Cities are increasingly the home of humanity. They are central to climate action, global prosperity, peace and human rights. More than half of all people live in cities and human settlements, and that proportion is projected to grow to two thirds by 2050.

To transform our world, we must transform its cities.

Crime, pollution and poverty are taking their toll on hundreds of millions of city-dwellers. At the same time, urban areas are hubs of energy, innovation and economic dynamism. By investing in cities, we can advance progress across societies.

Momentum is building. The recently concluded Habitat III Conference adopted the New Urban Agenda, a vision for cities that are just, safe, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable. This marked a milestone in setting global standards for sustainable urban development, sparking new thinking on how we plan, manage and live in cities.

Together with the other new global frameworks and Agendas – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda for Humanity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda – this New Urban Agenda will put sustainable urbanization at the centre of our efforts to eliminate poverty and achieve development and prosperity for all. It can also complement the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Local action is essential to realizing the potential of these global agreements. On World Cities Day, let us renew our resolve to confront urban problems and forge lasting solutions. Together, we can show how success in cities inspires change across the world.