

**DARING  
CITIES  
2020**

# DARING CITIES 2020

## KNOW MORE, ACT BETTER AND LEAD TOGETHER

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

**NACHHALTIGKEIT.  
SUSTAINABILITY.  
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for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

The State Government of  
North Rhine-Westphalia



Foundation for International Dialogue  
of the Savings Bank in Bonn

## DARING CITIES 2020: KNOW MORE, ACT BETTER, LEAD TOGETHER

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Daring Cities is a global, action-oriented virtual forum, designed by ICLEI and the city of Bonn, to empower urban leaders to tackle the climate crisis, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The forum took place for the first time 7-28 October 2020.

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

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## **GINO VAN BEGIN**

Secretary General, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

## **FOREWORD**

ICLEI works with more than 1,750 local and regional governments in every region. Over the years, we have learned to recognize daringness as very context-specific: Lima's audacious actions differ from Bonn's. However, Daring Cities 2020 as an event uncovered important commonalities.

We believe cities and regions that take exceptional climate mitigation measures and ensure enhanced resilience of their communities - all while actively building the structural means for equitable and inclusive action - are models of the daring approach.

They are jurisdictions making systemic changes to achieve climate neutrality: they declare a climate emergency, adopt carbon-neutrality targets, divest from fossil fuels and invest in 100% renewable energy.

They are responding to their residents who have made the call for immediate climate action to the streets. They integrate nature and principles of circularity to their climate plans and link their action to that of their national governments. Daring cities are also finding ways to embed climate action in the heart of their COVID-19 recovery plans.

The Daring Cities platform converts the bold risk taking and innovation of these pioneering cities into common resources for other communities to adapt and emulate.

Daring Cities could not have happened without major contributions from the Federal City of Bonn, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), and the Foundation for International Dialogue of the Savings Bank in Bonn.

We are grateful for and honored by the trust and boldness of our partners who shared our vision and saw the need for Daring Cities. What follows are the outcomes of this vision.

1

**INTRODUCING**

**DARING**

**CITIES**



*When ICLEI and our partners in the Federal City of Bonn and the German government began formulating a way to build on the 10-year legacy of the Resilient Cities Congress Series, we were conceiving an event that could speak to, and serve, the decade before us - humanity's best chance of preserving a livable future for its inhabitants.*

Such an undertaking called for more than just careful branding. The name needed to encapsulate the progress made by cities over the past decade to build climate resilience but, more importantly, the caliber of action happening on the ground to secure a low-emission, resilient future for their residents.

*Daring* resonated.

As a term, “daring” alludes to the calls for boldness around climate action made commonplace by determined local leaders in city halls, negotiators in the halls of the United Nations and citizen activists marching in the streets.

But “daring” moves beyond bold. Daring is audacious and introduces an element of calculated risk-taking. Indeed, the climate emergency presents uncharted waters for our planet and governments at all levels are turning toward solutions that were unimaginable a decade ago.

In this way, Daring Cities marks a shift. Whereas the Resilient Cities Congress series was shaped as a response to the catastrophe that was the 2009 UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, the next 10 years will pave the way for a new era of climate governance under the Paris Agreement. Cities are crucial to meeting the agreement’s 1.5 degree Celsius

target and climate neutrality goals at all levels of government. In the Decade of Action, local governments will not only follow national commitments - they will lead.

In a typical year, these exchanges would have happened in-person in Bonn. But 2020 proved to be an atypical year with extraordinary disruption. Due to the combined challenges of climate change and COVID-19, for many, “the very fabric of our lives has been stretched to the breaking point,” observed Mami Mizutori, Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) during Daring Cities 2020. “With COVID-19, the tragedy is we knew it was going to come.” And just as the world now is frantically responding to this outbreak, we must come to grips with the fact that, as Ms. Mizutori aptly observed, “there is no vaccine for climate change.” The impacts are here to stay.

But the need for ambitious sustainability action, also remains and cannot be postponed, but rather must be accelerated, during times of crisis. In the year when key events on the global climate and biodiversity calendars were postponed, Daring Cities became the conference where action and advocacy continued - a Conference of Cities on the Climate Emergency.



