



UN-HABITAT

Country Report China Office



UN-HABITAT CHINA 2023



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UN-Habitat China 2023

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Urban Context & Challenges



Figure: Shenzhen, China
Source: Pixabay.com

The urban context and challenges in China are influenced by various factors, including rapid urbanization, environmental concerns, and socio-economic issues.

Rapid Urbanization: China has experienced significant urbanization over the past few decades, with millions of people migrating from rural areas to cities. This has led to the growth of megacities and the development of large urban areas. However, managing such rapid urban growth presents challenges in terms of infrastructure, housing, transportation, and social services.

Climate Change and Environmental Concerns: China is one of the world's largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, primarily due to its heavy reliance on coal for energy. As a result, the country faces the challenge of combating climate change and reducing pollution. The government has implemented various measures to promote sustainable development, including investing in renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency, and implementing stricter environmental regulations. It also released the "3060 Goal" which means to strive to reach CO² emissions peak by 2030 and strive to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. In addition, China has faced severe air pollution issues, particularly in urban areas. Factors such as industrial activities, vehicle emissions, and coal-burning contribute to high levels of air pollution, impacting public health and quality of life. The government has been working to address this challenge through measures like promoting clean energy sources, stricter emission standards, and adopting cleaner technologies.

Urban Transport: The rapid urbanization in China has put immense pressure on transportation systems. Traffic congestion, particularly in major cities, is a significant issue. The government has made efforts to improve public transportation infrastructure, including expanding subway networks, implementing bike-sharing programs, and promoting electric vehicles. However, the sheer scale of urban transportation demands remains a challenge.

Social Inequality and Housing: China faces issues related to social inequality and housing affordability. Rapid urbanization has led to a demand for housing, resulting in rising property prices, especially in major cities. This can make it difficult for low-income individuals and families to find affordable housing, leading to social disparities and challenges in providing adequate housing for all segments of society.

Urban Planning and Land Use: Effective urban planning is crucial for sustainable urban development. China is working on enhancing its urban planning processes, such as improving land-use management, promoting mixed-use development, and creating more green spaces. However, challenges remain in terms of balancing economic growth with environmental protection and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

It's important to note that China has been actively addressing these challenges through various policies, initiatives, and investments to promote sustainable urban development, improve environmental conditions, and enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

Factsheet



Total population: 1.44 billion (2022)



Urbanization rate: 63.9% (2022)



Average annual urbanization growth rate: around 1% (last 10 years)



Elderly population (65 years old and above) share: 14.9% (2022)



Youth population (16-25 years old): 10.5% (2022)



Total GDP in 2022: around \$11.5 trillion



Human Development Index (HDI): 0.768 (2022)



Unemployment rate: 5.5% (April 2022)



Internet population coverage: 75.6% (2022)



CO² emissions: 11.48 billion tons (2022)



Number of cities: 669 (2020)

Number of megacities (population over 10 million): 4

Number of metropolis (population over 5 million): 15

Number of large cities (population 1-5 million): 38

Number of medium-sized cities (population 500,000-1 million): 95

Number of small cities (population 200,000-500,000): 147



Total population of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen: 82.993 million (2022)



Total population of the three major urban clusters (Pearl River Region, Yangtze River Region, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei): 338 million (2020); Average housing area per person: 33 square meters



Highway mileage: 5.35 million km (including highways and general roads 2022)



Urban rail mileage: 6,619 km (as of the end of 2021)



Green building area ratio: more than 50% (new buildings, calculated by building area, 2020)

The above data are obtained from China's official data bulletin, UN data, etc. The data are updated to May 2022, and some data are for 2020-2021.



Figure: Shsnghai, China
Source: Pixabay.com

Summary of Current Portfolio

The UN-Habitat China Office is actively engaged in promoting the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. Aligned with the goals and principles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda, and the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan, the Office is committed to advancing sustainable urban development in China.

The China Office has established six country office flagship programmes to drive its work in the country:

1. Sustainable Urban Planning Programme:

This programme provides support in sustainable urban planning to numerous Chinese cities, including Chengdu, Nanjing, Xuzhou, Jiaxing, and Changbaishan etc., Through policy guidance, technical assistance, and forum collaborations, the programme assists cities in developing sustainable urban future.



Figure: Sustainable Development Guidelines for the First Batch of Pilot Cities
Source: UN-Habitat China Office

2. People-Oriented Urban Public Space Programme:

In collaboration with the UN-Habitat HQs' Global Public Space Program, this project utilizes relevant tools to assess and provide guidelines for urban public spaces. Additionally, it has initiated the China Place-making Alliance. The programme has conducted significant cooperation in Wuhan to enhance urban public spaces.



