CITIES AND REGIONS ADVANCING GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION

at COP23, the 23rd United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn
Linking national and subnational climate action is key

What we need

The Paris Climate Agreement sets a clear global goal: To keep the global temperature rise well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This requires that nations set, track, report and progressively increase climate commitments over time.

At the same time, the Paris Agreement, for the first time in climate history, recognizes the importance of engagement with all levels of government worldwide and domestically – including municipalities, towns, districts, cities, metropolitan areas, counties, provinces, regions, prefectures and states.

Under the Paris Agreement, nations are expected to submit targets every five years, and increase their level of ambition with each submission. This is critical to closing the gap between current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the emissions reductions needed to achieve global goals.

Nations will assess their progress in 2018 as part of the Facilitative Dialogue, using that assessment to inform the process of reviewing and resubmitting pledges designed to raise national and global ambitions.

For this process to be effective, it is critical that national governments are equipped with robust data. National governments need an accurate and up-to-date picture of climate action and climate risks at the subnational level.

At present, national and subnational governments often use parallel, disconnected climate action and reporting systems. This means that in many cases, subnational climate commitments, actions and risk assessments are not factored into national planning. This disconnect makes it difficult for nations to plan and set targets that reflect a real country-wide picture.

To address this, national and subnational governments need to work together to track performance and implement effective, coordinated climate action, with the aim to progressively raise climate action at all levels.
On climate conferences and the UNFCCC process

PART 1. DECISION MAKING PROCESS AT THE UNFCCC

What is the UNFCCC?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted at the Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. National governments become Party to the UNFCCC or its supplementary agreements by ratifying these through their domestic legislative channels. Parties, primarily through ministries of environment or climate change, are responsible for its implementation. Because many of the provisions of the UNFCCC are inspirational, two supplementary documents provide further guidance. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005, primarily focuses on mitigation of greenhouse gases by developed countries. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 and entered into force in 2016, defines roles for all countries and stakeholders and encompasses all elements of climate action. Because of this universal scope, it has become an integral element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015.

What is the COP?

The Conference of Parties (COP), held for two weeks, is the annual meeting of the national governments as the highest level decision making body by Ministers to monitor and enhance progress on the implementation of the UNFCCC. The UNFCCC Secretariat, seated in Bonn, Germany, provides technical support to Parties on implementation.

Each year, one national government is elected by Parties as the President of the COP to provide political guidance in the work of the Secretariat and Parties. The six regional groups under the United Nations rotate in proposing the COP Presidency and the COP usually takes place at the country of the COP Presidency.

A COP President conducts informal consultations and meetings of heads of delegations all-year round, focusing on key negotiation issues. To ensure continuity, COP presidencies of two consecutive years work hand-in-hand. The role of COP President usually is assumed by either the Minister of Environment or Foreign Affairs, depending on the decision of the hosting Party, and it sometimes can be at the level of Heads of State/Government. As of 2015, the COP President also appoints high level climate champions to bridge the negotiations process and the climate action by all stakeholders.

Year-round process for intergovernmental negotiations

The topics to be discussed and draft decisions to be adopted at COP meetings are prepared and guided by two subsidiary bodies focusing on implementation (SBI) and scientific and technical guidance (SBSTA). These bodies meet for two weeks twice a year. In addition, a number of technical groups, focusing on various technical details such as finance, adaptation and capacity building, which meet throughout the year, subject to availability of resources and workload of their agenda items.
Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

At COP17 in Durban in 2011, Parties recognized the inadequacy of the action and commitments of national governments in meeting the goals of the UNFCCC and started to explore ways to engage stakeholders. The 2014 UN Climate Summit held by the UN Secretary General introduced major progress in relationship between the United Nations with various stakeholders, including appointment of Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City as the UN Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change. In the same year, the UNFCCC Secretariat launched the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA), an online platform to demonstrate actions by stakeholders, followed by creation of Lima-Paris Action Agenda.

In 2015, all these efforts were embedded in the COP21 Decision for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and COP Presidencies are assigned to designate High Level Climate Champions to guide these efforts. In 2016, Marrakech Partnership was launched as a more systematic approach to engage global climate action in the work of the UNFCCC, through year-round engagement in thematic content groups, release of a Yearbook, supported by a Leadership Network. In 2017, Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor of California was appointed as the COP23 Special Advisor for States and Regions, which provided additional support to this engagement. The Climate Chance Conference, held annually since 2015, provides an additional contribution by mobilizing bottom-up initiatives among Major Groups.

Friends of Cities at the UNFCCC

While the work of LGMA Constituency and engagement in the action agenda present a unique added value, the decision-making process under the UNFCCC is still, and will continue to be, under the authority of national governments. In 2013, the LGMA Constituency invited friendly national governments to gather under the Friends of Cities Group at the UNFCCC to create an informal mechanism to exchange information and provide more substantial inputs into the negotiations. The Friends of Cities Group will be instrumental in securing a prominent role for local and regional governments in the full implementation of the Paris Agreement.
The summit was the launch point for deeper engagement and action by local and regional governments. It was the launching point for key initiatives and partnerships that support implementation of the Paris Agreement, demonstrating that when cities, regions, businesses, communities and all levels of government join forces, it makes climate action stronger and more effective. Throughout the day, speakers from all levels of government presented their actions, announced new initiatives and promoted cooperation between all levels of government, civil society and the private sector.

