

Cities and Regions are ready for COP21! But what is happening and where?

ICLEI BRIEFING SHEET - Climate Series, No. 07

Cities and regions have made it clear that they are ready to scale-up their climate action at COP21 in Paris. And while a considerable amount of this activity is going to be focused around the Cities & Regions Pavilion in the Green Zone, the power of local action is going to influence an ambitious Paris Climate Package through advocacy efforts in the Blue Zone and throughout the City of Paris. This briefing sheet outlines what is happening and where.

Key Messages

- COP21 is occurring three months after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introduced as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is considerable hope, and urgency, that the “Paris Climate Package” which emerges from COP21 builds upon the momentum and ambition of the SDGs.
- Local and subnational governments are ready to act, and will be at the Cities & Regions Pavilion showing their innovative sustainability solutions which reflect the power of local action.
- The COP21 program is packed full, and local and subnational governments are going to play a considerable role in its proceedings. In addition to the Cities & Regions Pavilion, local and subnational voices will be heard through the advocacy of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, as well as within the UNFCCC and Lima-Paris-Action-Agenda processes taking place within the restricted-access Blue Zone, and in several events which will be held around the City of Paris.

What is the “COP”?

In December 2015, the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) will take place in Paris for the nations (the “Parties” to the UNFCCC) to negotiate a binding and universal agreement on addressing climate change. Since 1995, there have been 20 such meetings to discuss global issues of climate change and how to respond to it.

COP21 is occurring three months after all UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the centerpiece of which is 17 ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs comprehensively address a cross-cutting, cooperative framework for sustainable development – including important targets related to climate change mitigation and adaptation – and there is considerable hope in the international community that the momentum of the 2030 Agenda will help catalyze an inclusive Paris Climate Package



Cities and regions have spoken: #WeAreReady

Cities & Regions Pavilion - TAP2015

The heart of local and subnational government activity at COP21 will be the Cities & Regions Pavilion, located in the **Green Zone**. The Pavilion will be a hub for mayors, governors, municipal officials, civil society leaders, businesses and financiers, and will provide a forum for mobilizing resources and building partnerships. It represents an important milestone in a larger effort to strengthen local and regional governments as crucial agents of positive and long-term climate action.

An exciting offering within the Pavilion will be presentations from the most ambitious, cross-cutting and inclusive climate projects submitted to Transformative Actions Program (TAP), with presenters having been selected among more than 125 projects submitted to the TAP by 88 cities and regions in 42 countries. For more information on the TAP, please read the Transformative Actions Program Briefing Sheet from this series and visit www.tap-potential.org.

Climate Summit for Municipal Leaders

On 4 December, coinciding with COP21, a Climate Summit for Local Leaders will take place at Paris City Hall. The purpose of the Summit is to ensure that the voices of local and subnational leaders - and the efforts underway in their towns, cities, and regions - are given appropriate recognition within the international climate negotiation process.



Parallel activities underway in Paris

In addition to the official logo of COP21, conference organizers have produced a “United for climate action” visual (pictured above right). Each object in the visual – which reflects the collaborative spirit which reflects French national governments Positive Agenda” for climate change – is representative of the various actors who have mobilized in support of an ambitious and inclusive Paris Climate Package.

This group of diverse actors includes local and subnational governments, who will be very active within five core work-streams that will take place in each the Green Zone, the restricted-access Blue Zone, and throughout the City of Paris (also indicated in the visual on following page).

- **Core LGMA Advocacy Activities:** within the primary advocacy activities of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA), including the Cities & Regions Pavilion itself, as well as events such as the Climate Summit for Local Leaders at Paris City Hall.



