PRESS RELEASE

COP31 World Leaders dialogue puts housing at the centre of climate implementation

Antalya, Türkiye, 12 November 2026 - World leaders meeting at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) today agreed that one of the most effective ways to protect people from climate change is through better housing, stronger local infrastructure and more resilient cities, with global climate commitments only succeeding if they translate into real improvements in people's daily lives.

"A national climate plan only becomes real when it reaches people's homes and neighbourhoods – that means unified efforts across all levels of government and investing in housing that protects families from floods and extreme heat and ensuring local services continue to function during climate-related disasters," said the Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Anacláudia Rossbach.

"From heads of state to mayors, there was unanimous agreement at today's high-level discussions: climate commitments will only succeed if they translate into real improvements in people's daily lives," she added. "UN-Habitat is working with governments to turn climate commitments into action, with particular attention to the many people living in slums and informal settlements worldwide."

The COP31 Presidency of Türkiye and UN-Habitat convened the 'High-Level Dialogue on Urban Resilience, Adaptation and Climate Action' to consider how national climate and adaptation plans can lead to stronger investment and delivery in cities and communities.

More than 1,000 people attended the High-Level Dialogue in the southern Turkish city of Antalya, including heads of state and government, mayors and climate finance leaders.

Currently, nearly 3.4 billion people lack access to adequate housing, more than 1.1 billion live in slums and informal settlements, and over 300 million are homeless. Overall, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to further increase by 2050.

Paris Agreement progress

The gathering's outcome document - the Chair's Summary – recognized that the attendees emphasized implementation of the Paris Agreement depends on action across all levels of government, and identified adequate housing, informal settlement upgrading, municipal infrastructure and access to essential services as priorities for building resilience and improving people's lives.

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, adopted at COP21 in 2015. Its overarching goal is to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

In today's discussions in Antalya, participants stressed that the next challenge is turning those commitments into projects and investments that improve people's lives.

Greater recognition

The High-Level Dialogue took place as cities gain greater recognition in national climate policy. UN-Habitat's analysis of 142 national climate plans found that 80 per cent contain well-developed urban measures compared to 50 per cent in the last round of national climate plans.

The Chair's Summary emphasized that this progress must now be matched by institutional capacity, access to finance and stronger coordination between national and local governments.

Participants highlighted Türkiye's Sustainable Urban Resilience Financing Facility, developed with UN-Habitat and the World Bank, as an example of how countries can help cities access the financing and technical support needed to strengthen resilience and prepare climate projects.

The attendees also reaffirmed support for international cooperation and partnerships that help national and local governments work together on climate action and adaptation. They cited initiatives such as the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation, the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships for Climate Action and the Baku Continuity Coalition as avenues for continued cooperation.

Implementation

Looking to the future, the High-Level Dialogue's participants also agreed that attention now needs to turn to implementation.

A forthcoming report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – the United Nations body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change – is expected to provide new scientific evidence to guide decision-making.

The IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities is the entity's first-ever comprehensive scientific assessment dedicated specifically to urban areas, and is due for release in March 2027.

In addition, COP32, which will take place in Ethiopia, will offer an opportunity to assess progress in financing, coordination and the delivery of projects that protect vulnerable urban communities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT

Access the broadcast on the UNFCCC website.

More information about the event on the UNFCCC website.

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