SURGe
SUSTAINABLE URBAN RESILIENCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe)

A COP27 Initiative dedicated to connecting local, national and global levels for climate action

COP27 SHARM EL-SHEIKH EGYPT 2022

UN-HABITAT

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

SUMMARY

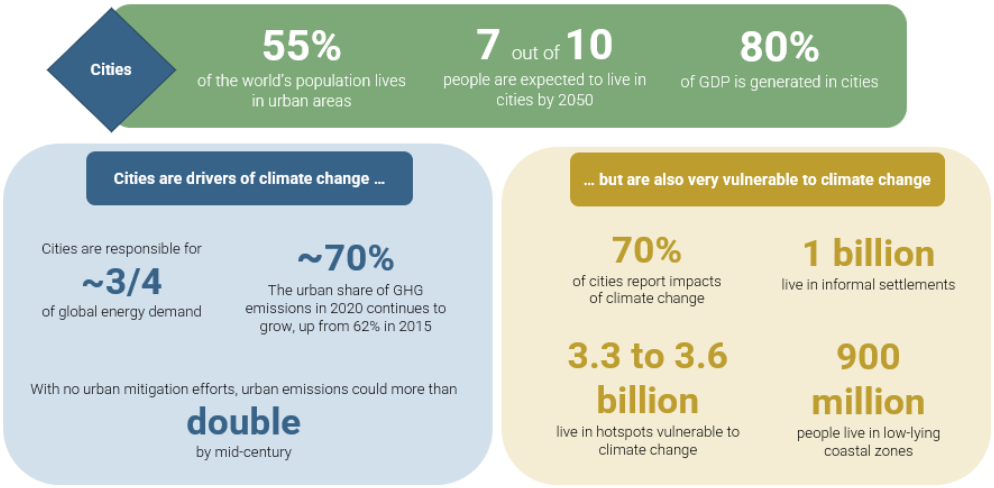
SURGe is a COP27 Presidency Initiative dedicated to connecting the local, national and global levels with the vision to achieve global climate goals by using effective multilevel governance to transform cities to be healthy, sustainable, just, inclusive, low-emission and resilient urban systems for a better urban future for all. To achieve this vision, the SURGe Initiative is dedicated to equipping cities to accelerate local climate action and building more strategically on cities and sustainable urbanization as allies to help deliver the targets of the Paris Agreements and the SDGs.

The SURGe Initiative has been developed under the leadership of the COP27 Presidency in collaboration with UN-Habitat and facilitated by ICLEI. It was officially launched at the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP27. It has been endorsed by 180+ global partners.

WHY SURGe? BACKGROUND

Why cities? Current multilateral climate frameworks are not strong enough to respond to the climate crisis
The world is not on track to limit global warming to 1.5ºC to pre-industrial levels, as set out in the Paris Agreement. Current national pledges are not sufficient to reduce harmful GHG emissions to avoid a global climate disaster. National climate action often focuses only on priority sectors, addresses these in a siloed manner, lacks ambition, and does not effectively integrate non-state actors, especially local governments guiding local action in their cities, considering these account for substantial GHGs (around 70% of CO2 emissions) and being at the forefront of adaptation action.

Cities are at the frontline of climate change. Climate change and growing urbanization are intertwined megatrends. Rising global temperatures have caused extreme weather events including flash floods, storms, droughts, and heatwaves in cities. All of these have impacts on urban services, housing, infrastructure, livelihoods, urban ecosystems, cultural practices, as well as the health and wellbeing of city residents. Rising food and energy prices exacerbate these impacts, with the most vulnerable being hit the hardest. Today, more than three billion people live in hotspots that are highly vulnerable to climate change and more than one billion urban dwellers live in informal settlements. Climate change impacts both increase urban populations due to climate-driven displacement and migration and aggravate the underlying socio-economic challenges that come with urbanization. At the same time, cities are a key contributor to climate change, as urban activities are major sources of greenhouse gas emissions.