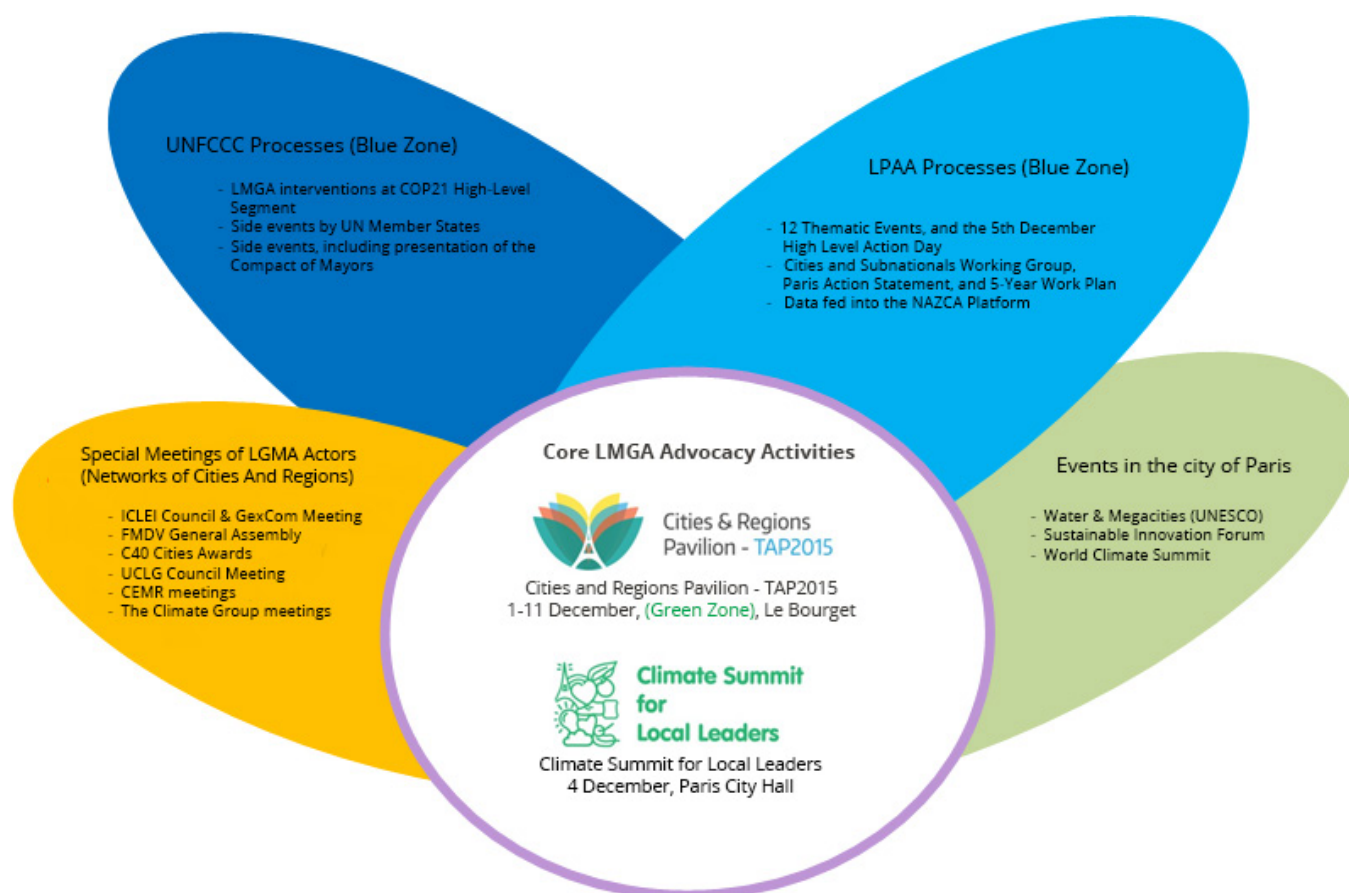
- **Closed Meetings from LGMA Constituents:** within special meetings of the LGMA, various closed meetings from city networks such as ICLEI, UCLG, C40, FMDV, CEMR, and The Climate Group will occur.
- **UNFCCC Processes:** within UNFCCC processes, all of which will take place in the restricted-access Blue Zone; the LGMA will make various interventions, be present at official UNFCCC and national side events, and within a special COP21 High Level Segment Intervention on 8 December. Of particular note is an update for the UNFCCC on the achievements of the Compact of Mayors on 7 December, to be moderated by ICLEI Secretary General Gino Van Begin.
- **Lima-Paris-Action-Agenda (LPAA) Processes:** within activities related to the Lima-Paris-Action-Agenda, which will also occur within the Blue Zone; this includes a special event for city and subnational actors on 8 December, as well as thematic events (the data from which will feed into the NAZCA Platform).
- **Events in the City of Paris:** including UNESCO'S Water, Megacities, and Global Change, the World Climate Summit (forum on business, finance, and government), and the Sustainable Innovation Forum, and others.

