

# KERATAN AKHBAR NST

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PREPARING ROADMAPS

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## Take action to create sustainable and resilient cities



DR  
AZMIZAM  
ABDUL  
RASHID

**CITIES** are an important driving force in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda.

The SDGs provide an operational framework to consider urbanisation globally, while providing local mechanisms for action and careful attention to closing the gaps in the distribution of health gains.

While health and wellbeing are explicitly addressed in SDG 3, health is also present as a precondition of SDG 11, which aims at creating inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

World Health Day is celebrated on April 7 yearly to draw attention to global health concerns.

The global health awareness day also marks the founding an-

niversary of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The theme for World Health Day 2022 is "Our Planet, Our Health", which calls for global attention toward urgent actions for fostering a healthy planet and human life with a focus on societal wellbeing.

How does the current climate impact urban dwellers' daily lives?

Are we able to reimagine a world where clean air, water and food are available to all? Where economies are focused on health and wellbeing? Where cities are liveable and people have control over their health and the health of the planet?

Over 90 per cent of people are breathing unhealthy air resulting from the burning of fossil fuels.

A heating world is the perfect condition for mosquitos to spread diseases farther and faster than ever before.

Extreme weather events, land degradation and water scarcity are displacing people and affecting their health.

Pollution and plastics have been found at the bottom of our deepest oceans, the highest mountains and in our food chain.

Systems that produce highly processed, unhealthy foods and beverages are driving a wave of obesity, increasing cancer cases and heart disease while generating a third of global greenhouse gas emissions.

While the Covid-19 pandemic showed us the healing power of science, it has also highlighted the inequities in our world.

The pandemic has revealed weaknesses in all areas of society and underlined the urgency of creating sustainable wellbeing societies committed to achieving equitable health now and for future generations without breaching ecological limits.

The present design of the economy leads to too many people still living in poverty and instability.

A wellbeing-based economy has human wellbeing, equity and ecological sustainability as its goals. These are translated into long-term investments, wellbeing budgets, social protection and legal and fiscal strategies.

Meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement could save a million lives a year worldwide by 2050 through reductions in air pollution alone.

Avoiding the worst climate impacts could help prevent 250,000 additional climate-related deaths per year from 2030 to 2050, mainly from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

Transportation produces around 20 per cent of global carbon emissions.

Alternatives like walking and cycling are not only green initiatives but also offer major health benefits, such as reducing the risk of chronic health conditions and improving mental health.

As per the United Nations, systems to produce, package and distribute food generate a third of greenhouse gas emissions.

More sustainable production would mitigate climate impacts and support more nutritious diets that could prevent close to 11 million premature deaths a year.

Natural disasters like floods, caused by long-term climate change, can disrupt health services, lead to displacement, cause death and injury by drowning, physical trauma, heart attacks, lead to a shortage of safe water, cause water-borne diseases and even result in poisoning

Rising temperatures increase

the risk of extreme heat.

Exposure to extreme heat causes headaches, confusion, tiredness and vomiting. WHO said that with temperatures above 40 degrees, heat strokes might happen, causing organ failure, hospitalisation and even death.

Additionally, rising temperatures and floods caused by climate change will put 2 billion people at risk of dengue.

Climate change also makes it more likely for droughts and wildfires to happen.

The Malaysia SDG Cities Roadmap developed by Urbanice Malaysia has drawn up a process as a guiding framework to support cities and regions to deliver the 2030 Agenda.

The roadmap advocates the agenda for a sustainable urban nation.

Its aim is to encourage all Malaysian cities to prepare their own sustainable development roadmaps and action plans aligned to the SDG goals and targets that can meet their local needs and challenges toward sustainability and resilience.

The writer is Deputy CEO, Urbanice Malaysia