



COP29
Baku
Azerbaijan



SUMMARY REPORT

Ministerial Meeting(s) on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP29



Summary Report Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP29

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Over 1,000 people attended the sessions of the Ministerial Meeting(s) on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP29
[Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat]

Ministerial Meeting(s) on Urbanization and Climate Change

Host: COP29 Presidency, UN-Habitat, High-Level Climate Change Champions

Date: Wednesday, 20 November 2024, 09:00 – 10:30 UTC+4

Location: UNFCCC COP29 – Baku, Azerbaijan; UNFCCC Plenary Room 2, Caspian. Blue Zone.

Organizers: COP29 Presidency, UN-Habitat, High-Level Climate Change Champion

Invitees: Ministers of Housing, Urban Development, Environment and Climate Change and/or Finance and local government leaders as part of the UNFCCC Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency and non-state actors.

Recordings via [Youtube](#)

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01

Background: Multilevel and Multisectoral Climate Action

As COP29 marked a critical year for climate action, cities were increasingly recognized as pivotal players in the global climate battle.

Building on the momentum from COP28, where two key events highlighted the growing role of urban areas – the second Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, with leaders from over 60 countries, and the Local Climate Action Summit, which saw the launch of the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) – COP29 offered a timely opportunity to take stock of progress, consolidate efforts, and strengthen multilevel and multisectoral action. These developments built on the recognition of cities in key international agreements like the Paris Agreement, the Glasgow Climate Pact, and the Sharm-El-Sheikh Plan, all of which emphasized the need for multilevel cooperation to address climate change.

Discussions at COP29 focused on advancing urban climate resilience, scaling up financing mechanisms, and addressing the challenges of integrating urban issues into national climate plans. As the world revises Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in preparation for COP30, integrating cities into these plans is essential. With only 27 per cent of current NDCs prioritizing urban issues, it is critical for national and subnational governments to collaborate to bridge the gap between climate commitments and the action needed in urban areas. By fully incorporating urban issues into national climate strategies, COP29 aimed to ensure a sustainable, resilient future for urban populations, particularly the most vulnerable.

Cities are major contributors to climate change, responsible for more than two-thirds of global CO₂ emissions despite occupying less than 2 per cent of the Earth's surface. Urbanization has led to the concentration of industries, transportation networks,

and energy consumption, all of which are key drivers of greenhouse gas emissions. As the global urban population is expected to grow by 2.5 billion people by 2050, cities will face heightened challenges, including increased emissions and growing demand for energy, transportation, and housing. These rising pressures, combined with the existing environmental footprint of urban areas, make cities central to addressing climate change.

At the same time, cities are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Informal settlements, slums, and densely populated urban areas are particularly at risk due to their exposure to extreme weather events such as floods, heatwaves, and storms, as well as rising sea levels and resource scarcity. These communities often lack adequate infrastructure, making them more susceptible to the effects of climate change. The risks faced by cities are further compounded by rapid urbanization and inequality, which strain already overburdened systems and deepen vulnerabilities. As urban areas expand, addressing these vulnerabilities becomes even more critical to ensuring climate resilience. However, cities also hold significant potential to lead the way in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Many local governments are already implementing ambitious emission reduction strategies, promoting renewable energy, and developing climate resilience initiatives to safeguard their populations. Cities can serve as testing grounds for innovative solutions, from green building technologies to sustainable public transport systems. Yet, the ability to fully realize these opportunities is constrained by a lack of adequate financing. Only a small portion of global climate funds currently reach local governments and urban projects, limiting the scale and impact of their

efforts. Without sufficient financial resources, cities may struggle to meet their climate goals, making the need for targeted investment in urban climate action even more urgent.

Climate action requires a multilevel and multisectoral approach, reflecting a shift in how the issue is addressed. Mitigation and adaptation strategies need to be incorporated into national policies with a focus on fostering collaboration across different levels of government and sectors. Currently, only 27 per cent of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) prioritize urban issues, leaving a significant gap between global climate commitments and real-world challenges facing urban areas. This gap must be addressed to ensure cities play a central role in achieving global climate goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Effective climate action in cities requires strong coordination between national, regional, and local governments, as well as alignment of policies across sectors such as energy, transportation, housing, and infrastructure. A multilevel governance approach, guided by the principle of subsidiarity—making decisions at the most local level possible—will be key to address urban climate challenges effectively and allocate resources efficiently. Furthermore, equity must be central to climate governance, ensuring that vulnerable populations, especially in developing

countries and small island states, receive the support they need to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

Recognizing the urgency of these challenges, the COP29 Presidency launched the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities initiative, which aims to foster collaboration across sectors and levels of government to tackle the complex issues facing cities. This initiative seeks to promote innovative solutions like green technologies, urban agriculture, and early warning systems, while also prioritizing the mobilization of urban climate finance. Another important outcome of COP29 was the presentation of the Baku Urban Continuity Coalition, a new initiative dedicated to ensuring continuity between past and future COPs on urban issues. The Coalition aims to encourage future COPs to include urban topics as a central part of their action agenda, reinforcing the importance of cities in global climate solutions and strengthening multilevel cooperation for lasting impact.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

02

High-Level Opening on Multilevel and Multisectoral Climate Action in Numbers

The third Ministerial Meeting(s) on Urbanization and Climate Change convened at COP29 in Baku brought together over 50 ministers and high-level representatives, with more than 100 national government delegations in attendance. Held as the high-level opening on the Urbanization, thematic day, the meeting drew over 1,000 participants, underscoring the rising global momentum behind multilevel and multisectoral climate action.

The high-level opening emphasized the central role of cities in tackling the climate crisis. As major contributors to global emissions and home to the majority of the world's population, urban areas are both at risk and uniquely positioned to lead. Speakers called for stronger alignment between national and local strategies, integration of climate and urban policies, and more equitable access to finance.

This high-level opening set the tone for the sessions that followed, with a shared commitment to empower cities, mobilize resources, and unlock solutions that are inclusive, innovative, and climate-resilient.

1000+

people participated including

26+

speakers representing national governments, local leaders, international organizations, and development partners



03

High-Level Opening on Multilevel and Multisectoral Climate Action

The discussions at the High-Level Opening on multilevel and multisectoral climate action emphasized the crucial role of cities in both contributing to and mitigating the climate crisis. Representatives highlighted the need for collaboration across all levels of government, particularly between local and national leaders, to drive meaningful climate action. The launch of the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities was presented as a cornerstone initiative, designed to create synergies between urban development and climate action through innovative policies and multi-sector partnerships. The discussions also underscored the disproportionate environmental burden cities bear, while acknowledging their heightened vulnerability to climate impacts. Cities were called upon to integrate both climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, with a strong emphasis on innovative financing and local solutions to ensure urban resilience in the face of escalating climate challenges.

The urgency of inclusive and multilevel collaboration was a central theme throughout the discussions. With the window for limiting global warming rapidly closing, representatives emphasized the need for local leaders to sustain climate action that promotes economic growth and job creation, with particular focus on the essential role of innovative financing and stronger partnerships in bolstering urban resilience. Additionally, representatives highlighted the need to align national and subnational strategies to implement sustainable, nature-positive urban solutions. Initiatives such as the MAP Declaration and the Coalition for High Ambition Multi-Level Partnerships (CHAMP) were recognized as key frameworks for empowering cities and regions to take a leading role in addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change. Collectively, the discussions reinforced the need for collaboration, local leadership, and innovative solutions to ensure that cities remain central actors in the global response to climate change.

Summary of statements (in chronological order)

MODERATOR



Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga,
Director of the
Intergovernmental
Support and
Collective Progress
Division, United
Nations Framework
Convention on
Climate Change
(UNFCCC)

Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga opened the third Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change by underscoring its significance, calling it “a cornerstone of our shared ambition to advance multi-sectoral and multi-level climate action, with a focus on urban resilience, health, and sustainability.” Reflecting on Azerbaijan’s role as the host of COP29, she drew inspiration from the works of Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi, quoting, “In his Book of Life, every page has two sides. He writes, ‘We human beings feel the opposite of our plans, hopes, and wishes, but Providence writes on the other side, and what it ordains is seldom our goal.’” She linked this idea to the theme of multilateralism, noting that as countries convene in Baku, each brings its own priorities, hopes, and plans. However, the outcomes of global collaboration often evolve in unexpected ways. “In multilateralism,” she explained, “the final results are sometimes different from what any single country might have envisioned. This highlights the importance of flexibility, cooperation, and the willingness to adapt in international relations.”

Over 1,000 people, including many online participants, listened to the interventions.
[Photo credit: Kamran Guliyev / UN Climate Change]





Anar Guliyev,
Chairman of the
State Committee
on Urban Planning
and Architecture
(SCUPA), Republic of
Azerbaijan

"We recognize the critical role of cities in shaping both our future and the future of our planet. As one of the fastest growing regions in terms of urbanization, Azerbaijan is deeply committed to addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities that come with this rapid urban growth." The gathering of partners from around the world here at COP29 "demonstrates their vision for the future, where multilevel and multi-sectoral stakeholders act together to address the climate challenges and transform urban spaces into resilient ecosystems." Initiatives, such as SURGe "have already made tremendous contributions by creating spaces for dialogue and fostering cooperation in addressing key urbanization challenges." Our launch of the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilience and Healthy Cities Declaration "integrates lessons learned from previous initiatives" and "encourages synergy between urban and climate processes." The initiative "promotes healthy equity" and fosters "nature-positive urban developments" while also calling for strengthened "urban climate resilience" and "for policies and frameworks to encourage sustainable construction practices." It "calls for stronger partnerships among UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations, development banks... and other stakeholders" to coordinate the mobilization of resources for cities. It "emphasizes... linkages between World Urban Forums, COPs, World Environment Days, and other relevant global and regional platforms for dialogue, actions and initiatives. It encourages WUF host governments to appoint a special envoy for urban climate action." Azerbaijan is proud to host "the coming WUF in 2026, and we will be happy to establish the first-ever... Special Envoy for Urban Climate Action and take practical actions so our commitments generate tangible results... I am particularly honored to emphasize the establishment of the Baku Continuity Coalition" which sends "a powerful message that the future of our cities will be shaped by collaboration, innovation and deep commitment... I believe through future-oriented and nature-positive urban planning policies... that our efforts will generate significant outcomes for the sake of our resilience and health."



**Anacláudia
Rossbach**
United Nations
Under-Secretary-
General
Executive Director
of United Nations
Human-Settlements
Programme

Cities must be "sheltered and taken care of," given the fact that they are home "to more than half the world's population" and given their "critical importance... for our future." Sustainable development within cities is imperative. "Unplanned urban sprawl is a threat to biodiversity, to the environment, to food security. It generates social fragmentation and fiscal deterioration. Buildings, housing and construction are responsible for up to 40 per cent of greenhouse emissions." Yet gaps remain. "We have 1 billion people living in informal settlements and we need to build 96,000 houses a day to achieve our sustainable development goal." Cities are also "extremely vulnerable to climate change." Threats to cities include temperature increases, sea level rise and severe storms. Global conferences, including WUF12, G20, and COP29 "have gathered national, local and regional governments, social and private sectors, with a clear and unified message:" we must mobilize now. Cities, local and regional governments play a "strategic and fundamental role" in building "coalitions for the future," ones that incorporate a new urban agenda to "strengthen the economy and, ultimately, address climate change challenges." The Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) "is a testament to" this fact. "Today represents a very important milestone. There is only one road to be pursued," the one in which "we work collectively" to address "social, urban and climate needs... harmoniously" and "over solid economic ground... Yes, we do need more finance" to "flow into cities." But it must come as we simultaneously "plan and prioritize." "Land is scarce," and it must "fulfill its social and ecological function... We take care of people; people take care of the planet; and we should leave no one behind."



Mr. Rafael Huseynov,
Deputy Speaker
of the Milli Majlis
of the Republic of
Azerbaijan

"Cities are at the frontline and the heart of the climate crisis. They are major contributors to global emissions and the first to feel the impacts of climate change. Yet they are also home to the solutions. We are urging" cities to focus on "innovative solutions" and "sustainable infrastructure." These "communities can make the most significant difference... We must ensure that climate policies are integrated across all sectors, from housing and transport to health and energy. We need to work with our local governments, the private sector and civil society to create policies that empower cities to lead in both mitigation and adaptation... We see the growing importance of multilevel and multi-sectoral cooperation to scale up urban climate action. We need to connect all levels of government... The MAP declaration, launched today, will guide us in this collective effort" toward "resilient and healthy cities... Many cities, especially in developing countries, struggle to access the financing they need to implement climate solutions. We must unlock innovative funding mechanisms, ensure that financing reaches the local level and build strong partnerships with international financial institutions, multilateral climate funds and the private sector... We must ensure that commitments made by cities are translated into action... We can advocate for stronger mechanisms to monitor the impact of urban climate policies and ensure that climate action is inclusive, benefiting all segments of society."



Selwin Hart,
Special Adviser to the
UN Secretary-General
on Climate Action
and Just Transition

"The stark reality is that the window of opportunity to keep the 1.5° limit of the Paris Agreement within reach and prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis is almost closed. At current levels, we are witnessing firsthand the consequences of inaction: wildfires, droughts, heat waves, storms, floods and accelerating sea level rise. They're devastating livelihoods across your countries, across your regions, and across your cities. No continent, no region, no country is immune. And as the world charges towards the 1.5° limit, the cost of climate chaos keeps piling up. You know firsthand that those who have contributed the least to the climate crisis are paying the highest price. More than 500 million urban residents live in coastal areas, and they face sea level rise and more frequent and severe storms... But all hope is not lost. There has never been greater clarity" about "what needs to be done, by whom, and over what time frame to avoid climate catastrophe... We have the technologies, the solutions and the know-how to supercharge the energy transition while simultaneously protecting those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. The Renewables Revolution is underway, and the transition is inevitable. In fact, it is unstoppable. The only open questions are, will it be fast enough to prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis? And will it be fair?" Will it help "to reduce inequalities? You, local leaders, are often going further and faster than your national governments... I ask you for your assistance in three critical areas." First, that the "new generation of NDCs... should reflect the urgency of the climate challenge, the urgency of the economy, and wider society," that they are "backed by credible domestic policies and regulations and clearly define national transition pathways... Second, continue to lead by example... Those of you who have the power to set policies and regulations must continue to demonstrate that climate policies and climate action at the local level can boost economic growth, create jobs, improve energy access, energy security and energy affordability." Lastly, "we need cooperation and collaboration of climate action across all levels. Geopolitical divisions must not and should not undermine cooperation and collaboration." Growing and widening "your networks, dialogue, and tangible collaboration at the sub-national level will be crucial to raise and uphold global and national ambition, as well as deliver tangible climate action that makes a difference in the lives of people on the ground." At the UN, "we're all in. We're here to support you. We're here to work with you. We will continue to work tirelessly to build trust, find solutions, convince stakeholders and inspire the cooperation and hope that our world desperately needs."



Mukhtar Babayev,
COP29 President

“Currently, urban areas are home to more than half the global population,” a figure “projected to rise to nearly 70 per cent by 2050... In the next five to seven years, the urban population is expected to grow by over 500 million people which will, in turn, put even greater pressure on urban infrastructure... Urban centers are responsible for more than 70 per cent of global CO2 emissions... A significant portion of urban residents” are living in areas “highly vulnerable to climate impacts.” The “COP29 Presidency is pleased to launch the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilience and Healthy Cities Declaration” which “is designed to align multilevel actions and transform urban spaces into hubs of resilience, sustainability and climate leadership. It serves as a clear call to action, urging national governments, together with private and public stakeholders, to join forces and work closely toward these goals... Multilevel collaboration is vital... Cities and regions need the tools, funding and authority to implement climate solutions designed to fit the unique and specific contexts... Initiatives like the Baku Urban Continuity Coalition... bring together different parties committed to enhance cooperation. Climate finance is also critical.” Climate action within cities “requires innovative financing mechanisms and stronger partnerships. This is not only about addressing climate risks, but also about unlocking opportunities for economic growth, job creation and improved quality of life for urban populations... I want to emphasize the need for inclusivity. Climate action in cities must address the needs of vulnerable populations, ensure equitable access to resources and integrate diverse voices... Together, we have the power to transform our cities and our planet for generations to come.”



Inger Andersen,
Executive Director
of United Nations
Environment
Programme

Representatives of subnational governments, mayors, local government officials, “you are where climate action meets... the vast majority of populations... Cities carry a significant burden” of climate impacts. “Just 25 megacities are responsible for 52 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Therefore, the actions you take at home” in terms of energy, waste, and transportation “can have a massive contribution... in the context of climate change. Cities are also the victims of the impacts of climate change, and this is where adaptation measures” will play an important role. “There is a lot that is happening in cities because” they are “the innovation lab for everything that we need to do in terms of climate.” “When you work in cities, you are also” invariably working on “adaptation... biodiversity... resources and waste management... reducing plastic and methane... pollution and energy efficiency.... You will be working on the Montreal Protocol... Everything is connected... and it all comes to your desks. So, we ask you to” use “partnerships that exist... so that in the next NDCs that your countries submit, your voice is heard... Everybody will need to lean in. Cities can lead and be part of the solution. Ensure that your cities are reflected in the National Adaptation Plans. This is how we can keep all citizens safe.”

From COP27 to COP30: Taking Stock of previous COP initiatives



**Prof. Dr. Mohamed
Masoud Al-Saadawi,**
Chairman of National
Housing and Building
Research, Arab
Republic of Egypt

The Egyptian Ministry of Housing “launched the Green Atomization Strategy, at WUF12 this month,” which centers as its goal “environmental sustainability and sustainable urban resilience for the next generations.” It will maintain a “rational use of energy, water, materials and resources” and will “improve air quality” while staying consistent “with the direction of... the 2050 climate change strategy.” Our National Research Center “plays a leading role in promoting sustainable development, especially in the field of green construction... Egypt and the Social Housing Fund launched... low-cost green housing initiatives in cooperation with the World Bank” which aims “to build 55,000 housing units.” These units are “expected to reduce energy consumption by” between “24 and 35 per cent, carbon emissions by 33 to 39 per cent and water consumption by 30 per cent... In October 2024, Egypt issued the Green Pyramids green building guidelines to encourage the private sector... to go green in construction... By implementing specific codes, expanding testing protocols and providing financial and educational support, the guidelines can facilitate a transition toward sustainable... solutions aligned with Egyptian environmental goals.” These initiatives in Egypt are “a major step on the path to achieving sustainable development and transitioning toward” sustainable construction, all “supported by His Excellency President Fattah el-Sisi.”