There is growing international awareness that the climate battle will be won or lost in cities

Multilateral Environmental Agreements have increasingly built on the opportunity of integrating cities to global challenges and using cities as the testing ground to be healthy, sustainable, just, inclusive, and of low emission. This includes an increasing integration of urban issues in the multilateral space:

- Cities in multilateral environmental agreements: The importance of cities for climate action is referenced in multiple MEAs, such as the Paris Agreement, the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact, and the Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan recognizing the need for *multilevel and cooperative action* beyond national level engagement. At COP27, the first-ever COP Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change was convened with over 50 member states, a significant step by national governments in delivering the alignment needed for multi-level urban climate action. Similarly, COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Global Biodiversity Framework, which includes the first global target on conserving and planning green and blue spaces in urban areas, and endorsed the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity.
- Multilateralims recognizes cities as actors in the planetary crisis: The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has highlighted the role of cities and communities as critical for responding to the climate crisis.
- Multilateralism campaigning for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through cities: As the UN Deputy Secretary-General explained, SDG11 is the docking station of all the 17 SDGs. Through the adoption of the New Urban Agenda by member states, multilateralism helps localize the SDGs. In 2022, the G7, G20, Commonwealth and Belt-Road Initiative emphasized the importance of cities, urbanization, and multilevel climate action for sustainable development through their Ministerial or Heads of States Communiques.
- National governments are committed to strengthen the urban lense in national climate policies: By 2022, around two-thirds of updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) had at least moderate urban content. National governments are strengthening the enabling policy environment for cities to regulate and respond to the climate crises.

Cities are key in delivering climate solutions

Though cities are a big driver of planet-warming emissions, they are also engines of climate action and at the forefront of delivering solutions. Many cities are committing to climate action, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change and passing targets to reach net zero emissions. As centers of production, population, and innovation, cities have a triple role in the climate and environmental crises: culprits behind, victims of, and, potentially, saviors from these crises.

If cities take aggressive and immediate mitigation efforts to limit global warming below 1.5°C, urban emissions could approach net zero. Net zero emissions in cities require an urban deep decarbonization and systematic transformation. Cities must reduce their energy consumption, prioritize compact and efficient urban forms and electrify their end-using services, expand their urban forests, trees and green roofs.

Local climate action increasing, yet challenges remain

There are key barriers that limit urban emissions reductions, adapting urban systems to climate change, and building urban system resilience including:

- **Multi-level governance:** Cities are not sufficiently anchored in international climate agreements to respond to the climate emergency.
- **Finance:** In 2017/18, climate finance for cities reached an estimated USD 384 billion, less than 10% of the estimated need of USD 4.5 to 5.4 trillion annually. Of the existing total climate finance, just 21% goes towards adaptation and resilience. Yet this is less than 10% of what is needed to accelerate local climate action.

- **Local capacity:** Local governments are often understaffed yet dealing with a wide range of agendas and priorities. Especially in the Global South, they have limited capacity for development planning and implementation, particularly with the integration of climate change.
- **Access to technology and innovation:** Greenhouse gas emissions in cities could be reduced by almost 90% by 2050 with technically feasible and available measures, potentially supporting 87 million jobs in 2030 and generating a global economic dividend of USD 24 trillion. However, technological and process innovations do not reach all cities due to significant research and action gaps.
- **Equity:** The impacts of climate change are unevenly distributed. Urban vulnerable groups are disproportionately and adversely affected by climate change while they contribute the least to urban emissions.

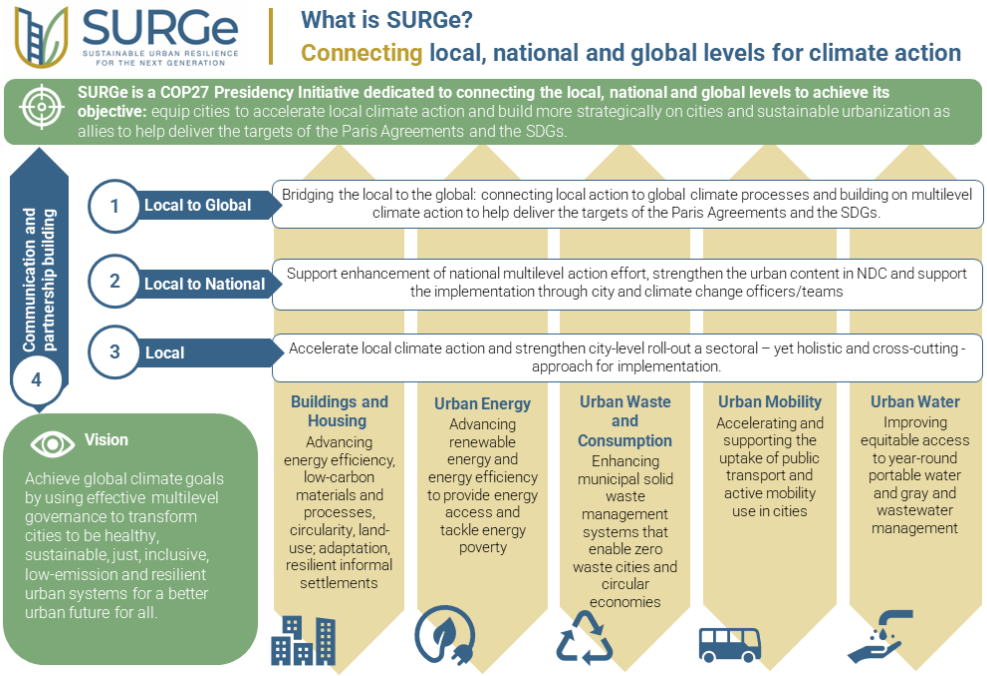
WHAT IS SURGe?