Figure: UN-Habitat HQ's experts visited East lake of Wuhan
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office

3. Smart City Programme:

The Smart City Project has established the "UN-Habitat China Future Cities Council (CFCC)" composed of technology entrepreneurs. Together, CFCC explores how smart city technologies can promote urban sustainable development. The programme publishes an annual flagship report, "Future Cities Advisory Outlook," and provides specific solutions such as smart city planning guidelines. It has offered smart city solutions to cities like Chengdu Hi-Tech Zone and Chengdu Future Science City.



Figure: Achievements of CFCC
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office

4. Waste Wise Cities Programme:

The project supports Chinese cities to improve their capacity in waste management and resource usage by translating curricula, conducting training, and preparing excellent case reports to promote the application and dissemination of the UN-Habitat HQ's Waste Wise Cities programme and its experience in China. It is hoped that this will call for more Chinese cities to take action to address global waste management challenges and support cities and local governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to waste.



Figure: Group Discussion of the Waste Management
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office



Figure: Competitions
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office

5. Rural Revitalization Programme:

The focus of this programme is to provide support for rural development in China. Through the "UN-Habitat Rural Enabling International Innovation Fest" and rural revitalization guidelines, the project offers technical assistance for rural planning, industrial development, and brand building. It has successfully implemented practical initiatives in cities like Wuhan and Dinghai District of Zhoushan.



Figure: Talk with Villagers
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office



Figure: Field Study
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office

6. Child-Friendly City Programme:

This programme collaborates with cities and leverages the expertise of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide training and planning support for child-friendly urban environments.



Figure: Youth Participation of the urban Planning
Source: Photo by UN-Habitat China Office

The work of the UN-Habitat China Office is guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda, and the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan. By actively engaging with Chinese cities and stakeholders, the office strives to contribute to the achievement of SDGs, promote sustainable urban development, and create livable and inclusive cities in China. Through policy guidance, technical support, and collaborative efforts, the office plays a vital role in advancing China's sustainable development agenda in line with global commitments.



Project Proposals

- Project Proposal 1: China Future Cities Council - Future cities Advisory Outlook 2023: Digital Innovations Empower Urban Net-Zero Carbon Transformation.
- Project Proposal 2: Rural Revitalization: UN-Habitat Rural Enabling International Innovative Fest 2023
- Project Proposal 3: Wuhan - Urban Renewal

Project Proposal 1

China Future Cities Council -
Future Cities Advisory Outlook
2023: Digital Innovations
Empower Urban Net-Zero Carbon
Transformation.



Figure: Tide Energy
Source: Pixabay.com

Overview



Partners

Chengdu Xinchao Media Group
ISoftStone Smart Technology Company Limited
BOE Technology Group
Huawei
BYD



Time Frame

3 years



Location

China



Estimated Budget

750,000 USD



SDG Alignment



Alignment with UN-Habitat
Strategic Plan 2020-2023
and Flagship Programmes

SP2: Enhanced shared prosperity of
cities and regions and collaborate
with UN-Habitat People-Centered
Global Flagship Programme.



Target Beneficiary Group

Cities: Cities in China,
Companies: Members of CFCC,
National Institutions: National
Institutions,
Public: Chinese Citizens
UN-Habitat

Cities contribute 80% of global GDP, but also bring 70% of global energy consumption and 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Cities are key to achieving the ambitious vision of net zero carbon. In order to reduce carbon emissions and alleviate climate change, China strives to peak carbon dioxide emissions ahead of schedule by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2060 for green and sustainable urban development.

With these opportunities and challenges, UN-Habitat China office and Chinese companies explored the potential for a UN-Habitat China Future Cities Council (CFCC), an advisory initiative of Chinese technology leaders in support of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. CCFC is planned to establish a partnership initiative giving the opportunity to Chinese technology leaders to look ahead at challenges, solutions and impact of Chinese and global technological innovation in the context of sustainable urbanisation.

Globally, China is promoting the development and application of smart city technologies. To better summarize the experience of carbon reduction with digital tech and provide reference for other cities around the world. The UN-Habitat China Future Cities Council set the theme of the 2023 flagship report as: Digital Innovations Empower Urban Net-Zero Carbon Transformation.

Objective

The overall objective of the project is that more frontier technologies and innovations support sustainable urbanisation and social inclusion in China, through a collaborative knowledge and advocacy initiative of UN-Habitat .