Mr. Tomáš Taraba,
Deputy Prime
Minister and Minister
of Environment of
Slovak Republic

“This marks a critical moment in our shared journey towards resilient and healthy cities, where our collective commitment will drive the change, we urgently need. Urban areas occupy less than 2 per cent of the Earth’s surface but” contain “57 per cent of the world’s population.” Earth’s urban population is “projected to increase to 68 per cent by 2050. At the same time, cities are responsible for approximately 70 per cent of all GHG emissions. Urban areas are often among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This year, Slovakia... has experienced the hottest summer on record. It brought heavy rains and devastating floods. Others have experienced heat waves and droughts. Therefore, our cities have to become more resilient by taking action on all levels of governance and across all sectors... Today, we are launching the Multisectoral Action Pathways (MAP) declaration to resilient and healthy cities” which “highlights the importance of integrating nature-based solutions, health, urban agriculture, and disaster resilience.” Our commitment to MAP “is a continuation of Slovakia’s dedication to sustainable urban development. In fact, Slovakia became a SURGe champion at” WUF12, “further solidifying our role in advancing urban climate action as a nation. We understand that sustainable and resilient cities are integral to achieving our broader climate and development goals.” In 2024 alone, “Slovakia invested in more than €400 million for the building or modernizing of service systems and water pipelines in our cities... With Baku set to host” WUF13 “and World Environment Day in 2026, we look forward to a global platform that will further elevate urban climate solutions and accelerate progress.”



Dr. Nawal Al-Hosany,
Ministry of Climate
Change and
Environment of the
United Arab Emirates

“We have seen firsthand how subnational actors can dramatically raise ambition.... The consultations on the global stocktake revealed that cities alone can help bridge the major gap between the current NDCs and a 1.5-aligned pathway by 2030. Greater involvement from subnational actors can lead to similarly impressive adaptation gains... At COP28, we set a powerful new precedent for multilevel engagement by integrating local actors into the core process for the first time... Rather than asking cities to undertake action alone, we urged federal governments to involve subnational actors in their NDCs and climate finance strategies... The UAE has proudly invested \$1.5 million... to help federal and subnational governments to work together to align NDCs with the universally adopted goal to triple renewables and double energy efficiency by 2030... Many of you will have noticed the strong multilevel content in some of the NDCs presented here in Baku. This matches our own

Continued

Dr. Nawal Al-Hosany,
Ministry of Climate
Change and
Environment of the
United Arab Emirates

domestic experience in the UAE... Subnational actors will play a major role in defining the success of our 2050 net-zero strategy... It would be a very powerful statement of intent if we can arrive in Belém with an even larger vanguard of countries that are tapping into the power of countries, regions and their NDCs. We encourage all countries to join" the Coalition for High Ambition Multi-Level Partnerships (CHAMP) "and put multilevel action at the heart of both adaptation and mitigation... We must keep cities and subnational actors in mind. With UN-Habitat and" the support of the Global Covenant of Mayors, "it would send a very powerful signal if we could begin to establish a new global benchmark on annual climate finance for cities... Multilevel action is one of the best investments we can make for the climate, for sustainable economic growth and, most importantly, for people."



Mr. Gregor Robertson,
Special Envoy
for Cities in
Coalition for High
Ambition Multilevel
Partnerships
(CHAMP)

"Launched less than a year ago," the Coalition for High Ambition Multi-Level Partnerships (CHAMP) "has rapidly become a beacon for multilevel climate action with 74 member countries that are committed to empowering cities, states and regions. CHAMP exemplifies how national and subnational governments can unite and turn the tide on this climate crisis. The potential is massive... Subnational leaders have been relentless in their call for greater collaboration with national governments on climate action. We are calling firstly for more countries to join CHAMP and for the existing members to deliver on their pledge to include subnational governments and their development process and content of their NDCs, adaptation plans and biodiversity strategies. Secondly," we call for "more investment in subnational action, particularly in providing resources for the most vulnerable populations... Cities are uniquely positioned to deliver. They are home to large populations; they serve as economic hubs; they currently burn most of the fossil fuels and hold authority over critical sectors like energy, transport, buildings and waste. Cities are key to decarbonizing the largest sources of climate pollution and reversing our devastating impact on nature. They are on the frontlines for building resilience to protect people" from climate impacts. "We've already seen remarkable progress... National, regional and local leaders could achieve more than they ever could alone. To my colleagues here today, I urge you to amplify the CHAMP vision with your nations and networks and push for much greater ambition, partnership, investment and action from here to COP30 and beyond.



Mr. Antonio Da Costa e Silva,
Ambassador from
the Ministry of Cities,
Federative Republic
of Brazil

"The CHAMP agenda" creates a path for the "construction of robust climate actions for all of humanity." These actions "require collaboration in our municipalities and also at the federal level... We would like to reiterate not only our promise with CHAMP" but also our commitment to "construct a process in which multilevel action is an indispensable part of climate action." Our agendas combine "multi-sectoral actions and climate actions." We promise to "foster collaboration that helps cities" become more sustainable and harnesses new technologies to ensure "the adoption of climate adaptation... In Brazil, we are supporting projects that work toward sustainable development and the reduction of carbon emissions through coordinated action. We encourage our leaders to face the challenges that climate change presents. More than 80 per cent of people live in cities" in Brazil. "The time for action is now... We must construct resilient cities and prepare for the challenges we are facing now." Alliances will be necessary going forward. "MAP will help construct" these alliances which "are essential to climate action" and will ensure we "keep our promise" in alignment with "the sustainable development agenda... We believe that there would be no climate justice without social justice," nor would there be "social justice without urban justice."

Interventions of national governments



Representative from
the Republic of
Lithuania

"Today's new urbanization should be both fit for a climate-neutral planet" by 2050 "and climate change resilient because we will use" cities "in a very different climate than today. Are we on the right path? Our cities are not just economic powerhouses, they are also among the largest emitters... We as urban planners should agree that all new development should be a solution for climate change mitigation and adaptation, not a problem. The power of change lies in the hands of city leaders and urban planners." In our capital, Vilnius, which is "one of the greenest cities in Europe, we are narrowing streets" to promote biking, "we are changing paved environments to green sponge areas for surface water" infiltration "and green lungs for urban air... Today, urban planning does not happen without a discussion at the neighborhood level... The journey towards green and resilient cities starts with the next construction permit. Let us make it a solution for global challenges, not a problem."



Representative from
the Kingdom of
Cambodia

"Climate change has put pressure on cities due to the displacement of people and immigration into cities. The resulting rapid urbanization has brought many challenges, including housing crises," pressure on "public services and infrastructure, and unplanned urban sprawl and informal settlements. That has affected the environment, sustainability and public well-being. As a country vulnerable to climate change, Cambodia takes climate change and green transformation seriously. Green investment with private sector participation is considered a priority in our national development policy. Our updated NDC presents our commitment to the next decade" and realizes "our vision of a low-carbon and resilient society... We call on UN agencies and development partners as well as the private sector to work closely with us to support our commitment and needs to address such complex issues and realize our vision of a low-carbon climate and a resilient and harmonious society."



Representative from
the Republic of Chad

Our country "is facing a very profound climate crisis. The majority of states and regions are affected by inundations. We have 42,000 hectares of land that have been devastated, and agricultural arable lands have been destroyed. Bridges and roads have been destroyed. Facing this situation, we have a National Committee for the Prevention of Inundations. We are trying to coordinate our measures" with other countries facing the "dire consequences" of climate change. "But we have limited resources. It is difficult for us to face the situation. So, it is high time for all the countries engaged in this COP to come and support us because tomorrow, it will be too late."



Representative from
the Republic of
Estonia

"Estonia firmly believes that strong collaboration between national and local governments is essential for achieving the Paris Agreement and our Sustainable Development Goals." In my country, "local energy and climate planning is a cornerstone of our climate framework. To date, 60 out of 75 municipalities in Estonia have developed their energy and climate plan. These plans are critical for aligning local actions with national climate targets... We are driving efforts to integrate urban nature into local planning... Cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants are required to develop urban greening plans" which are "aligned with the newly adopted Nature Restoration Regulation. They strengthen the capacity of cities to mitigate urban heat islands, reduce flooding risks and foster healthier communities." Estonia is creating climate-focused "digital tools and maps" that "are accessible to municipalities, banks, insurance companies, city planners and the wider public" around the country. They "provide robust risk assessments across sectors, from infrastructure resilience to public health preparedness... Through these initiatives, Estonia exemplifies how national governments can empower local authorities to lead climate action, ensuring resilience, sustainability and alignment with global goals."



Representative from
Georgia

"Environmental protection, development and climate resilience. Those are the topics which are so important... Our approach is that these are balanced... Infrastructural development plays a pivotal role in combating climate change. When designed and implemented thoughtfully, it has the power to reduce emissions, improve energy efficiency and create resilient communities that can survive the impacts of a changing climate. We can minimize our ecological footprint while fostering economic growth. However, we must not lose sight of one fundamental truth: prevention is our priority. It is not enough to simply react to the consequences of climate change. We must take proactive steps to prevent further damage to our planet... That requires deep collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and expertise between countries... The future of our cities depends on our ability to integrate sustainability and balance processes into every aspect of urban life. By aligning our actions with the SDGs, we can create urban spaces that are not only better for the planet, but also better for the people who call them home. Let us work together... to build cities that are sustainable, inclusive and, of course, resilient. Our cities are the heartbeat of our nations, and it is our responsibility to ensure they remain places where future generations can prosper."



Representative from
the Republic of Italy

"Italy recognized the construction and building sector among the value chains that constitutes a challenge in terms of circularity. We underline the importance of energy efficiency as an upstream choice for consumption-reduction policies, particularly relevant in the building and urban areas. During the Italian Presidency, we introduced nature-based solutions to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation in cities. As part of the Intergovernmental Council on Buildings and Climate, Italy has proposed 4 priority issues to focus on in the coming years. First, a tax mechanism, an innovative solution for the financing of energy redevelopment of private real estate. Second, the role of public administration in refurbishing public buildings is a leading example. Third, the circular economy in urban areas and in the construction sector for waste reduction and the reuse and recycling of building materials. Fourth, technical planning and design solutions to reduce building consumption. The full involvement of local levels in the environmental and climate efforts is crucial... Italy has adopted a multilevel approach to implementing its sustainability strategy. Together with UN-Habitat, we have launched a joint initiative called the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs to collaborate globally with partner countries and their cities at local levels. We are confident that exchanging information, updates and best practices among Member States will facilitate the advancement of the climate change agenda on the global and local level."



Representative from
Malaysia

"We convene with a deep sense of urgency because the most pressing extreme climate events have the highest impact in urban environments. Malaysia is experiencing rapid urbanization. Extreme climate events, such as urban flooding, have been occurring very often. This year we experienced the worst heat wave in living memory. We understand that rapid urbanization has increased our carbon footprint... Therefore, we must meticulously plan our cities to ensure they are resilient and capable of withstanding extreme weather events." The Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities initiative "focuses on fostering multi sector collaboration which is critical for addressing the complex challenges posed by climate change, especially in urban settings... Malaysia has taken significant steps to address urbanizations with climate conscious strategies, embracing multilevel and multi-sectoral approaches... The stark reality is that only 27 per cent of NDCs globally currently include comprehensive urban strategies. We must do better... Malaysia aims to establish itself as a leading hub for green investment by promoting supportive policies and fostering strategic collaboration to drive sustainable growth. I urge all Member States to unite in addressing climate change and advancing sustainable development, building inclusive and resilient cities. It is only by prioritizing peace and climate action that we can ensure a livable planet for the future. We will not be remembered for what we see, but we will be

Continued
Representative from
Malaysia



Representative from
Montenegro

remembered for what we have done and left for the future generation. Malaysia is committed to contributing and collaborating together. Let us turn this vision into a reality."

"Buildings and construction account for nearly 40 per cent of global carbon emissions, making it imperative that we adopt sustainable practices and innovative solutions to reduce our environmental footprint... Our journey towards a sustainable future begins with the adoption of green building standards and energy efficient technologies. By integrating renewable energy sources into our building designs, we can significantly reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Additionally, the use of sustainable materials and the implementation of circular economy principles will help minimize waste and promote resource efficiency. The first concrete steps on the way to a circular transition in Montenegro were made with the development of the Roadmap Towards a Circular Economy in Montenegro, a document identifying priority areas and key driving factors for a circular transition" and "built environments based on sustainable spatial planning and circular design... The buildings and construction sector has a unique opportunity to lead the way in the fight against climate change. By embracing sustainability, innovation and cooperation, we can build a future that is not only resilient, but prosperous for all. Let us seize this moment to make a lasting impact and ensure a better world for future generations."



Representative from
the Principality of
Monaco

"We have a very important objective: building green and sustainable cities. This requires collaborative efforts... Our urban areas are responsible for the majority of emissions, so we need to become models of adaptation and resilience... We are working on transitioning towards green and decarbonated energies" in order "to limit the negative impact" of climate change. For example, "we have a label that is called Mediterranean Sustainable Building, an important label for virtuous construction practices and a showcase of our commitments to" curb "greenhouse gas emissions." We must "concentrate on green areas and... increase biodiversity in our cities. Nature-based solutions should be at the heart of adaptation plans in order to improve" the lives "of our citizens." We need "local coordination and stakeholder mobilization to reach these objectives... Together we can build" for "the future and can achieve climate resilience."



Governor of
Shusha, Republic of
Azerbaijan

"We are focusing on creating a resilient environment... for our people... Special attention is paid to the creation of sustainable infrastructure that meets current requirements of the climate agenda and Sustainable Development Goals... The government has issued a special decree, in 2021, prohibiting all businesses that are potentially harming the environment from operating within the city. We are implementing the Project for Integrated Water Management System; Shusha is the first site in which the pilot project aimed at modernization of waste management" is taking place; thousands of apartments are being built that stay in line with our commitment to "resilient building practices by introducing new technologies and materials that allow" greater "energy efficiency... I am proud to inform you... that our city of Shusha is the first city in Azerbaijan where public transportation is 100 per cent electrified." We must continue to "support the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities. By endorsing this declaration, Azerbaijan affirms its commitment to a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach to climate action. We are committed to making Shusha a model for resilience and sustainability, not just for Azerbaijan, but for the broader region."



Mayor of the City of
Turku, Finland

"We are here as protectors of our shared future, united by urgency and action. But we all must do better... Cities are ready and willing to help. We are innovative. We are determined. And we are already driving the changes on the ground. We will never give up. Together, we can do so much better. Since the Paris Agreement, cities and regions have set ambitious climate targets and taken bold steps. Turku, my home city in Finland, is an example. We will be climate-neutral by 2029, showing that a sustainable future is within reach. Hundreds of towns, cities and regions... have proposed three key asks... First, accelerate multilevel action. Second, finance urbanization fairly. And third, integrate climate action into all sustainability agendas. We need climate finance that focuses on grants, not loans... We must build synergies between mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity to create a healthier planet... As we look ahead, let us remember: hope gives us strength to act. Ambition drives real progress, but only action turns hope into reality."



Representative from
the Republic of
Türkiye

"This meeting... offers an important opportunity to enhance cooperation at local and national levels in line with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Türkiye has determined its policies to combat climate change with its national Climate Change Action Plan," centering "energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable transportation and waste management. Our country's urbanization policy includes affordable housing for all and resilient cities... Our country has faced many... disasters due to climate change, as has the rest of the world." We aim "to make our cities more resilient as part of our climate change adaptation" strategy. "I hope this event... will reveal the strength of cities in combating climate change, and it acts as an inspiration to the whole world."

Closing remarks



Nigar Arpadarai,
Climate Change
High-Level Champion
for COP29

"Our civilization is very much built around cities. The creative potential of humans is concentrated in them. But cities are also the source of major challenges. How do we create an urban environment which has the advantages of collective living but does not suffer from over-crowdedness and pollution? We cannot exist and prosper without them as they are the beating hearts of our societies... There is no place on Earth where the green agenda affects the quality of life more positively than in cities. Cleaner air, better and more convenient public transportation, less congestion, more online services and many more benefits come with turning cities smart and green... Collaboration between national and subnational governments is essential to bridge the gap between climate commitments and real, impactful implementation." The Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities "brings together health and cities for the first time.... Governments need to engage with national leaders to seize the opportunity to bolster city level climate policy, to unlock private finance, to establish a vision for climate action grounded in locally led solutions. We urge you to collaborate through multilevel actions... and to work together on the existing mechanisms to create the environment needed to keep the Paris Agreement and our future within reach."



Yalchin Rafiyev,
COP29 Lead
Negotiator, Republic
of Azerbaijan

"I'm filled with both a sense of urgency and deep appreciation for the work done here at COP29. The discussions we have had today are not just an exchange of ideas, they represent the foundation for future urban climate action. Today we heard about the work being done by" multilevel "representatives from different countries and by stakeholders from MDBs, the private sector and other important international organizations. Cities are central to our shared responsibility to tackle the climate crisis, and we have outlined the collective vision that recognizes both the challenges and the transformative opportunities cities present." The Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities declaration "is a critical step forward in recognizing the importance of collaborative action across different sectors and levels of government... The role of cities in addressing climate change will remain critical. To achieve our global climate goals, we must continue to strengthen collaboration across all levels of government and ensure that urban issues are integrated into broader climate strategies and equip cities with the resources and support they need to drive effective action. Only through continued partnership and innovation showcased here today can we pave a pathway to resilient and healthy cities."



htar Babayev
ecology and Natural
of the Republic of
COP29 President

Cecilia Kinuthia-
Njenga (UNFCCC)
moderated the High
Level Opening with
more than 1,000
people in attendance
[Photo credit: Kamran
Guliyev Milhahn / UN
Climate Change]



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04

High-Level Roundtable 1: Green Construction and Energy Efficiency in Buildings and Climate Resilience in Cities

This roundtable was convened with the leadership of the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), with valuable support from the Building to COP Coalition, UN-Habitat, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The building and construction sector, responsible for 21 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, is a critical focus for achieving the Paris Agreement goals. With urbanization expanding at the pace of one “Paris-sized” city footprint per week, aligning growth with stringent energy efficiency, climate-smart design, and resilience measures is essential. Countries are embedding building decarbonization into their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), recognizing the sector’s potential to deliver job creation, economic growth, and improved public health alongside emissions reductions. Key milestones include the launch of the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC) under the Chaillot Declaration, uniting over 60 countries to accelerate the transition toward net-zero, climate-resilient buildings. Policies are prioritizing retrofits over new construction, the use of low-carbon and CO₂-negative materials, and the integration of renewable energy into heating and cooling systems. Examples range from Germany’s national retrofitting schemes, Dubai’s plan to retrofit 30,000 buildings by 2030, and Kenya’s new green building code to Lithuania’s subsidies for heat pumps and Uganda’s promotion of green housing technologies. Financing is advancing through tools like International Finance Corporation (IFC)’s Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) certification, Green Climate Fund (GCF) investments, and guarantees to de-risk

private capital. Public-private partnerships and digital innovations such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) and digital twins are improving transparency, reducing costs and embodied carbon, and enabling climate-aligned procurement. Despite progress, the sector remains off-track, with many NDCs lacking explicit building targets. A recurring theme was the call for “radical collaboration” across governments, the private sector, and civil society to harmonize building codes, share knowledge, and mobilize resources. The path forward demands urgent, coordinated action to ensure that the world’s buildings become a driver of climate mitigation, adaptation, and inclusive urban resilience.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Summary of statements (in chronological order)

Opening remarks



Photo credit: Mariana Castaño Cano/10 Billion

Inger Andersen,
Under-Secretary-
General of the
United Nations and
Executive Director of
the UN Environment
Programme

Inger Andersen emphasized the critical role of the building and construction sector in addressing climate change, as it contributes 21 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. She stressed the urgency of reducing emissions by 41 per cent by 2030 to meet the 1.5°C target, calling for the integration of energy efficiency, passive cooling, and climate resilience into new constructions and retrofitting of existing buildings. Highlighting the rapid pace of urbanization, equivalent to adding one Paris-sized footprint weekly, Inger Andersen underscored the importance of aligning this growth with stringent, climate-smart building standards and regulations.

