

# BRIDGING LOCAL AND GLOBAL

Advancing global climate action at COP23



**LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
GOVERNMENTS AT COP23**  
SUMMIT | DIALOGUES | PAVILION

**I.C.L.E.I.**  
Local  
Governments  
for Sustainability



## Local and regional governments are delivering on Paris Agreement goals and shaping the global climate policy landscape.

### In this urban era, local and regional governments are responding to unprecedented global change.

Local and regional governments are on the front lines of climate change. They witness and respond to its impacts directly, whether they be sea level rise and heat waves to more intense and frequent storms and droughts.

They are testing new and innovative solutions to tackle these challenges and curb greenhouse gases emitted from urban environments.

### Local and regional governments have a critical role to play in driving climate action worldwide.

Local and regional governments have demonstrated their proactive and forward-thinking leadership, and national governments and the international community have taken note. The Paris Agreement recognizes the role of local and regional governments in delivering on climate goals and calls for their continued engagement in global climate action.

Local and regional governments are both influencers and implementers. They are positioning themselves to shape and strengthen climate policies and are translating global goals into tangible results on the ground. They have sparked a groundswell of support across civil society, the media and a range of climate stakeholders worldwide, and are vocal leaders in the climate conversation.

## Local and regional governments have an influential voice in the global climate conversation.

COP23, the 23rd United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bonn, Germany in November 2017, is a prime example of how local and regional governments meaningfully engage in and influence the climate conversation.

Local and regional governments were highly visible in several arenas throughout the full two weeks of COP23, coming together collectively at the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders. Facilitated by ICLEI and hosted by the City of Bonn and the State North Rhine-Westphalia, the summit was the flagship event for local and regional governments, attended by more than 1,000 delegates and upwards of 300 political leaders from 60 countries.

At the summit, local and regional leaders signaled their intent to deliver on Paris goals. Through the Bonn-Fiji Commitment of Local and Regional Leaders to Deliver the Paris Agreement at All Levels, local and regional governments affirmed their commitment to climate action and called on nations to ensure the Paris Agreement achieves its full potential. The Bonn-Fiji Commitment demonstrated that local and regional governments intend to leverage their position as key actors, while working with nations to strengthen climate action and bridge climate and urban policy.

Global fora like COP23 have clear strategic value for local and regional governments. Through active participation and visibility, local and regional governments invigorate their collective energy and send a message to nations and the international community.

Preparing for and delivering on these engagements builds lasting mechanisms for change. Here we look at what goes into preparing local and regional governments to participate in global fora, and mechanisms ICLEI uses to link global and local in the climate context.

COP23 is a milestone for the multifaceted diplomatic process ICLEI pursues to **engage local and regional governments** more deeply in global climate action. COP23 has successfully shaped how their engagement is unfolding.

## ICLEI sparks connections in the global climate arena, linking subnational actors and policies to national and global contexts.

Creating linkages between the local and global works in two directions:

**Bridging up** to ensure policy frameworks and implementation mechanisms reflect the interests of local and regional governments, and **bridging down** to apply global policy to sustainable urban development strategies at the subnational level.

This bridging process spans from local to global and encompasses all levels of government in between. By linking subnational, national and global actors, policies, commitments and actions, ICLEI strengthens climate action at all levels.

Through a strategically designed process combining **global advocacy, thematic expertise, strategic communications and event planning and design**, ICLEI leveraged the COP23 platform to create linkages in both directions, deepening how local and regional governments engage in global climate action. These interconnected mechanisms are what made COP23 a launch point that has shaped how local and regional governments are now engaging in climate action worldwide.



### • GLOBAL ADVOCACY

We influence global and national policy to reflect the realities and needs of local and regional governments. We directly engage and build relationships with national governments and intergovernmental bodies like United Nations Climate Change.

### • THEMATIC EXPERTISE

Technical experts within the ICLEI network bring a grounded and informed perspective to global climate dialogues. ICLEI shares real world case studies, challenges and solutions to give a more in-depth view of how the Paris Agreement is implemented on the ground. We also draw on this experience to bring the latest global tools and ideas to the local level.

### • STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

ICLEI leverages a range of communication tools to generate visibility for our network of local and regional governments and inform them of global policy developments. We craft targeted messaging that supports our advocacy efforts and translate global processes to enable local and regional governments to engage more effectively in the conversation.

### • EVENT PLANNING AND DESIGN

We purposefully craft programming and convene a diverse pool of local and regional government leaders and department-level staff prepared to represent their constituents and share critical knowledge in the global arena.



## Global advocacy

ICLEI shapes global climate policy and positions local and regional governments to advance climate and sustainability goals. Over the years, we have reshaped the global climate landscape to achieve greater recognition, engagement and empowerment of local and regional governments. This process began in earnest as part of the Local Government Climate Roadmap launched in 2007, a coalition of local government networks advocating a robust global climate agreement. Our efforts continue actively today, with an increased focus on national level policy.

ICLEI represents the local and regional perspective in international climate negotiations. ICLEI holds accredited observer status to the UNFCCC, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and serves as the focal point of the LGMA – the constituency of Local Governments and Municipal Authorities – since 1995. This is our entry point to engaging directly with national negotiators and intergovernmental bodies like United Nations Climate Change to ensure the interests of local and regional governments are understood and taken up in global debates and frameworks.

Our current advocacy efforts focus on strengthening national policy. In 2015, when the Paris Agreement was adopted, approximately half of all Nationally Determined Contributions – or NDCs – foresaw action at the local and regional levels. Additionally, only around 60 percent of current NDCs consider the urban dimension of climate action, a notable gap in our increasingly urban world. We aim to change this through our advocacy.

## KEY ACTIONS

As part of our advocacy efforts, we:

- Conceptualize high level events and engagements that give visibility to local and regional governments and their political leadership.
- Facilitate direct dialogue between national delegates and subnational government representatives.
- Convene consultations with Friends of Cities, a group of national delegates working with ICLEI to represent the interests of local and regional governments directly in the climate negotiations.
- Arrange speaking opportunities at high level events attended by national negotiators, ministers and other key national and global decision makers.
- Provide inputs to the negotiation process, representing the collective interests of local and regional governments.
- Cooperate with LGMA partners to expand and strengthen the common front for climate action and ensure the breadth, depth and potential impacts of subnational climate initiatives are made visible.

- Lead daily briefings with the LGMA constituency to give negotiation updates and offer a space for input and alignment across partner organizations.
- Leverage climate data collected through the carbonn Climate Registry as evidence of the potential impact of subnational commitments and actions.

## COP23 HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

The summit was the launch point for deeper engagement and action by local and regional governments. Through the Bonn-Fiji Commitment, they issued a direct call for nations to connect climate action across all levels of government, and to set up inclusive in-country consultations with local and regional governments. This call was subsequently taken up through the Talanoa Dialogue launched at COP23 by Fiji, designed to kick off multistakeholder climate dialogues throughout 2018, with the aim to raise national ambitions. Local and regional governments are now responding through the Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues in more than 50 cities worldwide, inviting nations to the table for discussions.

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 (BMUB).



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.



## Thematic expertise

ICLEI technical experts work alongside local and regional governments to design and implement strategies towards carbon neutrality, urban resilience and energy security. We strengthen their capacities through hands-on support and bring the latest global thinking to the local level. ICLEI is now recognized as among the foremost actors in the field of climate change and capacity building, according to the Working Group on Paris Committee on Capacity Building, a key institution enshrined in the Paris Agreement.

Our thematic expertise brings a grounded perspective to global climate dialogues. ICLEI shares real world examples in global fora to give a more in-depth view of how the Paris Agreement is implemented locally.

We design our climate work not only to tackle local challenges, but also to test and shape emerging global concepts and interventions. We take an integrated systems approach, embedding a climate lens across multiple dimensions of sustainable urban development policy and planning.