Description

The project consist of following components:

1. Developing Future Cities Advisory Outlook 2023 to summarize the experiences and knowdedge of the application of digital technologies on empowering urban net zero carbon transformation;
2. Visiting Chinese cities for collecting the Best Practice of Smart Cities;
3. Inviting CFCC members to attend high level forums and smart city related events to exchange their professional experiences and knowledge;
4. CFCC members will be invited to other smart city advocacy learning and training activities in China, where relevant, the knowledge from this project, will be pro-actively used.

Strategy

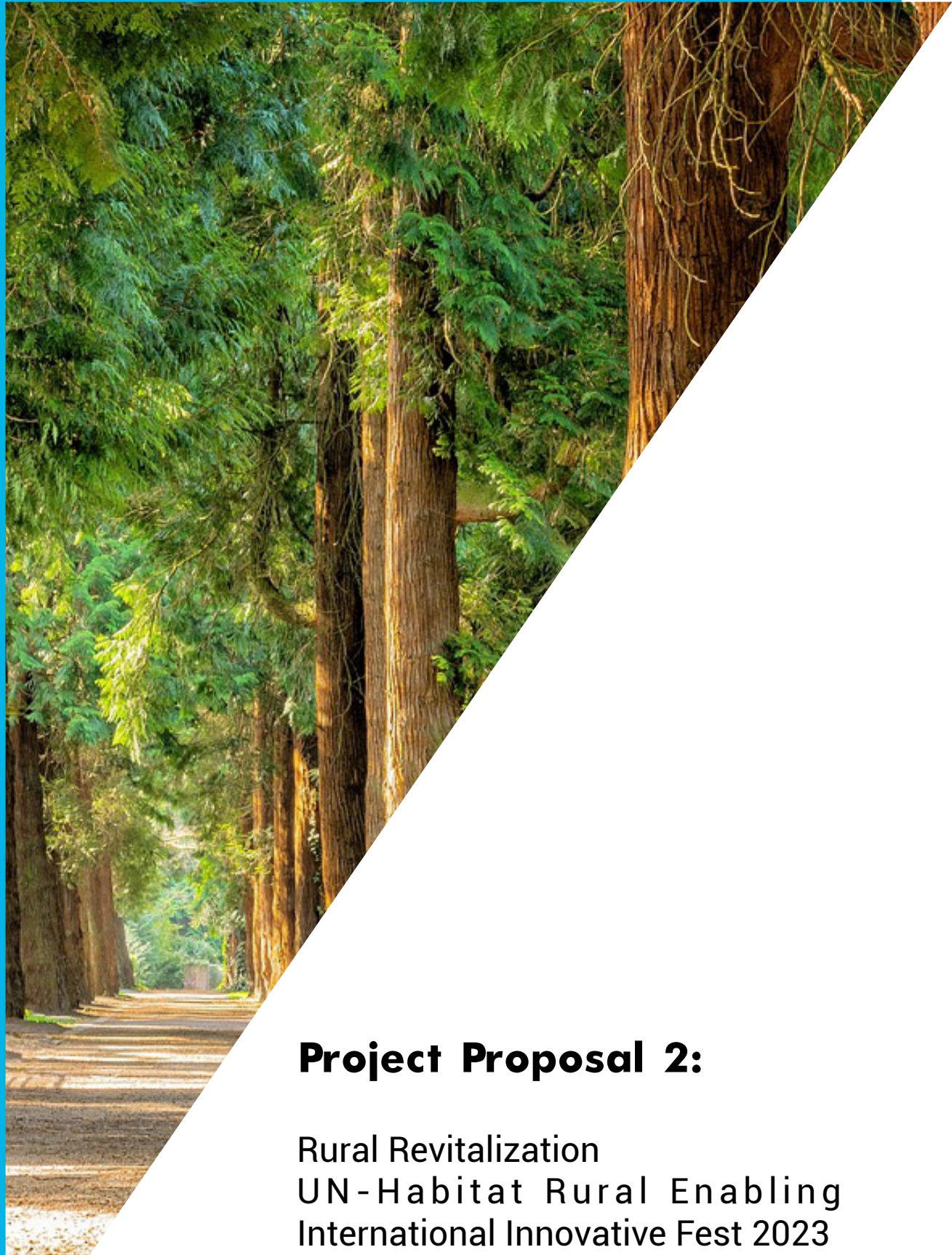
1. Summarize the approaches and best practices of using the frontier technology to support cities in China achieving the net-zero carbon.
2. Promote the China experience on the frontier technology to make the city more low-carbon and sustainable to the world through the platform of UN-Habitat events.
3. Formulate the advice by Chinese technology business leaders for the benefit of the Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

Expected Accomplishments

- Fast-track frontier advice on the implications of Chinese and global technological developments and its potential or real-time impact on sustainable urbanisation in the world.
- National institutions in China enhance their guidelines and advocacy to promote international guidelines and frontier technologies for sustainable urbanization.

