

Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy – April submission to the Talanoa process

1. Introduction

Cities and local governments are essential to turn climate action pledges into concrete action, supporting the implementation and accelerating the ambition of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to ensure the goals of the Paris Agreement are met.

Through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy¹ (GCoM) cities and local governments are voluntarily committing to tackle climate change, mirroring the commitments their national governments have set through the NDC process. This global initiative, the largest of its kind, comprises thousands of cities and towns across 6 continents and more than 120 countries, representing almost 10% of the world's population.

With the political steer of UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Action Michael R. Bloomberg and European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič, former UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christian Figueres and ten global mayors, cities that are part of GCoM are also supported by founding partners, including most of the world's major city and climate networks: C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, CEMR, Climate Alliance, Energy Cities, Eurocities, European Committee of the Regions, FEDARENE, ICLEI, UCLG and UN-Habitat, as well as the European Commission and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

A commitment to the Global Covenant of Mayors signifies a commitment – in alliance with partners - to accelerate ambitious, measurable climate and energy initiatives that lead to an inclusive, just, low-emission and climate resilient future, helping to meet and exceed the Paris agreement objectives. It is a commitment to take bold local action and to work side-by-side with peers around the world to share innovative solutions that enable local governments to do more, faster. GCoM committed cities and local governments connect and exchange knowledge and ideas, supported by global and regional city networks and other relevant stakeholders. By being part of this community, they strengthen their ability to implement ambitious climate actions.

2. Where are we?

Collectively, nations are not on track to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement to keep the global temperature increase well below 2 °C. Actions by local and regional actors are of the utmost importance to raise the ambition of existing NDCs. The importance of local and regional actors in supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement has been recognised at all levels, including by Parties of the Agreement.

Thousands of GCoM committed cities across the world have already made – and are working toward – voluntary commitments to take significant action on climate change that is in line with, or even go beyond their respective national

¹ GCoM formally brings together the Covenant of Mayors and the Compact of Mayors, the world's two primary initiatives of cities and local governments, to advance their transition to a low emission and climate resilient economy.

government's targets. By achieving commitments made to date, Global Covenant cities and local governments have already made commitments that, if fully realised, could collectively reduce 1.3 billion tons of CO₂e emissions per year from business-as-usual by 2030, from a total urban potential of 3.0 billion tons of CO₂e. This equals the emissions of 276 million cars taken off the road, almost a quarter of the estimated number of all cars worldwide. By 2050, by implementing their existing commitments, these cities could cumulatively reduce more than 46 Gt CO₂e, which is more than 30% of the 147 gigatons CO₂e of cumulative urban mitigation potential. Mobilising additional cities to join the alliance could significantly increase the overall global reduction of CO₂e.

Throughout the world, cities have embarked on an ambitious course. **African** cities could reduce their emissions by 44% compared to the business-as-usual by 2030, while **Southeast Asian** cities could collectively achieve an average emission reduction of 39%. **North American** cities, based on higher emission levels, could achieve approximately a 28% reduction from business-as-usual

And significant progress has already been made. As of 2017, cities and municipalities in the **European Union** (EU) have achieved a reduction in greenhouse gas emission of 23% compared to the baseline and reduced the average energy consumption per capita by 22% – significantly contributing to achieving the EU's 2020 climate target.

Individual cities committed to the Global Covenant are already undertaking highly ambitious climate action that include targets to be completely fossil-fuel free, carbon-neutral, or powered by 100% renewable energy. For instance, **Helsinki**, Finland, recently unveiled the Carbon Neutral Helsinki 2035 plan, aiming to reach carbon neutrality by 2035, accelerating the goal by 15 years.

In 2007, the City of **Paris** introduced its Climate Action Plan in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emission by 75%, relative to 2004, by 2050. As an intermediary step, by 2020, Paris' target is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 25%, its energy consumption by 25% and aims to have 25% of Paris' energy consumption to come from renewable energy sources. One of the biggest and most successful initiatives to help reach these goals is the bike sharing service, *Vélib*, launched in 2007. With over 260,000 subscribers and an average of nearly 95,000 journeys registered per day, Paris has made a concrete commitment to creating a priority place for bicycles in the city with a view to doubling the number of cyclists by 2020.

