

New analysis shows the world can fight climate change through greater action in cities

- Cities are home to 50% of the global population and produce 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions
- New analysis shows just one third of 72 national climate action plans (NDCs) of CHAMP endorsing countries have strong urban content with low and middle income economies leading the way
- Climate and city leaders say greater local and national partnership is essential for ambitious climate plans

UN-Habitat released today new research that looks at whether national climate action plans, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), have included urban priorities as a key focus.

The findings come on the back of 72 countries joining the Coalition for High Ambition Multi-Level Partnerships, or 'CHAMP' initiative, which was launched at COP28 in Dubai and spearheaded by the COP28 Presidency and UN Special Envoy on Climate Solutions, Michael R. Bloomberg. The CHAMP-endorsing countries pledged to cooperate with their local governments in developing their climate strategies, including making their NDCs more ambitious ahead of COP30 in 2025.

Cities are home to over 50% of the world's population and are responsible for 70% of greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, they are also important in delivering climate solutions. Many have taken the lead to implement ambitious local climate action plans with successful outcomes. In recent years, such efforts have received increasing recognition, but little of this has been reflected in the bulk of NDCs that exist today.

The deep dive analysis of the 72 CHAMP signatory countries finds that only 27% of NDCs included strong urban elements. The remaining 63% of NDCs have either 'moderate', 'low' or 'no' urban content in their climate commitments.

Low and middle income economies lead the way in having 'high' urban content, including Colombia, Jordan, Morocco, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, while high-income economies such as Australia, Canada, European Union member states, Japan and the United States tend to have 'moderate', 'low' or 'no' urban content in their NDCs.

The findings demonstrate the need for many nations to go further and seize the opportunity that cities offer in achieving decarbonisation targets. Multi-level partnerships between local and national levels can help close the gap between current commitments and global climate goals.

NDCs are a key element of the 2015 Paris Agreement adopted by 194 countries. They outline national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and describe plans to achieve them, along

with climate adaptation actions. Countries are responsible for updating their respective NDCs every five years. The next round of revisions are due for submission in 2025.

In 2023, the first-ever review of global climate efforts, known as the Global Stocktake, concluded that the world is far off track from the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees celsius, with a rapidly narrowing window to meet this commitment.

This new analysis highlights opportunities for countries in working with city leaders to increase urban content in climate plans and therefore set more ambitious goals to accelerate global climate action.

Quotes:

Michal Mlynár, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Director of UN-Habitat, said:

“In an era marked by the climate crisis, decisive and collective action is crucial. As witnessed during the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, many national governments are committed to closer cooperation with local governments to shape climate strategies. In the context of Member States revising and updating their NDCs, the analysis from UN-Habitat showcases a prime opportunity to achieve our climate aspirations through swift multilevel climate action.”

Adnan Amin, CEO of COP28 said:

“The COP28 Presidency highlighted the imperative of elevating our climate ambitions within this critical decade, signalling a transition into a new era of climate action. The recent research conducted by UN-Habitat underscores the necessity for a synergistic approach between national and local governmental entities to strengthen NDCs. This advancement can only be achieved through the inclusion and active participation of sub-national actors, emphasising their vital contribution to our shared commitment to a resilient and sustainable future.”

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone and C40 Co-Chair said:

“As the level of government closest to citizens, cities have time and again proven themselves to be nimble, progressive and responsive. From decarbonising public transport systems to combating emissions from waste, mayors and governors are ‘doers’ when it comes to climate action. Cities across the globe stand ready to work together with national governments to collectively move further and faster.”

Notes to editors

- The findings of the new research can be found [here](#).
- Several partners including the COP28 Presidency, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency (LGMA) contributed to and reviewed the technical brief.
- More information on the CHAMP initiative can be found [here](#)
- Information about NDCs and the NDC process is available [here](#)
- Information about the Global Stocktake can be found [here](#)

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About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries that support policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit www.unhabitat.org or follow on X @UNHABITAT.

About C40 Cities

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere, can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a science-based and people-focused approach to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. We work alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to support mayors to halve emissions by 2030 and help phase out fossil use while increasing urban climate resilience and equity.

The current co-chairs of C40 are Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United Kingdom, and Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr of Freetown, Sierra Leone; three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit our website or follow us on X, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

About the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM)

GCoM is the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, uniting a global coalition of over 13,000 cities and local governments and 100+ supporting partners. The cities and partners of GCoM share a long-term vision of supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and towards a resilient and low-emission society. GCoM serves cities and local governments by mobilizing and supporting ambitious, measurable, planned climate and energy action in their communities by working with city/regional networks, national governments, and other partners to achieve our vision. The coalition comprises cities across 6 continents and 144 countries, representing over 1 billion people or more than 13 percent of the global population.