



## Record number of countries now integrate cities, housing, and urban services into climate plans, UN-Habitat report finds

**Baku, 19 May 2026** – A new UN-Habitat analysis reveals that cities have moved to the centre of national climate plans, with 80 per cent of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) now including well-developed urban measures, up from 49 per cent in the previous cycle (NDC 2.0).

The report, *Urban Content in NDC 3.0: Cities at the Centre*, analysed 142 national climate plans submitted to the UNFCCC before 15 April 2026.<sup>1</sup> It shows that there is a growing recognition that while climate commitments are often set at the national level, implementation happens in cities.

Recognition of climate risks in cities is translating into stronger action. 87 per cent (123) of NDCs outline the role of cities in adaptation – up from 54 per cent in NDC 2.0 – targeting sectors such as infrastructure, water management, ecosystems, and biodiversity. NDCs that explicitly identify urban climate risks are significantly more likely to include concrete adaptation responses.

Urban mitigation is also expanding rapidly, appearing in 83 per cent (118) of submissions, compared to 55 per cent previously. Key sectors include transport, energy, and waste management, with governments emphasizing vehicle electrification, renewable energy adoption, and circular economy approaches. Interestingly, rapidly urbanizing middle-income countries are leading ambitious urban mitigation efforts, while some higher-income countries integrate cities less prominently despite strong emissions reduction targets.

Housing is becoming a key pathway for delivering climate action and building resilience, with almost 50 per cent of NDCs 3.0 addressing housing and informal settlements, with a focus on safe housing, resilience, slum upgrading and tenure security. The findings reflect growing recognition that the housing and climate crises are deeply interconnected, particularly in rapidly urbanizing regions facing intensifying climate risks. This growing focus on housing was also reflected at the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) in Baku, where the report was launched. Attended by over 21,000 people on the first day of the

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<sup>1</sup> Not including Union of the Comoros and Georgia

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**Contact information:**

Jessica Jones-Langley

Climate Communications Coordinator,  
UN-Habitat

WhatsApp: +33 6 95 55 61 01

Email: [jessica.joneslangley@un.org](mailto:jessica.joneslangley@un.org)

Website: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)



Conference, discussions at WUF13 are focusing on the urgent need to address the housing crisis and build safe and resilient cities and communities.

“Cities are increasingly recognized as central to climate action,” said **Anacláudia Rossbach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat**. “The findings of this report show growing recognition that climate commitments must be delivered where people live, through better housing, stronger infrastructure, and more resilient communities.”

Concrete delivery mechanisms are becoming more common, with 4 out of 5 NDCs identifying at least one enabler of urban climate action. Vertical coordination and capacity-building efforts have more than doubled compared to previous cycles. However, urban climate finance remains a critical gap. Only 19 per cent of NDCs include dedicated urban finance mechanisms, primarily in lower- and middle-income countries, highlighting the need for stronger global investment commitments.

Regional trends highlight uneven progress. In Asia, 77 per cent of submitted NDCs now include well-developed urban content, representing the largest urban population covered by any region. In Europe, the EU’s collective NDC marked a major shift toward well-developed urban content, while multilevel governance and implementation mechanisms emerged as key regional priorities. Across regions, the findings point to a broader transition from urban recognition toward implementation and delivery in cities.

“Cities are a critical arena of climate action,” said **Murat Kurum, COP31 President-Designate and Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye**. “In the wake of the 2023 earthquake which affected millions of people, Türkiye’s roadmap for urban reconstruction has brought together resilience, disaster management and climate change as part of the same vision. We have built nearly half a million homes in line with the nearly zero-energy building concept and based on principles of efficiency, environmentally friendly buildings, Zero Waste and smart systems management. This has reduced energy consumption by almost 40 per cent, which is vitally important for families facing spiralling global energy prices. At COP31, we want to share this experience with the world and help everyone scale up solutions in cities to make them resilient and sustainable.”

“A new generation of national climate plans – NDCs – are setting us on a path towards a cleaner, more resilient, and more prosperous future and cities are at their centre. Now it’s time to move from words on paper, to projects on the ground all over the world. Because,

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Jessica Jones-Langley

Climate Communications Coordinator,  
UN-Habitat

WhatsApp: +33 6 95 55 61 01

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Website: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)



without local action, global climate goals would be impossible to achieve,” said **Simon Stiell, Executive Director, UNFCCC.**

“Cities cannot deliver climate goals without the right support and coordination,” said **Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, and GCoM Regional Ambassador for Africa.** “It is encouraging to see more countries strengthening the role of local governments in national climate plans through multilevel governance, capacity-building and clearer implementation frameworks. For cities, these mechanisms are what turn climate ambition into safer housing, stronger infrastructure, better transport and more reliable basic services for people facing growing climate pressures.”

A critical window for action remains. More than 50 NDC 3.0 submissions remain outstanding, representing a continued opportunity for countries to strengthen urban climate ambition and deepen multilevel collaboration ahead of the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) taking place in Antalya, Türkiye. COP31 is expected to play a key role in accelerating climate implementation in cities in line with the Paris Agreement.

### **About the report**

The Urban Content in NDCs series is a UN-Habitat flagship global analysis of how urban content is being integrated into national climate plans under the Paris Agreement. Published alongside each NDC cycle, the series tracks progress across mitigation, adaptation and implementation, while identifying opportunities to strengthen multilevel climate action and accelerate delivery in cities and communities worldwide.

### **About the World Urban Forum**

Established in 2001 by the United Nations, the World Urban Forum is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization, designed to examine the impacts of rapid urbanization on cities, communities, economies, and climate change. Since its inception, WUF has been hosted in cities across the world, with the first session held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2002.

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Climate Communications Coordinator,  
UN-Habitat

WhatsApp: +33 6 95 55 61 01

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Website: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

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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 supporting 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 [unhabitat.org](http://unhabitat.org) or follow us on social media @UNHABITAT.

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