The Italian region of **Emilia Romagna** became a European Covenant Coordinator in 2014 as part of its Regional Energy Plan to help develop an integrated regional energy policy involving the municipalities, their associations, the provinces and several agencies. The Covenant's Sustainable Energy Action Plans have been an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and build capacities at local level. This helped strengthening the coherence between local planning and regional policies. Overall, 294 out of 340 municipalities in the region have joined the Covenant of Mayors, representing 94% of the region's citizens

Georgia, a country with 4.5 million inhabitants, is currently developing a national low emission development strategy. At the local level, Global Covenant of Mayor signatory cities are planning to make significant contributions to this

strategy and Georgia's national mitigation efforts. Of the seven current signatories to the Covenant of Mayors in Georgia, four have already submitted and have begun implementing Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP). The SEAPs outline plans to reach GHG emission reductions of at least 20% by 2020.

In Northern Africa, **Chefchaouen**, Morocco, has been working on the Energy Information Centre (CIE), designed to provide the public with free advisory services and outreach around energy-related issues through the organization of events, study visits, educational material and provision of measuring equipment. The goal is to collect better data about the population's energy consumption and give way to more specific actions and policies. CIE's focus is, amongst others, on energy efficiency and the utilization of solar energy. The stimulating aspect of CIE is the particular focus on the inclusion of the local population, community and businesses.

In Asia, the city of **Rajkot**, India, has prepared a GHG inventory and a Low Emission Development Strategy and Action Plan for the year 2020, committed to reduce 25% of GHG emissions by that year. Rajkot is the first Indian city to commit to a climate change mitigation target through the Urban-LEDS project of ICLEI and UN-Habitat., which contributes to India's NDCs.

Seoul, South Korea, is committed to transforming the city into a global climate and environment leader, with significant support from its citizens. Based on the belief that saving energy is the most effective way to tackle climate change, the initiative "One Less Nuclear Power Plant," now in phase 2, was created with the goal of reducing energy by the amount of electricity generated by one nuclear power plant and raising the production of renewable energy such as solar power. In phase 2 it aims to reach an energy independence rate of 20% by 2020 and reduce 10 million tons of greenhouse gases.

In the North American region, an excellent example of a city working towards a highly ambitious energy transition is **Vancouver**, Canada. Mayor Robertson aims to make Vancouver the first major city in North America to transition to 100% renewable energy for all sectors by 2050. The mayor has also overseen the creation and implementation of the award-winning Greenest City 2020 Action Plan that aims to make Vancouver an environmental leader in everything from energy efficiency and waste reduction to clean air and local food.

3. Where do we want to go?

The Global Covenant has a long-term vision of a world where committed mayors and local governments – in alliance with all relevant stakeholders – accelerate ambitious, measurable climate and energy initiatives that lead to an inclusive, just, low-emission and climate resilient future. GCoM committed cities and local governments are demonstrating how action can accelerate change to meet – or even exceed – the ambitious targets set by nation-states in Paris. They are leading by example, increasing ambition amongst other cities and regions. And while this leadership is starting to gain visibility, we need to transition to a future where city action is fully recognized and resourced.

Multilevel collaboration is critical in this process. Climate action by local governments needs to be integrated with the design and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions, national climate change and adaptation plans, and related budgetary allocations, as well as with other national goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Global Covenant Board, as well as the European Covenant Board, will play a critical role in charting the way forward, advocating in the various regions and nations for better multilevel governance of climate and energy issues with national and international authorities. The Global Covenant acts as a “UNFCCC for cities” and the unique cities voice in the multi-stakeholder dialogue that is required to raise the ambition on climate action.

GCoM cities and local governments aim to become **models for climate transparency and accountability**. Cities and local governments committed to GCoM pledge to implement policies and undertake measures to (i) reduce / limit greenhouse gas emissions, (ii) prepare for the impacts of climate change, (iii) increase access to sustainable energy, and (iv) track progress toward these objectives. This is a prerequisite for their efforts to be incorporated into NDC’s and for getting improved access to investors and financial institutions. By using a common, consistent and comparable data reporting framework, the Global Covenant of Mayors is raising the bar for other climate stakeholders to create an open source dialogue and track progress transparently. GCoM reporting further provides an opportunity for high-achieving cities to be recognized among their peers as exemplars and offer a model for raising ambition. With the support of GCoM, leaders will be sharing their progress through consistent, regular reporting and freely available, public platforms.

Finally, as **hubs of innovation**, GCoM cities and municipalities can catalyse transformation, promote renewable energy technology, and accelerate the development and deployment of innovative low-emission solutions, thus creating new markets, fostering economic growth and generating employment opportunities, while also addressing access to energy and energy poverty.