Inger Andersen welcomed the inaugural ministerial meeting of the [Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate \(ICBC\)](#), describing it as an important step toward fostering international collaboration and setting shared goals for decarbonizing the sector. She emphasized the ICBC’s role in supporting governments to strengthen their climate commitments and integrate them into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Additionally, Inger Andersen explained the role of the [Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction \(GlobalABC\)](#), which will act as the ICBC’s secretariat, providing technical support, fostering partnerships, and promoting knowledge-sharing to advance climate action in the building sector. These efforts aim to ensure the sector contributes to emissions reductions and resilient urban development globally.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Anar Guliyev,
Chairman of the
State Committee
on Urban Planning
and Architecture
(SCUPA), Republic of
Azerbaijan

Anar Guliyev emphasized the critical role of the construction sector in addressing climate change while acknowledging its impact on carbon emissions and environmental challenges. He stressed the need to adopt greener practices, improve energy efficiency, and use environmentally friendly materials. Anar Guliyev announced Azerbaijan’s partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to create a Green Building Roadmap, offering practical steps to promote sustainable construction and urban development.

Anar Guliyev highlighted Azerbaijan’s efforts to modernize its construction sector, including simplifying permit processes and using new technologies like Building Information Modeling (BIM) to improve efficiency. He also pointed to initiatives such as installing solar panels and adopting green technologies to reduce energy use in buildings. Anar Guliyev underlined the importance of public-private partnerships to advance urban renewal, particularly in post-conflict areas. He expressed confidence in the “Pathways for Resilient and Healthy Cities” declaration and the newly formed [Baku Continuity Coalition](#) as tools to drive collaboration and sustainable urban progress.

Part 1: Role of the NDCs as a lever for building and construction decarbonization and strengthening climate resilience

MODERATOR
Gulnara Roll,
Head of Cities Unit,
Officer-in-Charge
for Mitigation
Branch, and Head
of the GlobalABC
Secretariat, UN
Environment
Programme (UNEP)

Gulnara Roll emphasized the significant role of the building and construction sector in addressing climate change, noting its status as the third-largest contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions. She highlighted the need to embed the sector into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans to align ambition with practical implementation, financing, and resilience measures. Gulnara Roll stressed that the NDC 3.0 submissions provide an important opportunity to prioritize the sector within national climate plans.

Gulnara Roll referred to activities at the [Buildings and Cooling Pavilion](#) during the same week, where the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC) and the Partnership for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB) launched a report. [This report](#) outlines strategies to make NDCs for buildings more ambitious, actionable, investable, and inclusive. She underscored the importance of multi-level governance and collaborative action to decarbonize the building sector, ensuring it plays a leading role in advancing climate resilience and sustainability.

H.E. **Stefan Wenzel,**
Parliamentary
State Secretary,
Federal Ministry for
Economic Affairs
and Climate Action,
Federal Republic of
Germany

H.E. Stefan Wenzel highlighted the significant role of the building and construction sector in achieving climate goals, emphasizing the need to adopt resilient and net-zero practices within the framework of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). He underscored the importance of constructing new buildings using climate-neutral materials such as wood, clay, and low-carbon cement, while also prioritizing circularity and recycling of materials. Transitioning from fossil fuel-powered heating and cooling systems to renewable energy technologies, such as heat pumps and district heating, was identified as a key priority.

H.E. Stefan Wenzel shared the European Union’s plans to present a new NDC ahead of COP30, with enhanced commitments for the building sector. He outlined key policy initiatives, including the Energy Efficiency Directive and the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, complemented by national policies like [Germany’s Building Energy Act](#) and public funding schemes to prioritize retrofitting over new construction. He acknowledged the economic and social challenges of energy-efficient retrofits but emphasized their long-term cost savings, job creation potential, and importance in preventing stranded assets. H.E. Stefan Wenzel also stressed the value of international collaboration through partnerships such as the Partnership for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB) to accelerate the sector’s transition.

H.E. **Ahmed
Mohammed bin
Thani,** Director
General of Dubai
Environment and
Climate Change
Authority, United Arab
Emirates

H.E. Ahmed Mohammed bin Thani highlighted the UAE’s collaborative approach to developing and updating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which integrates actions from all emirates. He detailed Dubai’s efforts, including the [Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050](#), which aims for 75 per cent clean energy by 2050, and a demand-side management program targeting a 30 per cent reduction in energy and water demand by 2030.

He emphasized the city’s commitment to retrofitting 30,000 buildings by 2030, with 10,000 already completed, and the regular updates to Dubai’s Green Building Code to enhance efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the building sector. H.E. Ahmed Mohammed bin Thani concluded by reaffirming the UAE’s dedication to increasing ambition and action at every stage of its sustainability journey.

Kennedy Matheka,
Deputy Director,
Buildings Safety,
Ministry of Lands,
Public Works,
Housing & Urban
Development,
Republic of Kenya

Kennedy Matheka emphasized the importance of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in guiding Kenya’s building and construction policies toward resilience and sustainability. He highlighted the updated [National Building Code](#), launched in July 2024 and set for implementation in March 2025, as a pivotal tool for achieving NDC commitments. Kennedy Matheka also discussed the recently approved Green Incentive Policy, which encourages the use of sustainable building materials, including a target of 40 per cent recyclable content in construction projects.

Kennedy Matheka stressed the need for local and international financing to support urban development and affordable housing initiatives, leveraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to engage the private sector. He underscored Kenya’s efforts to build capacity among professionals, contractors, and stakeholders to align with climate-focused goals. Collaboration and synergy, Kennedy Matheka noted, are essential to instilling confidence and achieving sustainable construction in line with NDC commitments.

Part 2: Leveraging finance and engaging the private sector

MODERATOR
Roland Hunziker,
GlobalABC Steering
Committee Co-
Chair; and Director,
Built Environment,
the World
Business Council
for Sustainable
Development

Roland Hunziker emphasized the need for systematic approaches to accelerate decarbonization in the building sector. Referencing the [Buildings Global Status Report](#), he noted that while progress has been made in stabilizing emissions, the sector is not yet on track to meet climate goals. He introduced the concept of “Market Transformation,” a strategy focusing on whole-life carbon assessment in building projects, integrating carbon data alongside cost considerations to improve decision-making, incentivize sustainable practices, and reshape market dynamics.

Roland Hunziker welcomed the establishment of ICBC as an essential platform for fostering collaboration between governments and stakeholders across the building value chain. He highlighted the importance of the GlobalABC in mobilizing partnerships among businesses, finance, and policymakers to drive the adoption of decarbonization solutions and align efforts toward a shared vision for sustainability in the built environment.

H.E. **Nigar Arpadarai,**
UN Climate Change
High-Level Champion
for COP29

H.E. Nigar Arpadarai emphasized the pivotal role of the building and construction sector in addressing climate change, highlighting its potential to provide solutions such as improved energy efficiency, job creation, and better public health. She noted that while developed countries must accelerate retrofitting efforts, developing countries have the opportunity to ensure new buildings are efficient and affordable by design.

H.E. Nigar Arpadarai introduced the [Azerbaijan Sustainable Built Environment Blueprint](#), launched at the event, as a guide for transitioning from commitments to action. She highlighted a landmark declaration signed by leaders in Azerbaijan’s construction industry, symbolizing the sector’s collective responsibility to reduce emissions. She called for “radical collaboration” across all sectors to address challenges such as limited technical capacity and regulatory needs, while unlocking opportunities for sustainable growth. Looking ahead to COP30, she urged stakeholders to act decisively and leverage the momentum created by non-state actors already demonstrating climate leadership.



Photo credit: Mariana Castaño Cano/10 Billion

Rama Dunayevich, Global Impact Partnership Lead, Autodesk	Rama Dunayevich highlighted Autodesk’s role in decarbonizing the built environment through its technology, which connects every stage of a project from design to operation. She emphasized addressing embodied carbon early in the design phase and enabling energy-efficient, low-carbon buildings. Autodesk’s tools provide real-time insights to ensure sustainable designs are implemented effectively. Rama Dunayevich stressed the importance of digital solutions in achieving transparency and collaboration to create a low-carbon future.
Diep Nguyen-van Houtte, Senior Manager, International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Diep Nguyen-van Houtte emphasized the urgency of transitioning to net-zero carbon buildings by 2050 and highlighted the \$1.5 trillion investment opportunity in green construction. She showcased IFC’s EDGE Green Building Certification System , which has driven \$94 billion in investments across 110 countries since 2015. She noted IFC’s support for the Buildings Breakthrough launched at COP28 and its collaboration with Azerbaijan’s State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture to develop the Green Building Roadmap , set to be further presented at COP30. Diep Nguyen-van Houtte encouraged governments to partner with IFC to advance net-zero and resilient building standards.
Thomas Eriksson, Director, Department of the Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East Region, Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Thomas Eriksson outlined the GCF’s work in financing green buildings, energy efficiency, and climate-resilient infrastructure, with \$2 billion invested in 49 projects across countries since 2010. He emphasized the use of innovative financial tools, such as grants, equity, and guarantees, to de-risk investments and attract private capital. Thomas Eriksson highlighted GCF’s efforts to design materials and infrastructure that withstand extreme weather events and to build capacity for climate-aligned building codes, integrating the sector into NDCs and National Adaptation Plans. He reaffirmed GCF’s commitment to advancing transformative projects for a resilient future.
Lasitha Peirera, CEO, Green Guarantee Company	Lasitha Peirera emphasized the Green Guarantee Company’s role in unlocking climate finance by addressing the perception of high risk through investment-grade guarantees for green projects. He highlighted that risks in developing markets are often overestimated, despite data showing otherwise. Lasitha Peirera stressed the importance of global standards, like IFC EDGE, and collaboration within the construction sector to ensure quality projects. He pointed out systemic challenges, such as Nigeria’s financial market, where only 50,000 mortgages exist for 200 million people, underscoring the need for financial reforms.
Adam Matthews, OBE, Head of Strategy and Engagement, Catapult UK	Adam Matthews emphasized building investor confidence by de-risking sustainable infrastructure projects through digitalization. He highlighted the importance of transparency and better quality of information enabled by tools like Building Information Modeling (BIM), which improved procurement efficiency, reducing timelines from 12 months to three. Adam Matthews stressed that transparency builds trust, reduces costs and carbon emissions by up to 15 per cent, and modernizes the construction sector to achieve climate goals.

Part 3: Strengthening intergovernmental cooperation for green and climate resilient buildings (Ministerial Inauguration of ICBC)

MODERATOR Gulnara Roll, Head of Cities Unit, Officer-in-Charge for Mitigation Branch, and Head of the GlobalABC Secretariat, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	Gulnara Roll introduced the session on strengthening intergovernmental cooperation for green and climate-resilient buildings, featuring the inauguration of the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate, established under the Chaillot Declaration and signed by over 60 countries.
Yves-Laurent Sapoval, Ministerial delegate for sustainable cities-Urban Envoy, Ministries of Territories, Ecology and Housing, France - Chair of ICBC	Yves-Laurent Sapoval emphasized the importance of launching the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC) to provide a political framework for collaboration and implementation in the building sector. Yves-Laurent Sapoval highlighted the sector’s significance, representing 11-13 per cent of global GDP and 60 per cent of global wealth, while addressing its mitigation potential and exposure to climate change. Yves-Laurent Sapoval noted France’s role in supporting the creation of the GlobalABC at COP21, which now includes over 290 stakeholders united under a common commitment. Yves-Laurent Sapoval praised milestones such as the Buildings Breakthrough, launched with Morocco, and the Chaillot Declaration, supported by over 60 governments. As ICBC Chair, Yves-Laurent Sapoval outlined priorities including expanding membership, establishing governance, and focusing on finance. He expressed gratitude to countries like Brazil, Kenya, Germany, and the UAE, as well as private and NGO partners, whose contributions remain key to progress in this journey.

H.E. Rachel Kyte , UK Special Representative on Climate	H.E. Rachel Kyte emphasized the importance of the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC) in fostering government-to-government collaboration to address the global challenge of decarbonizing the building sector. She highlighted the UK's unique context, with one of Europe's oldest housing stocks, where buildings account for a third of national emissions, making retrofitting essential to achieving net-zero goals. H.E. Rachel Kyte announced the UK's funding of a Global Whole Life Carbon Tracker, which will provide a clearer picture of emissions from the building sector by country and inform the updated Global Status Report from the GlobalABC. She reaffirmed the UK's commitment to international initiatives like the Buildings Breakthrough and called on the ICBC to generate political momentum for achieving net-zero and resilient buildings globally by 2030.	H.E. Simonas Gentvilas , Minister of Environment, Republic of Lithuania	H.E. Simonas Gentvilas emphasized Lithuania's focus on achieving carbon neutrality by ensuring that buildings constructed today are climate-neutral ready. He highlighted Lithuania's transition from 10 per cent to 80 per cent renewable energy use in district heating over 15 years and subsidies covering half the cost of heat pumps for private residences. Lithuania has retrofitted one in seven multi-block housing units through a 20-year government program, fully subsidizing retrofitting for socially vulnerable groups. H.E. Simonas Gentvilas outlined Lithuania's new building code, which mandates passive house standards and prioritizes CO2-negative construction materials. He noted that public procurement now requires 50 per cent CO2-negative materials for government buildings, setting an example for the private sector. He called for global collaboration to prioritize green and resilient city development.
H.E. Toesulusulu Cedric Schuster , Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Independent State of Samoa	H.E. Toesulusulu Cedric Schuster emphasized Samoa's vulnerability to climate risks as a small island developing state and its strong commitment to decarbonizing the building sector. Samoa's NDC, submitted in 2021, targets a 26 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2007 levels, 100 per cent renewable energy for electricity generation by 2025, and 70 per cent renewable energy use by 2031. Key measures include mandatory building codes, energy efficiency standards, and low-carbon construction materials. H.E. Toesulusulu Cedric Schuster stressed the importance of climate finance, capacity building, and technology transfer to achieve these ambitious goals. He welcomed the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate as a vital platform to foster collaboration and advance sustainable development.	H.E. Namuganza Persis Princess , State Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Republic of Uganda	H.E. Namuganza Persis Princess highlighted Uganda's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions and keeping global temperatures below 1.5°C by 2030. She emphasized the significant environmental impact of the construction sector, which accounts for 21 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, 37 per cent of energy-related carbon emissions, and half of the world's raw material use. She called for urgent action to ensure a sustainable built environment, particularly in developing countries like Uganda, which face heightened climate-related risks. H.E. Namuganza Persis Princess noted Uganda's rich natural resources and its role in absorbing global emissions, emphasizing the importance of preserving these assets. She reaffirmed Uganda's support for the Declaration de Chaillot and called for adequate funding to advance green housing technologies. Uganda remains committed to advancing Nationally Determined Contributions, implementing international covenants, and fostering global collaboration to promote resilient and sustainable urban development.
H.E. Shaikh Nasser Majid Al Qasimi , Assistant Undersecretary of Infrastructure Development and Transport, United Arab Emirates	H.E. Shaikh Nasser Majid Al Qasimi emphasized the UAE's commitment to decarbonizing the building sector and enhancing climate resilience through initiatives like the UAE Energy Strategy 2050 and Water Security Strategy 2036. He emphasized the role of the ICBC in fostering intergovernmental cooperation and exchanging best practices to advance shared decarbonization goals. H.E. Shaikh Nasser Majid Al Qasimi discussed key measures, including the Green Loans Program to promote environmentally friendly homes, solar energy expansion in government buildings, and the National Demand Side Management Program, targeting a 51 per cent reduction in energy consumption by 2050. He also highlighted research on rising sea levels and the adoption of technologies like smart construction and 3D digital twins to improve urban planning. He reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to global collaboration, including the Arab Roadmap for Zero Emission Buildings.	H.E. Yoko Alender , Minister of Climate, Republic of Estonia	H.E. Yoko Alender emphasized the building sector's significant impact on biodiversity, noting that 90 per cent of biodiversity loss is due to material extraction, with 50 per cent attributed to the building industry. She stressed the need to shift from new construction to renovation and reuse, highlighting Estonia's renovation wave and innovative factory reconstruction methods using sustainable materials to reduce demolition waste and improve energy efficiency. H.E. Yoko Alender highlighted Estonia's collaboration with Nordic countries on sustainable construction practices and announced new regulations requiring carbon footprint calculations for buildings over 1,000 square meters starting July 2025. She praised the Chaillot Declaration and the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC) for fostering intergovernmental collaboration to advance sustainable building solutions.
H.E. Dr. Eang Sophalleth , Minister of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia	H.E. Dr. Eang Sophalleth emphasized Cambodia's vulnerability to climate change despite its historically low greenhouse gas emissions. He highlighted Cambodia's updated NDC, targeting a 42 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030, and the submission of a long-term strategy for carbon neutrality by 2050 to the UNFCCC in 2021. He also noted the adoption of an operational manual for implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. H.E. Dr. Eang Sophalleth outlined key initiatives, including the Green City Strategy Plan Methodology 2016, the Phnom Penh Sustainable City Strategic Plan 2018-2030, and the Sustainable City Strategic Plan for Seven Secondary Cities 2020-2030, aimed at accelerating low-emission and climate-resilient development. He reaffirmed Cambodia's strong support for the ICBC's inauguration, highlighting its potential to foster global collaboration and advance climate action.	Maurice Akech , Executive Director, National Construction Authority (NCA), Kenya - Vice-Chair of ICBC	Maurice Akech highlighted Kenya's active role in the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC) as a vice chair under France's leadership. He emphasized the importance of clear, measurable objectives, knowledge-sharing platforms, harmonized building codes, and engaging diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, community groups, and private sectors, to advance ICBC's goals. Maurice Akech outlined Kenya's progress in decarbonizing the building sector, including the implementation of a new building code, gazetted in March 2024 on the same day as the Declaration de Chaillot signing in France, launched in July, and set to become effective in March 2025. He also noted Kenya's development of long-term strategies for 2050, aligned with UNFCCC requirements, and a decarbonization roadmap to guide investments and foster economic growth in the construction sector.

Alessio Cipullo,
Expert Advisor,
Ministry for
Environment and
Energy Security,
Republic of Italy

Alessio Cipullo reiterated Italy's active participation in the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC), established through the Declaration de Chaillot. He highlighted key priorities, including innovative tax mechanisms and financing solutions for energy renovations, and landmark legislation on energy communities passed recently in Italy.

Alessio Cipullo emphasized the role of public administrations in green public procurement and the importance of circular economy principles in urban areas, construction, and technical planning to reduce building energy consumption. He also underlined Italy's commitment to developing nature-based solutions alongside energy efficiency, positioning green public procurement as a model for residential buildings.

Closing remarks

Ambassador **Antônio da Costa e Silva**,
Chief International
Adviser, Ministry of
Cities, Federative
Republic of Brazil -
Vice-Chair of ICBC

Ambassador Antônio da Costa e Silva emphasized Brazil's commitment to shaping the ICBC agenda to address challenges relevant to both Brazil and other developing countries. He highlighted the issues of informal, self-built construction in peripheral areas and the critical role of local governments, as most building regulations in Brazil are set at the municipal level. Brazil plans to integrate decarbonization standards into its social housing program, which aims to build 2 million homes under President Lula's mandate to address a 6-million-unit housing deficit. He also identified waste management in the construction sector as a key area for improvement.