Without the ability to travel, Daring Cities successfully reimagined how we connect, shifting from in-person to a virtual platform (and from days to weeks of sessions), ultimately providing the year's most accessible space for dialogue. It was also ICLEI's most inclusive event yet, with sessions delivered in eight languages that engaged 4,500 participants in 150 countries.

## WHAT IS THE RESULT OF DARING CITIES 2020?

We see three distinct outcomes of Daring Cities. The first is that cities and regions are already acting on the climate emergency. Already, 982 cities and regions around the world have committed to one or more forms of ambitious climate action. As a unique example, all local governments in South Korea have declared a climate emergency during 2020, joining Glasgow, Scotland and Recife, Brazil, among many more. Dunedin, New Zealand, and Malmö, Sweden, have pledged divestment from fossil fuels while Tshwane, South Africa, and Orlando, USA ([page 27](#)) transition to 100% renewable energy and Turku, Finland ([page 8](#)), is on track to achieve climate neutrality by 2029.

The second outcome is that a daring approach drives momentum to respond to the climate emergency. It is built on the foundation of KNOW more, ACT better and LEAD together—the framework adopted by Daring Cities as prerequisites for local governments taking the most ambitious climate action. The framework is seen in the many cities that are striving to not only “build back better” but to go a step further and pursue a true redesign. It is embodied, for example, in the Mannheim Message, the European cities' local response to the European Union's Green Deal, which calls for systemic changes to localize the process into Local Green Deals ([page 28](#)). And it is exemplified by the Government of Japan, which announced a stepped up climate commitment during Daring Cities to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050,

## MALMÖ INVESTS IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL GREEN FUTURE



Listen to podcast

A port city that sits on one of the highest traffic waterways in the world may seem an unlikely place to have a sustainable revolution. To be sure, access to the sea has defined the Swedish city's industrial life as a shipbuilding center for two centuries. But since the 1990s, Malmö's manufacturing economy has given way to greener and more diverse industries. “[*In the past*] it's been really an industrial city, and it's not that anymore,” said Simon Chrisander, Municipal Councilor for Urban Planning and the Environment.

Part of that transition involved fostering strong city-to-city partnerships with its neighbors—including its inland sister, Lund, and Copenhagen, Denmark, across the water—in ongoing efforts to make the Oresund region Europe's first cross-border carbon neutral zone. In practice, this means Malmö will be supplied by 100 percent renewable energy by 2030, something that again requires regional cooperation to modernize an electric grid capable of carrying wind and hydropower from the north. It also calls for a radical vision of principled development, where all cities benefit from growth without taxing the environment. It's an adherence to principles that also moved the City to make a pledge to divest from fossil fuels in 2016.

In this process, Malmö looked at the various funds in which the city invests for insurance, infrastructure and other purposes, and defined a strategy to remove investments from funds tied to fossil fuel companies—a process outlined in ICLEI's Climate Neutrality Framework, and which 67 other cities, including Dunedin, New Zealand, and [New York City, USA, have had success with](#). The next step is to re-invest these freed up financial assets into climate programs and clean energy. Geothermal could be a major source of Malmö's energy generation, and already in the City's Western Harbor District, a geothermal heat pump system supplies energy to area residents. Chrisander is confident the transition will continue with mindful budgeting: “*We need to really focus on what we can do on a local level.*”



### TURKU'S CIRCULAR APPROACH TO RAPID CLIMATE NEUTRALITY



Watch session

Tackling production-based greenhouse gas emissions is critical to the success of the Paris Agreement, but it's only half

of the picture. Consumption-based emissions—the so-called indirect emissions associated with food choices, travel habits, supply chains and many more activities that keep cities running but are not directly tied to local production—are proving to be the blind spot of current mitigation efforts.

The Finnish city of Turku recognizes the gap but is determined to not let it stand in the way of its goal to become climate neutral by 2029. *“How we make and use products and how we produce food generates almost half of the emissions in our current economic system because the production of goods and infrastructure generates emissions all along value chains,”* said Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku.