Throughout the year, ICLEI designs projects to facilitate peer learning and support action with a range of tools, methodologies and technical support. We prepare local and regional governments to deliver on the Paris Agreement by setting, assessing and implementing their climate commitments.

### KEY ACTIONS

Through our thematic work, we:

- Embed multilevel governance models into our projects, facilitating working groups and dialogues involving all levels and layers of government, including ministers, mayors and departmental level staff.
- Take lessons, examples, solutions and challenges from the ground to inform global and national processes.
- Align projects and initiatives with global goals and frameworks.
- Promote evidence-based, research-driven planning at the local and regional levels.
- Mobilize cities to set targets, report data and track progress through the carbonn Climate Registry.
- Connect local and regional governments with peers to encourage knowledge sharing and scale good practices.



Launch of the Front-line Cities and Islands initiative at the Cities and Regions Pavilion.

### COP23 HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

The Bonn-Fiji Commitment highlights more than 20 joint initiatives undertaken by local and regional governments, their networks and their partners.

**The initiatives in the Bonn-Fiji Commitment were strategically selected to highlight global efforts to implement the Paris Agreement at the subnational level, offering evidence of concrete action beyond COP23.**

ICLEI is engaged in and leading a number of the Bonn-Fiji Commitment projects, including the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Front-line Cities and Islands and collaboration on multilevel governance with the NDC Partnership. Through each of these initiatives, we provide technical expertise and support to governments at all levels to ensure they have the capacity, policy expertise and systems in place to advance climate action as effectively as possible.

The Bonn-Fiji Commitment also highlights the collective climate commitments of local and regional governments. By the end of 2017, more than 1,000 local and regional governments across 86 countries reporting in the carbonn Climate Registry collectively committed to reduce emissions by 5.6 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2020 and 26.8 gigatons by 2050, compared to levels going as far back as 1990. ICLEI works with these local and regional governments reporting to carbonn to ensure they can effectively carry out their commitments and identify gaps in their planning and capacities.

## Strategic communications

Through strategic communications, ICLEI ensures that the efforts and achievements of local and regional governments are visible globally. We capture and amplify local and regional stories and craft targeted messaging towards national negotiators and global actors through our global and regional channels. Over the years, ICLEI has fueled global interest in climate action undertaken by local and regional governments. It is our priority to show how subnational governments tackle climate change and the barriers they face and overcome in doing so.

Today, there is a groundswell of support for local and regional governments as torchbearers of climate action. We ignite this conversation using a range of tools and strategies, focusing on the critical need for the urban context to be an inextricable part of the climate conversation.

We also engage local and regional governments in the climate conversation by informing them of policy developments. We translate global policy into accessible formats and concepts to build their awareness and understanding of how global processes affect climate action at the subnational level. Supporting awareness around multilevel government, a key part of our global advocacy and thematic work, is one of our major focuses.

**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. We are led by the monumental and far reaching Paris Agreement, but we are also in a race against time. Quite simply, we must act, all of us together and with great urgency.**

Patricia Espinosa  
Executive Secretary, UNFCCC



## KEY ACTIONS

Through our strategic communications around climate action, we:

- Raise awareness and engage stakeholders through campaigns that amplify our advocacy messaging.
- Design attention-grabbing brands and visuals.
- Create promotional material for use by all LGMA and other partner organizations.
- Pitch local climate action stories to top global and specialized media and broker media interviews with ICLEI experts and local and regional leaders.
- Place opinion pieces in global media.
- Prepare speakers for media interviews and statements.
- Develop speeches for ICLEI leadership and political representatives across our network.
- Organize press conferences.
- Translate high-level messaging and information on global policy frameworks targeted towards local and regional governments.
- Staff newsrooms during global events to provide up-to-date coverage on how local and regional governments are engaged in the global climate debate.
- Disseminate local stories, policy updates and other news from our network through our global blog, social media channels and newsletters.