Ambassador da Costa e Silva stressed the global importance of addressing housing deficits, noting that this challenge is not limited to the Global South but also affects developed nations. He highlighted the need to balance housing needs with the evolving demands of the building sector while ensuring sustainability. He called for building synergies between ICBC and other global alliances to address shared challenges and advance a common climate agenda. Brazil, in collaboration with ICBC co-chairs France and Kenya, aims to present a more comprehensive program of work at the next ministerial meeting in Belém.

Anar Guliyev,
Chairman of the
State Committee
on Urban Planning
and Architecture
(SCUPA), Republic of
Azerbaijan

Anar Guliyev emphasized the success of the high-level ministerial meeting, noting the valuable contributions from delegates in advancing sustainable urbanization and low-carbon construction practices. Anar Guliyev stressed the importance of integrating carbon emission accounting alongside construction costs to accelerate progress toward zero-carbon buildings. He highlighted the launch of the MAP initiative and the Baku Continuity Coalition, designed to ensure that discussions lead to actionable plans at both national and local levels.

Looking ahead, Anar Guliyev reaffirmed Azerbaijan's commitment to supporting these initiatives, leveraging its role as host of the 13th World Urban Forum in 2026 to further global efforts in sustainable urban development. He emphasized the need for continued collaboration to address shared challenges, particularly in achieving decarbonization and resilience in the construction sector.





05

High-Level Roundtable 2: Greening Urban Transport

This roundtable was co-organized by the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan, the International Transport Forum (ITF), and UN-Habitat through the EU project "Stimulating Road Transport Research in Europe and around the Globe for sustainable Mobility (STREnGth_M)".

The global transport sector, responsible for 23% of energy-related CO₂ emissions, is under intense scrutiny as nations prepare to submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2025. Urban transport, a major contributor to these emissions, has become a focal point for climate action with widespread additional benefits on air quality, economic access, and public health. Despite progress, the sector remains off-track to meeting the Paris Agreement goals.

Key milestones include the widespread commitment to expanding and electrifying public transport fleets, expanding walking and cycling infrastructure, and promoting shared mobility systems. Countries like Azerbaijan, Qatar, and Uzbekistan aim to fully electrify their public bus fleets by 2030. The European Union has mandated Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) for its largest cities, aligning urban transport with land use development, integration climate adaptation and resilience planning. Technological innovation is being paired with behavior-driven change. Nations emphasize the importance of reducing car dependency by improving the attractiveness, speed, and integration of multi-modal, public transport to achieve the so-needed modal shift. Investment in data-driven tools like digital twins, green financing instruments (e.g., green bonds, subsidies), and public-private partnerships are accelerating this transition.

A recurring theme is the call for stronger integration of transport into climate strategies. Only one-third of current NDCs set explicit transport emissions targets. New international frameworks and guidance, such as those from the ITF, UNECE, and UITP, are helping countries align their urban mobility goals with broader climate ambitions. Ultimately, the path forward demands urgent, inclusive, and coordinated action - recognizing that sustainable transport is not only a technological challenge but also a societal transformation.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Summary of statements (in chronological order)

Rashad Nabiye
Minister of Digital
Development and
Transportation of
the Republic of
Azerbaijan

Minister Rashad Nabiye of the Republic of Azerbaijan opened the Ministerial Roundtable welcoming participants to Baku and emphasized that “we have come together to address one of the biggest challenges of our time: decarbonizing urban transport.” He outlined Azerbaijan’s ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2050 and presented the national Mobility Transformation Plan, which includes over 60 initiatives to promote sustainable transport. “We want to reduce the individual car trips in the city of Baku by 40%,” he stated, while also ensuring that “90% of our population has access to public transportation.” He further highlighted plans to build “more than 100 kilometers of infrastructure for micromobility—specifically for bicycles and scooters,” so that “travel times to any point of interest within the city of Baku do not exceed 20 minutes.” A centerpiece of the strategy is the creation of a “digital twin” of Baku, described as “one of the most comprehensive in the world,” using over 6 billion data points to enhance decision-making. Thanks to network optimization, “bus speed has increased from 18 to 22 km/h” and service frequency has improved, making public transport more attractive. The plan also includes full electrification of the bus fleet by 2030, pedestrianizing central areas, and offering strong VAT and customs exemptions to encourage low-emission vehicles. As a result, “the share of electric and hybrid vehicles among imports has nearly doubled from 10.5% to almost 20%.” He concluded with a call to “embrace innovation,” “strengthen partnerships at local, national and global levels,” and “engage with communities to ensure their voices are integral and heard,” expressing confidence that “our common efforts will advance solutions that accelerate the decarbonization of urban transport on a global scale

Gulnaz Cavadova,
Chief Advisor at
the Department of
Economic Policy and
Industrial Affairs
at the Presidential
Administration of
the Republic of
Azerbaijan

“Azerbaijan proudly stands at the forefront of this collective mission,” Ms. Javadova said while emphasized the country’s strong commitment to sustainable mobility and decarbonization. Azerbaijan is “recognizing the pivotal role of the transportation sector.” She acknowledged that the country’s “ambitions come with challenges that require coordinated action,” citing “limited infrastructure, high upfront cost of electric vehicles, and low public awareness about the benefits of sustainable mobility” as key barriers. In response, Azerbaijan leveraged the Business Environment International Rankings Commission, established in 2016, to turn obstacles into actionable reforms. “A specific working group has been established under the Commission, and we approved the specific road map of key reform initiatives,” she noted. Among the most impactful measures were fiscal incentives: an 18% VAT exemption introduced in January 2022 for electric and hybrid vehicles and charging equipment, followed by a 15% customs duty exemption for electric vehicles in December 2022. Banks also reduced advance payment requirements “from 40% to 10% for electric vehicles and to 20% for hybrid vehicles,” improving affordability. As a result of these reforms, “today, we have more than 600 charging devices,” with “over 70% installed by the private sector, showcasing robust private investment in green infrastructure.” The impact has been substantial: electric vehicle imports rose “from 160 to more than 5,000 over the last three years,” representing a 33-fold increase, while their market share among imported vehicles grew from 0.22% to 4.37%. Ms. Javadova concluded by underscoring that this “exceptional trajectory” demonstrates Azerbaijan’s firm belief in “creating a sustainable and eco-conscious future for Azerbaijan and the world.”

MODERATOR

Young Tae Kim,
Secretary-General
of the International
Transport Forum
(ITF)

“Explore how to transform our urban transport systems and transport’s 23% contribution to global CO2 emissions demands urgent action.” With these opening words, Young Tae Kim, moderator of the Roundtable, emphasized that “the sector is still not on track to decarbonize in line with the Paris Agreement.” He highlighted that “cities are central to this challenge,” with 68% of the global population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, and urged a “vision-led approach to transport infrastructure planning,” aligned with the future we want rather than current systems that are failing. He stressed that decarbonization can go “hand in hand with wider objectives”, such as improving air quality, job creation, and access to education, through shifting to low-carbon modes. “Governments must work to scale up electrified public transport, integrating it with walking and cycling, ride sharing and shared vehicles,” he said, noting that infrastructure like “safe walking and cycling lanes, dedicated bus lines, new metro lines or charging infrastructures for EVs” is central to this transition. Kim called for strong coordination “between local and national governments and transport network providers, industries, investors and civil society,” and reminded that many urban residents live in smaller and medium-sized cities, where local context matters. With the third round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due in early 2025, he concluded by launching a new ITF guide to support countries in integrating transport into their climate commitments, describing it as “a framework to draw from and adapt,” rather than a one-size-fits-all solution.

Juan Carlos Munoz,
Minister of Transport,
Republic of Chile

Juan Carlos Muñoz, Minister of Transport of Chile, emphasized that transport accounts for “23% of energy-related CO2 emissions” but the sector “is not on track to decarbonize in line with our Paris Agreement commitments.” He noted that only “33% of existing NDCs include specific emissions reduction targets for the transport sector,” despite most mentioning transport-related measures with varying scope. To address this gap, he announced a new ITF guide offering “a comprehensive framework that governments can draw from and adapt” to their national contexts. Muñoz highlighted that integrating transport into NDCs is “not just a technical necessity, but a strategic opportunity” to enhance ambition, clarify policy actions, and mobilize finance. He stressed that a clear transport component “attracts partnerships, investments and support needed to turn ambition into reality.” Looking ahead, Chile will host a dedicated discussion on transport in NDCs at the ITF Summit in May 2025 to “build on progress, identify gaps and work together to overcome challenges.” He concluded by urging bold leadership to transform transport “from a significant contributor to climate change into a key driver of solutions.”

Ms. Anaclaudia Rossbach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General Executive Director of United Nations Human-Settlements Programme	“Today transport is among the fastest growing sources of emissions worldwide, and without decisive action, this trend will only worsen as transport activity is projected to double by 2050.” The Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat emphasized the urgent need to transform cities as the key to addressing this challenge. She called for a “shift in direction, one that prioritizes transparent policy and investment choices that consider environmental and social equity.” Ms. Rossbach stressed the importance of making “public transport, walking, cycling and ride sharing so convenient and accessible that they become the preferred choice even for current car users.” She urged cities to “prioritize the development of compact mixed-use neighborhoods with multimodal electric public transport systems that connect affordable housing to key opportunities like jobs and essential services.” Highlighting the need for support, she noted that “cities with paratransit systems need to be assisted to modernize the networks to ensure better and cleaner services, while remaining affordable for all. The Executive Director of UN-Habitat emphasized empowering cities to create “sustainable urban mobility plans,” comprehensive frameworks that “promote balanced growth between land use and transport, while collaboratively shaping a shared vision with all stakeholders.” She concluded by highlighting the opportunity to integrate “multimodal low carbon transport and sustainable urban mobility into NDCs” to meet climate targets and advance sustainable development goals. Finally, she congratulated the COP29 Presidency for prioritizing sustainable urban development and launching the “Multisectoral Action Pathways declaration” as a crucial step toward resilient, healthy cities, stressing “we no longer have the luxury of delay.”	<i>Continued</i> Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister for Communications, Islamic Republic of Pakistan “50% of fuel usage to Euro 5 compliant fuel, targeting 100% compliance in the next two to three years.” The Minister noted that urban-rural transport development is led by provincial governments, citing mass transit systems launched in Lahore, Rawalpindi-Islamabad, Multan, and Peshawar since 2013. Despite limited access to international climate finance, Pakistan is developing financing frameworks, with the State Bank implementing “green banking guidelines to promote environmental risk management” and climate finance. The country is exploring market and non-market instruments under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, such as “nature performance bonds, green blue bonds, and carbon pricing instruments” to diversify funding. He concluded with a call to “join hands together to achieve a sustainable and green resolution in our urban transport system and make this world a beautiful place to live and breathe.”
Mr. Abdulkadir Uraloglu, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Republic of Türkiye	“Electric vehicles are a cornerstone of the green transformation in urban transportation,” stated the Turkish Minister of Transport. He highlighted Turkey’s significant investments and incentives supporting electric vehicle deployment, including the domestically produced “TOGG electric car”, which is increasingly visible on the roads. The Ministry is rapidly expanding electric bus fleets, driving fundamental changes in public transport habits. With the Turkey’s net zero emission target roadmap project, “we are creating a holistic, participatory and feasible roadmap to guide achieving zero emissions in the transportation sector.” Emphasizing alternative transport modes, he noted that “increasing bicycle and pedestrian paths is an important step” and that expanding bicycle-sharing systems in major cities encourages greener individual transport. Turkey is boosting “the number of bicycle lanes and making cycling safer and easier,” while implementing metro and light rail projects under urban transport policies. Coordinated sustainable urban transport plans with local governments “make a significant contribution to emission reduction and proper planning of mobility.” "While discussing the possibilities of cooperation on green city transportation on the one hand, on the other hand, the isolation of the Palestinian people in Gaza from all kinds of transportation rights, persecution and genocide is unacceptable. I hope that this will be ended with international cooperation as soon as possible”	Mr. Umberto de Pretto, Secretary General, International Road Transport Union (IRU) “Let me just answer very quickly: the short answer is pragmatism and start acting now,” said the Secretary General of IRU. He emphasized that achieving net zero by 2050 “is going to be a marathon, not a sprint,” and the urgent need to implement efficiency measures that can be realized today. Highlighting immediate action, he shared that the IRU and FIA have trained 5,000 bus, coach, and taxi drivers to reduce their carbon emissions by 15%. De Pretto stressed the importance of making buses and coaches more attractive, noting that “one bus represents 30 vehicles” and that these modes are “the safest mode of transport.” He pointed out that investing in buses and coaches requires “10 times less investment than rail,” making them a flexible, quick solution to get people out of cars. Regarding freight, he mentioned that eco trucks can cut emissions by 30% and already achieve 45% with training. On future fuels, he acknowledged the challenge of shifting to hydrogen and carbon-neutral options, requiring infrastructure and investment. But his core message was clear: “stop talking and start acting,” focusing on practical steps through public-private partnerships to make progress now.
Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister for Communications, Islamic Republic of Pakistan	“Major urban centers in Pakistan are grappling with the poison of smog, with air quality indexes exceeding hazardous levels of 300 to 400 points,” stated Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister for Communications, Pakistan. He stressed that addressing urban growth challenges requires “strategic long-term planning at all levels of government,” rather than short-term fixes. Pakistan’s green mobility strategy focuses on three pillars, starting with “the electrification of transport at the national level,” aligning policies with climate goals to ensure “every urban transport project is designed to be sustainable, low carbon, and resilient to climate shocks.” He highlighted provincial efforts, including Punjab’s plan to launch 680 electric buses and Sindh’s approval of 500 electric buses. To reduce freight emissions, Pakistan is transitioning to “100% diesel supply through pipelines” and upgrading	Ms. Maja Bakran Marcich, Deputy Director-General of DG Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), European Commission “Careful planning is crucial,” emphasized the Deputy Director-General of DG MOVE, European Commission, also outlining key EU actions to translate green transition policies to the local level. The EU is focused on “increasing availability and attractiveness of public transport,” expanding “infrastructure for walking and cycling and recharging of zero-emission vehicles,” and complementing the transport ecosystem with “innovative mobility solutions, shared mobility, and more effective city freight logistics.” These efforts are embedded in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs), which this year became a legal requirement for the largest 431 cities across the Trans-European network. Cities must “collect data” and develop “multimodal passenger hubs,” but success requires coordination “between all levels of government.” On resilience, the Deputy Director stressed that “adaptation must be an essential element of urban planning,” especially in light of recent floods across Europe, urging the prevention of development in high-risk areas, climate-adaptive infrastructure, and “building redundancy and flexibility” alongside disaster recovery. “There is no good planning without a sound risk assessment,” she concluded, emphasizing the integration of transport into urban climate risk

Mr. Dukundane Dieudonne, Minister of Infrastructure, Equipment and Social Housing, Republic of Burundi	“Metrocity is located in Central and Eastern Africa. We do appreciate the subject under discussion as a very important step towards achieving our goals,” said Burundi’s Minister of Infrastructure, Equipment and Social Housing. The Minister highlighted the collaboration with partners like the African Development Bank, World Bank, and Climate Compatible Growth to develop “a comprehensive project or program that addresses greening urban mobility.” Mr. Dieudonne emphasized that “access to climate finance is a journey that is not always easy,” and Burundi is working to “ease access to these funding facilities.” Noting the growing number of motor vehicles in Burundian towns and the clear impact on climate change, he asserted that “the only solution is to go on the modal shift,” such as embarking on “a metro project or someway project” to reduce dependence on fuel. He added that their project is designed to “attract the appetite of the private sector” and invited interested parties to “join their efforts to ours.” Looking forward, he expressed a hope “to come and not talk about speeches, but showcase a project that would have started in terms of its implementation.”	<i>Continued</i> Ms. Judith Nabakooba, Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Republic of Uganda	action units” receive technical assistance and capacity building. Finally, the Minister pointed to flagship projects such as the “Kampala Green Transport Initiative,” aiming to develop “80 kilometers of dedicated low emission bus corridor and 200 kilometers of cycling networks,” serving as “a model for other cities in Uganda.”
Dr. Abdulla bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, Minister of Environment and climate change, State of Qatar	“The transport sector accounts for about one-fifth of global CO2 emissions, a substantial share of which comes from urban transport, while addressing transport-related emissions is particularly challenging,” stated the Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Qatar. His Excellency highlighted that “electrification offers a promising pathway for urban systems,” noting that it not only “reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but also brings significant co-benefits such as improved air quality and reduced atmospheric pollutants.” To develop and fund green urban transport, the Minister emphasized the need to “align policies across government levels, coordinate through intergovernmental task forces, leverage innovative funding like PPPs and green bonds, and engage communities to ensure tailored, sustainable, and widely supported solutions.” For increasing resilience, Qatar is focusing on “climate-proof design, smart technologies like AI for disruption management, green infrastructure such as urban greenery and permeable pavements, and robust emergency plans with evacuation routes and alternative transport options.” Qatar’s key initiatives include the “Durham Metro and Lusail Tram,” which are “modern energy-efficient systems integral to Qatar’s urban mobility transformation” and featured in their NDC. The Minister noted that “more than 75% of Qatar’s public bus fleet is electric, aiming for full electrification by 2030,” alongside plans to install “600 private transport charging stations by 2025.” Concluding, His Excellency affirmed Qatar’s commitment to “sharing experience and collaborating internationally to advance sustainable urban mobility.”	Mr. Mohamed Mezghani, Secretary General, Union Internationale des Transports Publics (UITP)	“Seventy percent of transport CO2 emissions is taking place in cities”, yet “one-third of countries have not included public transport in their NDCs.” The Secretary-General of UITP emphasized that “decarbonizing transport is not just about technology, it’s mainly about model shift,” because “an electric bus stuck in traffic will not attract more people.” To achieve this shift, “we need to give priority to public transport, walking and cycling.” Mr. Mezghani highlighted the necessity to “set emission reduction targets for the transport sector,” aiming to “reduce CO2 emissions by 41% by 2030,” which requires halving emissions through a model shift rather than only technology. Key to this endeavor is “integrating public transport into wider national strategies” and managing “the interface between national and local levels.” Capacity building is “critical,” and UITP has developed new “NDC guidance” to support countries in defining transport goals. Finally, the Secretary-General of UITP called for “international cooperation” and better “access to climate finance for transport projects,” noting that “climate finance for transport is still very low compared to other sectors” and must address “the complexities of emissions reductions, including over reduction as well as avoided emissions, not just reduction.”
		Mr. Jamie Leather, Chief of the Transport Sector Group, Asian Development Bank (ADB)	“In the Asia Pacific Region, 1.4 billion of the urban population have poor urban access,” stated the Chief of the Transport Sector Group at ADB. Mr. Leather emphasized that “promoting quality urban transport using a system approach to get the balance right” is essential, recommending “a 70/30 split of urban trips” with “70% share for public transport and non-motorized transport, including popular or informal transport,” and “30% share for private trips.” This approach, he explained, “will provide green urban transport.” As the “Climate Bank for Asia and Pacific,” ADB focuses on “supporting green urban transport through integrated infrastructure investments and operational improvements.”
Ms. Judith Nabakooba, Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Republic of Uganda	“Uganda, like many other countries, is rapidly urbanizing”, with “50% of our population projected to reside in urban areas by 2040,” posing “both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development.” The Minister explained that “approximately 60% of our urban residents are living in informal settlements where access to proper transport infrastructure is limited,” making it difficult to maintain “proper greening approaches” as the country currently has “just 0.8 square meters of green space per capita.” To address these issues, Uganda is “embedding green urban transport system and best practices in our NDCs,” including a “29% emission reduction commitment in the transport sector by 2030.” The government has developed a “comprehensive framework for sustainable transport” that “mandates climate screening for all major transport infrastructure projects” and “integrates climate resilient design standards.” Her Excellency highlighted prioritizing “low carbon transport corridors,” “promotion of non-motorized transport infrastructure,” and “stringent vehicle emission standards and green vehicle incentives.” Ms. Nabakooba emphasized a “multilevel governance approach” ensuring “coordination between national and local transport initiatives,” supported by “dedicated funding mechanisms, including the National Climate Change Fund and Green Climate Fund readiness”, adding that “local governments develop local climate action plans that include sustainable transport measures” and that “city climate	Ms. Agnė Vaiciukevičiūtė, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications, Republic of Lithuania	“Lithuanian approach to urban mobility requires coordinated action across governance levels, with national goals tailored to the unique needs of municipalities,” said the Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications of Lithuania. Her Excellency emphasized that “success in sustainable mobility relies on four main pillars: well-crafted policies, legislative support, clear guidelines aligned with standards, and dedicated financial resources for implementation.” Lithuania uses “sustainable urban mobility plans” as a foundational framework, with updated guidelines since 2022 to balance broad policy goals and city-specific needs. Active mobility is a priority, highlighted by the recent approval of “the national strategy for cycling transport development,” which includes expanding “pedestrian and bicycle paths and safer roads for non-motorized travel” to encourage “healthier eco-friendly commuting options.” Lithuania is also “dedicated to achieving full energy independence by 2050,” aiming to “generate 100% of its electricity domestically,” reinforcing “energy security and climate action” in its climate commitments. The Deputy-Minister concluded that Lithuania’s model “combines top-down support, a commitment to energy independence, and a clear focus on active mobility” to build “a sustainable urban transport model that’s resilient, effective, and inspiring for others.”

