



COP31 Presidency 10 Priority Themes

COP31 is being shaped as an Implementation COP, designed to respond to one of the central challenges in global climate action today: closing the gap between multilateral commitments and real-world delivery. Building on the first Global Stocktake, which highlighted the continued distance between Paris Agreement targets and actual transformation on the ground, COP31 is intended to place implementation at the centre of the process and to turn pledges into practical outcomes, delivery mechanisms and action-oriented cooperation. As Incoming Presidency, Türkiye aims to position COP31 not only as a conference for dialogue, but as an action process that produces concrete results.

The COP31 Action Agenda is being developed on the basis of the strengthened Global Climate Action Agenda architecture, while also reflecting current global priorities, opportunities and needs. Its overall approach rests on three core principles: no duplication but complementarity, reinforcing existing initiatives; prioritizing implementation gaps by focusing on the most critical areas where policy ambition has not yet translated into measurable action; and inclusive ownership, by reflecting the priorities of countries at different levels of development and ensuring that no one is left behind. In this sense, COP31 seeks to provide an implementation-focused, inclusive and practical framework that can connect climate priorities with concrete action.

Within this framework, COP31 highlights nine priority areas. Across all of these pillars, finance, technology and capacity building are treated as horizontal enablers. The Action Agenda will continue to be shaped through a broad consultative process leading up to its formal announcement at the Bonn SB64 session in June 2026, with stakeholder engagement, partnership-building and clarification of concrete outputs forming the basis of its final structure.

1. Zero Waste

Unlocking the climate action potential of waste management through scalable circular economy solutions.

The waste sector is the third largest source of anthropogenic methane — responsible for 30 per cent of global warming since the Industrial Revolution. Global waste generation is projected to increase by 50 per cent by 2050. COP31 aims to scale circular economy solutions that prevent emissions at source, turning a climate problem into an implementation opportunity.



1. Food waste prevention across production and consumption
2. Supporting circular economy policies
3. Integration of waste-related methane reduction opportunities into NDC updates

ICLEI Comments:

We welcome the recognition of *“Food waste prevention across production and consumption”* as a COP31 priority. We recommend positioning food loss and waste reduction as a high-impact intervention across the entire food systems value chain, with strong potential for climate change mitigation, methane reduction, related GHG emissions' reduction (e.g. from food packaging, transportation, etc), as well as food resilience and security, and resource efficiency. Food loss and waste reduction are particularly critical at the urban level and therefore require stronger partnership and collaboration with subnational governments. This includes prevention measures linked to sustainable public procurement, school/hospital meal programmes, local food markets, and circular economy solutions that also provide socio-economic benefits. We encourage referencing the UNEP-led Food Waste Breakthrough initiative, in which ICLEI is an active partner, as an important vehicle for accelerating food waste prevention and methane mitigation by adapting and scaling proven solutions at the national and subnational levels, while promoting global collaboration through three pillars: capacity building and advocacy, data and policy and finance and implementation. We welcome the leadership of the Zero Waste Foundation in transitioning cities towards a zero waste future and will continue to build on the existing partnership.

2. Oceans and Seas

Protecting marine ecosystems and unlocking blue carbon for climate resilience.

Oceans absorb approximately 25 per cent of human-produced carbon dioxide and regulate global climate systems. Yet rising emissions are driving ocean acidification, marine heatwaves, and coastal ecosystem degradation. COP31 will strengthen ocean-climate action through enhanced observation, data sharing, and regional cooperation.

1. Blue carbon integration into national climate strategies
2. Coastal and marine ecosystem resilience frameworks
3. Ocean observation and data-sharing partnerships
4. Resilience support for coastal communities



ICLEI Comments:

We welcome the inclusion of Oceans and Seas as a dedicated COP31 priority and strongly support the emphasis on resilience, ecosystem protection, GHG reduction potential, and regional cooperation. We encourage the Action Agenda to further recognise the critical role in coastal cities, and island communities, with subnational governments as frontline actors in ocean-climate implementation. Local and regional governments are central to advancing integrated coastal zone management, protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, wetlands and seagrasses, strengthening climate-resilient coastal infrastructure, reducing GHG emissions in and near oceans, and supporting inclusive and sustainable blue economy pathways.