The process of designing and organizing the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders was, in of itself, an active demonstration of multilevel collaboration across levels of government. The summit host committee comprised local, regional and national government representatives, including the City of Bonn, the State of North Rhine Westphalia, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

More than 1,000 participants, including more than 300 leaders from the local, regional and national levels came together at the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, the highest level political event of its kind at COP23.
We are here to forge new coalitions, to act and collaborate for our climate and to encourage civil society, businesses and our peers in cities and regions to join the #Uniting4Climate movement.

Ashok Sridharan, Lord Mayor, Bonn, Germany

ICLEI First Vice President

Ashok Sridharan, Lord Mayor, Bonn, Germany

We are here to forge new coalitions, to act and collaborate for our climate and to encourage civil society, businesses and our peers in cities and regions to join the #Uniting4Climate movement.

Ashok Sridharan, Lord Mayor, Bonn, Germany

ICLEI First Vice President

This is the moment to take what we know cities and regions can accomplish and turn it into the everyday reality of citizens everywhere. We are at a crucial point.

Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC

We can draw from the power and enthusiasm of local and regional leaders in the mission to tackle climate change. So many of you have already demonstrated how to make decisions and implement them.

Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister, Republic of Fiji COP23 President

Welcome to the age of sustainable development, local and regional governments will have to shoulder much or even most of the task of enacting programs and schemes that will actually curb climate change.

Armin Laschet, Minister-President, State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Ambitious climate action needs cooperation from and between all levels. Germany therefore wants to further intensify this exchange and cooperation together with interested partner countries, initiatives and networks.

H.E. Barbara Hendricks
Federal Minister, Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), Germany

We have time but not much time. So please, push yourself to the furthest degree. I will promise you that California will be right there with you.

Edmund G. Brown Jr, Governor, State of California Co-Founder, Under2 Coalition, COP23 Special Advisor for States and Regions

Cities cannot win the fight on their own, but without cities, the fight cannot be won at all.

Hans-Joachim Fuchtel
Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany

Cities, states and regions hold tremendous power, especially when you work together... We are the laboratories of reform, we are the engines of innovation and we are where the action is.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, R20 Founding Chair
Summit Dialogues

The Summit Dialogues were a stretch of heightened activity by local and regional governments taking place before and after the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders. The dialogues featured meetings, events and interactions with negotiators, laying the foundation for new initiatives, platforms and declarations. This is a selection of key meetings and events that took place as part of the Summit Dialogues.

The third Low Emission Solutions Conference (LESC) gathered cities, businesses and researchers in a unique forum to discuss the implementation at scale of low-emissions solutions. The event was organized by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UNSDSN) and ICLEI. Several elements made this night truly unique: the diversity of the actors, the richness of the solutions presented, the determination to take action and the frankness of the discussion.

Over 40 mayors and local political leaders from around the world convened for a screening of An Inconvenient Sequel, the latest climate change film by Al Gore, followed by a conversation with the former US Vice President on the state of climate action.

Former ICLEI President and Mayor of Seoul, Park Won Soon and Mayor of Quito Mauricio Rodas and ICLEI Secretary General Gino Van Begin met with the UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa to discuss the critical role of local and regional governments in global climate action.
The Cities and Regions Pavilion

Throughout the two weeks of COP23, the Cities and Regions Pavilion was the home base for local and regional governments, hosting conversations on key climate and sustainability topics from multilevel governance to adaptation and resilience.

The Pavilion saw the official launch of the Front-line Cities and Islands initiative which unites islands and coastal cities to build resilience.

**Featured below:** Mayors and leaders of islands at the front-line of climate change, from the President of Palau to the Mayor of Cozumel, Mexico join forces at COP23

The NDC Partnership, launched at COP22 in Marrakech, is a global network of countries, development organizations, multilateral development banks and organizations focused on implementing the NDCs. It facilitates technical assistance, creates and disseminates insightful knowledge products that fill information gaps, and promotes enhanced financial support for NDC implementation. ICLEI is the first non-country associate member of the NDC partnership. Together, these two organizations aim to put multilevel governance into practice, making it a core element of successful NDC implementation. The two organizations dove into a discussion of multilevel governance with representatives of national, regional and local governments at the Cities and Regions Pavilion.

**Featured above:** Mayor Manuel Araujo of Quelimane speaking on multilevel governance in Mozambique.
RESULTS

The Bonn-Fiji Commitment of Local and Regional Leaders to Deliver the Paris Agreement At All Levels

Adopted by hundreds of local and regional governments at the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders at COP23, the Bonn-Fiji Commitment puts forward concrete actions cities and regions will undertake globally to drive climate action and calls for multilevel governance as a key part of global climate action.

Ashok Sridharan, Lord Mayor of Bonn, co-host of the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders and now President of ICLEI presented the Bonn-Fiji Commitment to the UN Secretary General and spoke on behalf of the LGMA.

“Hundreds of local and regional leaders from more than 60 countries and all levels of government - 1,000 participants in total - have adopted the Bonn-Fiji Commitment, last Sunday, at the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders. With the Bonn-Fiji Commitment we express our willingness to be full partners in the process to come – before and beyond 2020.”
#UNITING4CLIMATE
citiesandregions.org

We are grateful for the financial support received from Bloomberg Philanthropies via the European Climate Foundation - Grant Number: G-1709-01674, Grant Period: 01/04/17 – 31/03/18.

Contact us

ICLEI World Secretariat
Kaiser-Friedrich-Strasse, 7
53113 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 228 976299 00
Fax: +49 (0) 228 976299 01
iclei.ws@iclei.org - www.iclei.org