The City's Circular Turku roadmap identifies non-production emissions and ways to tackle them in five key sectors which also address zero waste: food, transport and logistics, buildings and construction, energy and water. For example, the city has supported a city-owned Smart Chemistry Park, an industrial symbiosis initiative aimed at recycling industrial side-streams into high-value chemical products. Technology increasing the recycling rate of e-vehicles lithium-ion batteries, have been transferred into large branches of industry in Finland — a telling example of how local innovations can contribute to the low carbon transition at the national level. In addition, [Turku is placing a strong emphasis on ensuring city-owned assets and public procurement meet carbon-neutrality criteria](#). *“Our economy has been growing steadily and these investments have created new jobs, which helped us being resilient to the COVID-19 crisis,”* said Mayor Arve.

working through a zero-carbon cities platform to deliver a prosperous, resilient post-COVID-19 society ([page 24](#)).

The third outcome is that local and regional governments need, demand and deserve this convening place for integrated and supported local action. When we took this idea to our network of local governments and to our partners, the answer was resounding: Yes, we want this space to reflect, collaborate and accelerate. Not as a usual climate conference, but as a space to explore ideas and areas that, at a first glance, might seem unconventional in relation to climate action. This means elevating discussions on climate issues to a holistic dialogue that includes cross-cutting themes, including biodiversity and nature-based solutions, waste minimization and the circular economy, sustainable urban mobility and ecologistics, and sustainable public procurement. Bonn, Germany ([page 19](#)) is applying this holistic approach through its Voluntary Local Review of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Across the forum, Daring Cities shined a spotlight on actions local governments are already taking to combat the climate emergency. Each embodies knowing and leading as part of their acting, and many adopt integrated approaches.

The many innovative and ambitious climate actions and policies being implemented around the world are as diverse as the cities, towns and regions responsible for them. In all cases, these daring actions are more template than blueprint: They show what worked in one place very well but invite communities everywhere to adapt them to a local context and make them their own.

Some of these approaches are highlighted as “Daring Cities Case Stories” in the pages that follow; many more are featured on the Daring Cities website. That is where the forum for knowing, acting and leading together continues. These are courageous local governments.

**This is Daring Cities.**

2500

Average Time  
**1.51 Sec**  
+ 2% From last Week

Total Males  
**2,500**  
+ 34% From last Week

Total Females  
**4,567**  
+ 12% From last Week

Total Collections  
**2,315**  
+ 34% From last Week

Total Connections  
**7,325**  
+ 34% From last Week

User Signup    Converted Sales    Profit Made

Some shitty stuff 1  
Some shitty stuff 2  
Some shitty stuff 3  
Some shitty stuff 4

Link One    Link Two

Active users    All users vs users affected  
cash

Daily active users  
Sessions

Disbursement	Progress
Marketing	30%
...	10%
...	20%
...	15%

# 2 THE LARGEST GATHERING OF CITIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

# DARING CITIES IN NUMBERS

## PARTICIPANTS



**4668** attendees

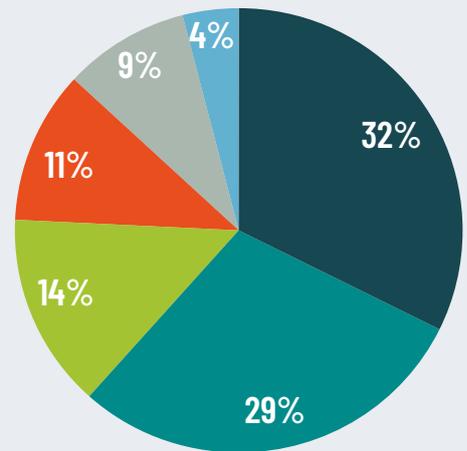


**150** countries



**850+** local and regional governments

## PARTICIPANTS BY REGION



■ Europe
 ■ Latin America & Caribbean  
■ Asia
 ■ Africa  
■ North America
 ■ Oceania

## PARTICIPANTS BY SECTOR



## EVENT



**3** weeks



**475+** speakers



**98** sessions

## SPEAKERS INCLUDED

**UN** Secretary General

**8** UN Agency leaders

**9** national ministers

**150+** mayors and city leaders

## SOCIAL MEDIA & PRESS



**DARING CITIES SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS**

**340,000**



**#DARINGCITIES REACH**

**250,000**



**MEDIA HITS REACH**

**234,061,745** aggregate readership



**BLOG HITS REACH**

**841,299** aggregate readership



# DARING CITIES HIGHLIGHTS

## THE DARING CITIES PODCAST



Across seven episodes that aired alongside the conference, host Julia Scott took listeners on a journey to seven daring cities in places as diverse as the Philippines, Finland, Japan, Sweden, Argentina and the USA.