We recommend strengthening the focus on locally-led and place-based implementation approaches that connect ocean action with adaptation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity conservation, GHG mitigation, and livelihoods. This includes support for coastal resilience planning, early warning systems, nature-based solutions, and community-centred adaptation for vulnerable coastal populations. Greater recognition should also be given to the role of port cities and coastal urban systems (i.e. territorial interconnectedness) in advancing decarbonisation, resilience, and sustainable maritime economies.

ICLEI also encourages stronger alignment between ocean action and multilevel climate governance processes, including integration into NDCs, NAPs, and local climate and development strategies. Existing initiatives, such as the Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition for Cities and Regions, launched at UNOC3, can provide an important platform for accelerating collaboration, implementation, knowledge exchange, and investment mobilisation across coastal and island territories. We further encourage support for improved ocean observation, climate services, and accessible local-level data to strengthen evidence-based planning and implementation.

3. Food Security

Advancing the global transition toward sustainable and resilient food systems.

Food Security theme focuses on addressing the acute food insecurity faced by approximately 318 million people due to climate shocks. It also aims to transform food systems — which are responsible for one-third of global emissions yet receive only 4 per cent of climate finance. To bridge this gap, COP31 will drive transformation through these key priorities:

1. Strengthening the food-water-climate nexus
2. Improving access to finance to support women farmers' resilience



3. Empowering youth and supporting employment via "Youth for Food & Climate Action"
4. Building climate-resilient agricultural systems through integrated policies that deliver benefits for food security, climate adaptation and resilience, biodiversity and conservation, and sustainable livelihoods

ICLEI Comments:

We welcome the inclusion of agrifood systems transformation within the Food Security theme. We encourage stronger recognition of integrated food systems approaches that acknowledge the need for interventions across whole food supply chains beyond production, including the role of urban-rural linkages. We welcome a focus on the role of subnational governments in advancing food security, climate resilience, and biodiversity protection. There is also a close connection to the Zero Waste pillar. We recommend promoting practical and inclusive measures, such as sustainable school/hospital meal programs and food education initiatives, stronger local and regional food markets, upgrades to road and market infrastructures that shape food safety, and circular approaches focused on reducing food loss and waste. Consideration should also be given to integrating food systems within biodiversity frameworks, NDCs and national climate strategies to maximize the combined impact on climate action and food systems transformation. The recently endorsed CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Urban and Peri-urban Food Systems (CFS 53) could also serve as a useful reference for implementation.

4. Climate-Resilient Cities

Climate-resilient cities to ensure liveable places for everyone.

Cities account for around 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions while all cities and towns face some of the most severe climate impacts, including flooding and drought. In response, the Action Agenda on Climate-Resilient Cities aims to drive systemic transformation by scaling up low-carbon solutions in all sectors, enabling the sustainable energy transition while improving energy performance, and mobilizing investment to support resilient and future-ready urban systems.

1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions throughout the entire life cycle of buildings and construction
2. Promoting sustainable buildings and settlements through sustainable / green building design and construction, and settlement certification systems
3. Supporting sustainable and scalable financing mechanisms for local governments to accelerate local action in their cities



4. Widespread adoption of resilient infrastructure and building standards

ICLEI Comments:

ICLEI welcomes the COP Presidency's focus on climate-resilient cities to ensure liveable places for everyone. The main actors here are local governments. This is a timely and important priority ahead of IPCC's Special Report on Cities due in 2027. Cities are already facing escalating climate risks, including heat, flooding, drought, water stress and sea-level rise, while also playing a central role in reducing or avoiding emissions and generally improving the quality of life. This Action Agenda can help accelerate practical urban solutions by connecting climate resilience, mitigation, social equity and inclusion, access to the necessary finance and implementation in an integrated way.

To maximize impact, resilience should be addressed through a holistic approach. Climate-resilient cities are built through coordinated action across sectors, such as infrastructure (including buildings, water, waste, transport, etc.), land-use planning, ecosystems, public services, finance and community engagement. Low-carbon buildings, sustainable settlements, resilient infrastructure standards and urban finance should therefore be framed as mutually reinforcing elements of one shared transformation agenda. This integrated approach can create strong co-benefits.