## COP23 HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

During the full two weeks of COP23, ICLEI was on the ground reporting from local and regional government events and dialogues.

The Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders attracted a high level of media attention, with over 100 journalists in attendance. Upwards of 800 articles in online media – including Reuters, Deutsche Welle, Climate Home, CityLab and Next City – referenced either the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders or projects and announcements made by leading city networks and partners.

**The combined potential reach of online media articles covering the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders was over**  
**500 million people**  
**during the two weeks of COP23.**



## Event planning and design

ICLEI designs global events that are both strategic political platforms and fora for networking and learning. During international events like the United Nations Climate Change conferences, we create and host dedicated spaces for our network and partners to launch projects, present new concepts and hold workshops and meetings.

ICLEI mobilizes a diverse pool of local and regional government representatives from around the world, including governors, mayors, city department heads and technical staff to demonstrate subnational climate action and benefit from global exchange.

We strategically select and prepare political leaders to represent their constituents at global events, ensuring they have direct access to their target audience, whether it is national governments, financial institutions or other potential partners.

We also recruit top experts, researchers and thought leaders and connect them with the local and regional governments in our network, laying the foundation for new partnerships and initiatives.

As part of planning and designing events, we:

- Design programs and recruit speakers for high level political events, project launches and technical workshops.
- Iteratively collect and assess registration data to target our outreach and marketing efforts.
- Provide ongoing guidance, support and visibility to event host cities.
- Manage the logistics and funds to secure participation by local and regional governments.
- Brief speakers, including political representatives and technical staff.

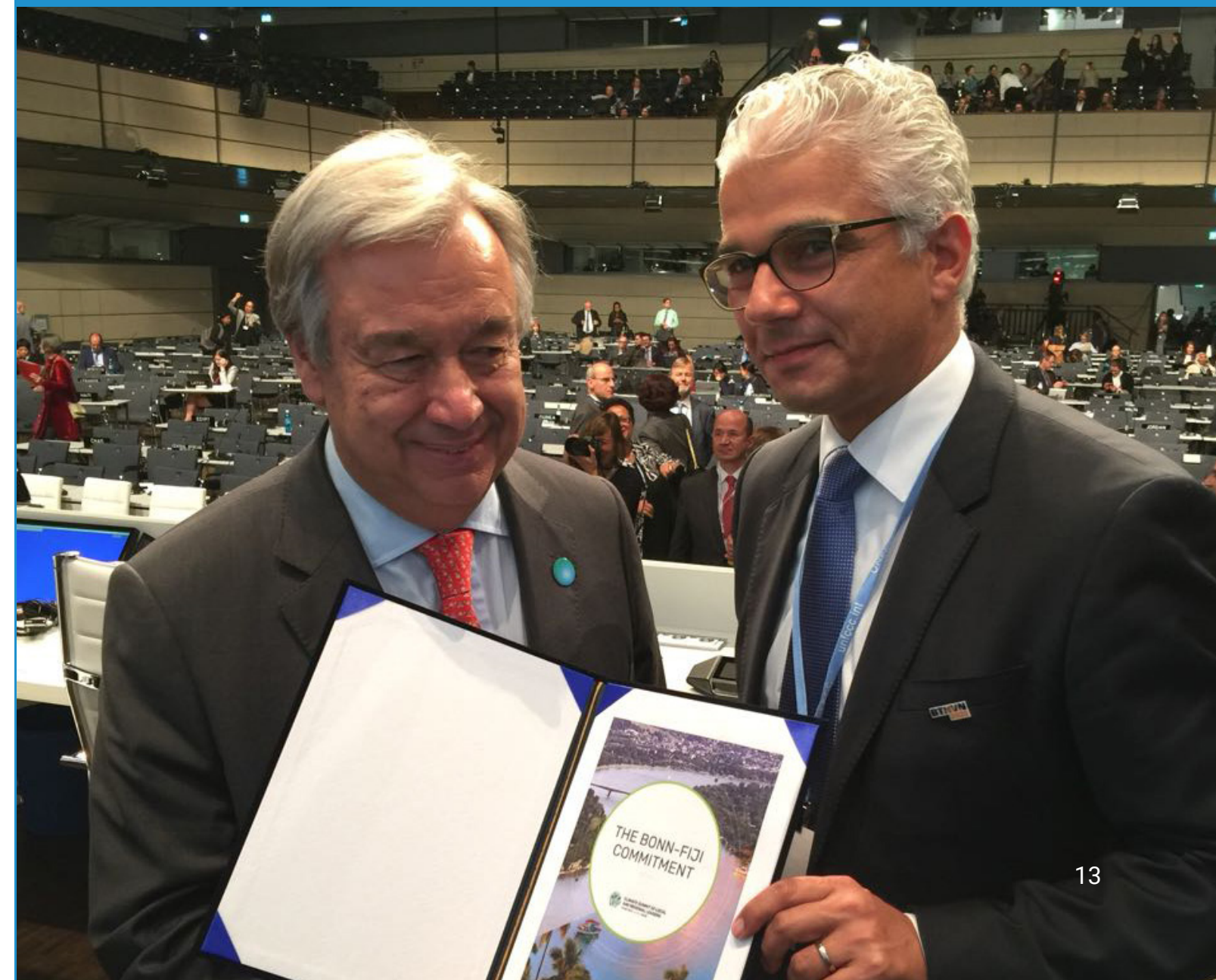
## COP23 HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

