

For Immediate Release

UNECE RECOGNISES THE NORMAN FOSTER FOUNDATION AS A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



Madrid, 26 April 2021

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Norman Foster Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 23 March 2021.

The two organisations formalise their cooperation in the promotion of sustainable housing and sustainable cities through the establishment of the Norman Foster Foundation as a 'Centre of Excellence' in Spain for the implementation of the [Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing](#).

The Centre of Excellence will provide best practices, research, support and training in the area of sustainable cities, sustainable housing and the organisation of the Second Forum of Mayors, to take place on 4 and 5 April 2022. This cooperation will also contribute to the development and undertaking of collaborative activities and projects to promote the principles of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing through the Centre of Excellence.

UNECE Executive Secretary, **Olga Algayerova**, emphasised: 'The collaboration between UNECE and the Norman Foster Foundation will strengthen the support we can offer to our member States on sustainable housing, to become more resilient while encouraging the transformation to smart and sustainable urban development'.

Norman Foster Foundation President, **Norman Foster**, said: 'We are delighted and honoured to be recognised by the United Nations as a Centre of Excellence and work forward to building on our collaboration in the future'.

With 'stay-at-home' orders becoming the norm during the COVID-19 pandemic, access to adequate and affordable housing is more critical than ever. Families and communities require a sense of stability and security that is particularly lacking for the more than fifty million people in the UNECE region living in informal settlements. The cooperation between UNECE and the Norman Foster Foundation will support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11): make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The alliance between UNECE and Norman Foster Foundation will combine the work of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management to address the housing and urban development challenges of the UNECE region with the vision and research of the Norman Foster Foundation, which is committed to helping new generations of architects, designers and urbanists anticipate the future and better serve society.

Activities undertaken by the Norman Foster Foundation, as partner organisation hosting the Centre of Excellence, will include the development and production of print and digital materials as well as curriculum for training and capacity building on sustainable cities, the organisation and hosting of meetings to disseminate information about the Charter and UNECE and the promotion of the Charter at international, national, and subnational level meetings and through print and social media.

UNECE will facilitate the work of the Centre of Excellence and the exchange of information, knowledge and experience within the network as well as with relevant international and national organisations in the UNECE region, coordinating cooperation and exchange of experiences between the Centres of Excellence.

Note to editors

About UNECE

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was set up in 1947 by ECOSOC. It is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations.

UNECE's major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration. UNECE includes fifty-six member States in Europe, North America and Asia. However, all interested United Nations member States may participate in the work of UNECE. Over seventy international professional organisations and other nongovernmental organisations take part in UNECE activities.

For further information on the work of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, please consult: <http://unece.org/housing/committee>.

About the Norman Foster Foundation

The Norman Foster Foundation promotes interdisciplinary thinking and research to help new generations anticipate the future. The first mission of the Norman Foster Foundation is to promote the importance of architecture, infrastructure and urbanism for the betterment of society. To this end, the second mission is to encourage new thinking and research across traditional boundaries to help younger generations anticipate the challenges of future change.

In particular, it addresses those professionals who are concerned with the environment — architects, engineers, designers, urbanists, civic leaders, planners and artists. This is at the heart of a holistic approach to design and is ever more relevant as populations shift to cities. With the implications of climate change, robotics and artificial intelligence, sustainable design is not about fashion but about survival.

The Foundation holds the Norman Foster Archive and Library, which provide a window into the larger narrative and history of our built environment through the work of Norman Foster. Through its research initiatives and programmes, the Norman Foster Foundation encourages the transfer of advanced knowledge in a wide range of design fields. The Foundation's educational initiatives are structured around research and workshops, fellowships and forums around the Foundation's core objectives. The Norman Foster Foundation is based in Madrid and operates globally.

For further information on the Norman Foster Foundation, visit <https://www.normanfosterfoundation.org/>

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