

# Hab Post

Updates from  
UN-Habitat

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## Would You Do Your Job for Free?



# Editor's note

Dear Reader,

2020 has so far brought to us one challenge after the other. From the Australia bushfires to the killing of George Floyd and the never-ending coronavirus pandemic, this year has already produced its fair share of turmoil.

We are now in July, a time when many of us would usually start to step out of the office to leave for more exciting and relaxing horizons. Things won't be that easy this year, as our ability to move freely has been hampered, and as we worry about our health and that of our loved ones. But just like any other year, the need for us all to take a break and breathe is still vital – perhaps now even more than ever. This week's issue of HabPost takes a break from the seriousness of most of our past issues and invites you to do the same. Our feature story will tell you just why it is so important for you to disconnect from work for a while, and ways to do so during the pandemic. So do have a read, and enjoy your holidays!

**The HabPost Team**

## On the menu

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## Alerts

### COVID-19

The coronavirus continues to cause disruption to the way we work, live, and travel. Here are selected highlights from the international media.

- **As of 30 June**, there were **10,096,002 confirmed cases of COVID-19**, with **500,792 deaths**. Monitor the situation at: <https://covid19.who.int/>. You can also access a newly-updated timeline of the WHO's COVID-19 response [here](#).
- In a media briefing on 29 June, WHO Director General Tedros Ghebreyesus stated that “this is not even close to being over”, calling on all to “reflect on the progress we have made and the lessons we have learned, and to recommit ourselves to doing everything we can to save lives.” You can watch the full media briefing [here](#).
- **Several US States**, including California, Texas, and Arizona, have rolled back reopening plans after reporting record surges in coronavirus cases.
- The EU has [released a tentative list of 14 countries](#) whose citizens are deemed “safe” to be let in during a planned border reopening from 1 July. Pending confirmation, the countries listed are Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay.
- Cases of coronavirus in India increased by **100,000 in one week**. Globally, the country is the fourth worst-hit country after the United States, Brazil and Russia.



# Would You Do Your Job for Free?



HAB POST | July 02 2020

Would you do your job for free? And do you take all your annual leave? If you said no to the first question, you had better say yes to the second.

When you forfeit your leave, you are essentially volunteering your services to UN-Habitat. That may be laudable, but consider these questions: am I being more productive by working more and longer? Am I happy with my work-life balance? And why, oh why am I working for free?

When your contract offers you annual leave, you'll be entitled up to 30 days of paid vacation per year. In addition, UN-Habitat observes 10 paid holidays per year which vary from one duty station to the other. All these benefits are clearly laid down in the [Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations](#), so you can be sure that we're not just saying that:

these days have been made for you to use.

But why are holidays so important? First off, [evidence](#) suggests that they contribute to general mental and emotional well-being. We all want to feel well and be happy, so naturally the UN should be concerned with it. But is it?

So it seems. In 2018, the Secretary-General launched the five-year [UN Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy](#) aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the UN by optimizing the psychological health of its personnel. The reinforcement of time out/holidays has been identified as a mental health promotion and prevention effort for implementation in the UN workplace. So you know it's good for you.

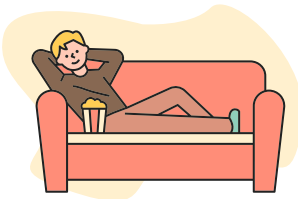
Second, the Strategy not only wishes us well but also seeks to increase our effectiveness (what did you expect?). And that's answer No. 2 as to why holidays are so important: believe it or not, they also [boost our productivity](#). But to reap the full benefits of your prolonged time off work, you'll need to be wise about it: not all vacations are equal.



In fact, [research](#) shows that poorly planned and stressful vacations eliminate the positive benefits of time away from work. In contrast, a positive, well-managed vacation can make you happier and less stressed, enabling you to return to work with more energy (and with more meaning in your life — isn't that great?). So how can you best benefit from your vacations? Here are a few tips:



**Switch off:** in the age of high-speed Internet, smartphones, and other electronic communication tools, we have become available 24/7 from anywhere in the world. It's not great during a work week, but it is worse when you're supposed to be resting. So finish what you can before you leave, delegate what can be delegated, reschedule your meetings and work plans for when you come back, and enjoy your time off. Needless to say, turn off all those phone notifications which will otherwise suck you right back into work.