Mr. Talgat Lastaev,
Vice Minister of
Transport, Republic
of Kazakhstan

“This issue is not only an environmental imperative, but also a cornerstone of our broader development strategy,” said the Vice Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan. His Excellency emphasized that “urban transport is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution globally,” and that cities like Almaty and Astana face “growing challenges related to traffic congestion, air quality and rising energy consumption.” Kazakhstan is “committed to adopting forward-looking policies and innovative technologies” and has “integrated sustainable transport objectives into our national development strategies,” aligning with international commitments to reduce emissions. A key focus is “modernizing public transportation systems” by expanding “eco-friendly transport options such as electric buses and trams,” replacing older diesel vehicles to “reduce emissions and improve air quality.” Investments in green infrastructure include “dedicated lanes for public transport, bicycle paths and pedestrian zones,” exemplified by the Green Belt project in the capital. The government also promotes “electric vehicles through tax incentives, subsidies and the expansion of EV charging networks,” aiming for “at least 30% of future vehicles to be electric and hybrid by 2030.” The Vice Minister concluded that green urban transport is “both a challenge and an opportunity to build resilient and sustainable cities” and urged collaboration to make urban spaces “models for environmental sustainability and quality of life.”

Mr. Mamanbiy Omarov,
Deputy Minister of
Transport, Republic
of Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan “has increased its commitments to reduce specific emissions of greenhouse gases by 35% by 2030 from the 2010 level, significantly higher than initial targets.” The transport sector, responsible for 6% of national emissions, is seeing progress despite a 10% annual rise in motor vehicles. Uzbekistan plans to convert “80% of public transport to electric and gas fuel vehicles from diesel ones by 2030.” These initiatives are underway, supported by new state financing mechanisms, digitalization of transport services, collaboration with international financial institutions, green credit lines, and entrepreneur involvement. In the past two years, “the number of electric buses increased to 400 units,” and electric vehicles total “70,000,” aided by cancelled customs fees on electric imports. One electric bus “reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 70%,” contributing significantly to emission reductions. Uzbekistan also focuses on “creating convenient infrastructure for pedestrians, micro-mobility, and public transit” to further reduce energy consumption. Transport master plans have been developed for 10 cities, with 10 more in progress. Summarizing, the Deputy Minister emphasized that “the transport sector plays a crucial role in our quest for a sustainable and green future,” and Uzbekistan remains “committed to international climate protection commitments and will continue actively introducing the latest environmentally friendly technologies.”

Mr. Magid Elabyad,
Executive Vice
President,
International Road
Federation (IRF)
Global

“We already know many of the solutions to greening urban transport [...] as the International Road Federation, our goal is to share that knowledge and technologies,” but “it’s incumbent on governments and agencies to make it easier to implement these green technologies, and particularly new technologies.” He emphasized the need to “optimize our investments because we all have limited investment dollars.” For instance, when considering “bus versus rail transport, you need to think about what solution gives me the best paying for our buck because we don’t have unlimited dollars.”

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin,
Deputy Executive
Secretary, United
Nations Economic
Commission for
Europe (UNECE)

“We need to talk about greening and resilience at the same time. And often these two objectives come at odds with each other. It’s complex because we need ministers of not just transport but many other ministers around the table to make this work. Greening urban transport is as much about energy as it is about urban planning and transport, as such. UNECE has developed and our Member States have agreed upon at decarbonization strategy for inland transport that sets very ambitious targets and offers very practical solutions to decarbonize land transport, including in cities. As part of it, we are collaborating with UNFCCC, ITF and others to develop a very specific template for reporting on transport in NDCs and I think it complements the guide presented today very well. UNECE is also cohosting with WHO a program on healthy cities, including on transport mobility as a major topic there and UNECE, in our working party on trends and economics, is working on the cycling of structure on electric mobility, including accessible charging infrastructure and on mobility as a service as major topics. Going forward, we believe this conversation has to include a very important dimension of road safety in addition to greening urban transport. Urban transport is green but not safe is not something that we can afford.”

Dr. Aafke van Rijn,
Vice Minister for the
Environment and
International Affairs,
Kingdom of the
Netherlands

“In the Netherlands, we are working to create a balanced mobility mix that reduces reliance on private vehicles and promotes sustainable transport options for all,” said Dr. Aafke van Rijn. This means building a transport system “where cars and heavy goods vehicles, public transport, cycling and walking all play significant roles.” The Vice-Minister emphasized that “cooperation between different tiers of government is key to planning, financing and implementing sustainable mobility systems.” Regarding charging infrastructure, “we work together with regional and local authorities, grid operators, utility companies and charge point operators to solve challenges such as permitting procedures and arranging grid connections at times of insufficient capacity.” This collaboration is driven by the national charging infrastructure agenda, “which brings all relevant stakeholders to the table.” On cycling, the ministry “collaborates with local government and public transport authorities” to “roll out programs, give low-income households access to bicycles, and encourage all people to keep cycling.” They also fund cycle path construction and bike parking facilities at transport hubs. Dr. van Rijn highlighted the Netherlands’ new mobility vision focused on “ensuring public access to workplaces, healthcare and social networks” and promoting “smart demand-driven transport solutions” to ease pressure on the system. The Vice-Minister concluded by urging countries “to prioritize and promote transport in the NDCs,” emphasizing that “sustainable mobility solutions can often be found at the intersection of multiple sectors, including housing, urban planning, healthcare and economics,” thus requiring “an integrated approach to achieve our sustainability goals.”

Mr. Hartmut Höppner,
State Secretary at the
Federal Ministry for
Digital and Transport,
Federal Republic of
Germany

“Last week my minister published the prognosis, showing that mobility as well as transport will in future rather increase than decrease. That means waiting for reduction in mobility and transport to solve the problem, it is just not going to work. And we also have to consider that our industry, our transport sector, had decades of perfecting their procedures, their processes based on the usage of fossil energy, and now we have to try to establish a much shorter time, climate friendly alternatives. This is not just a technological debate we are facing. It is even more a social a behavioral debate, because people have very well adapted their mobility needs by using fossil energies. And now we have to come up with better climate friendly alternatives, so transformation does not only is not only a time for acting, it is also a time for listening, for understanding because if you want to make people change from

Continued

Mr. Hartmut Höppner,
State Secretary at the
Federal Ministry for
Digital and Transport,
Federal Republic of
Germany

their car to public transport, you have to make sure that public transport is the better option. Transformation means rethinking. But rethinking also means that there is a chance you come up with a better solution."

Mr. Adrian-George Foghis,
Secretary of State
with the Ministry
of Transport and
Infrastructure,
Romania

"Romanian public policy regarding the green urban transport system has five pillars. First of all, there is a need for collaboration between all levels of government," requiring "the alignment of urban mobility initiatives with urban planning strategies to create a sustainable and integrated system." The five pillars include: "policy alignment," where the government "establishes a framework to support green mobility, such as emission reduction targets and funding mechanisms that local governments can adapt to their specific context." The second pillar is "integrated urban planning," focusing on "compact mixed-use developments that reduce travel distances, prioritize active transport like walking and cycling, and integrate public transportation." The third pillar, "collaborative governance," involves "setting an intergovernmental working group and a platform to align efforts, share knowledge, and coordinate infrastructure investments." Romania has advanced this by adopting the metropolitan areas law, allowing "voluntary association for collaboration on urban development projects at the local level." Finally, the fourth and fifth pillars are "community involvement and financing," with financing combining "public financing with private investment" and using "instruments such as green bonds and carbon pricing."

Mr. Petr Kulhanek,
Minister for Regional
Development, Czech
Republic

"As we work toward greener urban transport, we see fostering and accelerating of cooperation across all sectors as essential," stated the Minister, acknowledging that "the importance of decarbonizing road transport," while emphasizing that "the transition towards zero-emission vehicles is realistic and achievable without negatively impacting the accessibility of mobility." While recognizing "the potential of electrification of transport, the transition of zero emission mobility should not involve only promoting electromobility." Other technologies such as "pure methane and synthetic fuels, hydrogen" must also be considered. The Minister highlighted the need to "reduce transportation needs and promote... already accessible public transport, active mobility and other environmentally friendly transport modes." By "investing in efficient public transit networks and creating safe infrastructure that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists, we can reduce congestion and emissions while promoting a healthier and more sustainable life." At the national level, "programs for the reconstruction of cycle paths or creation of lanes for cyclists are led by the state fund for transport infrastructure," with regional authorities ensuring "connectivity through public transport." In cities, focus should be on "the development of shared zones and creating a robust system of public transport that allows our citizens to commute from the outskirts to the cities."

Ms. Sara Mariani,
Sustainability
and D&I Director,
Fédération
Internationale de
l'Automobile (FIA)

"It's very important to create a sustainable, accessible and inclusive future for transport [...] there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to decarbonization," said the Sustainability and D&I Director, at FIA. She suggested that "we are open to various technologies, from hydrogen to sustainable fuels to try to find a solution that works best for our stakeholders in their markets." While striving to "green public transport, incentivize shared means of transportation, and reach that 70/30 balance between shared transport and private transport," she warned, "let's not forget about the 30% that remains [...]. It will take some time for the transformation we hope to foster as soon as possible, but let's not forget about the cars that exist today." Shee highlighted the importance of "microfinancing, the incentive to import, reducing tariffs to imports [...]. Let's find alternative solutions like sustainable fuels to make sure they don't pollute." She also pointed out the need to "look at the trade of used vehicles [...] to make sure we don't move the problem from one country to the next." Finally, she underscored that "whether the trip is private or shared, road safety should be an element that does not disappear from all policies for the sake of everyone."

Ms. Lucie Anderton,
Director of
Sustainability,
International Union of
Railways (UIC)

"We want to talk about the potential for interurban and suburban railways as part of an integrated mobility system with public and active travel to really prevent greater urban sprawl, reduce the growing private motorization and to bring about modal shift," said Ms. Lucie Anderton. She emphasized that this is "critical for reducing congestion and tackling the road safety and air quality issues as well as, of course, decarbonization." UIC has "launched a template... to help countries to really bring rail comprehensively into the NDCs for both mitigation as well as adaptation." She highlighted that "one of the biggest opportunities, particularly for those around the table from low- and middle-income countries, [is] to set out conditional NDCs and in doing so, really help climate finance to flow and invest in expanding, electrifying and modernizing the railways in the developing world." Ms. Anderton called for "support from federal government to do that, to register for it and to advocate for the transfer of methodologies... into the new Article 6 mechanism," concluding that "UIC stands ready to support that process."

Mr. Giovanni Donato,
Diplomatic Advisor
of the Minister
of Transport and
Infrastructure,
Republic of Italy

"Transport are crucial for modern European development, and greening urban transport means keeping citizens at the center of the green transition and upholding the right to mobility, guaranteeing a safe, convenient and accessible transport to all. No one must be left behind." He stressed that "this is even more so when it comes to those living in urban areas and peripheral regions." Italy's highest priority "is to strengthen the multilevel governance, ensuring that national policies are transferred at local level in the most effective way." Italy is "investing massively in railways and rapid mass transport" and "financing a new project to support the model shift from road to rail to support the green transition, sustainable infrastructure and inclusion and social cohesion." Mr. Donato also emphasized strong support for "the principle of technological neutrality, as the technology should facilitate access to new generations of vehicles for all social levels, especially using also new types of fuels." He concluded by highlighting the "close collaboration between the stakeholders involved, both at our national and local level," as crucial to success.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Ms. Patricia Lock Dawson,
Mayor of City of
Riverside, California,
United States of
America

Representing ICLEI and the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, Mayor Dawson started by recognizing “we know we must reduce emissions and it’s urgent, but how?” In Riverside’s, there is a “three-pronged approach”: “One, we’ve set ambitious goals. Two, we’re modifying our roads to be less car-friendly and more pedestrian-friendly. And three, we’re transforming our local economy by focusing on clean and green tech businesses.” Riverside aims for net zero emissions by 2040, ahead of California’s 2045 and the US goal of 2050, achieved by “taking care of our own house first,” switching its municipal fleet to zero-emission and electric vehicles, making it “the greenest fleet in the US” for two years running, while developing “robust infrastructure for charging.” On roads, Riverside “invested 13 million in a safe streets program,” implementing a “road diet” that reduces car lanes and adds pedestrian pathways and bike lanes, making “public transportation ... the easy choice.” To transform the economy, Riverside has actively attracted “three new companies” producing zero- and low-emission vehicles, bringing 700 jobs and supplying greener fleet and public transit options, including an electric autonomous vehicle manufacturer from New Zealand, a medium-duty electric truck maker, and a hydrogen fuel train manufacturer.

Ms. Cecily Mbarire,
Governor of Embu
County, Republic of
Kenya

“Urban areas are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to exposure to environmental hazards, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to resources and services,” stated the Governor of Embu County, Kenya. Highlighting that “Embu County is no exception,” the Governor described challenges such as “flooding, climate-driven diseases, and degradation of natural assets,” which are common across developing urban regions. Emphasizing transport as a “key pillar in ensuring green and sustainable urban development,” Ms. Mbarire shared that Embu has developed a green infrastructure and transport plan with support from the European Union. The county is now transitioning its most common mode of transport, the “boda boda” motorbike, toward electric alternatives: “We have over 1,000 boda bodas, and we are trying to bring in electric motorbikes,” underscoring efforts to partner with the national government to train riders in road safety and “ensure affordable credit facilities”, aligning climate action with economic inclusion.

Mr. Manuel Araujo,
Mayor of Quelimane,
Republic of
Mozambique

“I stand here today not just to speak about green urban transport, but to champion a vision where African cities can lead the way in building sustainable, resilient and inclusive transport systems”, stated the Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique, speaking on behalf of ICLEI. “COP29 for us is not just a platform for commitment, it’s a call for tangible actions. Cities like ours are at the forefront of both climate impacts and solutions. Indeed, last year on the 12th of March 2023, my city was hit by Cyclone Freddy and transport was one the most affected sectors in our economy. Green urban transport, is the key to achieving equitable, resilient and sustainable cities that align with global climate goals. How do we then think that we can work across all levels of government? While we recognize the COP processes commit billions to climate finance, much of this remains inaccessible to local governments. Therefore, we propose decentralized climate finance. We advocate at COP for the establishment of direct financing mechanisms for municipalities to access funds for green transport systems.”

Mr. Bob Moran,
Deputy Director
of Transport
Decarbonisation, UK

“Last week our Prime Minister announced an ambitious nationally determined contribution to reduce the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 81% by 2035; delivering it will not be possible without urgent action on transport, and this includes creating greener urban transport systems. We will do this in the UK by reforming public transport, so it better meets the needs of the people it serves. We will get more people cycling, walking and wheeling by supporting local authorities to install and upgrade safe infrastructure. And a new strategy to integrate transport across the UK will tie all these measures together. Our vision for a 1.5° aligned transport system has people at its very heart, and we look forward to continuing to work with you all to deliver it.”

Ms. Mary Lisa,
Deputy Director,
Office of International
Transportation and
Trade, United States
of America

“To support collaboration across all levels of government to deliver a green transportation system, the Biden Harris administration worked hard first to secure funding for transportation sector decarbonization and then to support implementation, allowing state and local governments opportunities to put that funding to good use through sustainable, resilient transportation projects. The US Department of Transportation is today releasing the climate strategies that work playbook to help cities reform land use, promote mode choice and low-carbon options and promote zero-emissions vehicles. The playbook contains 28 climate solutions that help decarbonize transportation and create more accessible and affordable mobility options. Its strategies range from active transportation to electric vehicles to freight operational efficiencies for use by all types of communities. The strategies include information on greenhouse gas reduction benefits, economic development and safety.”

Ms. Jill Warren,
CEO, European
Cyclists' Federation
(ECF)

"Enabling more people to walk and cycle safely and to access public transport by foot and by bicycle can help cut transport emissions in half by 2030. Our groundbreaking research shows that walking and cycling are often underprioritized in the mobility mix and in countries' NDCs. So much more ambition, action and investment is needed almost everywhere to fully unlock the benefits of walking and cycling. We stand ready to support national policymakers in this process and embedding walking and cycling in their NDCs and as part of a green urban transport system. Walking and cycling have also proven time and time again to be the most resilient forms of urban transport in the face of climate shocks. Case in point, after the devastating floods in the Valencia region last month in many impacted areas, the only ways to deliver lifesaving food, medicine and other forms to help was on foot or by bicycle."

Mr. Steve Cotton,
Secretary General,
International
Transport Workers'
Federation (ITF)
Workers

"Quite clear to us that a lot more work needs to be done on the NDCs. There needs to be a formula and a process. We really welcome the ... ITF's report because it's critical that we're going to have something to measure. Again, our colleagues from the other agencies are open invitation to collaborate much more in this area. Workers are very concerned about what climate change means in order with urban transport, but also the connection to the global supply chains. It's utterly critical that we engage. We're very pleased to see many of the mayors here. This is a critical area for developing within their own finances and infrastructure."