Risk & Mitigation Measures

Risk	Mitigation Measures
One or more member companies face disciplinary sanctions or investigations, or reveal incidents or actions against the GC principles and other issues of possible reputational harm to UN-Habitat	CFCC will revoke the membership, on the merit that this situation has also an adverse impact on the reputation of the United Nations. The Report editor will design a resilient structure that a situation of 2-3 members no longer contributing midway.
CFCC does not mobilise enough members timely	UN-Habitat and signed-up members need to modify the CFCC guidelines and terms
Reputation of a member (company) becomes negative or disputed during the term	UN-Habitat will revoke the membership and will seek consensus with at least a majority of the members
UN-Habitat Secretariat and appointed editor deals carelessly with confidential information of the members	UN-Habitat China office and ROAP need to ensure continuous tight management oversight of the initiative.



Project Proposal 2:

Rural Revitalization
 UN-Habitat Rural Enabling
 International Innovative Fest 2023

Figure: Forest Avenue
 Source: Pixabay.com

Overview



Partners

Chongqing Municipal People's Government
 Xuzhou Municipal People's Government
 Xi'an Municipal People's Government



Time Frame

2 years



Location

Xi'an, Chongqing, Xuzhou



Estimated Budget

300,000 USD



SDG Alignment



Alignment with UN-Habitat
 Strategic Plan 2020-2023
 and Flagship Programmes

SP1: Reduced spatial inequality
 and poverty in communities
 across the urban rural continuum



Target Beneficiary Group

Rural Areas: Villages in China,
 Industries: Local industries
 Participated students and
 institutions

"UN-Habitat Strategic Plan (2020-2023)" adopted in May 2019 emphasizes "reducing poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities as one of the four domain of changes of UN-Habitat in the coming years. The resulting need for rural revitalization is not only related to the overall situation of sustainable urbanization but also related to the even broader aspects associated with global sustainable development.

The main problems of the development of countryside in China are the low efficiency of agricultural mechanization and digitalization, and the imperfect institutional mechanism and policy system for integrated development of urban and rural areas.



Figure: PV Installed Roof
Source: Rural Revitalisation under the Net-zero Carbon Goal of Dinghai, Zhoushan, China

Revitalizing, expanding and optimizing the production, living and ecological functions of the countryside, to meet the growing needs of the people for a better life is a matter of further development of China's economy and society, and is one of the key components of the promotion of the socialist modernization of China.

UN-Habitat has always played a leading role in promoting "Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities". UN-Habitat China Office is committed to solving complex urban and rural development issues with innovative solutions. In 2023, UN-Habitat and Xi'an will co-host the "UN-Habitat Rural Enabling International Innovative Fest 2023", inviting domestic and international university students to carry out empowerment programs in the areas of "rural planning", "industrial development" and "brand building", and to carry out rural revitalization projects in the relevant rural areas of Xi'an.

Objective

Providing innovative solutions for rural revitalization in rural planning, industrial development and brand building. It will also focus on rural development orientation, rural infrastructure, industrial upgrading, historical culture and natural heritage protection and development, as well as rural tourism.

Description

The project consist of following components:

