

Habitat for Humanity to hold Asia-Pacific Housing Forum in Thailand for the third time

Over 2,000 industry experts and delegates expected to participate in a hybrid event, co-organized with SWITCH-Asia

BANGKOK (August 2, 2021) – Habitat for Humanity announced today that the eighth Asia-Pacific Housing Forum with the theme, “Building forward better for inclusive housing”, will be held in Bangkok from December 7 to 9. This will be the third time that the affordable housing forum will be held in Thailand. The strategic location of the country, presence of a strong and vibrant international development community in Bangkok, and Habitat for Humanity’s 23-year history of building homes in Thailand, were the key considerations for the choice of venue for the biennial event.

“The focus for this year’s Asia-Pacific Housing Forum centers on how affordable and sustainable housing solutions can bring an inclusive future for vulnerable and low-income families through greener, safer, and more resilient approaches,” said Luis Noda, area vice president of Habitat for Humanity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Globally, the health and economic impacts of the ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the housing crisis and made clear how crucial having safe, secure, and adequate housing is to one’s health, wellbeing, and even survival.

Around the world, approximately 1.6 billion people live without adequate shelter. In the Asia-Pacific region, an estimated one-third of urban dwellers live in slums or slum-like conditions. In Thailand, for instance, the slum and squatter population has continued to increase, with a majority of them in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. The nation’s urban population is approximately 35.29 million in 2019 (Statista.com). From 2018 to 2019, the poverty rate dropped to 6.2%, according to the World Bank. However, in 2020, the poverty rate increased to 8.8% due to the effects brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the main speakers of the Asia-Pacific Housing Forum include Maimunah Mohd Sharif, executive director of UN-Habitat, and Jonathan Reckford, chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International.

Co-organized by Habitat for Humanity and the EU-funded SWITCH-Asia programme, with the support of other partners, the Forum brings together industry leaders, innovators, policy experts, and various stakeholders to inspire a new vision for more inclusive, healthy, and resilient cities and communities. It serves as a multi-sectoral platform to build collaboration among like-minded organization to create impact at scale for low-cost, affordable technologies across the Asia-Pacific region.

The importance of housing as a driver of economic growth and sustainability in human settlements will be one of the central discussions during the Forum. It also aims to strengthen the regional community’s commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and align

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climate change initiatives with national priorities.

The Asia-Pacific Housing Forum, which has been attended by more than 7,200 participants since its inaugural conference in 2007, is supported by The Hilti Foundation, Whirlpool, Agence Francaise de Developpement, and Somfy Foundation. Other partners include UN-Habitat, Cities Alliance, and Total Quality PR.

The Forum will adopt a hybrid format, with limited in-person participation in accordance with government-mandated health and safety guidelines. However, with the fluid situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizers are continuously monitoring the situation with a pivot strategy in place for an enhanced fully virtual experience. Register at aphousingforum.org and find out more about the forum program, tracks and side events.

About Habitat for Humanity

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 as a grassroots effort and has since grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in more than 70 countries. In the Asia Pacific region since 1983, Habitat for Humanity has supported millions of people to build or improve a place they can call home. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. To learn more, donate or volunteer, visit habitat.org/asiapacific

About EU SWITCH-Asia programme

Launched in 2007, the SWITCH-Asia programme is the largest European Union-funded programme promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) supporting 24 countries in Asia and Central Asia. The programme has funded around 130 projects, supporting over 500 Asian and European non-for-profit partners, about 100 private sector associations and 80.000 Asian MSMEs. The SCP Facility, one of SWITCH-Asia Components, aims at strengthening the implementation of SCP policies at the national level, facilitating the coordination of all components of the programme through information sharing. In addition, it carries out analyses on the results of the pilot projects and supports dialogue with stakeholders.

Media contact:

Maetavarin Maneekulpan | +66-2260-5820 | mae@tqpr.com

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