Mr. Volker Ratzmann,
Executive Vice
President, DHL

"As the world's leading logistics provider, we recognize clearly that there is a strong and increasing interest in the business in sustainable transport. And we answer this increasing interest by already operating, for example, 36,000 pickup and delivery events based on an electric base. And we are investing in pilot projects like using electric bikes, for example, in African cities. All these require huge investments, and these investments must be supported by regulation through appropriate framework conditions. We need clear, understandable and reliable regulations, as business requires planning security, especially for these huge investments. Regulatory incentives such as subsidies and support should be meaningful and promote transformation rather than detailed regulations that create unnecessary bureaucracy."

**Mr. Juan Carlos
Munoz,**
Minister of Transport,
Republic of Chile

"We've heard that we are dealing with an urgent and difficult task. We must build better, sustainable transport modes and convince our people to leave their cars at home and use these transport modes instead, and this is urgent. We need to act now; that's what we heard. Let me suggest a low-hanging fruit to achieve this goal. Let's start using the transport modes we are promoting ourselves. My experience is that this systematic choice builds political support and allows us to identify improvement opportunities as we travel in buses, trains or as we bike to work. Let's build pride on the determination and trust around transit and biking."

Anar Guliyev,
Chairman of the
State Committee
on Urban Planning
and Architecture
(SCUPA), Republic of
Azerbaijan

On behalf of COP29 presidency, I would like also to thank all participants, distinguished ministers, mayors, private sector, civil society, all stakeholders, international organizations for participation in this high level roundtable. I would like to inform you that this morning we successfully launched Multisectoral actions pathway to resilient and healthy cities initiative, a MAP initiative, it is a COP29 presidency led initiative. Also, we established COP29 Presidency Legacy, COP Continuity Coalition between COP27, COP28, COP29 and COP30 to continue to this topic, urban topic, cities topic to take to from COP to COP. and to ensure continuity and complimentary between initiatives like SEARCH which was launched in COP27, CHAMP which was launched last year in COP28 and MAP initiative which we launched this morning. [...] Today's discussion once again clearly showed that green urban transport, it is one of the important issues. And green urban transport was very well integrated into this declaration that I already mentioned.





Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

06

High-Level Roundtable 3: Nature, Health and Agriculture in Cities

This roundtable was convened with the leadership of the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and UN-Habitat, supported by World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The intersection of nature, health, and agriculture in cities is emerging as a pivotal arena for climate action, with urban areas already home to nearly 70 per cent of the global population by 2050. Rapid urbanization is amplifying risks from extreme heat, flooding, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity, making localized, people-centered adaptation strategies essential. Nature-based solutions (NbS) such as urban forests, wetlands, green roofs, and peri-urban agriculture are gaining traction as cost-effective, scalable tools that deliver co-benefits for climate resilience, public health, and sustainable food systems.

Countries and cities are embedding NbS into updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans, with examples including Japan's flood-resilient parks, Brazil's ecosystem integration into large-scale housing, and Kenya's county-level greening and coastal restoration programs. Regional and local governments, from Andalucía's peri-urban ecosystem restoration to Lagos' mangrove rehabilitation, are demonstrating the value of aligning environmental, health, and food security goals. International organizations such as UN Environment Programme (UNEP), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Bank are advancing tools, financing mechanisms, and cross-sector partnerships to accelerate NbS adoption.

Despite growing momentum, financing for subnational action remains a critical bottleneck. Participants called for innovative partnerships, direct access to climate funds, and blended finance models to unlock urban resilience investments. A recurring theme was the need to mainstream health and equity into climate strategies, recognizing the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations. Ultimately, integrating nature, health, and agriculture into urban systems is not just an environmental imperative but a societal one - demanding multilevel governance, community leadership, and sustained political will to deliver inclusive, climate-resilient cities.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Summary of statements (in chronological order)

Introduction

Mirey Atallah, Chief, Adaptation and Resilience Branch, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Mirey Atallah set the tone by highlighting the urgency of scaling up urban adaptation to address the interconnected crises of biodiversity loss, land degradation, and climate change. She emphasized the role of cities in shaping resilient futures through nature-integrated planning and underscored UNEP’s commitment to enabling multilevel action.

Welcome remarks

Umayra Taghiyeva, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Republic of Azerbaijan

Umayra Taghiyeva welcomed participants and reaffirmed Azerbaijan’s commitment to sustainable urbanization. She highlighted the country’s efforts to promote ecosystem-based adaptation in cities and called for inclusive urban planning that benefits both people and the environment.

High-level keynotes

Shinichi Goto, Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan

Shinichi Goto emphasized Japan’s promotion of “Green Infrastructure” and NbS through urban redevelopment projects, including flood-resilient parks and community gardens. He underscored Japan’s support for knowledge sharing to mainstream climate-resilient urban design.

Ambassador Antônio da Costa e Silva, Chief of International Relations, Ministry of Cities, Federative Republic of Brazil

Ambassador da Costa e Silva highlighted Brazil’s initiative to incorporate NbS into large-scale urban housing programs, especially in informal settlements. He stressed the importance of empowering local governments and aligning national funding with community-driven solutions.

Hon. Nasra Nanda, Chair, World Green Building Council’s Africa Regional Network, CEO Kenya Green Building Society*

Hon. Nanda emphasized Kenya’s integration of green corridors and sustainable agriculture into city master plans. she called for international cooperation to address financing and capacity-building gaps in the Global South.

**speaking on behalf of Hon. Joel Arumonyang, Principal Secretary, State Department for Public Works, Kenya*

Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla, President of Andalusia, Kingdom of Spain

President Moreno Bonilla outlined Andalusia’s strategy for restoring peri-urban ecosystems, combating heat stress, and improving food security. He emphasized Spain’s regional efforts to align urban development with the EU Nature Restoration Law.

Opening remarks

Ko Barrett, Deputy Secretary General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Ko Barrett warned about increasing heat risks in cities and stressed the role of ecosystems in mitigating climate extremes. She called for data-driven urban planning that integrates climate projections with health and biodiversity metrics.
Dechen Tsering, Acting Director, Climate Change Division, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	Dechen Tsering underlined the necessity of whole-of-society approaches and highlighted UNEP’s work in connecting cities with climate finance mechanisms and technical expertise for NbS.
Dr. Maria Neira, Director, Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO	Dr. Neira stressed the co-benefits of urban nature for mental health, disease prevention, and well-being. She emphasized the need to embed health indicators into climate and urban policies.
Nasar Hayat, FAO Representative and Head of FAO Partnership and Liaison Office, Republic of Azerbaijan	Nasar Hayat highlighted the role of urban and peri-urban agriculture in strengthening food systems and livelihoods. He introduced FAO-supported initiatives to integrate agriculture into spatial planning.

Inspirational keynotes

H.E. Ms. Razan Al Mubarak, COP28 High-level Champion & IUCN President	H.E. Al Mubarak urged collaboration to embed NbS into every stage of urban planning. She emphasized inclusive governance that amplifies the voices of youth, women, and Indigenous Peoples. Razaan emphasized the essential role of cities and nature in achieving climate, biodiversity, and desertification goals. She stressed the importance of recognizing subnational actors in the negotiation processes, giving them power and accountability to contribute meaningfully to climate action. She concluded by underlining the importance of collective journey toward COP16 on Desertification in Riyadh.
Dr. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC	Dr. Ürge-Vorsatz stressed the scientific consensus on the cost-effectiveness of NbS in cities and warned that failure to act will lock in risks for generations. She advocated for knowledge co-creation and peer-to-peer city partnerships. Dr. Urge-Vorsatz highlighted scientific evidence from the IPCC on how NbS in cities offer health and climate benefits. She emphasized the multiple gains from urban green spaces, including stress reduction, improved physical health, and biodiversity. She warned of the extreme heat risks and lack of cooling access, especially in the Global South, and stressed the urgency of scaling NbS to mitigate these impacts.

Eleni Myrivili, Chief Heat Officer, UN-Habitat	Eleni Myrivili showcased practical examples of heat reduction through urban greening. She emphasized the need to institutionalize the role of heat officers within city governments. Eleni outlined the disproportionate impacts of extreme heat on vulnerable urban populations and critical systems. She stressed that urban design must shift away from car-centric models to people-focused infrastructure. She presented global examples of cooling interventions—from Medellín’s green corridors to Athens’ rediscovery of ancient water systems. She concluded by calling NbS the ‘best shield’ against extreme weather.
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Roundtable discussion

MODERATOR Mirey Atallah, Chief, Adaptation and Resilience Branch, UNEP	Mirey Atallah opened the session by stressing the need for transformative urban climate action. She underlined the growing urban footprint and climate vulnerability, framing cities as key to future climate resilience.
Janet Yvone Castagne Vásquez, Mayor of Coronel Portillo, Republic of Peru	Janet Yvone Castagne Vásquez shared success in revitalizing urban wetlands to control flooding and improve local food sources. Mayor Vasquez presented the case of the Peruvian Amazon, where heatwaves and droughts are intensifying. She described her city’s actions including public space reforestation, water system rehabilitation, and training of emergency volunteers. She advocated for cities as laboratories of innovation capable of leading the transition toward inclusive climate resilience.
Ahmet Aras, Mayor of Mugla, Republic of Türkiye	Ahmet Aras highlighted reforestation and local food markets to build community resilience to climate shocks. Mayor Aras spoke of the dual challenge faced by Muğla as both a tourism and agricultural region. He underlined infrastructure strain caused by seasonal population increases and highlighted investments in solar energy and support to local cooperatives. He also warned about invasive species entering Mediterranean waters, disrupting ecosystems and fisheries.
Clifford Galea Vella Maslennikov, President, Reġjun Tramuntana, Republic of Malta	Presented coastal city strategies balancing tourism, biodiversity protection, and food access. Mr. Galea emphasized the importance of youth participation, territorial approaches to SDGs, and multi-level governance. He shared how his small island region applies urban greening, flood mitigation, and food security initiatives, supported by EU and youth ambassador programs.
Dr. Lillian Chunda, Chief Health Services Officer, Ministry of Health, Republic of Malawi	Discussed integrating environmental health indicators into city health surveillance systems. Dr. Chunda explained how rapid urbanization in Malawi creates stress on water, health, and sanitation systems. She described policy reforms to update outdated legislation and promote climate-responsive urban planning, especially for vulnerable slum populations.
Samuel Assefa, Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation Director, State of California, United States of America	Emphasized climate justice in urban agriculture programs and introduced equity-focused zoning reforms. Mr. Assefa affirmed California’s leadership in NbS, wildfire mitigation, and coastal adaptation. He emphasized equity by highlighting tribal engagement and frontline community resilience efforts, and reaffirmed the state’s climate commitment irrespective of national politics.

Mary Mwiti, Chief Executive Officer of the Council of Governors, Republic of Kenya	Advocated for decentralized planning, linking community-led NbS with national climate frameworks. Ms. Mwiti detailed seven nature-based actions across Kenya’s 47 counties, including urban greening, grass reseeding, coastal restoration, agroforestry, and water conservation. She pointed to legal and resource challenges while emphasizing the importance of local communities and ecosystem-based enterprises.
Martin Haese, Chair, Premier’s Climate Change Council, Government of South Australia	Outlined green infrastructure programs funded through public-private partnerships. Mr. Haese highlighted urban canopy expansion, biodiversity legislation, and carbon sequestration on conservation lands. He emphasized social capital and the transformation of Adelaide into a National Park City, promoting greening of roofs, streets, and conservation of wetlands.
Dr. Folayinka Dania, Chief Resilience Officer, Lagos, Federal Republic of Nigeria	Explained how Lagos is piloting mangrove restoration and rooftop agriculture to build resilience.

Responding interventions

Ming Zhang, Global Director for the Urban, Resilience and Land Global Department, World Bank	Highlighted tools to integrate NbS into urban investment frameworks, stressing cost-benefit transparency. Presented \$8B in NbS-related investments in 30 countries and a Nature-Based Opportunity Scan tool.
Hon. Nasra Nanda, Chair, World Green Building Council’s Africa Regional Network, CEO Kenya Green Building Society	Advocated for green rating systems that embed food, health, and biodiversity indicators into building performance.
Pascal Martinez, Senior Climate Change Specialist, Global Environmental Facility	Introduced the GEF Urban NbS Facility, providing grants for nature-integrated city development. Described \$480M in grant support and 90 partner cities using integrated solutions to advance climate resilience.

Closing remarks

Elmar Mammadov, Co-chair of the Global Initiatives Group of the COP29 Action Agenda	Advocated for multisectoral action for resilient and healthy cities and delivered the final remarks by announcing the launch of the Baku Presidency Coalition on Urban Climate Action. This unprecedented alliance builds a legacy of collaboration across COP presidencies—linking COP27 (Egypt), COP28 (UAE), COP29 (Azerbaijan), and COP30 (Brazil). Mamadov emphasized the significance of the MAP Declaration (Multisectoral Action Pathways), which elevates healthy and resilient cities within the global climate agenda. He urged all stakeholders to endorse the declaration to ensure continuity, complementarity, and long-term impact across climate governance processes.
Henrietta Ampofo, Environmental Health thematic co-facilitator of the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP	Henrietta called for long-term intergenerational engagement in climate-urban strategies. She stressed that nature-based approaches are not optional, but essential to protect the futures of young people and urban ecosystems alike.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat



Photo credit:
Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

07

High-Level Roundtable 4: Financing Urban Climate Action

This roundtable was convened with the leadership of the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Urban MDB group, and UN-Habitat.

Cities are facing a significant climate finance gap, requiring between US\$4.5 trillion and US\$5.4 trillion annually to build climate-resilient infrastructure. In contrast, the total urban climate finance in 2021/2022 was just US\$831 billion, highlighting the challenges cities face in securing the necessary funds. Local governments often encounter regulatory and fiscal barriers, such as the inability to borrow or issue municipal bonds, limited creditworthiness, and a reliance on local commercial banks for funding. These issues are compounded for smaller cities and informal settlements, especially in the Global South, where financial constraints further hinder sustainable development and climate resilience.

The roundtable focuses on strengthening multilevel partnerships to improve access to finance for urban climate action. Key initiatives, such as the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) and the Multisectoral Action Pathways (MAP) Resilient and Healthy Cities Declaration, aim to align national climate strategies with local actions across sectors such as energy, transport, health, and finance. The discussions explored how innovative financial instruments can be adapted to the diverse needs of cities, mobilizing both public and private sector finance to scale urban

climate solutions. Emphasis was placed on the role of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in supporting local actions, incentivizing private sector investment in urban mitigation and adaptation, and ensuring that green projects within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are translated into actionable finance and implementation strategies.



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Summary of statements (in chronological order)

Opening remarks

Anar Guliyev,
Chairman of the
State Committee of
Urban Planning and
Architecture (SCUPA)
Republic of
Azerbaijan

The SCUPA Chairman highlighted “the need for innovative and equitable financing mechanisms to support urban climate actions”, acknowledging the pivotal role of urban areas in both the challenges and solutions to climate change. “Over 55 per cent of the world’s population currently lives in urban areas, a figure expected to exceed 60 per cent by 2030.” These cities are responsible for “70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions”, yet they hold the potential to drive climate solutions. However, “to unlock this potential we need adequate financing” the Chairman emphasized, indicated that “[i]t is estimated that 3.5 trillion per year is required globally to meet the climate goals in urban areas.” To address needs like “green infrastructure, energy efficient buildings, public transport systems and disaster resilience” it is necessary to explore “how public and private investments can be better mobilized to fill the financing gap.” The private sector is seen “as an essential driver of climate solutions”, and public-private partnerships (PPP) are crucial for “large-scale urban regeneration,” especially in post-conflict areas. The Chairman further highlighted the recently launched MAP declaration that emphasizes “the need for financing to address climate change at the city level” to ensure “that urban populations, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from sustainable and climate resilient development.” Specifically, nature-based solutions “offer cities an opportunity to reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality more sustainably while engaging communities and generating green jobs.” Recognizing that “cities cannot address these challenges alone,” the Chairman stressed the need for “global partnership, innovative financial models, and the support of the international community” to ensure cities are “both climate resilient and inclusive.”

Anacláudia Rossbach,
Executive Director,
UN-Habitat

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat referred to the message of the World Cities Report, launched at the World Urban Forum: “[C]ities and urban areas require an estimate of 4.5 to 5 trillion annually up to 2030 to invest in new or retrofitted climate resilient infrastructure” but are currently securing only “a fraction of 7 to 8 per cent” of this amount. “[F]ailure to plan and finance low emission and resilient urban infrastructure, housing and basic services... will not only exacerbate poverty but also lock cities and nations into unproductive urban forums.” Especially informal settlements, where “ownership of land is not clear” pose a significant challenge to urban investment. Land policies can unlock opportunities by identifying “underutilized vacant spaces in cities” and promoting “densification policies.” The Executive Director further stressed the need “to design the instruments, the guarantees... [as a] key strategic aspect of... funding”, as well as increasing “revenues such as property tax” through better land planning. To ensure “financing reaches our cities and lands where it’s needed most, including vulnerable and informal settlements,” cities must align with “a vision of cities... [and] follow the principles stated... [in] the New Urban Agenda.” A “road map” for urban and financial regulatory integration is needed, with events like the Development Conference providing “an important opportunity... to change and to offer inputs on the revision of the international development finance system, aligning climate, urban, and development finance.”

Representatives from MDBs

Guangzhe Chen,
Vice President for
Infrastructure of
World Bank

The World Bank’s representative emphasized that “cities are critical to devise the solution needed to tackle climate change,” but face barriers to accessing necessary finance. These barriers include “a subpart level of expenditure related to the need; the low level of own resources generation; and extremely limited private investments for public infrastructures.” To address these challenges, the representative outlined four key areas for improvement. First, there is a need “support reforms and strengthen the basic systems and conditions that constrain urban infrastructure investment,” which is a core focus of the World Bank’s urban sector. Second, to help cities boost investments, the “City Climate Financing Gap Fund” has been developed, representing “such an instrument to help cities in this regard.” Third, the representative stressed the importance of “expand[ing] the volume of fiscal flows to municipal government” while “providing powerful incentive to improve the institutional and delivery performance.” Finally, the representative advocated for “leveraging private investments through de-risking,” pointing to the World Bank’s revamped guarantee platform. Improving “the city’s creditworthiness” is fundamental, as cities must be able to “leverage the future revenue for investing.” The World Bank invests between “\$7 and \$8 billion annually,” using this catalytic funding to “leverage much more financing from... private sectors to support our cities.”

Gianpiero Nacci,
Director, Sustainable
Business and
Infrastructure,
European Bank for
Reconstruction and
Development (EBRD)

The EBRD representative considered the “crucial role of cities in combating climate change” and the “immense need of support they require.” Citing the “sobering figure” from UN-Habitat’s Executive Director, the representative noted that the necessary funding should come from “public financial institutions, from the development banks, but also crucially, increasingly so from the private sector.” MDBs have been collaborating for years to offer a “harmonized approach to local climate action and to complement each other’s capacity and resources.” The representative further reaffirmed the MDBs’ and EBRD’s commitment to “continue scaling up technical assistance and urban climate finance to support cities achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement, where local climate action is critical... to accelerate climate finance, including through concessional funds, subnational lending and guaranteeing instruments to leverage the private sector... to bridge the financing gap... to engage extensively with city leaders and city networks focusing on scaling up climate finance, but also to bring climate adaptation at the core of climate actions for cities.” Aiming “to work collaboratively and welcome broader partnerships, which are needed to address the financing gap,” examples, such as the CHAMP initiative and the MAP declaration were mentioned.