A “Paris” Declaration: Addressing the root causes of climate change

The great desire from ICLEI is that COP21 will close with an inclusive and ambitious Paris Climate Package that will enable us to rapidly transform into a low-carbon, climate resilient sustainable development towards and beyond 2020.

In order for this to occur, however, three basic realities that constitute the root causes of global climate change must be addressed, and these have been laid out within ICLEI's “Paris” Declaration to the Ministers at COP21 (official document is forthcoming, 06 December 2015).

1. The legacy of a fossil-dependent era and ineffectiveness of piecemeal solutions;
2. The unstoppable transformation into a development model that is based on 100 percent renewables and a circular economy;
3. The need to develop innovative governance models in a multi-polar, multi-stakeholder, multi-level Urban World of the 21st Century.



Desired outcomes for COP21

An inclusive and ambitious Paris Climate Package is essential to the addressing the root causes of global climate change; but what does inclusive and ambitious look like? At the very minimum, ICLEI believes there are three core criteria which must be met in order for the final outcome of COP21 to be considered a success:

- Commitment to global carbon neutrality, or 100% renewable energy, by 2050, in order to ensure that global greenhouse gas emissions peak as early as possible;
- The adoption of a global vision on adaptation which incorporates an inclusive global framework for loss-and-damage. All communities, but especially those in areas which are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of

climate change, need to know that they will not be left to face climate-related disasters alone;

- The acknowledgment of the role that non-UN member states can play in climate action. This includes local and subnational governments, who through their voluntary commitments, enormous potential, committed networks and innovative partnerships, are ready to accelerate action and raise ambitions globally.

After years of negotiations, ICLEI feels that the current draft text which will be negotiated on at COP21 provides all the necessary elements national governments need to form an inclusive and ambitious consensus. Accordingly, we invite, encourage and urge all governments and the global climate community to seize this opportunity in Paris.

More related ICLEI Briefing Sheets in the 2015 Climate Series:

No. 01 - A brief history of local government climate advocacy: the Local Government Climate Roadmap - mission accomplished!

No. 02 - Vertical integration between levels of government to effectively address climate and energy

No. 03 - "Friends of Cities": Good practices in multi-level partnerships on scaling-up climate action

No. 04 - Forging Measurable, Reportable and Verifiable actions to tackle climate change

No. 05 - Reporting platforms for Local and Subnational Climate Action

No. 06 - The Transformative Actions Program (TAP): Linking with finance

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These Briefing Sheets are produced by ICLEI as a contribution to the Local Government Climate Roadmap at the UN Climate Summit (COP21) 2015 in Paris.



Further Reading

- ICLEI Declaration to the Ministers at COP21, Paris, France (official document is forthcoming, 06 December 2015)
- ICLEI (2015) "Vertical integration between levels of government to effectively address climate and energy", ICLEI Briefing Sheet – Climate Series No. 02. Bonn, Germany.
- ICLEI (2015) "Linking with Finance, the TAP", ICLEI Briefing Sheet – Climate Series No. 07. Bonn, Germany.
- Other ICLEI Briefing Sheets in the Climate Series towards the COP21: www.iclei.org/briefingsheets



Author

Michael Woodbridge, Urban Research Junior Officer, ICLEI World Secretariat

Editors and Contributors

Yunus Arian, Head of ICLEI Global Policy and Advocacy, Kathrine Brekke, Urban Research Officer; ICLEI World Secretariat

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is the world's leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a sustainable future. By helping our Members to make their cities sustainable, low-carbon, resilient, biodiverse, resource-efficient, healthy and happy, with a green economy and smart infrastructure, we impact over 20% of the global urban population.

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ICLEI World Secretariat

Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße 7, 53113 Bonn, Germany
Email: urban.research@iclei.org