



ICLEI World Congress
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Malmö Commitment on Inclusive & Equitable Communities

Introduction

Cities and towns all around the world are vibrant hubs of people with the strength, knowledge and capacity to drive significant change. Nowadays, cities are facing multiple, interconnected challenges: the climate and nature crises as well as social injustices. Cities and communities can be part of the solution to today's challenges, encouraging sustainable approaches, innovation, adaptability, participation, and inclusiveness.

The climate emergency calls for action now. Cities and communities are vital in the process of ensuring a green transition. The transition must however be inclusive and fair if cities are to contribute to the goals set in the Paris Agreement, as well as more broadly to the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, cities need to work with a holistic approach working with all aspects of sustainability.

People in cities, towns and communities are powerful agents for addressing both social and environmental injustices. As local governments, we must follow rights-based approaches and include all community members in policy processes. Empowering members of the community to participate in decision making processes gives people ownership and an active role in the development of local environments. We need to further support individual and community agency by providing equitable access to resources and services in ways that are sensitive to gender, race, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity and income. We should reshape measures of success beyond GDP, and focus on the wellbeing of all members of the community, and embrace diversity in our cities and towns, which will lead to inclusive, prosperous, resilient and sustainable communities for all, locally and globally.

There are many challenges, but even more opportunities if we work together.

The Malmö Commitment

We commit to prioritizing all people and social equity at the core of local sustainable development.

Sustainable cities, towns and communities are ones in which everyone is given a voice, where policy making is inclusive and participatory, and all community members are represented and valued. As local governments, we shall strive to develop inclusive policy processes that engage individuals, groups and communities in public governance and urban development, and allow all people to prosper. We shall work to adopt whole-of-society approaches to decision-making and policy development, and in doing so, prioritize partnering and participatory approaches, creative expression, and the facilitation of safe space for inclusive engagement. We shall strongly value social and cultural diversity and reflect this in policies, strategies, plans and actions.

How successful we are in resolving the climate, environmental and sustainability crises will be directly correlated to how inclusive and participatory our sustainable development policies are.

We commit to fostering safe, vibrant cities, towns, and communities for all to live, work, and thrive.

In recent decades we have seen increasing global and regional migration pushed by war, economic hardship or the climate crisis. Cities are also destinations of internal migration, places where people from different parts of our countries move to pursue their dreams, to work or educate themselves. Our cities and towns are well positioned to absorb new arrivals and to leverage these human resources, talent, and innovation.

Stability and peace are vital to achieving greater economic and social progress. We as local governments must build safe and peaceful cities and towns for all through processes that support social integration, strengthened communities and social cohesion. In this role, we must create and

foster opportunities and spaces that celebrate and showcase diversity within communities and connect community members with one another.

We shall also pursue and support policies and programs that actively reduce climate and economic stressors that may lead to, or are causing, forced or reluctant migration, as well as design programs that welcome and support new arrivals to our communities.

We shall strive to foster environmentally-sound human wellbeing through three key elements:

1. **Our cities and towns shall be for all**, and we as local governments shall ensure that all persons have equitable access to good-quality, safe, secure, affordable and sustainable resources and services in the following ways:
 - Adopt whole systems perspectives to measure and implement sustainable food, water, sanitation, energy, communications and waste systems;
 - Ensure fair and equitable access to quality, affordable housing, addressing and further preventing homelessness and housing overcrowding;
 - Use planning as a tool for more integrated cities and neighborhoods;
 - Invest in sustainable bulk infrastructure development;
 - Promote decentralised service delivery approaches;
 - Manage unplanned development and invest in upgrading unplanned settlements;
 - Support individual access to land tenure;
 - Develop effective financial models to support infrastructure expansion while ensuring affordable, quality services for all community members.

2. We shall promote **safe & healthy urban spaces and communities** by prioritizing both the health of people, as well as that of the planet, through our policies and activities, such as:
 - Creating open public space that supports community engagement, artistic expression and mental wellbeing;

- Planning and fostering neighbourhoods and communities that contribute to positive quality of life, providing safe places for all to live, work and thrive, promoting neighbourliness and community cohesion, and supporting healthy air quality and ambient noise levels;
- Designing cities that promote healthy, sustainable lifestyles by creating opportunities for exercise, providing supportive infrastructure for convenient, reliable mobility, and maintaining affordable, accessible, nourishing food environments;
- Supporting access to affordable and accessible healthcare programmes and facilities;
- Integrating nature into urban built environments through nature-based solutions that ensure environmental regeneration and ecological function, while also contributing positively to the physical and mental health of community members.

3. We shall ensure **just transitions to a sustainable local economy, providing opportunities for dignified livelihoods to all** by:

- Creating decent employment, particularly for youth and women. These jobs should support new local economies that are productive and not extractive, that contribute to restoring and enhancing the environment, that manage climate risk, or are otherwise supportive of safe, healthy, sustainable communities and lifestyles;
- Supporting employment and local entrepreneurship by enabling access to finance and affordable credit, supporting private sector forums, and fostering alternative business models that focus on delivering social and environmental benefits;
- Ensuring that labour supply matches the needs and demands of emerging markets and industries, through investment in skills development programmes.

In order to bring about the change we are engaging to in creating and supporting inclusive and equitable cities, towns and communities, we hereby commit to:

- Collaborate with community stakeholders to identify the key sustainability challenges that must be prioritized within the community, and the social dimensions against which each challenge must be addressed;
- Design smart social equity indicators to measure and monitor our progress in addressing key sustainability challenges facing our communities;
- Report our progress and share our successes and lessons learned with other committed local governments to develop a pool of knowledge for further advancing equitable sustainable local development around the world;
- Encourage the local governments of neighbouring communities, and those with which we work and partner, to commit to the Malmö Commitment and further enhance our collective efforts.