Sustainable and scalable financing mechanisms will be essential. Many local governments are ready to act but require support and resources to move from planning to implementation. The Action Agenda could help by promoting city-specific project-preparation facilities, concessional finance, guarantees, blended finance and direct access channels that enable local governments and their networks to develop robust pipelines of resilient, low-carbon projects. Financing for capacity-building of local governments and their local partners is essential, also for smaller cities, towns and vulnerable communities. Further, locally appropriate solutions need to be designed, with proper management and maintenance of infrastructure critical success factors,

Multilevel governance is key to co-designing and delivering on this agenda. Local and regional (subnational) governments play a critical role in designing and implementing systems for urban resilience, including land-use planning, buildings, transport, waste, water, public spaces and effective emergency response. At the same time, national governments are responsible for creating enabling policy and fiscal frameworks and conditions that enable subnational governments to act at scale and at tempo. More effective coordination between all levels of government is therefore essential, with established processes and mechanisms.



The COP Presidency can add value by encouraging countries to formally involve local and regional governments for their contribution, implementation and review of NDCs, NAPs, long-term (thematic) strategies and investment plans.

In doing so, the Action Agenda should build on existing initiatives and activation groups rather than create parallel or duplicative processes. The climate-resilient cities priority can be most effective if it connects with and reinforces existing efforts such as SURGe, the Urbanisation Ministerial, the Baku Continuity Coalition for Urban, Multilevel and Multisectoral Climate Action, and CHAMP (Coalition for High Ambition on Multilevel Partnerships). These initiatives already provide strong foundations for strengthening multilevel collaboration, aligning national and local climate action, and mobilizing urban implementation. The Action Agenda should therefore help create continuity across COP cycles, improve coherence among initiatives, and focus on accelerating delivery where gaps remain.

The focus on buildings and infrastructure is important; but we urge the Agenda to also explicitly recognize the role of nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration in enhancing urban climate resilience, reducing emissions and improving liveability.

ICLEI also encourages explicit reference to locally led community engagement to ensure that climate resilience measures respond to local needs and promote a just transition, especially for vulnerable and marginalized populations disproportionately affected by climate impacts.

Lastly, ICLEI encourages that the Agenda references stronger language on data, monitoring and accountability frameworks to help subnational governments track progress, share knowledge and scale successful solutions globally.

5. Powering Climate Action: Financial & Institutional Boost

From pledges to progress — accelerating delivery through practical partnerships.

The gap between global climate targets and in-country implementation remains the most critical structural challenge in climate action. While many countries have set ambitious goals, translating these into tangible results remains constrained by structural barriers, including the lack of enabling regulatory and fiscal frameworks, misaligned risk–return profiles, and weak linkages between policy and finance. Establishing national project pipelines and national platforms can enable faster identification of projects and processing investments.

In this context, this Priority Theme, developed under the COP31 Presidency, supports the transformation of climate commitments into investment-ready, scalable projects. It



complements the Global Implementation Accelerator launched at COP30 by translating global priorities into country-level action.

The Priority Theme is designed not to replace or duplicate existing platforms and project preparation facilities, but to build on them by providing the political momentum needed to better align, connect, and scale ongoing efforts. It operates in a complementary manner, respecting the distinct mandates of key partners such as the NDC Partnership, UNDP (Climate Promise), CCG, 2050 Pathways, and Multilateral Development Banks. Through close collaboration and joint analytical work with these actors, the Priority Theme helps translate country-defined priorities into structured, investment-ready project pipelines that address the requirements of both public and private investors. In doing so, it adopts a partnership-driven approach that leverages existing delivery systems while supporting country-led implementation and demonstrating early, tangible investment outcomes in the lead-up to COP31.

