

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 17 JUNE END OF BUSINESS

Urban 20 calls on G20 to empower cities to ensure a green and just recovery.

An official communiqué from Urban 20 (U20)

[DATE], [LOCATION]

Under the leadership of the co-chair cities of Rome and Milan, we, the Mayors and Governors of the undersigned cities, gather as the Urban 20 (U20) and call on G20 Leaders to partner with cities in achieving human centred, equitable, carbon-neutral, climate-safe, inclusive and prosperous societies.

The transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda provides a key opportunity for cities to promote a new sustainable development paradigm and to move towards a resilient recovery from the humanitarian crisis caused by COVID-19.

Mayors and Governors are leading the frontline response to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency. How its leaders direct COVID-19 recovery funding is the most significant challenge of any government's commitment to these agendas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the solidarity between cities and has emphasized the importance of working together on local solutions that ensure that no one and no place is left behind. It has emphasized that strong public institutions and service provision are vital to the cohesion of our communities and to guaranteeing universal health care access equally for all.

To ensure that local public service provision is sustained, that people are protected, and a green, just, and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is achieved, cities must have direct access to supplies and funding from international and national sources, such as national recovery plans. Equitable access to vaccines must be guaranteed to all, especially for cities in developing countries. Green investments must be scaled-up, and fiscal decentralization and autonomous local financial and administrative institutions should be seen as economic multipliers for national development. Moreover, the principle of subsidiarity must be followed as the key to improve territorial governance and reach multi-level governance framework processes to increase the impact and coherence of policies and private investments. A more inclusive multilateral system where cities have a seat at the decision-making table must also be in place to acknowledge that international agendas depend on local action, and to foster transformative tools such as Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews.

Consistent with SDG 17 and advancing partnerships among sustainable cities to implement SDG 11 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole, we invite all levels of government, businesses, trade unions, investors, academia, youth movements, and civil society to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and to help us deliver on science-based actions to overcome it. Building on the foundation set by previous U20 cycles, we issue this Communiqué calling on G20 countries to work with cities to deliver a green, just and local recovery through:

[PEOPLE] G20 Priority

1. **Strengthening health systems** – Calling on the G20 to guarantee the right to health by supporting strong frameworks of basic services and multi-stakeholder engagement; moving from systems of response to systems of prevention and honour the commitment of making vaccines a global public good through strong collaboration between the public and private sectors and equitably distributed to people around the world; and to step up support for developing countries in a timely manner and prioritize increasing manufacturing capacity, health and wellbeing in the regulation of international trade, and to commit to refrain from export restrictions on vaccines as inequitable access widens the gap between the Global North and South.

2. **Guaranteeing local public service provision** – The G20 should enable legislative frameworks in order to foster a strong framework of local public services as a cornerstone of health systems and a green and just recovery by investing in human resources and capacity building in local governments, and through direct access to financing.
3. **Prioritizing equal access that leaves no one behind** – Call on the G20 to strengthen local economies, guarantee adequate housing through collaboration with the public and private sectors, provide social safety nets, and essential public services, especially education, health, and the right to mobility and safe public transport that reduces inequalities, emissions and which guarantees connectivity and accessibility, ensuring these are universally and equitably accessible to all, affordable and free from discrimination of any kind.
4. **Investing in cultural life** – Calling on the G20 to empower cities to guarantee cultural life as a key pillar of sustainable development, equity, justice, human dignity and diversity, and the fight against climate change, by supporting self-expression, indigenous knowledge, the education of future generations and by building mechanisms to further develop existing cultural realities. Recognise that the cultural sector has been critically impacted by the pandemic, and acknowledge its essential role in the social and economic recovery of our cities with its power for change, innovation, and the strengthening of communities and identities.
5. **Fostering social cohesion** – Calling on the G20 to empower cities to guarantee human rights preservation, foster social cohesion, protect the most vulnerable living and working in informality, and lead green and just recovery efforts that recognise the importance of human mobility as a powerful engine of development, to build cities of belonging, promote gender-inclusive policies, women's leadership, equity in paid and unpaid work, and to dismantle longstanding structures that perpetuate discrimination, harassment, racism, and sexism.

[PLANET]: G20 Priority

1. **Smart investments for a green and just recovery** – Calling on the G20 to make all stimulus a green stimulus, by shifting public investments from high-carbon infrastructure to green solutions and accelerate the divestment from fossil-fuels, and to fight energy poverty, ensuring that between 40% and 50% of climate investments directly benefit frontline, vulnerable or marginalized communities. This should happen firstly via investment in retrofit technologies, capacity-building and research in sustainable, safe public transportation, net-zero carbon buildings, deployment of mature clean energy technologies, innovative clean energy solutions such as green hydrogen, green and blue infrastructure, carbon removal, circular economy towards zero waste, transit-oriented development and a climate-friendly food system. Secondly by dedicating funding for adaptation and climate resilience and restoration, to empower cities by securing financial streams and capacity building to accelerate and scale urban climate resilience. Foster urban rehabilitation through greener spaces, regenerating natural living systems, and ensuring smart cities are designed to centre the needs of residents.
2. **Accelerated climate action ahead of COP26** – Under the recognition that now is the time to act to tackle the global climate emergency, calling on G20 countries to lead the way to an ambitious COP26 by committing to keeping global heating to 1.5°C, as targeted by the Race to Zero, putting science-based and inclusive climate action at the centre of all decision-making; pledging to reach net zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, and set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO₂ by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°Celsius, in accordance with the

principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances; submitting new enhanced Nationally Defined Contribution (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies (LTS); securing an appropriate financial package, including through at least 0.7% ODA, to support developing countries to achieve these goals; committing to 100% clean energy by 2040 or sooner; to phasing out internal combustion engines and achieving 100% zero-emissions vehicles sales as soon as possible and no later than 2035; ensuring that new buildings are resource-efficient and operate at net-zero carbon by 2030 and that all existing buildings are renovated and retrofitted to operate at net-zero carbon by 2050; recognizing that for many countries, climate ambition and action depend heavily on the availability of external funding. Collaborate with cities to move away from coal and other fossil fuels, listening to cities needs and including them in the key decisions and actions necessary for the energy transition.

3. **Supporting intermediary cities** – Calling on the G20 to utilize the great potential of intermediary cities as catalysts for sustainable development and sustainable and transformative production and consumption models through directed policy and investment, ensuring territorial cohesion, resilience and equality among territories based on a symbiotic relationship between rural and urban areas.
4. **Building cities with nature for climate resilience and wellbeing** – Calling on the G20 to empower cities to enhance nature-based solutions in our urban environments to reduce climate risk and vulnerability, minimize the impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis, support wider ecosystem services that adapt to changing environmental conditions, respect life systems and protect biodiversity, help frontline communities to build resilience and adapt to impacts of climate change, including extreme heat, drought, fires, flooding and sea-level rise, and ensure that natural spaces are publicly and equitably accessible to all by 2030.
5. **Transforming food systems** – Calling on the G20 to support and empower cities as key actors of sustainable food systems capable of spearheading change in consumption and production through urban food policies that promote the fight against hunger, healthy eating habits, conscious consumption, and the preservation of agricultural land and water resources. Facilitate cities' access to funding and innovative solutions for the development of sustainable, biodiverse food environments, supply chains and urban food production, and circular economy models that will ensure food security for all and minimize carbon footprint. Promote policies aimed at the interaction between scientific research and food culture. Support local and organic producers and consider urban-rural linkages, territorial and cultural differences to develop resilient and inclusive food systems that provide nutritious and sustainable options for all.

[PROSPERITY]: G20 Priority

1. **Adapting to the future of work and a just transition** – Work, and guaranteeing workers' rights, is the most powerful lever to address inequalities and the gender and racial gap. A green and just recovery could create as many as 50 million sustainable jobs by the end of 2025, over a third more than a traditional, high-carbon recovery. The G20 should empower cities to address the structural changes, including labour polarization due to the digital economy, that are reshaping the future of work, investing in decent and well-paying jobs that generate revenue from climate mitigation, supporting a just transition for fossil fuel workers and developing national strategies that account for local jobs impacts and increase women's participation in the labour force. The G20 should provide equal access to quality education for all, employment opportunities for youth and people

with disabilities, professional and vocational training and upskilling on soft and digital skills, and tackle the administrative, economic and technological barriers that impact our communities, including regularisation mechanisms, benefits and protection for informal workers and contract-based workers.

2. **Strengthening local democracy** – Calling on the G20 to protect and elevate local decision-making and public participation mechanisms, both in physical and digital channels, by developing legal and institutional frameworks that fully include and respond to the needs of cities, including data, transparency, and freedoms of press and expression. Strengthen the direct involvement of all persons, particularly from under-represented and vulnerable communities, in decision-making spaces to better reflect the composition of our cities and give voice to a wide range of experiences and ideas.
3. **Promoting fiscal autonomy** – Calling on the G20 to rebuild cities' fiscal autonomy to secure revenue streams for better planning, borrowing and investment and establishing enabling conditions to create an ecosystem of public and private financial partners that can mutually support each other and aid in securing much needed financing. Enhance the capacity of cities to guarantee compliance and integrity in public procurement and cultivate new sources of revenue, for example, through data production and circular economy and decarbonization models. Scale-up blended financing models, backstop innovative means of multilateral and cross border finance, reinforce the capacity for local finance, and act to increase flows of domestic and international capital for transformative financeable investments, especially in underserved markets, while ensuring that such investments do not harm local livelihoods.
4. **Fostering local economic development** – Calling on the G20 to foster production and consumption models based on proximity, sustainable tourism, green manufacturing, and support local micro, small and medium enterprises as the backbone of our economies and connect them to international value chains. Continue to promote and harness inclusive innovation and multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration through social platforms. Recognise the importance of cities as part of their local economies and help maintain the consistency and sustainability of local public services when economic shocks impact local budgets. Harmonize and expand international standards and certification mechanisms for companies and investment funds to more directly contribute to the SDGs at the local level.
5. **Protecting digital rights** – Calling on the G20 to acknowledge the lasting impacts of digitalization on equity and citizen engagement during and after the pandemic by urgently enabling new forms of data regulation and digital governance, which adapt human rights to the digital age by fostering digital rights, transparency and privacy, and which take into account the regulation and tax consequences of operating and providing digital services internationally. Support efforts to bridge the digital divide (connectivity, devices and skills) and ensure that future investments in smart cities follow open and ethical digital standards, make technology and data affordable, citizen-controlled, universally accessible, support digital literacy, and guarantee freedom from censorship and discriminatory bias within algorithms and resulting artificial intelligence systems.

[ENDORSEMENTS]