## COUNTDOWN AND TEDxDARINGCITIES



We partnered with TEDx and Future Stewards to bring the global Countdown initiative to Daring Cities. Watched by 15 million people, the event brought together diverse voices, some of whom we heard from at TEDxDaringCities, to reach a broad global audience about the challenges and solutions for climate change.

## THE RACE-TO-ZERO EMAIL BOOT CAMP

Five emails, delivered weekly, explored the climate neutrality conversations happening at Daring Cities through case studies, articles and interactive tools. Nearly 100 subscribers engaged in the collaboration between ICLEI and apolitical.



## INNOVATE4CITIES

Research and innovation are instrumental to advanced city action. Spanning global time zones across 24 hours and five region-specific, generative sessions, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy brought cities and partners together to answer key research questions.



## UNU-EHS PARTNERSHIP

Through the lens of transdisciplinary exploration, United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), a think tank of the United Nations, served as the main research partner for Daring Cities 2020. Three sessions were designed to share cutting-edge research and best practices, inform on capacity development materials available and thereby strengthen the dialogue between researchers and city leaders. Acknowledging that sustainable change can only be achieved when communities have an active role in the process, the sessions focused on ways to reduce urban vulnerabilities from natural hazards and climate change, including holistic planning, introducing nature-based solutions, and establishing new stakeholder coalitions.

# UNITED NATIONS LEADERS AT DARING CITIES

These leaders joined mayors, governors, secretaries, councillors, and other leaders from 850+ cities and regions in 150 countries.



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**

United Nations Secretary-General



**INGER ANDERSEN**

Executive Director, UN Environment



**MAIMUNAH SHARIF**

Executive Director, UN Habitat



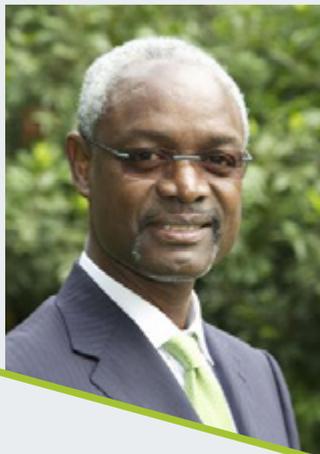
**PATRICIA ESPINOSA**

Executive Secretary, UN Framework  
Convention on Climate Change



**ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA**

Executive Secretary, UN Convention on  
Biological Diversity



## **IBRAHIM THIAW**

Executive Secretary, UN Convention on Combating Desertification



## **MARINA PONTI**

Director, UN SDG Action Campaign



## **MAMI MIZUTORI**

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction; Head, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



## **ANNE LARIGAUDERIE**

Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)



# NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS AT DARING CITIES

These leaders joined mayors, governors, secretaries, councillors, and other leaders from 850+ cities and regions in 150 countries.



**H.E. UKHNAAGIIN KHÜRELSÜKH**  
Prime Minister, Mongolia



**H.E. SVENJA SCHULZE**  
Minister of Environment, Germany



**H.E. SHINJIRO KOIZUMI**  
Minister of Environment, Japan



**H.E. SERGIO COSTA**  
Minister of Environment, Italy



**H.E. CAROLINA SCHMIDT**  
Minister of Environment, Chile; UNFCCC COP25  
President



## **NORBERT BARTHLE**

Parliamentary Secretary of State, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany



## **RT.HON. ALOK SHARMA**

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, UK; UNFCCC COP26 President-Designate



## **H.E. FRANCINE BARON**

former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador, Interim CEO of the Climate Resilience Execution Agency of Dominica (CREAD), Dominica



## **NIGEL TOPPING**

COP26 High Level Climate Action Champion



## **GONZALO MUÑOZ**

COP25 High Level Climate Action Champion



## **H.E. MANUEL PULGAR VIDAL**

former Minister of the Environment, Peru; President of UNFCCC COP20, Head of WWF's Climate and Energy Practice



# 3 THE DARING CITIES APPROACH



*We originally envisioned Daring Cities as a forum to convene local leaders, climate science researchers, and city sustainability practitioners in Bonn over several days in order to provide a spark to the important work that occurred between 2010 and 2019 at Resilient Cities Congress.*

After all, Resilient Cities played a key role in mainstreaming local-level resilience into global agreements—including the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the New Urban Agenda—and contributed city-focused research to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Given what we learned over the past decade about the urgency of the climate emergency, a boosted event in 2020 was called for. Then, everything changed.