1. Delivering country-driven, demand-based support
2. Strengthening national implementation architecture through data, modelling, and coordination
3. Translating NDC and NAP priorities into investment-ready and scalable project portfolios
4. Developing bankable and standardised project pipelines
5. Mobilising public, private, and multilateral finance, including blended finance

ICLEI Comments:

ICLEI welcomes the COP31 Presidency's focus on accelerating implementation through stronger, extended, and additional financial and institutional support. Bridging the gap between climate ambition and delivery is essential to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and responding to escalating climate risks. To maximize impact, the Agenda should:

- explicitly address the barriers faced by subnational governments in accessing climate finance, including complex application procedures, insufficient technical support, and restricted direct access to international finance, particularly for concessional finance.
- further highlight the need to build long-term institutional capacity of local and regional governments, including capacities for project preparation, financial management, project implementation, climate action planning, etc.



- emphasize the importance of ensuring that financing mechanisms support equitable and inclusive outcomes towards a just transition, particularly for vulnerable communities and Global South cities and regions.
- explicitly promote multilevel climate governance and action that aligns national climate priorities with local implementation plans and actions.
- include a stronger science-based and data-driven approach to implementation, aligned with the best available climate science (SRCCC) and informed by robust local, national and global datasets.
- place greater emphasis on monitoring and reporting of local climate action, as well as multilevel climate governance and action tracking that enables transparent assessment of progress and impact over time, ensures accountability, and helps make appropriate investment decisions.

6. Youth and Education

Young people as architects of climate solutions, not just inheritors of climate risks.

With 1.8 billion people aged 10-24, youth represent the generation that will experience climate impacts longest — yet their meaningful participation in decision-making remains limited. COP31 will strengthen climate literacy, intergenerational knowledge exchange, and youth engagement in climate processes.

1. Meaningful youth inclusion in climate negotiations and processes
2. Climate literacy and education frameworks
3. International cooperation between youth networks and institutions
4. Capacity building aligned with green workforce development
5. High-level dialogue bringing together youth leaders and stakeholders

ICLEI Comments:

ICLEI welcomes the COP31 Presidency's focus on youth, as a key stakeholder group in co-defining the way forward as an inclusive approach - to their sustainable future. We recommend addressing youth at the local community level, including youth representatives in various political bodies, such as councils - with a real voice that is heard, as part of decision-making processes. National additional financial and institutional support is needed in this regard. The youth can bring necessary innovation and fresh perspectives to the table, to raise the level of ambition and co-define practical implementation approaches.



7. Green Industrialization

Accelerating inclusive, resilient, and low-carbon industrial transformation that supports innovation, territorial development pathways, competitiveness, and just transition.

Industry accounts for a significant share (25%) of global emissions, with hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, cement, chemicals, aluminium and fertilizers facing particularly complex decarbonisation challenges. At the same time, rapidly urbanizing and industrializing economies require support to build competitive, resilient and low-carbon industrial systems from the outset. COP31 will advance policy dialogue and practical mechanisms for inclusive industrial transformation.

Green industrialization requires the rapid deployment of renewable energy, electrification, energy efficiency, circular economy approaches, sustainable infrastructure, green hydrogen and other near-zero emission technologies, alongside enabling policy environments, investment readiness, workforce development and international cooperation. Industrial cities and regions play a critical role in enabling this transition through integrated planning, infrastructure development, innovation ecosystems, industrial clustering and local economic transformation.

Under the COP31 Action Agenda, the initiative should support inclusive and implementation-oriented industrial transformation pathways that strengthen sustainable development, economic resilience, energy security and decent job creation, particularly in emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs).

1. Enhancing international cooperation for competitive, resilient and low-carbon industrial transformation with focus on technology partnerships, renewable energy cooperation, green hydrogen corridors, and industrial knowledge.
2. Promoting country-led and subnational industrial decarbonisation hubs and clean energy corridors to enhance investment readiness, particularly in EMDEs
3. Fostering markets and public procurement mechanisms for low-carbon and circular industrial products.
4. Accelerating renewable energy, electrification, green hydrogen and near-zero emission technology deployment in hard-to-abate sectors
5. Strengthening sustainable, circular and inclusive industrial ecosystems and value chains with SME participation and workforce transition support.

ICLEI Comments:

The inclusion of Green Industrialization as a key priority under the COP31 Action Agenda strongly supports the focus on implementation-oriented industrial transformation pathways



that align climate action with sustainable development, competitiveness and just transition objectives.

