



**Innovative Governance, Open Cities**

GUANGZHOU, CHINA

## **WORLD CITIES DAY 2017**

### **MESSAGE OF THE UN-HABITAT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DR. JOAN CLOS**

#### **31 OCTOBER 2017**

With more than half of the world's population living in urban areas, we need to rethink the way we want to govern our cities and towns in more innovative ways. We have committed to work together for a better world in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the adoption of the New Urban Agenda is giving us a vision on how to build, plan and manage our cities in a more inclusive, safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable way.

The use of technology presents enormous opportunities for more inclusive governance mechanisms, increasing and improving citizen involvement for more inclusive, efficient and accountable cities. The scope and speed at which people access information and interact among themselves is unprecedented in history, and institutions need to react to these new ways to exercise citizenship.

We should not fear innovation. On the contrary, transparency and open government are strong tools to make cities more efficient and bring more and more people on board. Citizens and stakeholders can contribute to making cities more inclusive, especially for their most vulnerable residents.

But to make this a success, governments need to open themselves up to the idea of governing together with citizens, civil society and the private sector – as the challenges facing us are too great to be achieved by one actor alone. Examples like crowd-sourcing can help to generate ideas and create fresh approaches to governance and policy-making.

Urban governance requires strong local institutions to take advantage of these opportunities and recognize the possibilities offered and leaders brave enough to embrace the changes.

This World Cities Day celebrates Innovative Governance, Open Cities, promoting the chance to say how we do – and do not – envisage how the cities of our future should be governed. If we open our minds to the possibilities and opportunities open government present, it will contribute significantly to generating a better world for people, planet and prosperity.