Nancy Saich,
Chief Climate
Change Expert
European Investment
Bank (EIB)

The representative from the European Investment Bank (EIB) highlighted that the EIB, as “the EU’s bank, the climate bank... finances projects and clients, public and private, inside the EU, but also in developing countries all around the world.” Since 2020, the EIB has committed to being “Paris-aligned in all our financing activities... [with] a target to exceed 50 per cent green finance.” Providing “low carbon solutions, including nature-based solutions, and innovative new financial solutions” for urban contexts is of great importance for cities to achieve green financing. The EIB’s adaptation plan notes that “cities [play] a critical part ... driving up [the] adaptation finance, but by also working in partnership with others.” Additionally, the EIB’s climate bank’ road map links “social and climate discussion together and address[es] such matters as gender responsive climate action... in urban transport and housing.” Key programs like ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance) focus on “supporting cities to scale up and accelerate energy efficiency and renewable energy investments, social housing... and low carbon urban transport.” The representative also mentioned the “Gap Fund for cities,” a partnership with the World Bank that focuses on “supporting the gap between the plans and the actual projects,” and specifically highlighted the need to “reach small municipalities through dedicated credit lines through local banks, which can be national promotional... or commercial banks.”

Norio Saito, Director, Urban Development and Water Division, South Asia Regional Department (SAUW) , Asian Development Bank (ADB)	The Asian Development Bank (ADB) representative reaffirmed the bank’s commitment “to scaling up urban climate financing by working with national and local governments, as well as the private sector, and philanthropies,” and to maintain the level of “more than half of ADB’s urban sector operations” focusing on climate financing. Highlighting “the importance of three matters, planning financing, and funding”, the representative indicated that the ADB supports various city-level planning, including “special plans, risk-based urban plans, or city climate action plans, [which] are aligned with NDC and NAP.” These plans will identify “priority urban investments that improve urban service delivery, while addressing cities vulnerabilities, strengthening resilience, and reducing GHG emissions.” On financing, it is noted that the “creditworthiness of local governments is rather low [for] attracting private sector financing.” However, the ADB’s “Invisible Cities Initiative” is helping cities to access capital markets, and it is further suggested that national governments “may wish to revisit the regulatory or legal constraints that prevents subnational borrowing... directly from external sources.” Regarding funding, the representative emphasized strengthening “own source revenue generation, such as water tariffs, user charges, and property tax enhancement.” and highlighted ADB’s support in Indonesia on “land value capture... through policy-based loans and technical assistance,” and improving the “budget allocation formula... to make it more transparent and predictable, while incentivizing strong municipal governance.”	<i>Continued</i> Diep Nguyen-van Houtte, Senior Manager, International Finance Corporation (IFC)	prioritize urban climate finance opportunities and policy intervention in a holistic manner,” by analyzing “a city’s environmental footprint in terms of carbon emissions across sectors, such as energy and built environment, transport, waste, and water.” Such tools “provide an optimal investment plan based on analysis and prioritization of potential investments across different urban sectors.”
Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, President, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)	The representative from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) indicated that the bank’s “investments in the urban sector amount to approximately 8 billion U.S. dollars in net approvals... [and] include support to early warning systems and flood management... [and] building affordable climate resilient housing in cities.” Particularly, “the affordable housing sector has been a great focus lately,” considering that in IsDB’s member countries “greater than 50 per cent of their urban population [lives] in slums... with some extreme cases reaching 80 to 90 per cent,” and “climate risks, such as excessive heat or floods, are the major threats to the dense population living in informal settlements.” The representative called for “innovation... affordable and green technology and materials to significantly increase the number of affordable and climate informed hous[ing] units.” Noting the importance of private sector involvement and innovative funding mechanisms, the use of “green and sustainable sukuk, which are the Islamic bonds” is suggested to leverage the Islamic debt market for climate action. It is further emphasized that since 2002, the IsDB “has approved more than 5.5 billion in critical climate financing,” with 47 per cent directed towards “adaptation, underscoring [the bank’s] commitment to [addressing] climate change.”	Mustapha El Habti, Governor, Director of Water, Sanitation and Licensed Services, Directorates General of Local Authorities, Ministry of the Interior, Kingdom of Morocco	Morocco highlighted the country’s efforts in advancing local climate action. Since the Paris Agreement in 2015, Morocco has supported the role of “non-state actors in global climate action,” actively engaging in international climate events, including COPs. Notably, during COP22 in Morocco, the “Second World Summit of Local and Regional Elected Officials for the Climate,” with over “1200 participants” was hosted. Morocco has also worked to position “local authorities... [as] key players” in climate policy. Initiatives like the “climate finance for Morocco’s cities and regions”, launched in partnership with the Moroccan Association of Mayors, and the 2019 “GCF (Green Climate Fund” program, aim to improve local climate project preparation. In 2021, Morocco launched a program with the Global Green Growth Institute, resulting “in the development of 10 climate projects... [for] the Green Climate Fund.” Finally, in 2024, the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection launched a project to enhance regions’ “ability to access climate finance,” focusing on “mapping climate funds... and structuring climate projects.”
Diep Nguyen-van Houtte, Senior Manager, International Finance Corporation (IFC)	The International Finance Corporation (IFC) representative focused on two main points: “financing and digital planning tools.” Regarding financing, it is indicated that “governments, city and subnational governments need to undertake many projects at the subnational level,” while “subnational borrowers are typically prevented from undertaking projects at these levels because they often rely on sovereign guarantees and hesitate to take on commercial debt,” despite having significant untapped borrowing capacity. While “emerging markets contribute to approximately half to global GDP” their “total subnational debt stock, excluding China, is only about 8.6 per cent.” This indicates a “significant capacity to borrow at the subnational level... [and to] address the financing gap.” To overcome the challenge of the “potential increase in costs and charges for citizens and users,” cities need to “improve service quality before they are able to increase charges for concession,” which requires “transitional concessional financing.” The representative therefore stressed the need for “programmatic blended finance solutions that... help cities adopt a holistic approach towards development projects at the subnational level... [and] balance priorities that enable them to achieve climate goals while delivering on important public services.” Regarding the second point, digital planning tools, such as the IFC’s apex programme, “help cities identify, quantify, and	Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai , Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Independent State of Samoa	Samoa addressed the “unique challenges small island developing states (SIDS), like Samoa,” face in tackling climate change. “Our unique socioeconomic context necessitates tailored urban planning and resilience strategies that differ significantly from those applied in larger, more developed urban centers.” While SIDS “may not resemble large metropolitan cities in scale or infrastructure, they constitute urban characteristics that require focused attention and innovative solutions” to address their specific vulnerabilities to enhance resilience. Samoa advocated for “elevated urban partnerships, such as the Pacific Urban Partnership, [to] prioritize the voices and needs of vulnerable cities in SIDS context.”. The country specifically called for increased commitments from MDBs and DFIs “to support resilient urban infrastructure investment projects... through simplified access to grants-based funding,” and the support for “regional financing mechanisms, such as the Pacific Resilience Facility.” Finally, Samoa stressed the importance of “improved transparency in urban climate financing... [to] build trust among stakeholders and ensure accountability.” This includes “regular reporting on funding flows, project outcomes, and impacts, ... [and] data sharing” to assess “progress towards achieving our climate goals.”

Judith Nabakooba
Minister of Lands,
Housing and Urban
Development,
Republic of Uganda

Uganda highlighted Africa’s first Urban Forum in Addis Ababa, where a declaration was made focusing on key issues such as “political will, institutional frameworks, resource mobilization, and finance,” including “capacity development, knowledge reporting, and accountability.” Uganda emphasized the need for development partners to help African countries “to prepare themselves for creditworthiness” to access financing for projects. Indicating that “if land is not titled, land is not properly planned,” the importance of “land tenure security” and proper “land use planning” is stressed to mobilize local resources. “Affordable finance for low-cost housing” is particularly crucial, considering that “60 per cent of people living in urban areas are staying in the informal sector”. To this end the programme “BCRUP, Building Climate Resilience with the Urban Poor” has been developed, and for which assistance is requested to “improve the livelihood, planning, administration, and governance” in the 14 pilot African member states.

Local Government Interventions

Mohamed Sefiani,
Mayor of
Chefchaouen,
Kingdom of Morocco

The mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, highlighted the city’s commitment to climate action and sustainability, noting that “finance is crucial for us in cities” to implement climate plans. Chefchaouen has joined GCoM (Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy), “developed the Chefchaouen 2030 Vision and Climate Action Plan, using a participatory approach,” and started to implement it. However, “implementation requires very substantial funding, which is why [they] are adopting multi-level governance in Morocco to finance [their] projects.” The mayor emphasized that “access to international climate finance is very difficult, particularly for intermediary cities in the Global South.” Chefchaouen has successfully accessed finance for projects like “waste management [and] public lighting,” with support from GCoM, DG Cities, multilateral banks, and the UN Capital Development Fund. The mayor stressed the importance of reviewing “mechanisms for access to [climate] finance for cities, and to support them with technical assistance that can help them to present bankable projects.” To this end “multi-level actions remain essential to implement the climate agenda,” and so are the CHAMP Initiative and networks like GCoM and ICLEI.

Yawo Winny Dogbatse,
Mayor of Kloto,
Republic of Togo
*Translated
from French*

The representative of Togo indicated that “Togo, along with other cities in sub-Saharan Africa, faces similar challenges,” noting that “the future of Africa is the future of the world” as the continent’s population will grow substantially by 2050. Despite Africa’s readiness to “contribute to global decarbonization efforts,” the representative emphasized the need for “radical collaboration... across all levels and sectors” to combat climate change, “undertaken with a spirit of innovation, inclusion, solution-oriented thinking, and transparency.” Local governments “have ambitious climate plans but often lack the funding and support needed to implement them.” This needs to be “improved to enhance the significant contribution cities can make in response to the climate crisis.” A “major overhaul of the global financial system” is therefore required to remove the barriers “preventing climate finance from reaching cities.” Additionally, “increased support for public development banks and development financing institutions, including MDBs, is... crucial.” Finally, the representative indicated that “members of GCoM welcome and celebrate the coalition for High Ambition Multi-Level Partnerships (CHAMP) for climate action... [as] a vital tool for strengthening cooperation and fostering closer collaboration” and specifically called for enhanced “financial cooperation” to support African countries.

Takeharu Yamanaka,
On behalf of the
Mayor of Yokohama,
Japan

The representative from Yokohama, Japan, echoed the “critical importance of mobilizing climate finance.” An example from Yokohama, where the city now calls “for tenders for photovoltaic (PV) panel installations” on city facilities, allowing bidders to “purchase and maintain the panels,” thus avoiding extra expenses for the city. It is emphasized that “the

Continued
Takeharu Yamanaka,
On behalf of the
Mayor of Yokohama,
Japan

key is the discussion with potential bidders [to make the] tender viable and feasible, while ensuring a level playing field.” Being the closest entity to local government is “the strength and advantage that cities have” to facilitate the “flow of climate finance.” The representative noted that “many cities around the world have many good examples” to share, citing Yokohama’s hosting of the “13th Smart City Conference” and upcoming “Green Expo 2027” as adequate platform “to showcase solutions.” Lastly, he reaffirmed cities’ “unwavering commitments to scale up and speed up climate actions... in solidarity with the global community” to meet the 1.5°C target.

Marisa Barros,
Undersecretary of
Energy and Mining
of the State of São
Paulo, Federative
Republic of Brazil
*Translated
from Portuguese*

The Undersecretary of Energy and Mining of the State of São Paulo, Brazil, Marisa Barros, emphasized the importance of acknowledging the diversity and unequal capacities among Brazil’s subnational governments in addressing climate challenges. While São Paulo has developed “a Climate Action Plan, an Energy Plan, and an Adaptation and Resilience Plan,” she noted that “this is not the reality for all subnational entities.” With 645 municipalities across the state, she highlighted that “the loss and damage equation directly affects the most vulnerable segments of the population,” with significant disparities in development and exposure to climate risks. She stressed that “cities and states, due to their proximity to the population, can accelerate the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures,” but also made clear that they “cannot do this alone.” Highlighting the urgent need for investments in “energy efficiency, low-carbon transport systems, and especially more resilient infrastructure,” she called on multilateral development banks to “create mechanisms to enable faster and more direct access to climate finance for local, municipal, and state governments.” To close, she outlined three priorities: “reducing information asymmetry tthe information must reach subnational entities directly,” “technical assistance for the structuring of public-private partnerships,” and “support to improve the financial conditions and creditworthiness of municipalities.” She illustrated the effectiveness of public-private partnerships by sharing São Paulo’s rapid response to a 2023 climate disaster, which enabled the relocation of vulnerable populations and the delivery of “704 housing units in just 10 months.” She concluded by urging multilateral banks to “optimize the allocation of resources for urban climate finance” and to support a “sustainable, safe, and just energy transition,” along with stronger “climate adaptation and resilience.”

Marianne Overtone,
Mayor of North
Kesteven and
Lincolnshire &
Representative of the
Council of European
Municipalities and
Regions (CEMR),
United Kingdom of
Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

With respect to the “road to decarbonization” the representative highlighted the importance of “multi-level governance to co-create solutions at local level, localize the Sustainable Development Goals, and enable cities and regions to access the finance needed.” CEMR (the Council of European Municipalities and Regions) represents “130,000 cities and regions across Europe” and has called to “seize the transformative force of existing financial mechanisms with blended finance and more innovative solutions.” The Heads of Government of the 56 Commonwealth countries have “reaffirmed their declaration on sustainable development, strengthening [the CEMR’s] endorsements.” The representative further emphasized the need to “take people with us, or the kickback may derail the whole.” It is therefore essential to “co-create those solutions so that they bring local benefits with a sense of local ownership,” and to attract and tie in local entrepreneurs with “innovative ideas for funding” to provide “much better long-term security of support.” To this end, financing “the local transition to climate neutrality” will require “mobilizing the national and EU budgets with private finance and partners in a multi-level approach.”

Roundtable Interventions: Bilateral donors, funds, philanthropies, and private sector

Mikko Ollikainen,
Representative,
Adaptation Fund

The representative of the Adaptation Fund highlighted “the importance of adaptation,” specifically the inspiration to “witness the action and the commitment at multiple levels on the challenges posed by climate change in the urban environment.” The Adaptation fund recognized the “rising demand for projects related to adaptation and urban development... deploying innovative solutions to a multitude of risks,” such as water shortages, heat waves, flood risks, “especially in sinking coastal areas.” The Fund employs various strategies, such as “disaster risk reduction, nature-based solutions, small scale infrastructure, institutional strengthening, and finance capacity building,” to enhance long-term resilience. The representative further focused on “enabling local-led adaptation” and the Fund’s role as “the first multilateral climate fund to have operationalized local adaptation and recently opened new funding modalities to facilitate more direct access to local actors,” including cities and local governments. By “collaborating with UN-Habitat as a multilateral implementing entity,” countries are supported in “developing and implementing impactful projects.”

Megan Ross,
Representative,
Bloomberg
Philanthropies

The Bloomberg Philanthropies’ representative emphasized the organization’s “efforts around the world to cut emissions in cities and help subnational leaders attract and access climate financing.” It is explained that “philanthropy can create a strong foundation that attracts additional funding,” enabling larger-scale solutions. Through CHAMP, “74 countries pledged to include local governments in their national climate plans, invest in subnational climate projects and implement actions in local communities and cities.” Local leaders “announced the call for national governments and MDB’s to invest 800 billion U.S. dollars every year by 2030 in climate solutions... and to spend 40 per cent... on those most impacted by the climate crisis... where adaptation actions can make a critical difference.” The urban climate investment gap is “estimated at \$4.5 trillion,” and “local leaders are urging the public investment sector to mobilize this funding to support our global climate goals,” particularly in the Global South.

Mafalda Duarte,
Executive Director,
Green Climate Fund
(GCF)

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) representative shared specific key messages. Firstly, the GCF emphasizes “climate action needs and opportunities in urban settings,” focusing specifically on “cities, buildings, industries, and appliances,” alongside “energy generation, sustainable transport, and resilient infrastructure.” The Fund has committed “more than \$7 billion for 100 projects related to these areas” and mobilized significant co-financing. Secondly, the GCF “employs a strategic approach,” partnering with “MDBs and the private sector to bridge the climate action and finance gap,” using instruments like “equities, loan guarantees, and grants.” Examples include “the Debt-for-Climate Swap” with the IDB and projects supporting resilience and early warning systems in Latin America and the Philippines. Lastly, the GCF offers “readiness support grants” to help cities develop climate strategies and projects “through national accredited entities.”

Claude Gascon,
Representative,
Global Environment
Facility (GEF)

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) representative introduced the GEF’s “launch of the Sustainable Cities Program in 2016,” which has since “provided over 450 million in grant funding to support climate action in more than 90 cities across 33 countries.” The program established “a global knowledge and coordination platform, led by the World Bank, in collaboration with other MDBs, city networks, and UN agencies.” Addressing the “financing gap in cities,” the program has mobilized “over 5 billion in co-financing... through strategic blending of GEF resources with MDB loans and grants.” The platform “also collaborates with project operating facilities, like C40 and ICLEI,” organizing “investment roundtables to connect cities with potential investment authorities.” Finally, the program supports “demonstration projects” and the “development of policies and regulations that enable public private partnerships in urban sustainability solutions.”



Photo credit: Dean Alexander/UN-Habitat

Jochen Renger,
Representative,
Deutsche
Gesellschaft für
Internationale
Zusammenarbeit
(GIZ)

GIZ’s representative highlighted several “successful initiatives,” including “the C40 Cities Finance Facility, the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the City Climate Finance Gap Fund.” The representative particularly emphasized the “unique” aspect of the “close combination and interconnection of financing instruments, financing mechanisms, and capacity development,” noting that “finance alone won’t make it.” There is a need to build upon “good experiences and lessons learned” to effectively address urban climate challenges.

John Safrance,
CEO/Founding
Partner of EMIF
Group

The EMIF Group’s representative discussed the partnership “with UN-Habitat through the Cities Investment Facility to catalyze more bankable infrastructure projects for sustainable development.” Summarizing the key messages, the representative noted that “private capital” needs to be clearly defined, while the role of “MDBs, and the development banks” is well established. However, there is a tendency to “overuse the term crowding in private capital” without fully understanding the scale and type of capital involved. It is further highlighted that bringing a “project from the end of technical assistance through to a bankable [stage]” could cost “\$2 to \$3 million minimum,” a gap that is both “expensive and [requires] high expertise.” These considerations should be focused on “coming into COP next year.”