With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, all sectors of society across every corner of the globe turned upside down. Key moments for global climate work ground to a halt. Yet, the science did not change. No fewer than 6,000 studies and thousands of experts informed the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, telling us that we have only 10 years left to take the level of action necessary to avoid the worst impacts of a climate catastrophe rapidly coming into focus. We are not facing a 2050 challenge, but a 2030 challenge. Cities and regions must now internalize this shorter timeline, rebalance their budgets and shift project priorities.

Many local governments are already recalibrating around this reality. Many more are ready to learn and adopt the best responses from leading cities. Daring Cities was designed to serve each, regardless of where a city or region is starting.

We structured Daring Cities around a 3-pillar approach that recognizes locally relevant, up-to-date data and information on climate change as a prerequisite to ambitious action. And that

## BONN LOCALIZES THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



When the United Nations announced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, unveiling the Sustainable

Development Goals, it presented a 15-year roadmap whereby countries could tackle the interlinked challenges of poverty, inequality, biodiversity loss, climate change and more in a shared vision for comprehensive sustainability action. Nations show their contributions by submitting regular Voluntary National Reviews, or VNRs, to the UN as a way to track their progress in support of the Global Goals over time. Cities have no formal mechanism to do the same, despite [65 percent of SDG subgoals requiring local-level support in order to be achieved](#).

The Federal City of Bonn took the visionary step to develop a “Voluntary Local Review” of the SDGs, entering the city into a global conversation initiated by New York City. *“This publication shows how Bonn is concretely setting out on the path to a fairer and more sustainable society. At the same time, it also highlights the role that cities should play in addressing current global challenges,”* affirms Marina Ponti, Director of the UN SDG Action Campaign based in Bonn. Bonn is one of the first cities both worldwide and in Germany to present a VLR.

The city structured its first VLR to follow the framework of Bonn's municipal Sustainability Strategy, which address six fields of action, including mobility, climate and energy, natural resources, work and economy, social participation and gender equality, and global responsibility. On the basis of 46 indicators, trend patterns illustrate how sustainable development is progressing in Bonn, and gives residents a chance to engage in shaping the city they want to live in. For instance, through the VLR process, Bonn found that per-capita carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced by about 25 percent between 1990 and 2016 and that it is Germany's leading city for renewable energy, with a renewables mix currently at 72 percent and expanding. *“Bonn has continually been adapting indicators; the VLR takes this reporting to the next and global level,”* said Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn. *“Our citizens and our children are right to claim this future from us.”*



### KOREAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SHOW CLIMATE SOLIDARITY



Read more

Whereas the concept of a climate emergency is straightforward—local governments acknowledge that we are now in an urgent and serious

situation due to climate change as a result of humanity's environmental overshoot—the political will needed to declare a climate emergency requires courage.

To do so, a government admits that climate change exists and that action up to this point is not enough to limit potentially catastrophic risk to the lives of its residents. And although [1,830 jurisdictions in 31 countries have issued a declaration](#), perhaps none have done so with as much solidarity as the local governments of South Korea.

In the largest single signing of jurisdictions, 226 of the 228 local governments in the country declared a climate emergency during the Korea National Assembly in June. *“As proved through the cooperative action model of national and local governments in the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of local governments is crucial in responding to the climate crises that would require a much higher level of cooperation between national and local than the COVID-19,”* said Yeom Tae-young, Mayor of Suwon and Chairman of the National Association of Mayors. The signing was all the more courageous for moving beyond acceptance to signing onto steps to avoid disaster: expanding renewable energy while achieving energy independence, working with citizens on action, and urging the national government to commit to climate neutrality. Mayor Yeom captured this spirit of daring unity: *“This declaration, made in solidarity, will serve as a determinative opportunity for local governments throughout Korea.”*

daring action—moonshot initiatives more than iterative approaches—is essential for joint climate leadership, given what we know now.

