

TPs for Panel Discussion	World Cities Summit High-level Panel “Cities Adapting to a Disrupted World”	22 June 2021 (10.00 – 11.10 AM, EAT)
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Opening Remarks

Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many cities globally, have committed to ambitious climate action targets, aiming to achieve carbon neutrality earlier than 2050. There are some notable cases of cities, aiming to become carbon neutral by 2030. Just to name few examples:

1. Johannesburg, where all new public and private buildings will operate at net zero carbon by 2030; ¹
2. Milan – plans to reallocate 100km of street space to cycling and walking paths by the end of 2021; ²
3. Tokyo – their Zero Emission strategy includes, amongst other measures, the progressive phase-out of gas-guzzling vehicles and transition to zero-emission vehicles. ^{3 4}

¹ <https://www.c40.org/other/net-zero-carbon-buildings-declaration>

² https://www.c40.org/case_studies/cities100-milan-world-s-first-freefloating-ride-sharing-system

³ https://www.kankyo.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/en/about_us/zero_emission_tokyo/strategy.files/Full-ver.ZE-strategy0311.pdf

⁴ KOIKE Yuriko, Governor of Tokyo Metropolitan Government statement at the Zero Carbon City International Forum, 17 March 2021 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=1250&v=g44RSHL4OCs&feature=youtu.be>

However, to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement on Climate Action, we need to find innovative ways to get more cities onto the New Urban Agenda bandwagon. We must make it possible, for cities in the developing world, to balance growth with carbon neutral commitments. This can only happen if there is multi-lateral action at the global level, and integrated cooperation within countries.

In UN-Habitat's recent *Cities and Pandemics* report, we have highlighted four key priorities to deliver sustainable, resilient, and just recovery:

1. **Rethinking the form and function of cities**, to not only enhance their resilience and ensure climate compatible growth through inclusive planning. We advocate for compact design, accessible mobility and mixed land use to make more livable urban environments;
2. **Addressing systemic poverty and inequality in cities**, by taking steps to address the underlying causes of exclusion particularly in access to basic services and infrastructure, adequate housing, secure livelihoods. We must also help cities provide access to digital services and tools;
3. **Rebuilding a new normal for the urban economy**, to help smaller businesses, informal workers, and at-risk sectors to survive the crisis, with an emphasis on “building back better” by promoting the transition to greener, more equitable urban economies; and
4. **Clarifying urban legislation and governance arrangements**. Authorities need to work in a more integrated manner, strengthen multi-level governance, with an emphasis on developing more flexible and innovative institutional and financial frameworks.

The time is now, to further raise the ambitions. Local climate action plans with concrete and verifiable targets, anchored in more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), are needed to ensure that, we move from small scale interventions, to city-wide action that can be replicated nationally and internationally.

Thank you.

Moderated Discussion

Round One - Primary Question: With limited powers, what are the steps cities can consider in climate change program implementation?

We are all finding creative ways, to cut global net emissions drastically, in the hope of holding global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, and thus avoid the most catastrophic impacts.⁵

To help coordinating the global community's efforts, the UN Secretary-General launched the Race to Zero campaign. Partners must demonstrate credible strategies to halve emissions by 2030, and achieve the net-zero target by 2050. To date, this campaign has mobilized a coalition of 708 cities, 23 regions, 2,162 businesses, 127 of the biggest investors, and 571 institutions of higher education.

⁵ <https://www.wri.org/insights/net-zero-ghg-emissions-questions-answered>.

These non-state actors, together with 120 countries that have signed on to the initiative, collectively represent almost 25% of global carbon dioxide emissions, and over 50% of GDP.⁶

Encouragingly, a number of cities have already announced such commitments, both in the Global North as well as in the Global South.⁷

We need to harness the power of city networks and partnerships, to stimulate climate actions in cities.

At the moment, the emerging second versions of the Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris agreement, fall far short of the emission reductions needed, to stay within 1.5 degree temperature increase. Cities and urban areas must position themselves as pioneers, in combating climate change, by ensuring that their needs for local climate actions are reflected in the NDC revision process. This can stimulate financial support for cities, through intergovernmental transfers from the higher-level government, to local governments drive more sustainable, socially just, and resilient local solutions.

Round Two - Secondary Question: In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change related disruptions are continuously rising. What should be the focus of cities for prevention and recovery?

⁶ https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Cities-Race-to-Zero?language=en_US

⁷ See https://www.c40.org/press_releases/cities-committed-race-to-zero.

The pandemic has exposed deep inequalities in how people live in cities, and how cities serve their residents. The already vulnerable groups have suffered most.

24% of the world's urban population live in slums. Less than half the global population can access open public spaces within 400 meters walking distance of their homes.