At COP23, ICLEI facilitated the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders as the defining event of its kind in Bonn. Alongside the COP23 Host Committee, we selected and recruited speakers, including hosts Mayor Ashok Sridharan of Bonn and Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia Armin Laschet, along with R20 Founding Chair Arnold Schwarzenegger, California Governor and Under2 Coalition Co-Founder Jerry Brown, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa, Prime Minister of Fiji and COP23 President Frank Bainimarama and Federal Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety H.E. Barbara Hendricks.

ICLEI worked closely with Mayor Sridharan in our preparations for and during COP23. As host of the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn and now President of ICLEI, carried the messages sent by local and regional governments by engaging in high level political events through the COP.

## At the closing of COP23, Mayor Sridharan presented the Bonn-Fiji Commitment directly to António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In addition to the Summit, ICLEI organized and managed the Cities and Regions Pavilion, a dedicated space that served as the home base for local and regional government action at COP23. ICLEI and our partners hosted more than 50 events, offering a stage to local and regional governments and their partners over the two weeks of negotiations. It was here that all the efforts, actions and activities of local and regional governments was concentrated, ensuring they had a presence and platform throughout the full two weeks as a complement to the flagship summit.







**When we learn more about what is actually being delivered at the local level, we may find that our NDCs can be enhanced relatively easily. Because so much is already happening there that has not yet been accounted for.**

Frank Bainimarama  
Prime Minister, Republic of Fiji  
COP23 President



## Climate action going forward

Our engagement at COP23, and the Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders in particular, was designed to deepen how local and regional government engage in global climate action. In the Bonn-Fiji Commitment, local and regional governments made it clear that they intend to do their part to bring climate action forward, working alongside nations to ensure that we bridge the divide between the climate and urban context.

Since COP23, local and regional governments have advanced on the promises made in the Bonn-Fiji Commitment. In addition to the many actions they are undertaking to implement the Paris Agreement on the ground, they have also issued significant global calls to action. They have invited national governments to join them for discussion through the Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues, bringing together all levels of government in over 50 cities and regions to bridge the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement. They have issued a Call for vertical integration of Local Authorities in national climate investment plans under the leadership of Mauricio Rodas, ICLEI Global Executive Committee Member, Global Covenant of Mayors Board Member and Mayor of Quito, and through the Edmonton Declaration led by Don Iveson, Mayor of Edmonton, called for cities to prioritize science-based decision-making that reinforces the Paris Agreement.





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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](mailto:iclei.ws@iclei.org) - [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)