**Rest more:** taking more vacation results in greater success at work and lower stress levels bringing you more happiness both at work and at home. Translation: if you have accumulated enough leave days, use them.



**Plan ahead:** if you're travelling, figure out in advance your trip details such as transportation, things to do, and things you need to know about the destination. This will help reduce the stress associated with last-minute schedule changes and other uncertainties.

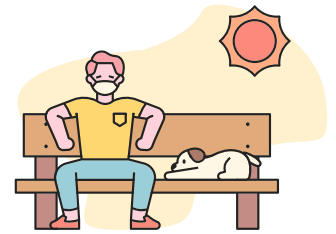
## But... COVID-19?

While these may be good tips in general, you might think they wouldn't be so useful or relevant during the current pandemic. This is true only to a certain extent: coronavirus or not, the need for us to rest is still crucial — perhaps now even more than ever.

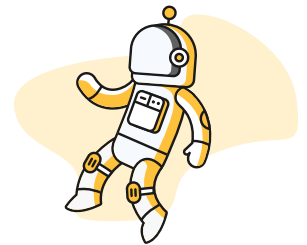
The truth is, a lot of us have been feeling anxious and concerned about the consequences of the virus on our health and livelihoods. Most of us have been staying home for months, inviting our laptops into our living room, displaying our personal life on our screens, home-schooling kids between a Webex conference and a Teams call, and letting our mobile devices set the rhythm of our life. We're hyper-connected, but we have nowhere to go. While travel restrictions might make you think that you're better off saving your vacations days for later, this could in fact jeopardize your mental health and well-being. Our advice: take a break even if it means sticking around.

With many borders still closed and the risk of transmission and propagation amplified in travel hubs, you might wonder what you can do to safely escape and get your much-needed rest. Here are a few tips and ways to leave your house physically and metaphorically:

**Take a stroll:** when it is safe to do so, go outside and replenish your batteries. Have a long walk, explore your neighbourhood, go to a nearby forest, spend the day out. A change in your daily routine will already provide you with a sense of novelty.



**Visit Mars:** if you're stuck at home and have exhausted your favourite books, try new ways of drifting to new horizons. A number of virtual tours are available just a click away. [Visit](#) the tomb of Queen Meresankh III, stroll in museums such as the [Louvre](#), or even explore [Mars](#)! Or go full screen and take a [virtual coral reefs tour](#).



**Entertain yourself :** if you haven't been able to meet up with your friends and/or miss dancing, you can [play board games](#) online or [party](#) with hundreds from your living room or backyard.



**Finally, avoid watching or reading the news:** just like you would normally do on your vacation, reduce the time spent on your New York Times app, or better yet don't open it at all.



But if you do decide to travel, bear in mind that you might need to quarantine for a while and risk exposing yourself and others to the virus. While a number of travel bubbles are in place, they do not mean that there is no risk, so take all precautions and stay alert.



This week, **Cynthia Mbutia**, Communications & Social Media intern with the OED, makes us reflect on the multidimensional aspects of travel, with a pinch of poetry. A new means to fly away.



Here we are four months deep, “locked” into the city, looking with anticipation to each presidential briefing and hoping we will soon be set free from the confines of coronavirus restrictions. Nairobi, my home city, teems with restless energy.

Most tourists who visit Kenya spend less than 24 hours in Nairobi. Despite the oft-cited accolade of having a national park within the capital, it is considered an entry point rather than an attraction in itself. The real action happens on the beaches, safaris or mountains. This isn’t a tourist stereotype, Nairobians too think this way: take any long weekend and see how traffic-free the city gets!

**People are rediscovering the city, and places that could once be considered “hidden gems” are becoming community hubs**

However, as lockdown restrictions persist, something else is happening. People are rediscovering the city, and places that could once be considered “hidden gems” are becoming community hubs. On weekday mornings, joggers in the forest. On weekend afternoons, scores of people trudging up to picnic on the hills, sweaty and exhilarated and looking over at the urban skyline with a new appreciation of the place we call home.

On a rare sunny day in London, friends sent me a picture of them sunbathing on air mattresses on the gravel outside their apartment. I wondered if any situation other than a global lockdown would have made this seem anything but absurd. The resilience of humanity is expressed in these newfound quests for magic in the mundane.

