

## HELPING CITIES TAKE A CITY-WIDE APPROACH TO PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING



**The definition, delimitation and protection of public space is the first and most important step of any planning exercise. The status of public space needs to be clearly defined in urban legislation and mechanisms for its protection to be enforced**

UN-Habitat Global Public Space Toolkit



The lack of long-term and comprehensive approaches to public space planning, design, construction, operation and management is deteriorating the quality of public spaces in many parts of the world. To help cities with this challenge, UN-Habitat has developed guidance for local governments on developing city-wide public space strategies. These strategies provide the foundation for taking a strategic and action-oriented approach to public space development and management and can help local governments map the current state of public spaces and set goals to improve them. This work can be translated into annual public space action plans which provide more detailed information on proposed projects as well as a monitoring framework.

The production of city-wide public space strategies must be based on accurate data on the state of public spaces. UN-Habitat's Community-led, City-wide Open Public Space Assessment Tool helps local governments cost-effectively collect and

analyse this kind of data and easily prepare the public space strategy. To date, UN-Habitat has worked with local governments in Nairobi, Kisumu, Bamenda, Addis Ababa and Wuhan to carry out public space assessments and city-wide strategies.

In 2017, UN-Habitat produced two guides to assist local governments in the development of city-wide public space strategies. *City-wide Public Space Strategy – A Global Guide for City Leaders* offers clear, practical guidance to local authorities and other stakeholders on how to prepare a city-wide public space strategy and how to deliver, monitor and review existing strategies. It describes a set of generic principles and actions that can be considered in the process of preparing and implementing a city-wide strategy on public space as well as guidelines on how to adapt the principles to the local context.

*City-wide Public Space Strategy – Compendium of International Practices* is a collection of case studies on public space city-wide

strategies. A variety of best practices can be extracted from these case studies. Melbourne, for example, has set targets of 300 or 500 metre walking distance to open public spaces depending on the neighbourhood. Where gaps in public space provision exists, the Victorian Government is committed to new land acquisition. The Mexico City *Green City Plan* is committing 8 percent of the annual budget to make Mexico City greener, including creating large numbers of pedestrian zones, constructing 4,000km of bicycle lanes and suspending vehicle circulation on weekends. The Boston *Open Space and Recreation Plan* contains a detailed environmental inventory and shows protection, ownership, regulation and development reviews related to all conservation and recreation spaces, including parks, urban walks, community gardens and cemeteries.