Lasitha Perera,
Co-Founder,
Development
Guarantee Group

The Development Guarantee Group representative described the platform as a private sector initiative partnering “with the public sector to develop new guarantee solutions which mobilize private sector finance” for achieving the SDGs. For cities “there are significant challenges, particularly around their creditworthiness,” resulting in being considered as “not investment grade” in the eyes of investors. It is emphasized that “guarantees can help... solve the problem,” particularly when cities “rely on sovereign guarantees.” This may result in “a challenge for cities”, as the sovereign guarantees take “them into the realm of political agendas and priorities, which the central government may not be able to support.” The Development Guarantee Group is collaborating with entities like the “Green Climate Fund, the governments of the United Kingdom, Norway, the United States, and Nigeria to develop the Green Guarantee Company,” aiming to attract global investment into urban climate projects. Additionally, they are “advising the global commission for urban finance on the development of a Green Cities Guarantee Fund for Latin America”, focusing on “building domestic municipal markets.”

Closing Remarks

Marjorie Kaufman,
Secretary of State
for Energy and
Environment, State
of Rio Grande do Sul,
Federative Republic
of Brazil
*Translated
from Portuguese*

State Secretary Marjorie Kaufman of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, speaking on behalf of the state as well as ICLEI and the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, highlighted the urgent challenges faced by local and subnational governments in the context of accelerating climate impacts. She described how, in May 2025, the state “experienced its worst-ever climate disaster, with 95 per cent of its municipalities affected.” In response, she explained, the government launched the Plano Rio Grande, which she called “a comprehensive plan that serves as a strong example of coordination across all government departments,” aiming to integrate “both structural projects and those essential to building resilience in the state and its municipalities.” Stressing the broader needs of subnational actors, she stated, “what local and subnational governments need most is not only financial support, but also strong technical assistance.” She concluded with a call to the international community: “We need concrete support to implement the goals of the Paris Agreement and to effectively deliver on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that countries have pledged.”

Juan Carlos Munoz,
Representative,
Republic of Chile

Chile closed the roundtable discussion by emphasizing “the most pressing issues surrounding urban climate finance,” considering that cities “are at the forefront of the climate crisis... but also uniquely positioned to lead the way in driving solutions.” Several key points are highlighted from the discussions: First, that “partnerships are the foundation of success” and “the scale of the urban climate challenge demands collaboration that transcends sectors, level of government and borders.” Second, the “transformative role of multilateral development banks and development finance institutions” was reaffirmed, emphasizing the need in financing models that suit cities’ capacities. Third, the discussion on how “climate finance facilities and blended finance approaches can unlock untapped potential,” with the Green Climate Fund and others playing critical roles. Finally, it was stressed that “the private sector remains underutilized” and that “embedding urban green projects into NDCs will not only help secure financing,” but also ensure alignment with the Paris Agreement.



Annex 1. Press conference on urbanization and climate change

Baku, Azerbaijan – November 21, 2024 – At the COP29 Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, global leaders including ministers, city officials, parliamentarians, multilateral development banks, and UN agencies gathered to advance urban-focused climate solutions. This pivotal event underlined the importance of aligning national and local efforts to create resilient, sustainable cities capable of addressing the climate crisis.

Held under the theme “Building Resilient and Healthy Cities for a Sustainable Future,” the Ministerial Meeting highlighted several critical commitments and strategic actions that will shape the pathway to COP30 and beyond:

- Launch of the Multisectoral Action Pathways (MAP) for Resilient and Healthy Cities Declaration:** The newly launched MAP Declaration serves as a strategic guide to enhance resilience and health in urban areas. This framework will inform ongoing climate negotiations and shape climate policy discussions through COP30, underscoring the role of cities in addressing climate vulnerabilities and building a sustainable future.
- Signing of the Baku Continuity Coalition on Urban and Multilevel Climate Action:** A formal signing ceremony marked the launch of the Baku Continuity Coalition, an initiative bridging the presidencies of COP27, COP28, COP29, and COP30 in partnership with UN-Habitat. This coalition is dedicated to:
 - Ensuring continuity in urban climate agendas across COP summits
 - Encouraging future COP hosts to prioritize urban resilience and climate adaptation on their agendas.
- Strengthening global event synergies:** Recognizing the momentum around urban climate action, leaders emphasized the importance of aligning future climate and urbanization events. Notably, Baku will host both the 2026 World Urban Forum (WUF13) and World Environment Day, providing critical platforms for urban-focused climate dialogue.
- Recognition of ongoing partnerships and initiatives:** The collaboration between the Slovak Ministry of Environment and UN-Habitat on the SURGE Initiative—formalized through a Letter of Intent signed earlier this month at the World Urban Forum (WUF12)—was highlighted as a key example of how national governments are advancing urban resilience through multilevel climate action

The outcomes and recommendations of the COP29 Ministerial Meeting will be instrumental in shaping global climate strategies and urban policies. By bringing urban issues to the forefront, participants reaffirmed the essential role of cities in achieving global climate targets and building resilient communities.

Speakers at the press conference included: Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat; Anar Guliyev, Chairman of the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA); Tomáš Taraba, Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic; Nigar Arpadarai, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP29 and Member of Parliament, Republic of Azerbaijan; Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku and ICLEI First Vice President; and Gianpiero Nacci, Director, Sustainable Business and Infrastructure, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Together, these leaders highlighted the urgent need for collaborative, cross-sector approaches to urban climate action.

“The Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change comes at a critical moment as countries are revising their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This meeting represents a key opportunity for dialogue that can help highlight the importance of aligning national strategies with local realities including the housing crisis, energy poverty, the loss of nature and biodiversity in cities and the challenge of financing development priorities. Ultimately, we believe this meeting will help maximize our collective impact in addressing climate challenges,” said **Anacláudia Rossbach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat.**

Commenting on the launch of the COP29 MAP Declaration, **COP29 President and Azerbaijan’s Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev** said, “Amid the urgent need to transform our cities into resilient, sustainable spaces, the COP29 Multisectoral Actions Pathway (MAP) Declaration serves as a catalyst for fostering cross-sector collaboration. By uniting experts from transport, infrastructure, urban planning, and environmental conservation, we can drive meaningful change that protects not only urban environments but enhances quality of life for all.”

“Today, I am proud to announce that, together with my colleagues from around the world, we launched the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) for Resilient and Healthy Cities at the COP29 Urbanization and Climate Day Ministerial Meeting,” said **Anar Guliyev, Chairman of the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (SCUPA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan**, at the press conference on 20 November. “This groundbreaking document is the first of its kind, integrating the concept of healthy cities into the climate agenda and fostering stronger synergies between urban planning and climate action for sustainable development. Additionally, I am excited to unveil the creation of the Baku Continuity Coalition, a new initiative designed to build connections and synergies between COPs and the World Urban Forum (WUF). The signing of this declaration with Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Brazil, and UN-Habitat sends a powerful message, underscoring our shared commitment to shaping the future of cities through innovation, collaboration, and a strong focus on climate action. As we look forward to WUF13 in Baku, we remain dedicated to taking transformative steps toward building sustainable urban futures, guided by our collective efforts within these established platforms.”

“The Slovak Republic is proud to commit €5 million within the next five-year period to the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative,” said **Tomáš Taraba, Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic.** “Following the Ministerial Meeting(s) on Urbanization and Climate Change, which united representatives from over 50 countries, this commitment reaffirms our belief in the power of partnerships to drive effective climate action. Through SURGe, we aim to strengthen the connections between local, national, and global efforts, empowering communities to create resilient and sustainable urban futures.”

“Sustainable urban development can bridge the gap between climate goals and concrete action if cities are fully integrated into climate planning, finance and implementation, and capacitated to implement them effectively on the ground. We know, through the continued success of the CHAMP

initiative, that nations are keen to strengthen collaboration across all levels of government to deliver effective climate action. Here at COP29, cities and other subnationals and nations together have an opportunity to create impactful outcomes through strong multilateral cooperation on urbanisation at the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change,” said **Minna Arve, First Vice President of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and Mayor of Turku, Finland.**

“Wednesday 20 November was an important day to highlight the role of cities in combating climate change and, with that, the immense need to support them—through the estimate of US\$800 billion in annual public investment by 2030 from national governments and development finance institutions,” said **Gianpiero Nacci, Director, Sustainable Business and Infrastructure, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).** “On behalf of the MDB Cities Group, I would first like to acknowledge the call for action and emphasize that MDBs are committed to continue scaling up urban climate finance and technical assistance to support city climate efforts and to help achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement, where local climate action is critical.”

Annex 2. Baku COP Presidencies Continuity Coalition

LETTER OF INTENT
BETWEEN
THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM FOUR HOST COUNTRIES OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES:
THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT (COP27), THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (COP28), THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN (COP29), THE FEDERATIVE
REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL (COP30)
AND
THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
We, the Ministers responsible for housing and urban development from four (4) Conference of the Parties (COP) host countries: the Arab Republic of Egypt, host of COP27; the United Arab Emirates, host of COP28; the Republic of Azerbaijan, host of COP29; and the Federative Republic of Brazil, host of COP30; and
The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), originally established as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) by resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations 32/162 of 19 December 1977, and thereafter transformed into a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly of the United Nations by its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, with Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, represented by Anaclaudia Rossbach, the Executive Director;
The COP host countries and UN-Habitat are hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Parties" and individually as the "Party";
Present at the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and

Considering that UN-Habitat and the COP Presidencies have had several discussions on possible collaboration;

Recognizing the significance of cities in climate action as reflected in the Paris Agreement, the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact, the COP27 Sharm El-Sheikh Implementation Plan, the COP28 UAE Consensus and in the Global Stocktake, and acknowledging the need for multisectoral, multilevel and cooperative climate action beyond national level engagement;

Further recognizing the significance of the three Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and Climate Change held during previous UNFCCC COPs;

Welcoming the ongoing processes and initiatives on urban climate action by UNFCCC COP Presidencies, including the COP27 Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) Initiative, the COP28 Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) Pledge, and the COP29 Declaration on Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities;

Noting that the COP30 Presidency intends to advance a strong multilevel and urban agenda as part of its action agenda;

Hereby express the following:

- Intend** to collaborate on urbanization and multilevel and multisectoral climate action.
- Intend** to develop an agreement to further outline the activities of the **Baku Continuity Coalition for Urban Multisectoral and Multilevel Climate Action** (hereinafter referred to as the “**Coalition**”), including, inter alia, the following areas of work:

- Encouraging past, present, and future COP Presidencies to collaborate to ensure continuity between COPs on urban, multilevel, and multisectoral issues.
- Encouraging future COP Presidencies to prioritize multilevel, multisectoral, and urban climate action in their action agendas, and to ensure the continuation of the Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and Climate Change in collaboration with the Coalition.
- Encouraging multistakeholder meetings during COPs and, in the interim period, fostering multisectoral, multilevel, and multis-takeholder cooperation towards developing climate action plans to help ensure coherence between global, national, and local efforts.
- Facilitating dialogue among existing and future multilevel, multisectoral, and urban climate action initiatives, reviewing progress from COP to COP on pledges and financing commitments made by the COP host countries and non-party stakeholders, while promoting accountability.
- Encouraging synergies between UNFCCC COPs and the World Urban Forum (WUF), by showcasing climate action results.

- Encourage** future COP Presidencies to prioritize urban and multilevel climate action in their action agendas and invite them to join the Coalition.

- Intend** to establish a coordination mechanism, outlined in a separate arrangement, comprised of a representative from each COP Presidency and UN-Habitat, chaired by the COP29 Presidency (Azerbaijan) as inaugural chair, and convened by UN-Habitat to oversee the Coalition's activities, with

regular meetings to be convened.

5. **Acknowledge** that signing this Letter of Intent is not binding and does not imply or create any legal or financial obligations on the Parties, nor does it constitute a definite commitment by the Parties to contract or promise to enter into a contract.

Subject to the respective rules, policies, and procedures of the Parties regarding information disclosure, this Letter of Intent may become publicly available. For clarity, the Parties will not use the names, marks, logos, or other intellectual property of the other Parties without prior written approval.

Nothing in this Letter of Intent constitutes a waiver, implied or express, of the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, including UN-Habitat.

We, the COP host countries and UN-Habitat, are confident that the intended collaboration will be fruitful and of mutual benefit for achieving our common goals of mobilizing all actors around the multilevel and multisectoral urban climate agenda ahead of COP29 in Baku and leading up to COP30 in Belém and beyond.

For the Arab Republic of Egypt (COP27)
Signed by: Mr. Wael Aboulmagd

For the United Arab Emirates (COP28)
Signed by: Ms. Nawal Al-Hosany

For the Republic of Azerbaijan (COP29)
Signed by: Mr. Anar Guliyev

For the Federative Republic of Brazil (COP30)
Signed by: Mr. Antonio Da Costa e Silva

For UN-Habitat
Signed by: Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach

Annex 3. COP29 declaration on Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to resilient and healthy cities

We, national governments, local administrations and municipal authorities, members of parliaments and their associations, and other stakeholders, including international organisations, financial institutions, philanthropies, private sector entities, academia, and civil society organisations;

Recalling the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Pact for the Future, and subsequent decisions made at UN Climate Change Conferences on multilevel engagement, including the establishment of the High-Level Champion role at COP21 and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action at COP22;

Recognising that more than half of the global population lives in cities and that urbanisation is rapidly increasing due to permanent and temporary human migration, economic growth, and demographic shifts; that cities are the centre of mobility of people, goods, trade, and ideas; that urban areas are responsible for 80% of global GDP and 70% of greenhouse gas emissions; yet are also impacted by climate change, with the most vulnerable being hit the hardest;

Acknowledging that local governments are taking ambitious climate action to deliver just and equitable transitions, supported by city networks, other non-party stakeholders, and the work of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency in the UNFCCC, while noting with concern that many local governments, municipal and subnational authorities, particularly in developing countries, lack access to sufficient financial resources, technology, and human, institutional, and technical capacities, as well as access to data-based evidence to accelerate urban climate action;

Recognising that climate change and other global challenges require collaboration across levels of government, sectors, and disciplines toward common solutions at the local, regional, and global levels, with a view to achieving the objectives of the UNFCCC and the goals of the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Pact for the Future;

Reaffirming the significance of fostering meaningful dialogue, cooperation, knowledge sharing, and coordination among different stakeholders, including state and non-state actors, to promote positive climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes that support sustainable urban development through interventions in various dimensions;

Highlighting the necessity of inclusive urban planning and incorporating approaches responsive to race, age, gender, and disability in urban climate strategies to address the impacts of climate change equitably and effectively across all communities and regions;

Welcoming the ongoing processes and initiatives by COP Presidencies, the UN system, multilateral development banks, philanthropic organisations, bilateral donors and their implementing agencies to create sustainable, climate-resilient and healthy cities, including the COP27 Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) Initiative and the COP28 Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action;

We hereby intend to, where applicable and appropriate within our respective mandates and based on national contexts:

- **On nature and health**, promote health equity and nature-positive urban development, including by enhancing urban afforestation, reforestation, sustainable infrastructure and spaces, sustainable patterns of consumption and production, nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches to mitigate urban heat and improve air quality;
- **On disaster resilience and early warning**, strengthen urban climate resilience by integrating disaster risk reduction and adaptation actions into infrastructure development, and by enhancing preparedness, early warning, and anticipatory action systems;

- **On technologies**, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, enhance renewable and clean energy, and improve energy and water efficiency in cities through environmentally sound and clean technologies, digital solutions, and adoption of circular economy approaches;
- **On jobs**, integrate sustainability-related education and green jobs considerations into urban planning;
- **On buildings and construction**, decrease greenhouse gas emissions from existing and new buildings, where applicable, by promoting energy-efficient materials, technologies, processes, certifications, smart systems, and access to finance for low-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and the construction sector;
- **On transport**, in close coordination with existing initiatives and programmes, develop and implement a vision for low- and zero-emission integrated and connected transport systems by promoting increased use of public transport and safe access to active mobility options, and reducing the sector's carbon footprint through low- and zero-emission solutions, such as renewable and low-emissions fuels and the electrification of vehicles, including through digital solutions;
- **On urban agriculture**, where appropriate, promote integrated land use planning, sustainable urban agriculture, and resilient food systems to increase climate action.

Through:

- **Planning**: future-oriented, sustainable, inclusive, nature-positive, and climate-resilient land use and urban planning;
- **Policies**: facilitation of participation by local and, where appropriate, subnational authorities in the development of multisectoral, multilevel, and multistakeholder urban climate action plans, aligned with short- and long-term national development strategies and national climate policy documents;
- **Science**: acceleration of urban climate action with an inter- and transdisciplinary approach;
- **Finance**: mobilisation of climate finance for both mitigation and adaptation in urban areas, across all channels, including through public, private, and public-private partnerships;
- **Collaboration**: encouraging collaboration with the private sector, academia, civil society (including youth organisations), UN specialised agencies, international organisations, MDBs, MCFs, philanthropic organisations, bilateral donors, and their implementing agencies.

We encourage, where applicable and appropriate:

- **Stronger partnerships** among UN agencies, intergovernmental organisations, MDBs, MCFs, philanthropic organisations, bilateral donors and their implementing agencies to strengthen ambition and climate finance in urban areas, and to improve access to finance for city, subnational, national, and local governments;
- **Building linkages** between World Urban Forums, UN Climate Change Conferences, World Environment Days, and other relevant global and regional platforms for dialogue, actions, and initiatives, including through encouraging World Urban Forum host governments to appoint a **Special Envoy for Urban Climate Action**;
- **Past, current, and future COP Presidencies** to establish the **Baku Continuity Coalition on Urban Climate Action** with the facilitation of UN-Habitat and in close collaboration with LGMA, to ensure continuity, foresight, and synergies between past and future climate and urban initiatives and issues, including through COP29 MAP, and to encourage the inclusion of sustainable urbanisation and urban climate action in future UN Climate Change Conferences.

National governments and other stakeholders can endorse this Declaration through:
Any official written communications (letter, note verbale, etc.) to the COP29 Presidency or email to MAP@cop29.az

Annex 4. Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative

To achieve our global climate goals, we must take action where it matters most, in the places where people live. Adequate, climate-resilient housing is the foundation of safety, wellbeing, and resilience, yet over 2.8 billion people live in inadequate housing, including 1.1 billion in informal settlements, many in flood-prone or heat-exposed areas with poor access to basic services.

The Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative helps countries translate national climate commitments into practical, cross-sectoral action in cities, from housing and basic services to mobility, energy, water, waste, and biodiversity. By strengthening the systems and sectors that shape daily urban life, SURGe builds resilience, reduces vulnerability, and delivers benefits for the people and places most at risk of climate impacts.

By supporting policy reform, project development, and access to finance, SURGe connects national ambition with local climate action - improving lives, reducing vulnerability, and advancing both climate and development goals. The work is organized around six thematic entry points: buildings and housing, urban energy, mobility, waste and consumption, water, and biodiversity - targeting the areas with the highest potential for transformative urban climate action.

Launched at COP27, SURGe is led by *UN-Habitat*, facilitated by *ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability*, and supported by dedicated champion countries. Initial champion support, including a multi-year €5 million commitment from the Slovak Republic, is enabling SURGe's full operationalization: establishing a global Secretariat, convening Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and Climate Change at UNFCCC COPs, and creating regional hubs to coordinate action and share knowledge. This includes the first regional hub in Europe, hosted in Slovakia, which will support multilevel climate action, facilitate partnerships, and strengthen technical cooperation across the region.

**A better quality of life for
all in an urbanizing world**



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