4. How do we get there?

To facilitate and accelerate the transition to low-emission and climate resilient societies, GCoM is acting to address identified barriers and help cities and local governments realise their potential. In February 2018, the GCoM Board addressed those barriers by adopting the following Strategic Goals, building further upon the initiative’s 2017 priorities:

- Scale city climate action
- Improve consistency of city climate action reporting
- Increase access to climate finance
- Amplify communications around city climate action leadership

1. Scale city climate action

Scaling city climate action involves ensuring the initiative is and remains relevant in all regions and countries, while enhancing its global significance. GCoM leaders are advancing climate justice in the Global North and the Global South for large, intermediary and smaller cities and will continue to expand into select regions, in particular in developing countries. The Global Covenant works with local communities through its local chapters around the world to identify

and, where possible, eliminate barriers currently keeping cities from meeting their full climate ambitions by providing global and local support.

GCoM partners and local chapters will continue to support cities in developing targets and local climate plans that, while in line with the overall vision of the initiative, will allow for regional specificities, in light of different objectives, priorities and capacities. At the same time, being part of the global initiative will facilitate supporting and assessing the collective impacts of cities to climate action.

2. Improve consistency of city climate action reporting

City climate leadership supported by robust and comparable data, and made available in a transparent way through a common data reporting framework, will help cities monitor and improve their policies, build momentum and confidence in cities' collective ability to manage climate change and result in other actors using this evidence to promote and invest in sustainable, inclusive and resilient cities.

Making key data available to the public is an important step forward for showcasing and assessing collective progress towards the Paris Agreement goals and increases the potential for financing opportunities at the local, regional and global levels. Moreover, it allows for the generation of new business in clean energy technologies and related investment, consulting and other support services.

For this purpose, the Global Covenant is working on three main areas:

- **A common data reporting framework:** A new global framework of reporting city and local governments' greenhouse gas emission inventories, climate risks and vulnerabilities is being developed. Actions to address both mitigation and adaptation will be formally adopted following a city consultation process in time for COP24.
- **Impact report:** The first annual impact report released at COP23 in Bonn demonstrates the collective potential of GCoM cities and local governments to take significant action. An updated and comprehensive report, including adaptation, will be presented at COP24 and at every COP thereafter.
- **Science-based decision making:** Following a convening of mayors and researchers in Edmonton in March 2018, a bold call-to-action was issued to cities and the scientific community to address critical knowledge, data and innovation gaps that will enable cities to take accelerated and more ambitious climate action.

3. Increase access to climate finance for cities

GCoM founding members have developed a strategic framework to help enhance local authorities' access to finance and vertical integration in national policies and budgets. The framework is based on:

- i. Advocating for **vertical integration:** At the One Planet Summit in December 2017, the Global Covenant launched a call to action under the leadership of the Mayor of Quito that aims to actively engage sub-national governments in the design and implementation of national climate investment plans to deliver upon national goals established as part of the Paris Agreement. Going forward, the aim is to roll it out in other regions, starting with Africa.

- ii. Accelerating access to resources for **technical assistance and implementation** in cities: The Global Covenant issued a call to action, Invest4Cities, to identify the scale of the investment needed (just for currently committed cities) and begin to mobilize resources. Additionally, GCoM has established financing partnerships, including: 1) **Global Urbis**, with the European Commission External Investment Plan, European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). This global initiative will help fill the urban financing gap, which is currently preventing many cities from implementing action programs. 2) The **partnership with the World Bank Group** is focused on resilience with the goal to unlock \$4.5 billion in lending over the next three years and to provide technical and financial assistance to 150 cities across the world undertaking aggressive climate action and resilience-building programs.
- iii. **Commitments to specific climate action that drives investments:** To support innovation and the greening of national and subnational procurement, GCoM launched the **One Planet Charter**. Through this call, cities will commit to specific climate actions that drive investments, green public procurement, and policy decisions in renewable energy, energy efficiency, electric vehicles, and efforts for zero emission buildings and zero waste.

4. Amplify communication around city climate action leadership

In order to push the ambition of parties ahead of the Global Stocktake, it is imperative to scale up global outreach and communication efforts to clearly demonstrate the leadership and contribution of cities and local authorities to the Paris Agreement objectives, incentivise city leaders to be even bolder in their climate action, and drive the involvement of local leaders in climate diplomacy. This includes a need to identify and exchange innovative and successful actions in cities and local authorities, and to leverage key global events to demonstrate and amplify local leadership, for instance through the [‘Bonn-Fiji commitment of Local and Regional Leaders to Deliver the Paris Agreement At All Levels’](#) launched at COP23 in Bonn in November 2017, and the [‘Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues’](#) launched at the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018, where GCoM is recognised as a special partner. Specific urban research-related knowledge gaps will be discussed at the Mission Innovation Summit in Malmö in May, and the ICLEI World Congress in Montreal in June.