The reality is that the unpredictable trajectory of outbreaks of new virus variants will make it even more difficult, to determine if a city is in its recovery process, or is yet to face the worst wave of COVID-19.

Yet the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with the opportunity to invest in a green and sustainable recovery. The UN Secretary-General concluded that, the COVID-19 recovery efforts present “a generational opportunity to put climate action, clean energy and sustainable development at the heart of cities’ strategies and policies”.⁸

⁸ UN Secretary-General's remarks to Meeting with Leading Mayors Supported by C40 Cities: “Advancing a Carbon-Neutral, Resilient Recovery for Cities and Nations” 16 April 2021
<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2021-04-16/un-secretary-generals-remarks-meeting-leading-mayors-supported-c40-cities-%E2%80%9Cadvancing-carbon-neutral-resilient-recovery-for-cities-and-nations%E2%80%9D%C2%A0final-text>

With our attention focused on responding and recovering from the COVID-19 crises, let us ensure that every action we take today, every investment and support we mobilize, stimulates more sustainable, low-carbon and resilient development models that leave no one and no place behind”.⁹ Investing COVID-19 recovery funds towards a green recovery could potentially cut the predicted greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 by 50%.¹⁰

Closing Remarks

Question: How could your city/organization play a role in ensuring that cities emerge stronger from these disruptions?

The UN stands ready to support mitigation and adaptation efforts, across all levels of government, and is working with governments at all levels, to ensure that in the future, cities collectively and radically reduce greenhouse gases emissions.

Green, resilient, and just recovery, can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, and strengthen climate response.

⁹ UN-Habitat “Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions through Urban Climate Action” p.6
[https://unhabitat.org/enhancing-nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs-through-urban-climate-action#:~:text=Enhance%20the%20ambition%20of%20their,GHG\)%20emissions%20and%20building%20resilience.](https://unhabitat.org/enhancing-nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs-through-urban-climate-action#:~:text=Enhance%20the%20ambition%20of%20their,GHG)%20emissions%20and%20building%20resilience.)

¹⁰ UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2020, p. 9 <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2020>

UN-Habitat is well placed to contribute to this most critical agenda, through its normative and operational role, convening power, strong partnerships, and country presence.

Specifically, UN-Habitat's approach to recovery in cities is underpinned by two pillars:

1. building local capacity, systems and legislation, based on conducive national urban policies; and
2. developing high impact, financeable projects at the community and city-level, to channel resources towards green, resilient and just recovery.

The UN Secretary General has called 2021 a 'make or break year' to confront the global climate emergency, highlighting that COVID-19 recovery plans offer the opportunity to build back greener and cleaner.

I invite you to join the upcoming **Innovate4Cities Conference**, from 11-15 of October 2021. The virtual conference will be an international gathering at the nexus of cities, climate change, science and innovation.

Co-hosted by UN-Habitat and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM), it will bring together over 1,000 city leaders, scientists, researchers, innovators, academics, youth, and the private sector, to advance pragmatic and action-oriented research, and science that will help cities reduce their carbon footprint, and increase resilience to climate change.

Thank you.

Prepared by	Edited by	Status	Version
Cerin Kizhakkethotta m	Bernhard; Neil; Runze	Finalized	Mon 21 June 20:06

Scenario for ED

High-level Panel at World Cities Summit 2021, 22 June 2021 (10.00 – 11.10 AM, EAT)

Cities Adapting to a Disrupted World

Organizer: Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (both are Singapore governmental bodies)

Background Information

The World Cities Summit is an exclusive platform for government leaders and industry experts to address liveable and sustainable city challenges, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships. Jointly organized by Singapore's Centre for liveable Cities and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (both are Singapore governmental bodies), the biennial Summit has been attended by over 250 global cities and supported by leaders from government, business, international organizations and academia.

This year the theme of the WCS is **Cities Adapting to a Disrupted World**

Speakers and Moderator (pending confirmation): At present, invited speakers include

- **Speaker:** Ho Ching (Chief Executive Officer, Temasek Holdings);
- **Speaker:** Maimunah Mohd Sharif (Executive Director, UN Habitat);
- **Speaker:** Olaf Scholz (Federal Minister of Finance, Germany),
- **Speaker:** Anne Hidalgo (Mayor, Paris),
- **Speaker:** Masatsugu Asakawa (President, Asian Development Bank).
- **Moderator:** Simon Tay (Chairman, Singapore Institute of International Affairs).

Duration : 70-minute session

Agenda

Part1: Keynote address by Mr. Dilhan Pillay – CEO of Temasek International (15 min)

Part 2: Opening remarks from Speakers (20-24 minutes total; maximum 4 minutes per speaker) ED invited to speak first

Part 3: Moderated discussion (30 min) two prepared questions for ED, response 2 minutes each

Part 4: Closing remarks (all speakers answer the same question) 3 minutes