engage in international dialogue on these issues and develop a national strategy to adapt to climate change and to include climate change in national development projects in all ministries.

World Cities Day 31 October 2021



The general theme of World Cities Day is Better City, Better Life, while each year a different sub-theme and a location for its global observance is selected, to either promote successes of urbanization, or address specific challenges resulting from urbanization.

The theme for World Cities Day this year is Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience. Cities worldwide are increasingly suffering the effects of climate-related disasters, such as floods, droughts, sea level rise, heatwaves, landslides and storms. At least 130 port cities with over one million inhabitants are expected to be affected by coastal flooding and the one billion people in urban informal settlements are particularly at risk.

Creating more sustainable, climate-resilient societies involves addressing a range of issues including poverty reduction, ensuring basic services livelihoods, the provision of accessible, affordable and adequate housing, investing in infrastructure, upgrading informal settlements and managing ecosystems. Successful, well-governed cities greatly reduce climate-related risks for their populations.



Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience Concept Note Summary

World Cities Day aims to enhance the international community's interest in sustainable global urbanization, advance cooperation between countries and cities to meet opportunities and address urbanization challenges, and contribute to sustainable urban development worldwide.

Within the framework of the general theme of World Cities Day 2021: the main objectives include:

- 1) Raising awareness about climate change adaptation and urban resilience,
- 2) Inspiring effective climate action at the local level
- 3) Contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

World Cities Day comes right before the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP-26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), from 1 to 12 November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland. World Cities Day and Urban October in general provide an opportunity to unite the messages, successes and concerns of the urban community moving forward to COP-26.

Challenges

- 1) Adaptation financing has lagged as a proportion out of total climate finance.
- 2) One billion people living in informal settlements are at risk from lack of services and poverty
- 3) The acceleration of urbanization leads to increasing the fragility of cities and greater exposure to climate risks

Remaining solutions and issues

- 1) Supporting innovations and creativity towards sustainability solutions
- 2) Take advantage of community social capital to reduce disasters and confront climate change
- 3) Building resilience holistically in a comprehensive and integrated way, from providing infrastructure to managing urban systems
- 4) Embrace a pro-poor approach and protect women, youth, people with disabilities and the elderly from the vagaries of climate change.
- 6) Investing in climate-resilient, sustainable infrastructure
- 7) Exploring nature-based solutions and ecosystem based approaches to adaptation.
- 8) Mainstream climate adaptation strategies in the broader development agenda, including COVID response.
- 9) Enhance inter-city cooperation for risk reduction and resilience building.

Source: <https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Concept%20Note%20WCD.pdf>