The San Francisco Global Climate Action Summit in September will bring together stakeholders from cities, regions, industry and the academic sector to highlight the role of non-state actors. C40 and GCoM, together with the partner network, are leading the challenge area on sustainable communities, where cities and other non-state actors will highlight how they lead the way to healthy, sustainable, equitable and climate-safe communities for all.

At the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires in October green infrastructure finance topics will be on the agenda. The European Green Capital closing event in Nijmegen in October will be an opportunity to highlight the input of European cities into the COP process.

Many of these and additional events will create an enabling environment for **Talanoa Dialogues** that will explore ways to foster **multilevel governance** and the inclusion of actions by cities in national policies and plans, including for

investment. Responding to the call of the COP Presidencies, local and regional governments will have a direct dialogue with national governments, including ministries of climate/environment as well as urbanization, with a specific focus on their role to implement and raise the ambition of NDCs through multilevel action. The first batch of 20+ sessions were already communicated to the UN Climate Change in March 2018, which include diverse events such as ambitious city promises in Indonesia to vertical integration and financing in Quito. Based on the dialogues until October, GCoM will submit additional input to the Talanoa high level dialogue that will take place at COP24 in December. We urge that sufficient space be provided for non-Party stakeholders to engage. We also call on the outputs of the Talanoa process to give clear recognition to the role and contribution of non-Party stakeholders.

A non-exhaustive list of events is included here below. The full and updated list is available at www.citiesandregions.org/talanoa.

Embedding cities' and local governments' actions in NDCs and national plans will be a priority for GCoM. This reflects the fact that, in order to be effective, local action must be recognised as contributing to national priorities and receive support of the national authorities – both in terms of an enabling legislative framework and financial resources.

	Country	City	Event/project	Host	Month
1	Global / Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	9th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) and Launch at the High Level Roundtable	ICLEI, GCoM, UN-Habitat, WUF9 Secretariat	9 February
2	Regional/Europe	Brussels	Covenant of Mayors Ceremony	EU Committee of the Regions	22 February
3	Colombia	Medellin	UrbanLED5-II Technical Expert Meetings	ICLEI and UN-Habitat	26-28 February
4	Global/Canada	Edmonton	Change for Climate - Global Mayors Summit	GCoM, FCM, City of Edmonton	3-4 March
5	Indonesia	Jakarta	Ambitious City Promises Project - Expert Meetings	ICLEI and SMG	5 March
6	Global/Canada	Edmonton	CitiesIPCC Conference Video message of COP23 High Level Champion Media event for Canadian Dialogues	Edmonton and CitiesIPCC Partners	7 March
7	Philippines	Manila	Ambitious City Promises Project - Expert Meetings	ICLEI and SMG	7 March
8	Viet Nam	Hanoi	Ambitious City Promises Project - Expert Meetings	ICLEI and SMG	9 March
9	Regional/ Europe	Brussels	European Dialogue for non state climate action	EESC, Climate Chance and CoR	23 April
10	Global/ Germany	Bonn	Resilient Cities Congress	ICLEI and City of Bonn	25-28 April
11	Ecuador	Quito	NDC Vertical Integration Call for Action	GCoM, ICLEI, C40	3-4 May
12	Global/ Austria	Vienna	Austrian World Summit	R20	15 May
13	Japan	Tokyo	Tokyo Forum for Clean City and Clear Sky	Tokyo Metropolitan Government	21-23 May
14	Global/ Sweden	Malmö	Clean Energy Ministerial	City of Malmö, GCoM, ICLEI	23-25 May
15	Global/ France	Strasbourg	UCLG Executive Bureau	UCLG, Mairie de Strasbourg, Climate Chance	23-24 May
16	Norway	Drammen	Dialogue Minister of Climate and Environment and city/regional governments	Ministry of Climate and Environment and Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)	11 June
17	Canada	Montreal	ICLEI World Congress Media event for Canadian Dialogues	ICLEI, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and City of Montreal	19-22 June
18	Regional/Africa/ Cote d'Ivoire	Abidjan	Climate Chance - Africa 2018	Climate Chance Association and ARDCI	28-29 June
19	Global/ Regional/ Morocco	Chefchaouen	1st World Forum of Intermediary Cities	UCLG	5-7 July
20	Regional / Republic of Korea	Seoul	North East Asia Air Quality Forum	ICLEI and Seoul Metropolitan Government	4-5 September
21	USA	San Francisco	Global Climate Action Summit	State of California	12-14 September
22	Global/Regional/Spain	Barcelona	International Climate Alliance Conference	Climate Alliance	1-3 October
23	Mexico	Campeche	Conferencia Internacional	SEMARNATCAM, nrg4sd and others	25-26 October
24	Global/ Argentina	Buenos Aires	U20 Summit	Buenos Aires, Paris and C40	29-30 October