Connecting local, national and global levels for climate action

SURGe is a COP27 Presidency Initiative dedicated to connecting the local, national and global levels with the vision to achieve global climate goals by using effective multilevel governance to transform cities to be healthy, sustainable, just, inclusive, low-emission and resilient urban systems for a better urban future for all. To achieve this vision, the SURGe Initiative is dedicated to equipping cities to accelerate local climate action and building more strategically on cities and sustainable urbanization as allies to help deliver the targets of the Paris Agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The SURGe Initiative has been developed under the leadership of the COP27 Presidency in collaboration with UN-Habitat and facilitated by ICLEI. It was officially launched at the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP27. It has been endorsed by 180+ global partners. The SURGe objective is achieved by connecting local, national and global levels for climate action and delivering through five integrated tracks and track partners: Buildings and Housing, Urban Energy, Urban Waste and Consumption, Urban Mobility and Urban Water. It builds on existing work in this space, on commitments of local and regional governments, adds momentum to existing initiatives, and provides a holistic framework to achieve sustainable and resilient urban systems.

SURGe offers the opportunity to turn urban resilience, climate-proof infrastructure and informal settlements into an economic, social and political opportunity for accelerating resilience to climate impacts and sustainable development. This is a critical opportunity for local, regional and national governments to work together and collaborate with key stakeholders and rightsholders to simultaneously advance decarbonization efforts while building resilient urban systems that allow residents to not simply survive but thrive.



Four priority actions connecting local, national and global levels

To achieve its objectives, SURGe forsees four priority actions connecting local, national and global levels, as well as expanding and growing the partnership and inform about the Initiative. SURGe builds on existing work in this space, on commitments of local and regional governments, adds momentum to existing initiatives, and provides a holistic framework to achieve sustainable and resilient urban systems.

1. **Local to global:** Bridging the local to the global: connecting local action to global climate processes and building on multilevel climate action to help deliver the targets of the Paris Agreements and the SDGs
   - Working with national governments to enhance the recognition of local climate at national level in the global context. This includes strengthening the link between sustainable urbanization, local climate action and impact.
   - Enhanced visibility for local leaders at UNFCCC COPs
   - Encouraging annual Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at UNFCCC COPs
   - Aligning calls for inclusion of local governments and enabling mechanisms into COP outcomes, via LGMA Constituency and in collaboration with the Parties
   - **Engagement opportunities of SURGe partners:** Track partners unify their voices to support strengthening the voice of cities in global climate agreements. Track partners provide guidance on how to strengthen COP outcomes with a sectoral lense.

2. **Local to national:** Support enhancement of national multilevel action effort, strengthen the urban content in NDC and support the implementation through city and climate change officers/teams
   - Support national governments with tailor-made approaches to strengthen the urban content in their NDCs, identifying opportunities for local governments in achieving sector-specific targets
   - Rally support for a global pledge of national governments to strengthen the urban content of NDCs to raise ambition;
   - Support the implementation of local climate action through building the capacities of national-level city and climate change officers/ teams –to be part of a growing network
   - Develop toolkit and capacity for action;
   - **Engagement opportunities of SURGe partners:** Track partners provide tools, capacity building and guidance on how to strengthen the urban content of the NDCs with a sector-specific lense.

3. **Local:** Accelerate local climate action and strengthen city-level roll-out a sectoral – yet holistic and cross-cutting - approach for implementation.
   - Link global goals to local implementation: raising level of local climate action by guiding a holistic and cross-cutting sectoral approach on project support, tailored to local context and needs
   - Capacity building and technical expertise: support improvement of cities multi-sectoral climate action plans with clear processes, actions and impacts
   - Enable implementation by expanding the pipeline of local priority climate infrastructure projects
   - Leverage support of exiting partnerships to collectively upscale guidance and action
   - **Engagement opportunities of SURGe partners:** partners help cities translating global goals into local action through the implementation of sector-specific (yet integrated projects), including providing capacity building and technical expertise.

