



**Ministerial Dialogue with Local and Regional Governments: Strengthening Coordination
to Implement the Paris Agreement**

**Speech by the UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif
28 May 2020**

Excellencies - Honourable Ministers and Mayors - Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to all of you!

It is so encouraging to see that all of you are in good health. Your forward-looking enthusiasm for more climate-friendly cities is much needed today as the world is figuring out how to get back to normal.

2020 was meant to be the super-year for Climate Action. A global youth-led public movement activated unprecedented global support for climate action. Activities, actions and policy changes inspired by many of you were ripe for being scaled up and replicated in more and more places.

This year was meant to be the year for improved NDCs and the formal start of the Paris agreement at COP26 in Glasgow. There is no reason why we cannot keep our promise to future generations. COVID-19 may have been the pause button. It demonstrates that if we push too far against the natural world, nature will correct itself.

There is no doubt that as we face the economic challenges of COVID-19, our well thought out plans will have to change. The economic impact may be undermining the ambition of NDCs but it need not hinder the progress of the Paris Agreement. We must ensure that we green urban growth and that the new normal that we get to is greener, cleaner and more equitable.

Let us take the opportunity to ensure that the new normal fully adopts the recommendations and targets of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. We can see what cost pushing the boundaries against nature can unleash. Inspiring examples of immediate action from government at all levels have included quick support and dramatic increases in the provision of urban space that favors safe walking and cycling outdoors.

There is also specific commitment in seizing the opportunity to scale up work on Adaptation and Resilience. Let us use this opportunity wisely.

FIRST: Let us help get the NDCs delivered on time and with the sort of ambition that sets us on a course to limit global warming to 1.5-2.0 degrees, and helps build resilience to Climate Disasters. Countries need our contributions and ideas.

UN-Habitat has just finalized a new guide for “Enhancing NDCs through urban climate action”. It contains a simple step-by-step approach designed for quick and effective application by NDC



teams. We invite all of you to take a look at this guide and apply its findings in the months ahead during the NDC process.

The guide was developed collaboratively with over a dozen expert organizations, many of you were part of this, with generous support from the European Commission under the framework of the Urban-LEDS project, that we implement jointly with ICLEI. Multilateralism works best especially during these challenging times.

SECOND: Let us support countries to recover from this crisis as soon as possible. This recovery be based upon a transformation to greener, healthier, resilient and climate-friendly economies and cities. Cities have a special role to play here: As the hubs of economic activity and home to the majority of population –We know that what cities do will be decisive in determining how countries will recover from the crisis.

Investments need to reach the local level, because in cities they can transform lives to be healthier. Transform industry to be greener. Transform communities and infrastructure to be more resilient. Transform mobility and consumption patterns to be clean and green. We need to make sure those huge investment leave no one behind and address the most vulnerable first.

Last year alone UN-Habitat supported numerous governments, cities and institutions to build capacity for addressing the climate challenge and develop the plans to deliver it. We have supported countries in East Africa – and currently in the Caribbean - to make their schools resilient to climate change, securing the education of young children in the face of climate change.

But these are just some examples, and you of all have more, of how we can make climate action more equitable and deliver on the dual promise of a climate-friendly and more prosperous future.

2020 was meant to be the super-year for climate action. And it will be. But to make this still happen is an enormous responsibility for all of us. There is still so much we can achieve even when we cannot meet each other face to face. Let's ensure this is the year future historians mark as the turning point for collaborative action on climate change.

Thank you



**Scenario for ED participation at UCLG Ministerial Dialogue on Climate Change,
28 May 2020 16:40 (CET) online (zoom meeting)**

Venue: Online Zoom Meeting, part of the Virtual UCLG Executive Bureau

Time: 12:00 pm – 17:00 pm Central European Time

ED is speaker number four in the Institutional closing (16:40-17:00), intervention expected to be around **16:55**.

Master of ceremony: Emilia Saiz, Secretary General, UCLG

Speakers (5 min each):

1. Mohamed Boudra, President of UCLG and Mayor of Al Hoceima, Morocco
2. Ashok Sridharan, ICLEI President and Mayor of Bonn, Germany
3. Mike Bloomberg, United Nations Special Envoy for Climate Action
4. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat
5. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment
6. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator

Technical modalities to be confirmed, expect a standard video-conference with a stand-alone intervention for the speech.

Annex 1: Programme of the Event