To further strengthen this priority theme and enhance its implementation impact, ICLEI recommends the following:

- Explicitly recognize the critical role of cities, subnational governments and industrial regions in enabling industrial decarbonisation through infrastructure planning, land-use planning, renewable energy deployment, sustainable mobility systems, industrial clustering and local economic development.
- Strengthen the integration of sustainable energy solutions within industrial transformation pathways, including renewable energy deployment, industrial electrification, energy efficiency, storage systems, district energy, and green hydrogen ecosystems for hard-to-abate sectors.
- Expand support for place-based industrial decarbonisation approaches such as industrial clusters, eco-industrial parks, hydrogen valleys, port-industrial systems and clean energy corridors, particularly in emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs).
- Reinforce implementation and delivery mechanisms by emphasizing enabling policy environments, investment readiness, multi-level governance coordination, institutional capacity-building and access to finance and technology for local and regional actors.
- Include stronger references to industrial resilience and energy security, recognizing growing climate risks, supply chain disruptions and geopolitical uncertainty affecting industrial systems and critical infrastructure.
- Strengthen the role of circular economy and resource efficiency approaches within industrial transformation pathways, including industrial symbiosis, material efficiency, waste heat recovery, sustainable construction materials and circular manufacturing systems.
- Expand the focus on market creation mechanisms to include green public procurement, embodied carbon standards, sustainable infrastructure investments and local demand creation for low-carbon industrial products.
- Ensure that just transition principles are fully integrated into green industrialization pathways, including workforce reskilling, social inclusion, decent job creation, SME participation and support for vulnerable and transition-dependent communities.



- Encourage stronger collaboration among governments, industry, financial institutions, research organizations, local authorities and communities to accelerate implementation and scale practical industrial decarbonisation solutions.

ICLEI further encourages the COP31 Presidency to position Green Industrialization not only as an emissions reduction agenda, but also as a strategic pathway for sustainable economic development, local value creation, resilient infrastructure, innovation ecosystems, energy security and long-term industrial competitiveness.

8. Clean Energy Transition

Delivering clean, secure, resilient and affordable energy for all — accelerating implementation through multi-level governance, local action, and inclusive transition pathways.

The clean and sustainable energy transition requires rapid deployment of renewable energy, modernized and resilient grid infrastructure, energy efficiency, electrification, storage, and equitable access to enabling technologies and finance. At the same time, rising geopolitical uncertainty, energy security concerns, extreme climate impacts, and growing urban energy demand reinforce the need for decentralized, reliable and locally resilient energy systems.

Despite progress, approximately 730 million people still lack access to electricity, while nearly 2 billion people remain dependent on polluting cooking methods associated with an estimated 3.7 million premature deaths annually. Accelerating implementation will require coordinated action across all levels of government, particularly cities and regions, alongside strengthened financing, capacity-building, technology cooperation, and enabling policy environments tailored to national and local circumstances.

1. Clean cooking access, technology deployment and community-centred delivery models, including innovative and high-integrity financing mechanisms for underserved and vulnerable communities.
2. Resilient and smart grid infrastructure, decentralized energy systems with local renewables integration, storage and flexibility solutions for energy resilience
3. Energy efficiency, sustainable cooling and demand-side transformation, particularly in buildings, urban infrastructure and rapidly growing cities.
4. Inclusive electrification pathways for buildings, mobility, industry and urban services
5. Just and context-specific transition pathways respecting national and subnational circumstances



ICLEI Comments:

The framing of COP31 as an “Implementation COP” provides an important opportunity to strengthen the connection between global climate commitments and action on the ground, particularly through enhanced engagement of cities and subnational governments who are central to delivering climate and energy transitions.