4. **Communication, and partnership building**: Cross-cutting communication to expand the global partnership and disseminating clear messages on multilevel climate action.
   - Build a SURGe website to showcase SURGe developments, portray 180+ endorsers, rally support and disseminate local climate action support stories.
   - Build a "Partner portal" integrated into the website, allowing for track partners to cooperate, share, and exchange, as a "technical" resource for project implementation. This will also provide an opportunity to collaborate on national level climate implementation plan.
   - Communication campaigns, including social media and newsletter to support SURGe narrative
   - **Engagement opportunities of track partners:** partners are at the core of the Global SURGe Alliance and help to spread the word, participate in events, help showcase success stories on the forthcoming portal.

Governance

Global SURGe Alliance, open to participation by interested stakeholders. Currently, 180+ global partners are part of the Alliance. This provides an advisory function and will convene regularly at major events, with a view to providing inputs to outcomes of COPs. An open call for interested stakeholders to join can be found below.

SURGe is governed by the interim Steering Committee, consisting of 10 partners who are also co-leads of the five thematic tracks. Several national governments have also expressed interest in joining the Steering Committee as co-chairs.

Day-to-day operations of SURGe are managed by UN-Habitat, with the support of ICLEI until a more permanent governance structure with a Secretariat is put in place at COP28. The Secretariat is to be responsible for day-to-day operations of the Initiative, ensuring alignment of work programmes between tracks in close collaboration with the track partners, keeping abreast of implementation progress including monitoring and reporting and securing high-level commitment to the Initiative from the Global SURGe Alliance. The Secretariat is also tasked with ensuring close collaboration with existing programmes, partnerships, initiatives and campaigns by seeking synergy and avoiding duplication. The secretariat may be complemented with national and/or regional secretariats to facilitate country-specific implementation.

Five tracks with track partners. Tracks build on/consider existing work, initiatives, and commitments in the respective field, convene key stakeholders and existing networks relevant to the track. While working groups are sector-specific, they also address crosscutting issues.

Next steps

- **City and Climate Change focal points:** Setting up a network of city and climate change focal points, in close collaboration with partners and the national level;
- **Global pledge**: Rally support for a global pledge on strengthening the urban content of the NDCs, in the lead up to the second Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP28
- **Urban content of the NDCs**: Working with interested national governments to strengthen the urban content in their NDCs
- **Partnership building:** Strengthening the partnership by rallying support from endorsers,
- **Website:** Setting up a SURGe website and partner portal to showcase success stories and rally further support
- **Events**: Collaborate and come together during events, in particular the SBs in Bonn, Daring Cities, Regional Climate Weeks, UNFCCC COPs and World Urban Fora

WHY JOIN SURGe?

The SURGe Initiative was developed in a collaborative process, building on a first stakeholder meeting at the World Urban Forum in Katowice in June 2022, a stakeholder consultation workshop in Cairo in July 2022, bringing together over 120 participants. The draft concept note also underwent open peer review. It was officially launched at the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP27. It has been endorsed by 180+ global partners. SURGe is open for endorsement and support to a global community, including national and local governments, city networks, academia, private sector and international organizations. Partners can support setting up national SURGe Secretariats, implementing climate action in cities and help spread the word on the importance of cities to achieve the Paris Agreement!

Ways of supporting for **national governments** include:

- Help build national-level SURGe momentum by joining the network of city and climate change focal points.
- Pledge to strengthen the urban content of your NDCs.
- Support to strengthen climate action in cities around the world.

Ways of supporting for **all interested partners** include:

- Endorse SURGe to show your support to the vision and objective.
- Join a working group to help shape SURGe.
- Spread the word to help grow the global SURGe Alliance.

Registration

Ministerial Meeting Report

300 + people/organizations involved

180 + organizations have signed up and endorsed

Questions?
Reach out to: lea.ranalder@un.org

Global SURGe Alliance

[as of November 2022]

National governments

Costa Rica - Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements
Egypt - Ministry of Local Development
Japan - Ministry of the Environment
Morocco - Department of Housing and City Policy
Nauru - Permanent Mission to the UN
Qatar - Planning and Statistics Authority
Syria - Ministry of Local Administration and Environment

Note: several governments also endorsed SURGe; not included here

Urban Networks

Benin Jeunesse Elite
C40 cities
Capital Cities of the Americas Coalition (CC35)
Commonwealth Association of Planners, Climate Action Working Group
Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) / PLATFORMA
Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA)
Climate Heritage Network
Eurocities
European Committee of the Regions
Global Building Network
Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GcoM)
ICLEI
Mayors Migration Council
Kwazulu Natal Government
Polis Urban Mobility Network, the Netherlands
Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA)
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
Urban Climate Nexus