At the peak of global restrictions a few weeks ago, people shared the #ViewFromMyWindow on social media, taken from the inside at a world that felt transmuted into the plane of imagination. But perhaps it’s time we continue to look around rather than out, and redecorate the places where we stand. Whether that is our homes, our cities, or our soul.

I’d be lying if I said I wouldn’t be the first out to the beach once the borders are open, but I no longer feel homebound, I feel home free.”

**Cynthia Mbutia,**  
Communications & Social Media Intern, OED

**I'd be lying if I said I wouldn't be the first out to the beach once the borders are open, but I no longer feel homebound, I feel home free.**



**Vacancies**

**Role**  
 Programme Management Officer (Project Post), P3  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 25 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements, P3  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 7 August 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Intern, Urban Design Governance in the EU  
**Duty Station**  
 Brussels, Belgium  
**Deadline**  
 8 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Programme Management Officer, Human Settlements, P4  
**Duty Station**  
 Bonn, Germany  
**Deadline**  
 25 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Associate Programme Management Officer  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 3 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)



**Role**  
 Senior Programme Officer, Human Settlements, P5  
**Duty Station**  
 Sana'a, Yemen  
**Deadline**  
 7 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Consultor en relaciones institucionales - PNDIC  
**Duty Station**  
 La Paz, Bolivia  
**Deadline**  
 4 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Drupal Web developer  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 7 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Spatial Data Analysis Junior Assistant  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 7 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Intern, Cities and Climate Change  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 3 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

**Role**  
 Research, Analytics and Coordination (Urban Innovation and Entrepreneurship)  
**Duty Station**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
**Deadline**  
 3 July 2020  
[Apply Here](#)

# Upcoming events and corporate calendar



## UN HABITAT



### 25 June – 17 August Scroll of Honour Awards – Nominations Open!

UN-Habitat has just opened the call for nominations for the annual Scroll of Honour awards, which will be presented during **World Habitat Day on Monday 5 October 2020** under the theme of **“Housing For All: A better Urban Future”**. Established in 1989, the Scroll of Honour Award recognizes up to five individuals, projects or organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the field of sustainable urbanization. In line with this year’s theme, there will be a focus on achievements in housing, which has become particularly critical during the COVID-19 lockdown. Further information, guidelines and nomination forms are available on the [World Habitat Day webpage](#).



### Urban Thinkers Campus COVID-19 Series

The Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) is an initiative of UN-Habitat’s World Urban Campaign which seeks to provide an open space for critical exchange between all stakeholders and partners promoting sustainable urbanization. The global platform advocates for more enlightened planning, design, community engagement, urban governance, and city management. As part of ongoing deliberations on the most pressing urban challenges, the UTC is hosting a series of online Campuses on the theme of COVID-19 in cities and towns. Topics discussed will include: Urban Legislation and Climate change post COVID-19, Urban responses to COVID-19 and the localization of SDG and the New Urban Agenda, and Megacities’ Post-COVID. There are 15 urban campuses coming up in the next two weeks, all free of charge and open to all for registration.

For a full list of the Campuses and to register, visit the World Urban Campaign website at <https://www.worldurbancampaign.org/urban-thinkers-campus>.

## Other organizers



### Reuters Impact Mobility Virtual Summit

COVID-19 has completely altered the mobility landscape across the world. With several companies facing survival challenges, and cities seeing opportunities to redesign their streets, this two-day virtual summit will reflect on **“Redesigning Mobility in a Brave New World”**. Speakers include CEOs, mayors, transportation and city leaders, innovators and disruptors seeking to set mobility collaboration, investment and execution strategies for the years to come. Further information, including a full list of speakers and free registration is available through Reuters events at <https://reutersevents.com/events/mobility-eu/>.



### High-level political forum 2020

The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2020 will be held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The theme will be **“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”**. In the 2020 HLPF, participants will debate where we stand on the SDGs in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Available technological solutions for virtual sessions and interaction are being explored, including for presentations of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).



