**Measuring Quality of Life in Cities:**   
**Connecting Local Action and Global Agendas**

**September 18th, 11:00 am**

**Introduction**

The world today is vastly different from a decade ago, and the pace of change shows no sign of slowing. In the face of immense challenges, but also immense opportunities, the notion of what constitutes a ‘good life’ has shifted for many people. In cities, local decision makers need reliable information and data on what their constituents value most and what is needed to improve their quality of life considering the *local context* and *lived experience* of individuals.

The Quality of Life Initiative aims to better understand urban priorities, needs, and aspirations; to establish quality of life as a unifying concept across local and global development agendas; and to equip local leaders with the knowledge and tools to enhance quality of life *in their communities*. It builds on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 SDGs and the New Urban Agenda. The Initiative taps into subjective and objective measurements of locally generated data to provide new insights on what people truly value in the unique urban contexts of each local government.

Implemented by UN-Habitat and sponsored by the Quality of Life Program of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Initiative was piloted in 10 cities worldwide in 2024. The pilot cities serve as models for other cities developing their own quality of life metrics as the Initiative expands to 100+ cities in 2025. There is a growing interest among cities, city networks, countries, UN institutions and organizations, NGO and academia in better measuring the quality of life in urban areas. To date, over 60 cities across 39 countries have joined the Quality of Life Initiative, and another 65 cities have expressed interest in joining through the Initiative’s Global Open Call.

This event, hosted by the Global Cities Hub in collaboration with UN-Habitat and the Quality of Life Initiative, will serve to introduce the Initiative and explore how it can align and collaborate with the programs and priorities of other institutions as well as local governments.

UN-Habitat is the United Nations agency responsible for promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities, with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. UN-Habitat's core mandate is to support countries and cities in their efforts to achieve sustainable urban development. It works to improve the quality of life in urban areas, particularly for the most vulnerable populations, by focusing on inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities.

The Global Cities Hub connects local and regional governments with international organizations to better link the local and global levels and strengthen inclusive multilateralism. It also works to provide more visibility to urban issues, so that they may be prioritized in the agendas of international organizations and their Member States.

**Objective**

This event, hosted by the Global Cities Hub in collaboration with UN-Habitat and the Quality of Life Initiative, will serve to introduce the Initiative and explore how it can align and collaborate with the programs and priorities of other institutions as well as local governments. It presents the Quality of Life Initiative to various groups of stakeholders, including local and regional governments and to discuss the alignment of the Initiative with global and regional development agendas and plans, especially the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. It helps understand the synergies between the Quality of Life measurement and other programmes by UN institutions, NGOs, and cities. It also gives guidance on how cities, governments and organizations can join or champion the Initiative and how the Initiative can benefit them in return.

**Practical details**

**Organizer:** United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Global Cities Hub  
**Location:** Online(Zoom): [register](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Kc08Ns0JQDG1fOj4gZdiPw)**Date** **and Time:** September 18th, 11am (CEST)  
**Language**: English

**Contact Information**

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**Programme**

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| **Time** | **Session** |
| *Moderation: Pauline Bekkers, Urban Health and Quality of Life Consultant, UN-Habitat* | |
| 10 minutes | ***Opening***  **Speakers:**   * *Anh Thu Duong, Co-Director, GCH* * *Graham Alabaster, Head of Geneva Office, UN-Habitat* * *Kawther AlKhudairy, Head of International Affairs Special Projects, the Quality of Life Program Center of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* |
| 15 minutes | ***Introduction to the Quality of Life Initiative***  Presentation on the Quality of Life Initiative and the Index, including its measurement in cities.  **Speakers:**   * *Agata Krause, Senior Specialist, Partnerships and Institutional Engagement, Quality of Life Initiative, UN-Habitat* * *Abdulrahman Mohammed, Associate, Quality of Life Initiative, UN-Habitat* |
| 30 minutes | ***Perspectives on measuring the quality of life in cities***  Interactive discussion with experts and the audience about the linkages of the Quality of Life Initiative with various global and regional programmes and agendas.  **Contributors:**   * *Ronald Jackson, Head of Global Disaster and Resilience, UNDP* * *Felix Kirchmeier, Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform* * *Peter Norris, Strategy and Economic Policy Manager, Manchester City Council*   ***Guiding questions to invited experts and the audience*** |
| 5 minutes | ***Closing and Summary***   * *Robert Lewis-Lettington, Special Adviser, UN-Habitat* * *Andras Szorenyi, Senior Policy Advisor, GCH* |