ICLEI welcomes the strong emphasis on implementation, inclusivity and practical delivery within the proposed COP31 Action Agenda. To further strengthen the “Clean Energy Transition” priority theme and ensure it is robust, action-oriented and implementation-focused, ICLEI recommends the following:

- Explicitly recognize the critical role of cities and subnational governments in planning, financing and implementing clean energy transitions, particularly in areas such as energy efficiency, distributed renewable energy, sustainable cooling, electrification of transport and buildings, and resilient local energy systems.
- Strengthen the framing around implementation and delivery by emphasizing enabling environments, multi-level governance coordination, institutional capacity-building, investment readiness, and scalable delivery mechanisms that translate commitments into measurable outcomes.
- Integrate energy resilience and energy security considerations into the priority theme, recognizing growing geopolitical uncertainty, climate-related disruptions, and increasing pressure on critical infrastructure. This includes promoting decentralized renewable energy systems, resilient grids, local energy generation and storage solutions.
- Broaden the scope of electrification pathways to include buildings, mobility, municipal services, industry and urban infrastructure, while ensuring equitable access and affordability.
- Expand the focus on energy efficiency and sustainable cooling toward broader demand-side transformation measures, especially in rapidly urbanizing areas and vulnerable communities, including efficient buildings, district energy systems, passive cooling and integrated urban planning approaches.
- Ensure clean cooking initiatives are linked not only to technology deployment, but also to community-centred implementation, public health, gender equity, affordability and access for vulnerable populations, supported through high-integrity and accessible financing models.



- Reinforce the importance of just, inclusive and context-specific transition pathways that respect national and subnational circumstances while also addressing energy poverty, workforce transitions, affordability and local economic resilience.
- Recognize finance, technology transfer and capacity-building not only as horizontal enablers, but also as essential implementation accelerators that must be made more accessible to local and regional governments.
- Encourage stronger partnerships and collaboration across all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and communities to accelerate implementation and scale practical solutions.
- ICLEI further encourages the COP31 Presidency to position the Clean Energy Transition pillar not only as a climate mitigation agenda, but also as a pathway for resilience, public health improvement, sustainable development, economic opportunity and long-term energy security.

9. Rio Synergy

Integrated solutions where climate, biodiversity, and desertification converge.

Frontline regions worldwide — particularly the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Pacific — confront a multidimensional environmental crisis where drought, water scarcity, land degradation, and wildfires reinforce one another. This reality demands integrated approaches that address climate, biodiversity, and desertification as interconnected challenges.

1. Integrated pilots for wildfire management and ecosystem restoration
2. Carbon sink protection and sustainable land management
3. Biodiversity conservation within climate adaptation frameworks
4. Cross-convention coordination and implementation models
5. Replicable regional approaches from Mediterranean to other hotspots

ICLEI Comments:

ICLEI welcomes the inclusion of the topic of Rio Convention Synergies in the COP31 Action Agenda. Pursuant to ICLEI's engagement at all 3 Rio Conventions as an accredited organization and its coordinating role on behalf of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, ICLEI is ready to provide active contributions into the process both through the outcomes of ICLEI's first Annual Review of Local and Subnational Action at Rio Conventions, as well as COP30 Action Agenda Rio Synergies Plan for Accelerated Solution where ICLEI is recognized as a founding partner.



10. Dynamic and Resilient Health Systems

Building climate-resilient, low-carbon and equity-focused health systems for the future.

In the context of climate change, health risks are increasing across a broad spectrum — from heat-related illness and mortality to shifting patterns of infectious diseases and growing pressure on health infrastructure. Against this backdrop, health systems must undergo a structural transformation that enables them to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover rapidly from climate-related shocks.

Aligned with the vision of an "Implementation COP" and the theme of "Dynamic and Resilient Health Systems," COP31 will support the systematic development of health systems that are not only climate-resilient, but also low-carbon, sustainable, and equity-focused — anchored in integrated policy tools, data-driven risk governance, strategic investments in resilient infrastructure, multi-hazard early warning, and a future-ready health workforce. With a strong emphasis on implementation capacity, scalable solutions, and measurable outcomes, COP31 seeks to accelerate the translation of commitments into tangible action — protecting public health, particularly for vulnerable populations, in the face of increasing climate uncertainty.

