

Secretary General's Foreword



António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The fight against climate change and the struggle to achieve more sustainable and equitable urbanization are two sides of the same coin.

When buildings, homes and vital infrastructure like water and transportation systems are poorly planned, built and managed, they are no match for climate-fueled disasters like rising seas, heatwaves, and other extreme weather impacts. This challenge disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable people.

But as this report shows, with bold investments and good planning and design, cities offer immense opportunities to slash greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the effects of climate change, and sustainably support urban populations.

Hundreds of cities around the world are leading the way by expanding inclusive green spaces, reducing emissions through smart planning and building, and investing in renewable energy to power civic services like transportation networks.

This report highlights strategies for local and regional governments and other partners to collectively forge solutions, drive innovation and craft budgets and policies that support sustainable urbanization for people and planet alike.

City and local leaders must also continue to be at the forefront of the fight against climate change. In many cases, cities are going further and faster than national governments in limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The success or failure of new national climate plans will be realized at the community level, and local leaders must be involved every step of the way.

The recently adopted Pact for the Future highlighted the importance of all levels of government working together to plan, design and build safe, healthy, resilient and sustainable cities for all people.

As we accelerate our efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, let's work to ensure that cities, everywhere, contribute to this goal.