

Side event to the United Nations Fifth Forum of Mayors' meeting



WOMAN AND MAYOR

Empowering Urban Leadership for Sustainable Futures

Organized by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations in Geneva and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)



FORUM OF
MAYORS 2025

PROGRAMME

Monday, 06 October 2025

13:15 - 14:45 CET

Room H 200, Building H, Palais Des Nations

Language: English

Join the event online via Teams Meeting! [Click here](#)

Meeting ID: 367 580 041 720 9

Passcode: He6U4Fu9



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva



UNECE

Local governments play a crucial role in addressing various specific community issues, ranging from infrastructure and public safety to education and healthcare. Mayors, as leaders at the local level, are at the forefront of this significant work by shaping urban landscapes, implementing sustainable policies and promoting community engagement.

Although women's participation in political and public life brings a diverse range of viewpoints and comprehensive solutions, they are still significantly underrepresented in decision-making and leadership positions: women serve as Heads of State and/or Government in only 25 countries and make up 27.2% of Members of Parliament. Globally, fewer than one in four cabinet ministers is a woman (22.9%) [1]. According to the recent Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, women's representation in local government remains stagnant at 35.5% [2]. At the current rate, achieving parity in management positions will take another 176 years [3].

Against this backdrop, the side event "Woman and Mayor: Empowering Urban Leadership for a Sustainable Future" has become an increasingly important part of the Forum. Around two dozen female mayors have participated in previous roundtable discussions, highlighting the impactful role of women in urban governance and sharing inspiring stories of how they have redefined leadership and promoted a more inclusive political culture in their cities as well as implemented innovative policies that meet the needs of their communities.

This time, for the third consecutive year, women mayors from around the world will gather to discuss their unique perspectives and priorities on finding solutions to local problems, transforming urban areas, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Based on the Forum's agenda, the female leaders will specifically focus on contributing to a more sustainable future and addressing relevant urban challenges such as access to healthcare and decent work, housing shortages, sustainable urban planning and gender-based violence.

Join us in this transformative journey as we celebrate the power of women's leadership in building safer, more accessible and sustainable cities!



[1] <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/03/women-in-politics-map-2025>

[2] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/>

[3] <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

TARGET 11-3



INCLUSIVE AND
SUSTAINABLE
URBANIZATION

1. What do you think are the main reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles within cities, and how does this gender disparity affect urban governance? Also, what difficulties do you encounter as a female mayor, and what strategies do you use or plan to use to overcome these challenges?

2. Drawing from your personal experiences and leadership journey, could you provide insights into the impact of gender-sensitive leadership on addressing urban issues, such as access to healthcare and decent work, housing shortages, sustainable urban planning and gender-based violence? You may also wish to share any significant gender equality challenges your city faces and the steps that you are taking to address them.

TARGET 11-7



PROVIDE ACCESS TO
SAFE AND INCLUSIVE
GREEN AND PUBLIC
SPACES

TARGET 5-5



ENSURE FULL
PARTICIPATION IN
LEADERSHIP AND
DECISION-MAKING

3. What measures can be implemented to promote a more inclusive political culture so to ensure women's representation in leadership positions within cities?

Light lunch

13:00 - 13:15 Offered by *the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva*

Opening

H.E. Ambassador Mr. Vincenzo Grassi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva

13:15 - 13:25 *H.E. Ms. Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*

Panel Discussion

Moderator:

Ms. Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, United Kingdom

Speakers:

Ms. Heiða Björg Hilmisdóttir, Mayor of Reykjavík, Iceland

Ms. Ana Aurora Muñiz Neyra, Mayor of San Mateo Atenco, Mexico

Ms. Irma Hernández, Mayor of San Miguelito, Panama

13:25-14:35 *Ms. Arlene B. Arcillas, Mayor of Santa Rosa, Philippines*

Ms. Mariana Gâju, Mayor of Cumpăna, Romania

Ms. Chilando Chitangala, Mayor of Lusaka, Zambia

Ms. Majlinda Bufi, Mayor of Roskovec, Albania

Ms. Serra Bucak, Mayor of Diyarbakir, Türkiye

Closing

14:35-14:45

*Speakers will be confirmed closer to date.