



**State Committee
on Urban Planning and Architecture
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**



UN-HABITAT

**AZERBAIJAN
NATIONAL
URBAN FORUM**

*Khankendi-Baku
15-17 October 2025*



Towards Climate-Resilient and Healthy Cities:
Harnessing Regional Partnerships and Innovative Solutions

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The Azerbaijan National Urban Forum is a non-legislative three-day event convened by the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The first two editions of the Forum were held in October 2022 and October 2023, respectively.

The third edition of the Forum (NUFA3) that is planned for October 2025 has become a highly anticipated and prestigious gathering in the region, attracting participants from around the world. It serves as a recurring platform for addressing urban challenges, with a particular focus on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of human settlements in post-conflict contexts. Additionally, the Forum aims to showcase contemporary approaches in urban planning and sustainable development, while facilitating the exchange of international experiences between practitioners in this field.



Figure 1: President Ilham Aliyev delivering his inaugural speech at the opening ceremony of the Azerbaijan National Urban Forum held in the newly built convention hall in Agdam, October 2022

Why an Urban Forum?

The National Urban Forum (NUF) is a multi-stakeholder platform convened at the national level to discuss, align and advance urban development priorities in support of sustainable urban development decision-making and policy review processes at all levels, including through advocacy, knowledge sharing, capacity development, partnership and networking. Such a platform is strongly advocated by UN-Habitat as a key mechanism to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”.

With the aim of fostering inclusive dialogue, the Forum brings together national and local governments, civil society, private sector, academia, grass root organizations and development partners to engage in open dialogue on urban challenges and opportunities. By promoting participatory planning and evidence-based decision-making, the Forum helps to mobilize support and consensus for the development of a national urban policy that aligns with national and international commitments.

National Urban Forums are also designed to strategically feed into international processes such as the World Urban Forum (WUF) by building local capacities to formulate national positions, showcase

progress, exchange experiences, formulate actionable strategies, foster national and international collaboration initiatives, and aligning domestic agendas with global urban development goals.

2025 Forum objectives

The main goal of the Third Azerbaijan National Urban Forum (NUFA3) is to showcase sustainable urban planning and development practices, with an emphasis on resilience and inclusivity, urban innovation and healthy living environments, addressing emerging urban challenges such as housing affordability, post-conflict and post disaster reconstruction, showcasing greener construction approaches, inclusive urban governance, digital innovations, nature-based solutions, and regional partnerships.

In consideration of Azerbaijan emerging position as a “regional connector” and hub for dialogue and innovation, NUFA3 has the ambition to encourage peer-to-peer learning and institutional cooperation between planning authorities of the region to address common challenges, while promoting alignment of urban and territorial planning with transboundary environmental and infrastructure goals, and create opportunities for joint project development, especially in post-conflict reconstruction, sustainable transport, disaster risk reduction, and green infrastructure. Structured dialogues between country representatives will encourage the development of shared indicators for urban monitoring and policy harmonization for sustainable regional development on shared issues, such as housing, natural resources, land use and mobility.

A regional focus could attract support from a wider set of UN agencies such as UNEP, UNECE and ESCAP multilateral development banks (e.g. WB, ADB, EBRD, IsDB), relevant economic organizations (e.g. ECO, D8) and academic and civil society networks, thus leveraging existing collaborations, regional funding, technical expertise, and investment partnerships.

Ultimately, NUFA3 will serve as stepping stone toward the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) in 2026, helping to (1) shape a coordinated regional voice for WUF13 and similar global events; (2) Gather inputs and recommendations that will strengthen the drafting of Azerbaijan’s National Urban Policy through regional benchmarking; and (3) Demonstrate Azerbaijan’s leadership in multilateral urban diplomacy, coordination and commitment to SDG11 and the New Urban Agenda.

Proposed date, duration and venue

NUFA3 will take place from 15 to 17 October 2025.

The opening ceremony and the second day will be held at the newly inaugurated Khankendi Congress Centre, located in the city of Khankendi. The venue is designed to accommodate comfortably 600 people in a theatrical setting.

The third day of the forum will be held at a venue in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan.



Figure 2: The Khankendi Congress Centre was officially inaugurated in July 2025

Proposed Agenda structure

The Forum will comprise of an Opening Ceremony, **10 thematic sessions each featuring 3-4 speeches**, a guided tour of Khankendi and Shusha, and an optional final site seeing tour in Baku.

	DAY 00	DAY 01	DAY 02	DAY 03
AM	Arrivals of participants	Baku > Khankendi	Session 2: Urban-rural linkages	Session 8: Urban accessibility and inclusivity
		Opening Ceremony	Session 3: Climate Resilient and Healthy Cities	Session 9: Finance for climate action in cities
		Session 1: Heritage sensitive master planning	Session 4: Housing affordability	Session 10: Fostering inter-sectoral Partnerships
		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
PM	Pre-registration of participants in Baku	Guided tour of Khankendi and Shusha	Session 5: Technology and Innovations for future of cities	
			Session 6: Healthies cities by design	Site seeing in Baku
			Session 7: Mobility, Data and Spatial planning	
		Gala dinner	Khankendi > Baku	

Participation

Invitees to the event will include representatives from international, regional, national and local governments, representatives of national and international non-governmental and community-based organizations, academics, research and training institutes, the private sector, multilateral and UN agencies, partners, and donors.



Expected Results

- Accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through urban actions;
- Showcase innovative urban practices and addressing emerging urban challenges such as housing affordability, post-conflict and post disaster recovery;
- Position WUF13 as a catalyst for regional and cross-border partnerships that promote inclusive, green, sustainable, resilient and people-centred urban development;
- Encourage peer-to-peer learning and institutional cooperation between planning authorities.