



Program for the 18th OWHC World Congress, Marrakesh (Morocco)

‘The New Urban Process: Toward Habitability of Historic Centers’

CONTEXT: A PRODUCTIVE JOURNEY

The 18th World Congress of the OWHC in Marrakesh is the culmination of a process that began in 2022 at the 16th World Congress in Quebec City. The OWHC’s member cities had affirmed there that the crises facing their historic centres, exacerbated by the effects of climate change, necessitate a renewal of the way World Heritage cities are managed and developed. This momentum gave rise to a collaborative effort on an unprecedented scale for the Organization, which led the 17th World Congress in Córdoba to identify habitability as the OWHC’s response to the challenges faced by its members. The resulting framework constitutes the New Urban Process (NUP).

MARRAKESH: A DYNAMIC PROGRAM

Marrakesh 2026 will enable member cities to:

- Adopt the New Urban Process.
- Lay the foundations for local action plans to improve the habitability of their historic centres.

The Symposium will lead to the adoption of the New Urban Process through a three-session itinerary:

Session 1 — Coming together. A review of the objectives of the mandate given in Quebec City and confirmed in Córdoba, and a sharing of the realities experienced by the cities, to facilitate a better understanding of the original approach brought by the New Urban Process.

Session 2 — Revealing where each city stands. Commitment to the principles of the NUP and the adoption of the conditions essential to its implementation, through workshops where cities exchange views based on their specific situations, challenges, initiatives and case studies.

Session 3 — Adopting. The adoption of the New Urban Process, which will open concrete prospects for the mobilisation of cities through their local processes.

For cities that did not participate in the preparatory work, a **catch-up session** on the New Urban Process will be offered on the afternoon of 26 October, prior to the Symposium.

During the 26th General Assembly of the OWHC, the institutional highlight of the Congress, member cities will take the administrative decisions necessary for the Organisation’s operation and governance. The Assembly will formalise the adoption of the New Urban Process and endorse the continuation of this initiative within the framework of the OWHC Strategy 2027–2030, accompanied by the Action Plan 2027–2028 and the 2027 budget. The cities will then have the necessary guidelines to **mobilise** towards habitability, with the support of the OWHC’s programs.



Marrakesh 2026 will mark the beginning of a new chapter in the OWHC's already long history and will see the launch of a vast international movement of cooperation for the habitability of historic centres, based on the New Urban Process.

18TH WORLD CONGRESS: CELEBRATING ENCOUNTERS AND COOPERATION WITHIN OUR NETWORK

The OWHC World Congresses are essential events that give the network its strength. The Marrakesh Congress is an important event for all OWHC members, aimed at making habitability a shared project for the historic centres of World Heritage cities. Marrakesh aims to bring together numerous delegations comprising a diverse range of stakeholders: decision-makers, heads of administrations and specialists, with the aim of strengthening their ties and broadening their professional horizons within the framework of the OWHC.

FOR MAYORS AND DECISION-MAKERS

Marrakesh 2026 will give mayors, elected representatives and decision-makers a central role in line with the political nature of the Organization. At the Congress, they will find numerous opportunities for meetings, dialogue and public speaking:

- The **Mayors' Panel** will provide a dedicated space for political discourse: public statements on habitability and a call for cooperation between cities.
- **Bilateral meetings** between cities will provide an opportunity to discuss ongoing initiatives and build concrete partnerships.
- The **adoption of the New Urban Process**, led by the mayors, will mark a strong political stance.

FOR PROFESSIONALS

Professionals from various relevant administrations of urban planning, economic development, heritage management, urban mobility and other fields will find in Marrakesh an atmosphere conducive to peer-to-peer exchanges, which is the tradition of the OWHC:

- **Workshops** to explore priority topics in depth and address common challenges.
- **Special areas** to meet privately or in small groups with colleagues, or with stakeholders from other sectors sharing similar responsibilities regarding historic centres.
- **Various materials and visuals** from member cities' initiatives and projects, which bring habitability to life and highlight its positive impacts on cities.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Venue: Congress Center Mogador, Marrakesh. Accommodation and hospitality at the Mogador Palace Agdal.

Dates: Participants arrival on 25 and 26 October 2026. Official program from 26 to 29 October 2026. Optional sightseeing tour on 30 October.

Languages: Simultaneous interpretation in French, English and Spanish.

Registration: Registration opens on 16 June 2026 via the conference's official website: [HTTPS://WWW.OVPMARRAKECH2026.COM/](https://www.ovpmmarrakech2026.com/). Each member city is invited to send a delegation comprising its mayor, a councillor and two to four technical experts.

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