

# Sustainable urbanisation the focus this World Cities Day

Coined by the United Nations General Assembly, World Cities Day is celebrated annually on 31 October. Alexander Abrass, senior sales director, Danfoss Cooling, Turkey, Middle East & Africa, says that this year, "We, as a global community, need to address the future challenges of urbanisation and make a concerted effort in contributing to sustainable urban development, especially during the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, whilst most households work and study from home."



It is estimated that at least 55% of the human population live in cities and towns and that this number will increase to 70% by the year 2050, with the majority of growth attributed to Asia, Africa, in particular China, India and Nigeria, where population growth is at its highest.

"The UN-Habitat identifies cities and their communities as being at the frontline of the Covid-19 response, and Danfoss aims to contribute at the forefront in the supply and recommendation of green economic, sustainable and energy efficient technology to ease the impact of urban development during this new normality," says Abrass.

## Addressing the world's urban challenges

Urban October was launched by UN-Habitat in 2014 to emphasise the world's urban challenges and engage the international community towards the New Urban Agenda. The aim - to ensure cities and human settlements become more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

"Gone are the days of conventional methodologies of producing, transporting, storing and the way we consume perishable foods. As it is estimated that 8.9% of the world's population (690 million people) suffer from hunger, we need to do more with less, as a global community.

"A lot more needs to be done about food safety and how produce is treated, and it needs to be done in an energy efficient way as we face over [a quarter of a billion people potentially at the brink of starvation](#). Carbon dioxide, or [CO<sub>2</sub>, as a refrigerant has therefore become a hot topic in the food retail industry](#)," says Abrass.

## Efficient cold chains reduce food wastage

The [Birmingham Energy Institute](#) estimates that as much as 90% of the food wastage in developing countries stems from food loss somewhere along the supply chain. An estimated \$940bn are lost, and 4.4 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions are created by the production of food, which will never be consumed, annually. With efficient cold chains, food loss could be reduced by up to 40%.

Another concerning issue cities are facing is that of clean water and sanitation. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, we still live in a society where:

- one in three people [do not have access to safe drinking water](#);
- two out of five [do not have basic water facilities for personal hygiene](#); and
- 673 million people still [participate in public defecation](#).

## Global energy demand

Lastly, climate change is an ever-increasing concern to our entire planet.

In the past months, amid the economic slowdown caused by Covid-19, we have seen a decline in the global energy demand by 3.8%, and a consequent drop in CO2 emissions, alas unless the wave of investment to restart economies is dedicated to the green transition, the rebound in emissions can be larger than the decline. To [meet the 1.5°C Paris target, we must cut emissions by 7.6%](#) in the next year, and every year thereafter. Sustainable, energy efficient infrastructure, alongside building efficiency retrofit, are investments that can support countries boosting economic growth and mitigating climate change.

“We need to adapt swiftly and promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed local and marginalised communities,” said Abrass.



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