



**CITIES & REGIONS  
IN THE UNFCCC PROCESS**



MEDIA RELEASE

31 OCTOBER 2021

## **COP26: Cities, regions & other subnationals urge nations to embrace multilevel collaboration as the new normal in the upcoming decade for ambitious climate action**

*Starting from COP26 in Glasgow, cities and regions of the world invite all nations to deliver multilevel collaboration action, as our collective responsibility and beacon of hope in order to avoid climate disasters rapidly driving our world and communities to a point-of-no-return.*

Glasgow, Scotland (31 October 2021) - On 31 October, the world celebrated “World Cities Day” and the COP26 in Glasgow opened its doors to the world’s leaders. At a press conference ([watch the recording](#)) in the Blue Zone of COP26, local, regional and government representatives called for a new phase where multilevel collaborative action becomes the new normal.

The press conference, convened by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) as the focal point for the constituency that connects local and regional governments to UN processes, known as the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA), highlighted the efforts of cities and regions to deliver on ambitious climate action, especially in working across all levels of government.

Of the second round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), only 80 countries have so far been found to be more ambitious than the first round. They all have something in common: Countries with more ambitious climate goals seized the opportunity of engaging all levels of governments.

The US is one such nation. “We are very excited to see the Biden Administration step up and say that not only are they in, but they are willing to work in a multilevel fashion for all of us to succeed in this. And I think that this really excites us, that we can make progress, that from the national level, to the state level, to the county level to the local level, we're all in this. We all see the opportunity. We need to share our best practices, we need to declare a climate emergency at all levels,” said **Frank Cownie, Mayor, Des Moines, US and ICLEI President.**

The press conference included the announcement of [LGMA Glasgow Time4MultilevelAction Roadmap: Implementing multilevel action in the age of climate emergency](#), and the [two-week agenda of the Multilevel Action Pavilion at COP26 Blue Zone](#), hosted by the Scottish Government and convened by ICLEI.

The speakers also emphasized that cities need to approach climate action in an inclusive way. In Glasgow, **Susan Aitken, Council Leader, Glasgow City Council, Scotland, UK**, emphasized that her government is learning from history to transition her city in a just and equitable way.

“True leadership is bringing our citizens along with us on every step of the journey, and helping them to understand why bold actions, which are sometimes taking place at a pace and a scale that we've never really done before, why it's so relevant to their everyday lives. And that is absolutely true of leadership, whether it's at a city level here in Glasgow, whether it's Scottish, or at the supranational level across the United Kingdom. It's about identifying solutions, but also ensuring that we've got partnerships and collaborations in place to deliver those solutions. None of us are going to be able to do this on our own.” said Ms. Aitken.

Subnational leaders also see a role in stepping when their national governments are reluctant to. **Joao Doria, Governor, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil**, spoke about how Brazil's subnational governments are acting on and holding true to their nation's commitments, even as their leaders are absent at COP26.

“We have come to the COP26 to honour the commitments made by Brazil in the Paris Agreement in 2015. I am Sao Paulo's former Mayor, and am well aware of the challenges of sustainable development in cities adjusting economic growth, with job creation, income distribution, and access for the most vulnerable to urban public goods and services. Now, as a governor of the state of San Paolo, I participate in the movement of subnational governments. We are 10 governors right now here in the COP26, and San Paolo reaffirms its leadership position in the face of global warming challenges and announces an ambitious agenda to come back to climate change with our common and shared responsibilities,” said Mr. Doria.

The national government of Japan emphasized that working regionally can accelerate the path towards climate neutrality. “We announced a commitment of carbon neutrality by 2050. But 90% of the Japanese local governments have already committed to become a zero carbon city by 2050 - on their own. Now, we cannot wait for regional carbon neutrality until 2050. Rather, we have to create a carbon neutrality region much faster and replicate them, in a so-called decarbonization domino effect,” said **Ryuzo Sugimoto, Director, International Cooperation and Sustainable Infrastructure office, Global Environmental Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan**.

The press conference also recognized that the first day of COP26 fell on World Cities Day, which is an international day organized by UN-Habitat.

“UN-Habitat supports member states in enhancing the urban dimension of the NDCs. We also work directly with cities to build capacities for a zero carbon resilient and socially inclusive, urban future. We support the goal of multilevel governance for climate action, in particular the role that cities, towns and local governments play. World Cities Day may fall on the start of COP26 more by coincidence than by design, but we hope that this is a good omen for elevating sustainable urbanisation as a pillar for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement,” said **Bernard Barth, Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat**.

Other leaders weighed in on the criticality of local and regional governments in the UNFCCC processes and global climate goals.

“The world is simply off track to avert the climate emergency. Subnational governments' climate commitments must be taken on board in the Nationally Determined Contributions, and they must be

given a formal seat in the UNFCCC negotiations. I call on the UN, the EU and all national governments to ensure the regional and local dimension is included in the COP26 conclusions. We can no longer afford to ignore the fundamental role of every region, city and village in delivering climate action, or we will continue to fail our young people and our planet," said **Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Governor of Central Macedonia Region, Greece and Greek Ambassador of the Covenant of Mayors.**

"Over one thousand cities have committed to more ambitious climate actions through the Race to Zero, but they all need collaboration with national and global partners to fully deliver on these commitments," said **Nigel Topping, High Level Champion for Climate Action, COP26, UNFCCC.** "At the same time, the most ambitious national governments know that they cannot deliver on the Paris agreement without multilevel partnership. We applaud all those governments - national and subnational - that are already showing that the way forward through this crisis is through meaningful and impactful collaboration."

## **THE MULTILEVEL ACTION PAVILION at COP26**

The Multilevel Action Pavilion at COP26 is the home for subnationals, including cities, towns and regions, at COP26 in the Blue Zone. This year, the Pavilion is both in-person and – for the first time ever – also an online pavilion to ensure everyone can attend regardless of travel restrictions, funding and summit accreditation requirements. Members attending virtually will have direct access to all of the same events right here.

For more information about The Multilevel Action Pavilion at COP26, please visit <https://www.cities-and-regions.org/multilevel-action-pavilion/>. The full Pavilion event program is available for download [here](#).

The Multilevel Action Pavilion is supported by major contributions from COP26, The Local Governments and Municipal Authorities, The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. The Pavilion is convened by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and hosted by the Scottish Government and co-hosted by the Welsh Government, Glasgow City Council, Urban LEDS and Daring Cities. To see more contributing partners and session partners, please visit <https://www.cities-and-regions.org/multilevel-action-pavilion/>

Video recordings of the virtual forum are available. Registration as part of the online Pavilion is required to view recordings: <https://www.cities-and-regions.org/multilevel-action-pavilion/>. Sessions from the Pavilion will be available after each session.

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

**About the LGMA**

At the Earth Summit in 1992, nine stakeholder groups, including local authorities, were designated as essential partners in society for the implementation of the global sustainability agenda. The Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency has represented networks of local and regional governments at the processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since the first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995. ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability acts as the LGMA Focal Point. This year’s COP features 400+ representatives from the LGMA, who are participating in 200+ events.

### **About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability**

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (known as "ICLEI") is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability. For more information about ICLEI, please visit: <https://iclei.org/>.

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