### Smart and Sustainable Cities Conference

The Smart and Sustainable Cities Conferences, a bi-annual event which usually takes place in Moscow, has moved online for 2020. The conference is a site for interdisciplinary discussion and technical analysis of urban ecosystems, with emphasis on the expansion of megacities. This year’s theme is **“Advanced technologies for sustainable development of urban green infrastructure”**. Registration is open, with a fee of USD 80-100. For more information, visit <http://ssc-conf.org/>



# Learning

## Umoja Training: Onboarding for HR Partners

The [Capacity Development and Operational Training Service \(CDOTS\)](#), in partnership with the [Human Resources Services Division](#) have launched a new self-paced training course on “Onboarding in Umoja”. The first in a series of blended courses offered in the HR Partner Certification Programme, the course combines online modules, hands-on practice and mentorship to equip staff with the knowledge and technological skills required to perform their functions in Umoja successfully. This course is a requirement for Certification Learners, and is also available to Continuous Development Learners, HR Partners wishing to refresh their skills or anyone curious about the onboarding process and the basics of personnel administration in Umoja. Find out more and register [here](#).

## Urban Lectures

The Global Urban lectures are UN-Habitat’s most popular video series, comprising of 15-minute lectures from renowned experts on advancing urban sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals in cities. Produced with the support of the [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#), the series features several videos addressing topics closely related to climate change and urban resilience. Each video release comes with a synopsis, a biography of the speaker, an audio track and links to additional reading material for further study. The lectures and supplementary material provide a quick and efficient online learning resource for all urban professionals. A new lecture is released every Tuesday until the end of August and is available along with the previous seasons of the Global Urban Lectures at: [unhabitat.org/knowledge/global-urban-lectures](https://unhabitat.org/knowledge/global-urban-lectures). All the videos are also uploaded on [UN-Habitat’s youtube channel](#).

## Inspiring Management and Supervisory Excellence

The self-paced Inspiring Management and Supervisory Excellence course is designed for new and mid-level supervisors. Its purpose is to help you develop the skills essential to getting the most out of your team and yourself as a supervisor. Through a range of modules including motivation, communication and managing conflict and unconscious bias, participants will work to become more dynamic and effective managers. The course features live, instructor-led facilitated dialogue, asynchronous engagement with your cohort of participants, and individual work for review by the facilitator. Any staff with supervisory responsibilities are eligible to participate. Find out more and register [here](#).

## Staff Selection Training for Hiring Managers (UNON)

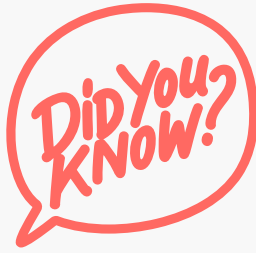
This two-day training workshop provides an overview of the UN Secretariat Staff Selection workflow, process and policy. It is designed for current or anticipated hiring managers who would like to understand the overall recruitment process and the role of hiring managers. You will learn how to tailor generic job profiles, build a job opening, evaluate and select candidates, as well as the role of the central review bodies and the onboarding process. The workshop will take place in two parts: the first at 14:30-16:30 on Tuesday 14 July, and the second from 14:30-16:30 on Wednesday 15 July (Nairobi Time). Register on Inspira Learning through code LMS-2411.

## LinkedIn Learning: Communicating with Empathy

Empathy at work is crucial to company-wide success. In this course, a communications expert will explain the principles of empathetic communication and share specific strategies to help improve your approach to difficult conversations. It will empower you to converse more empathetically and improve your one-on-one conversations and team interactions. You can explore this course and other related courses [here](#).







On 26 June, we marked the 75th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, the founding document of the UN. This is a unique opportunity to reaffirm our pledge to the ideals and values of the document that officially brought the United Nations to existence.

We commemorate this day at a time of great disruption where our role as international civil servants of the United Nations has become more crucial than ever in [leading and addressing global challenges](#) to protect our planet, end poverty and ensure prosperity for all as part of the sustainable development agenda. **To reaffirm our continued commitment to the Charter and the execution of the mandates assigned by Member States to the various organizations of the United Nations family, you are invited to participate in the online campaign celebrating Charter Day.**

You are invited to visit [share.un75.online](https://share.un75.online) and take a selfie using a unique photo filter, each spelling out a keyword from the Charter, such as "Justice", "Equality", "Dignity", "Peace", and to share it on social media platforms using the hashtag #UN75.

This campaign will continue through to the UN's 75th birthday on 24 October 2020. The UN looks forward to your participation!



I stand for HUMAN RIGHTS •  
EQUALITY • DIGNITY & WORTH OF  
EVERY PERSON • JUSTICE • PEACE  
today and every day! #UN75



## Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at [unhabitat-habpost@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-habpost@un.org).

### Editorial Team

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