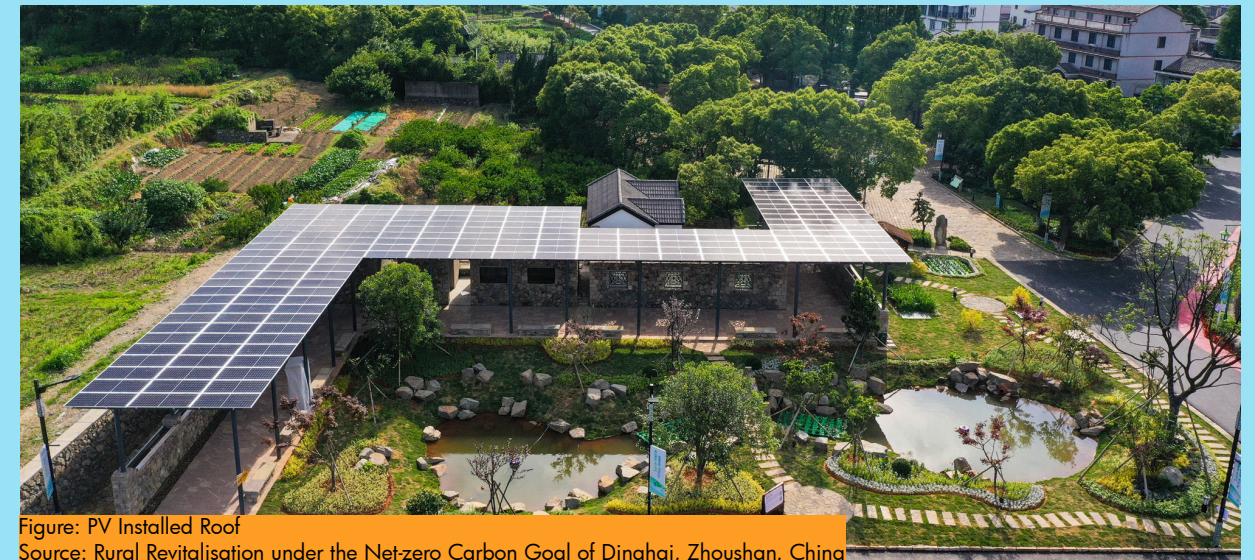


Figure: PV Installed Roof
Source: Rural Revitalisation under the Net-zero Carbon Goal of Dinghai, Zhoushan, China

Rural Planning

Reviewing the existing datas and the characteristics of the village, and the lifestyle of the villagers, such as the age composition of the villagers, and the main activities and the spatial needs under the dominance of different activities.

Industrial Development

Exploring and studying the special industries in the region, understanding their industrial production, profitability and development patterns, promoting the expansion and integration of rural industrial functions.

Brand Building

The countryside is abundant in culture, and culture needs to be disseminated in the form of symbolic elements, the brand of the countryside shall be analyzed and refined from the three aspects, namely, history and culture, natural landscape and new economy.



Project Proposal 3: Wuhan - Urban Renewal

Figure: Wuhan, China
Source: Pixabay.com

Overview

 Partners Wuhan WPD
Ezhou Municipal People's Government

 Time Frame 2 years

 Location Wuhan

 Estimated Budget 500,000 USD

 SDG Alignment





 Alinment with UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and Flagship Programmes Enhanced Shared Prosperity of Cities and Regions and promote the development of People-Oriented urban public space.

 Target Beneficiary Group
 Cities: Cities in China can be popular for its public space construction
 Companies: Devoted to the construction of Public space
 Public: people from all age groups.

11 Outline of the People's Republic of China 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives for 2035" clearly proposed the implementation of urban renewal action. Chapter 29 states that " it is necessary to accelerate the transformation of urban development, coordinate urban planning and construction management, implement urban renewal actions, and promote the optimization of urban spatial structure and quality improvement".

UN-Habitat is working for SDG11: make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable. Three of the targets in Goal 11 are related to the issue of urban renewal. 11.3 points out that by 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries; 11.6 demonstrates that by 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management; 11.7 shows that by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

UN-Habitat China Office takes the urban renewal and regeneration as the priority of 2023 workplan. UN-Habitat will start with Wuhan, then Xuzhou, Fuzhou, for the sustainable regeneration projects, especially the planning of the public space of East lake, Wuhan.



Figure: Waterfront park, Wuhan, China
Source: Pixabay.com

Objective

Taking measures such as renovation of old neighborhoods, preservation of historical districts, promotion of ecological space and enhancement of infrastructure to improve the quality of people's lives, enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the city, and increase the competitiveness of the city.

Description

The project consist of following components:

Historical & Cultural Heritage Protection

For old neighborhoods or old buildings that have historical, cultural preservation value, protection and preservation.

Public Space Improvement

Public space includes the improvement and construction of urban public space such as parks, green belts, rivers and lakes, as well as the promotion of environmental sanitation facilities such as garbage disposal and sewage treatment.

Infrastructure Upgrading

Large-scale infrastructure upgrading includes road drainage and other infrastructure maintenance and rest; small-scale infrastructure includes street parks, public toilets and other regional facilities renewal.

Old Neighborhood Renovation

Renovation of old neighborhoods with inadequate facilities, substandard roads and less environmentally friendly sanitation, especially for the disadvantaged groups such as the elderly and children to install barrier-free facilities.



IMPLEMENTING
THE NEW
URBAN AGENDA



UN-HABITAT

For A Better Urban Future

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