**KNOW more** presents the most cutting-edge research and information on climate change with city and region relevance. It brings the latest data, innovations, and necessary skills into focus for local practitioners to move from learning to doing.

**ACT better** showcases action happening on the ground now. Acting better spans climate adaptation and resilience, progress toward renewable energy goals, inclusive approaches, and climate action that integrates with biodiversity and circularity.

**LEAD together** showcases dozens of case studies — and the inspiring leaders behind them — for effective governance, finance, and partnerships.

Interlocking and embodied in the boldest actions, the pillars played out in the conference program through a research forum (KNOW) with live, interactive workshops followed by facilitated small-group discussions; in city showcases (ACT), where interview-style chats explored what daring action looks like through examples and gave room for attendee questions; and in “country in focus” panel discussions (LEAD) that gave concrete examples of the multi-level governance that is necessary for climate work to succeed.



*“In Malmö, we understand the importance of knowing more. We actively work together with our local academic and research partners in our climate action work, making sure we understand risk and challenges facing us today and tomorrow.”*

**Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh**  
Mayor, City of Malmö, Sweden



## WHAT DOES A DARING CITY DO?

Based on the actions shared during Daring Cities 2020, trends emerged in the practices of daring cities. Daring cities actively seek information and stay open to science, adopt and adapt the boldest solutions technically and politically feasible, and remain unafraid to show climate leadership by working across levels of government, teaching others, and engaging with a wide range of partners.

**Knowing more** means bringing the latest climate science down to on-the-ground decisions—but also bringing new types of information into the traditional climate conversation.

What became clear as Daring Cities progressed is that considerations for biodiversity and systems-thinking around circularity both have strong linkages to climate action. An excellent example was from Vincent Kayanja, Mayor of Entebbe, Uganda, who described his city's waste-to-wealth program as "moving money generated from recycling to families most affected by climate change".



Or when we learned from Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Science-

Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) that measures such as "green space, parks, and green roofs not only promote biodiversity, but also help mitigate climate change by reducing heat island effects and (support better) air quality."

The same way the IPCC has used its research to galvanize the global community around the severity of the climate emergency, IPBES' research is triggering the level of international action we need to tackle the biodiversity crisis.



*"Giving public officials the opportunity to highlight the good work they are doing in the world stage helps them stay motivated and helps others muster the courage to evolve."*

**Attendee feedback**

For example, [Valerie Plante, Mayor of Montreal, Canada, shared news of her city's goal of creating Canada's largest park](#) — which, at 8,000 hectares once complete, will be eight times larger than New York City's Central Park—tying this initiative in with the conviction that cities need to change how they approach climate change by dramatically "rethinking urban planning".

**Acting better** means implementing these dramatic shifts. The best actors make structural changes in the way local governments operate to address resilience alongside mitigation and to consider community voices as among the



most important to be heard—often and early—in the development of new policies.

These changes are embodied in the approved bill from Sorocaba, Brazil, that mandates sweeping transparency in how each administration sets goals, a shift which resulted in an otherwise routine transportation update to build the longest bicycle path in the country. They are also captured in the [City of Bratislava, Slovenia, that sees cultural heritage as an asset for resilient recovery](#), and in one county in Texas, USA, where residents have been put in charge of their own wildfire evacuation response for the first time. “Community preparedness is built person by person, street by street, through individual preparedness,” said Brigid Shea, Commissioner of Precinct 2 in Travis County.



Chief among structural change is achieving climate neutrality. Goals to reach climate neutrality must become universal. Those daring cities pursuing this necessary target must look beyond normal



*“Thank you very much for this invaluable opportunity to be part of such a great initiative. The exposure and feedback we received from the financial experts was very constructive in helping us to develop our project proposal even further.”*

**Rulien Volschenk**

Environmental Management Officer, Overberg District Municipality, South Africa, Daring Cities attendee, and participant in the “Test Your Pitch” session

climate action planning measures to integrate climate considerations into aspects of their work where this has not been done before. Cities like Turku, Finland, ([page 8](#)) and [regions like the Australian Capital Territory are getting close to achieving this goal](#).

