



CITIES & REGIONS IN THE UNFCCC PROCESS



14 November 2023

Dear Assistant UN Secretary General Selwin Hart,
Dear COP28 President Designate Dr Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber,
Dear UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell,
Dear UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif,
Dear World Bank President Ajay Banga,
Dear COP28 High Level Champion Your Excellency Razan Al Mubarak,
Dear COP27 High Level Champion Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin,

Climate change is a global problem with local solutions. This year alone, our cities, towns, states, regions, and devolved nations have seen deadly flooding, record-breaking heatwaves, and wildfires – all while air quality continues to deteriorate and water scarcity threatens the lives and livelihoods of millions.

Correcting course on climate change will require nothing less than full-scale coordination between local, state, and global leaders as highlighted in the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency (LGMA) [joint COP28 position](#).

However, it is clear that the targets of the Paris Agreement are quickly slipping out of reach. Despite everything that countries and their subnational governments have achieved since 2015, we are now at risk of crossing the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C threshold for global warming even sooner than expected.

This is why, on behalf of local climate leaders worldwide, we offer our thanks to you for convening the first-ever Global Delegation of Local Leaders at the COP28 World Climate Action Summit and for hosting the COP28 Local Climate Action Summit in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, alongside your widespread support in championing multilevel climate partnership.

Our call to harness the power of local governments

If global decision-makers can join forces with local climate leaders—consulting them on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and providing much-needed resources for frontline climate action—then together, we can lower emissions and keep the aims and the spirit of the Paris Agreement alive. According to UN-Habitat, as of 2022 only 24% of existing NDCs in national climate pledges under the 2015 Paris Agreement include strong urban content.



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We, therefore, call on those national leaders attending COP28 to commit to working with local climate leaders when they update their climate mitigation and adaptation targets along with implementation plans, which are due before the end of 2025.

Local governments are not only first responders to the climate crisis—we also provide one of the best vehicles for effective climate solutions. The subnational networks we represent include more than 13,000 local governments, representing over half of the world’s GDP and 70% of energy-related greenhouse gases. With this impact, local governments can take action to transform local transport systems, decarbonize buildings, increase renewable energy supply, and put in place local just transition mechanisms that significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels and, therefore, emissions. We are close enough to the needs of residents to translate even the boldest climate goals into practical projects that will have real impacts on people’s livelihoods, quality of life, and health.

Our call to invest in local climate solutions

Funding local climate action is one of the most cost-effective investments any country can make. And yet, only 10-15% of global climate finance reaches local governments.

This critical funding opportunity must be pursued without delay. We call upon the leadership of COP28 to strongly encourage the national leaders attending COP28 to embrace climate actions from subnational leaders in the development and enhancement of Nationally Determined Contributions. Furthermore, we urge the COP28 leadership to prompt governments represented at COP28 to start pledging their commitment to multilevel partnerships by including subnational climate solutions in their NDC investment plans.

With high-level commitments in place, national leaders can work with local climate leaders to ensure more accessible access to enhanced sustainable financing, particularly for those in the Global South who are taking climate action. Likewise, the international community must commit to making reforms at the World Bank and other international financial institutions to channel new climate financing into cities, states, and regions throughout the developing world.

Multilateral Development Banks should develop dedicated subnational climate investment strategies, coordinate with national governments to create better enabling environments for subnational climate



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finance, and improve access to funding by adapting existing financing mechanisms to the reality on the ground for cities and regions.

As an added incentive to act, national leaders now have a range of attractive options for climate-smart investments, including breakthrough low-emissions technologies and resilient, sustainable infrastructure projects. These innovations are protecting communities and helping millions of people prepare for, recover from, and adapt to all climate disasters.

Many of these investments also promise valuable financial returns while creating well-paid jobs and driving valuable growth in underserved communities. In cities alone, 90% of emissions could be reduced while generating US\$23.9 trillion net value (greater than the U.S. economy) by 2050 and 50 million good green jobs by 2030 in C40 cities. With subnational governments in the OECD representing 55% of its public environmental spending and 64% of its public environmental investment, there are huge opportunities here as well.

A cause for hope

If this sounds like cause for hope, it is – but it's also a call to action. The time to act is now. In small towns, intermediary cities, megacities, and states and regions alike, we are working hard to make our communities safe, sustainable, and equitable for the more than 1 billion people we represent.

But subnational governments can't deliver alone. We need partners in our national governments, development finance institutions, and global organizations to support and elevate our ambition. We want to work together on solutions that work for all people.

Thank you in advance for helping us begin to realize the full potential of that partnership when many of us meet in Dubai later this month.

Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, OBE, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Co-Chair of C40 Cities

Mayor Abigail Binay, Makati, Philippines

COP28 Advisory Committee and Board Member of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy



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Mayor Carolina Cosse, Montevideo, Uruguay

Executive President of United Cities and Local Governments

Mayor Frank Cownie, Des Moines, United States

President of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

Mayor Yawo Winny Dogbatse, Kloto I, Togo

Board Member of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

Mayor Katja Dörner, Bonn, Germany

Host City of UNFCCC Secretariat and ICLEI Global Executive Committee Climate Action and Low Emission Development Portfolio Co-Chair

Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Africa Co-Chair of the Under2 Coalition

Mayor Anne Hidalgo, Paris, France

Global Ambassador of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

Mayor Sadiq Khan, London, United Kingdom

Co-Chair of C40 Cities

Governor Yuriko Koike, Tokyo, Japan

Vice Chair of C40 Cities

Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, Warsaw, Poland

President of the European Committee of the Regions' Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE) and Board Member of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

First Minister Humza Yousaf, Scotland, United Kingdom

European Co-Chair of the Under2 Coalition