



MEDIA RELEASE

Bonn and ICLEI Launch the UrbanEra4Life

New initiative takes sustainable urban development to the next level

Bonn, Germany (27 June 2019) – The climate change impacts of the next decade, when more people live in cities than outside, demand faster, more decisive action to protect lives and livelihoods. ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and the city of Bonn announce the launch of a new and exciting initiative that addresses the urgency of climate change in a new urban era.

The goal of the initiative – “UrbanEra4 Life” – is to give a forum for national and global decision-makers on climate and sustainability to hear from cities and regions about the realities of climate impacts at the local level and local action. These inputs can be used in setting national climate goals and building collaborative action.

With this year’s ten-year anniversary of the Resilient Cities Congress in Bonn, ICLEI and the city have spent the past decade building up cities’ ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. From 2020 onwards, this new global gathering will take place in parallel to the Bonn Climate Talks (1-11 June 2020) and in celebration of World Environment Day, 5 June 2020. With all levels of government present in Bonn at this time, this event will help to spark collaborations that will continue in various nations around the world as leaders at all levels set their sights on a sustainable future.

“As a UN city that is home to the UNFCCC and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as IPBES - the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - Bonn is proud to link sustainability initiatives from the local to the international,” said Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn. “As a city committed to sustainable action, Bonn will lead by example under our sustainability strategy. After one decade of successful

Resilient Cities Congresses, I am excited to see a new conference format which responds to the urgency of our time, and a new era of collaboration derived from 10 years of continual ambition, action and advocacy.”

Ongoing inputs to the climate negotiations from local and regional governments are crucial. While the global research agenda on cities and climate change is underway, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Cities and Climate Change, a resource for international negotiators from the world’s scientific body on climate change, is not due to be released until 2025.

“The climate change emergency is an existential threat. It means that business as usual is not an option anymore,” said UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa. “National governments alone cannot overcome our climate change challenges—it will take the combined efforts of all sectors of society. The insight, creativity, and drive of local governments to provide solutions have never been more needed than today and ICLEI is an important voice both representing and driving that local action.”

Additionally, ICLEI and the UNFCCC are partners in Bonn’s “Pastoral Project”, which connects the work of Beethoven to climate, land and nature preservation. Art and music festivities will kick off on Earth Day 2020, and continue through World Environment Day (5 June) 2020.

“When we first launched the Resilient Cities Congress ten years ago, you could count the experts in city resilience efforts on one hand,” said Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. “Over the past decade we have strengthened local knowledge on resilience around the world. Now, ICLEI and our network of local and regional governments stand ready to bring their strength and expertise to the international community and join all levels of government to collaborate towards a sustainable future.”

The UrbanEra4Life is built on the success of ten years of ICLEI’s Resilient Cities Congress in Bonn. More than 350 cities from 86 countries, and hundreds of other leaders and practitioners have gathered every year to share strategies on building resilience at the local level. 2019 was a record year, with over 550 attendees.

This year, in a joint effort with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the presidency of COP24, ICLEI and Bonn brought over 40 city leaders to the table during a presidential session of the Bonn Climate Talks.

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In its role as UNFCCC focal point for Local Governments and Municipal Authorities, ICLEI is invested in building multilevel collaboration. “This promising first joint session during the Bonn Climate Talks 2019 on mobility and adaptation demonstrates the potential of an annual forum,” said Yunus Arikan, Head of Global Advocacy at ICLEI.

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About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

For more information: <https://iclei.org/>

About City of Bonn

The Federal City of Bonn is Germany’s United Nations City, home to 20 UN entities and to many international organizations. Bonn is climate-active and fosters decentralized cooperation for two decades and has just launched its first Sustainability Strategy. Mayor Ashok Sridharan became president of ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability in 2018.

<https://international.bonn.de>

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