Grassroot and civil society

Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE)
Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation Inc. USA HCRFF
Inspirator Muda Nusantara (Inspiring Youth of the Indonesian Archipelago)
International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)
SPARC
Ukombozi Heritage Foundation
Youth Green Society

Local and regional governments

Abasan Al-Kabira (State of Palestine)
Ahome (México)
Ambato and Esmeraldas (Ecuador)
Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam (The Netherlands)
Athens (Greece)
Barcelona (Spain)
Bogota and Tópaga (Colombia)
Bonn (Germany)
Bristol (UK)
Chefchaouen (Morocco)
Comas (Perú)
Copenhagen (Denmark)
Des Moines (Iowa, USA)
Despeñaderos, San Justo (Argentina)
Ekurhuleni (South Africa)
Florence (Italy)
Glasgow (Scotland)
Glasgow City Council
Independencia, Peñalolén (Chile)
Makati City and Manila (The Philippines)
Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council (Uganda)
Miami Dade (Florida, USA)
Oreamuno (Costa Rica)
Paris and Marseilles (France)
Phoenix (Arizona, USA)
Quelimane (Mozambique)
Regional Council of Nouakchott (Mauritania)
Salvado, São Paulo, Serra Talhada (Brazil)
San Francisco, San Jose (California, USA)
Turku (Finland)
Warsaw (Poland)

UN Agencies & International Organisations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
IOM
IRENA
UN Water
UNCDF
UNEP / Global Alliance for Building and Construction
UNESCAP
UNESCO
UNFCCC
UN-Habitat
UNICEF
WHO
YOUNGO Constituency to the UNFCCC

INGOs & NGOs

Africa Place & Equity Cities Foundation
Aprodea, DRC
Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l'environnement
BENAA Foundation
CDP
Build Change
Centre of Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)
Children's Cancer Charity Club (Indonesia)
CItiesWithNature
Clim-Eat
Climate Chance Association
Destiny Africa
Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Housing (EAROPH)
ECOSOC – Kathak Academy
Eziodu Initiative for Sustainable Environmental Development, Nigeria
Egypt Green Building Council
FMDV – Global Fund for Cities Development
Habitat for Humanity International
Mainstreaming RSA Practitioners Network MPN
Munansi Green Initiative, Uganda
National Park City London
Impact Circles
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)International Association of Public Transport (UITP)
International Union of Railways (UIC)
Planners for Climate Action
REFADD-RDC/MUT-REDIT ASBL
RegionsWithNature
Research Triangle Consortium (Uganda)
Resilience Rising
Resilient Cities Network
Saving Our Sons & Sisters International (SOSSI)
SeforAll
Sons and Daughters of Africa, Uganda
Urban Transitions Mission
World Green Building Council
World Resources Institute / Ross Center for Sustainable Cities
WWF International

Financial institution

Climate Investment Funds

Academia

Young Academics Network of Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)
Biosonar Services - Strategic Water Resilient Development
Cairo University
CGIAR (Resilient Cities Initiative)
Climate Reality Project / Sierra Club (Atlanta Chapters)
Destination EMEA
Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association
Georgia Institute of Technology
Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation
InAfrika
Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey
Kennesaw State University
Kenyatta University
Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur (Department of Architecture)
NCTE
New York University
Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
University of agriculture Faisalabad
University of Oxford Earth Sciences
University of politecnico di Torino
University of Southern Denmark
Urban Imaginarium
Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology
World Talent Economy Forum

Private Sector and Utility Companies

Biophilic Private Limited, Singapore
BuildingtoCOP Coalition
BUMAS
Cassava Industry, Portugal
Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) GmbH
Claudia Dutra Consultoria
Custom Built, Ghana
Diagonal
ECOCONSTRUCT BRAZIL
GIGANTESQ CONNEXION
GV&DEP7 Consultoria Relações Institucionais e Assuntos Governamentais
Majesty Business Utvikling
MAUA et Associés
Plan Rite Consult
Platforms for sustainable cities and regions
ROCKWOOL Group
Shanghai Yangtz Delta Human Eco- tech Development Center

SURGe PARTNERS

COP27 Presidency in collaboration with UN-Habitat and facilitated by ICLEI

Interim co-leads and Steering Committee of the SURGe Initiative

180+ Members of the Global SURGe Alliance, including