1. Climate-resilient, low-carbon health infrastructure for service continuity under climate shocks
2. Climate risk assessments and integrated surveillance in national health planning and governance
3. Multi-hazard early warning and response systems for climate-sensitive diseases and extreme weather
4. Artificial intelligence and digital health solutions for forecasting and evidence-based decisions
5. Climate-competent health workforce through training and green-transition employment
6. Intersectoral coordination and the One Health approach across health, environment, food, water and disaster risk
7. International cooperation, sustainable financing and knowledge-sharing for equitable, adaptive health systems

ICLEI Comments:

ICLEI welcomes the framing of health as a core implementation priority within COP31 and supports the emphasis on resilient, low-carbon and equity-focused health systems. The theme aligns well with the urgent need to translate climate-health commitments into



practical, locally grounded action and appropriately recognizes the growing impacts of climate change on health risks, service delivery and infrastructure systems.

To further strengthen the framing and implementation focus of the theme, ICLEI recommends the following refinements:

- **Strengthen recognition of local and regional governments:** The framing would benefit from explicitly recognizing local and regional governments as critical implementation actors. Municipalities directly influence many determinants of climate and health resilience through mandates related to water and sanitation, waste management, air quality, emergency response, urban planning, housing, transport, green infrastructure and disaster risk reduction. Climate-resilient health outcomes cannot be achieved through the health sector alone but require coordinated urban governance and service delivery systems.
- **Broaden the framing beyond the health sector:** While the current framing appropriately focuses on health systems, climate-related health risks are deeply shaped by social, environmental and infrastructural determinants, many of which fall within the core mandates of local government. The theme could more strongly reflect preventative and systems-based approaches, including healthy and resilient urban and rural environments, and stronger integration across the health sector itself and adjacent sectors that strongly influence health outcomes.
- **Embed Health in All Policies and whole-of-government approaches:** The reference to intersectoral coordination is welcome. It could be further elevated through clearer emphasis on Health in All Policies and integrated governance. Climate-health outcomes depend on decisions made across sectors including energy, transport, housing, food systems, water, urban planning and social protection. Implementation challenges are often institutional rather than technical, requiring stronger coordination mechanisms across sectors and levels of government.
- **Strengthen focus on equity and vulnerable populations:** The theme appropriately references vulnerable populations, but greater emphasis on inequality and uneven exposure to climate-health risks and unequal social vulnerability would strengthen the implementation focus. In many cities and regions, low-income communities and informal settlements face disproportionate exposure to heat, flooding, air pollution, food insecurity and inadequate infrastructure. Localized and equity-driven approaches are essential.
- **Explicitly recognize the importance of urban health and place-based approaches:** Given rapid urbanization globally, cities and urban systems should be more explicitly recognized as critical arenas for climate-health implementation. Urban areas



concentrate both climate-health risks and opportunities for integrated adaptation and mitigation co-benefits. Place-based approaches can help bridge national policy commitments with implementation realities at the local level.

- **Broaden the understanding of resilient health systems:** Resilient health systems extend beyond infrastructure and surveillance. Effective resilience also depends on governance capacity, primary healthcare systems, human resources for health within facilities and communities, continuity of essential services, community engagement, resilient supply chains, public communication and social protection systems. A broader systems framing would improve implementation relevance.
- **Balance digital technology with institutional and community capacity:** ICLEI strongly supports the inclusion of AI and digital health tools, while noting the importance of ensuring that digitalization supports locally actionable decision-making and strengthens existing public health systems. Capacity constraints, interoperability, accessibility and unequal digital access should be considered alongside technological innovation.
- **Strengthen financing and implementation support:** The recognition of finance, technology and capacity building is strongly supported. However, greater emphasis is needed on implementation support for subnational and local governments, many of which face significant barriers in accessing climate finance, technical assistance and institutional capacity support despite being frontline implementers of climate-health action.

ICLEI supports the strong implementation orientation of the COP31 health theme and its emphasis on resilience, equity and systems transformation. Strengthening the framing around integrated governance, Health in All Policies, urban and local government leadership, and preventative approaches would help ensure the theme reflects how climate-health resilience is delivered in practice.

A clearer and more intentional focus on cities and local governments is particularly important, given their central role in managing the social, environmental and infrastructural determinants of health and in translating national commitments into concrete, on-the-ground implementation.

For further information

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