The launch of ICLEI’s Climate Neutrality Framework at Daring Cities helps cities to do this by augmenting ICLEI’s integrated climate program, GreenClimateCities, and its assess-act-accelerate model with three key pillars: 1) drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 2) divest from fossil fuels, and repurpose and reinvest in regenerative and renewable asset classes, and 3) offset and compensate any remaining emissions that cannot be otherwise reduced, removed or avoided.



“Reaching carbon neutrality brings us important social, environmental and economic benefits, and particularly in the transition to clean energy,” said Carolina Schmidt, Minister of Environment for Chile and COP 25 President, pointing to the \$30 billion in net economic benefit her country is expecting to realize on its path to climate neutrality and “disproving that you must choose between climate responsibility and economic growth—this is not true!”

**Leading together** means showing courage in the face of political or financial obstacles to climate action and, where great success is found, amplifying those messages in a spirit of collective progress. Leaders are learners and doers, but also powerful storytellers who



look for opportunities to bring their global peer cities along.

In effect, daring leaders are teachers that look like Recife, Brazil, which this year introduced climate education as required curriculum in schools; and like Taoyuan City in Chinese Taipei, which after recognizing the immense potential to address emissions in urban freight, helped to launch the ICLEI Ecologistics Principles during Daring Cities so that its global peers could bring efficient freight delivery and climate-friendly business models home to their own communities.

When it comes to leadership in finance, cities are deploying creative new instruments to meet the \$19 trillion backlog for low-carbon infrastructure, including in Cape Town, South Africa, where the city's first green bond was four times oversubscribed, showing the appetite for these kinds of investments.



Watch session

"We need to make sure we use the funds most effectively to catalyze and leverage private investment,"

said Barbara Buchner, Executive Director for Climate Policy Initiatives at the Climate Finance Leadership Alliance. "At the moment, we're not there." But progress is being made: The Climate Finance Gap Fund has opened with partnership leadership that brings the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, and national governments together with local government networks such as ICLEI and the Global Covenant of Mayors to support early-phase urban climate projects. Additionally, during Daring Cities 2020, the Alliance announced the launch of its Green City Finance Directory, an open, online resource to help subnational governments and stakeholders identify appropriate project preparation facilities.

One of most important forms of leading together is through multilevel governance. During Daring Cities' second week, Shinjiro Koizumi, Japan's Minister of Environment, set his country's intention to raise its climate ambition in cooperation with a net-zero cities approach, saying "local governments should play a key role."

## DELHI TACKLES MULTI-SECTOR AIR POLLUTION



Watch session

Delhi has suffered from air pollution for many years, with industry and automobiles also contributing to the dark haze that chokes the city and its residents, contributing to thousands of deaths each year. But Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, India, and his colleagues are actively addressing the issue, working across multiple sectors, including energy and transportation to reduce smog-producing chemicals, as well as using nature-based solutions to reduce deadly particulates.

Among the most daring interventions is an odd-even traffic-rationing measure, whereby private vehicles with registration numbers ending with an odd number are allowed on roads on odd dates while those with even digits are allowed on even dates. Controversial and met with mixed results in other places, some critics warned the scheme would be ineffective or worse. "People cautioned it's too harsh or political suicide," said Kejriwal. "But we implemented aggressively anyway."

To detractors' surprise, residents embraced the idea and drivers voluntarily came forward. Pollution dropped nearly 15 percent. Additional measures are shuttering fossil-fueled power plants in a national shift toward renewable energy.



### QUELIMANE SHARES AFRICA'S FIRST CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN



Watch session

Sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest-urbanizing region on the planet, driven by a population growing so fast it is anticipated to double by 2050 and by formerly rural places that are [increasingly dense enough to be reclassified as cities](#). These changes bring great opportunity but also immense challenges. These same cities are also some of the most vulnerable to climate change. For them to become more resilient, significant funding will be required to enable climate adaptation.

*"We know that less than 3 percent of global climate finance flows to Africa,"* said Manuel de Araùjo, Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique, *"and it is almost impossible to know how much of this flows to the local level, where climate finance is needed most"*. Mayor de Araùjo is right to be worried about climate change; Quelimane is a coastal community reliant on fishing and exporting the fruits of one of the largest coconut plantations in the world. His city is the urban-rural nexus built from brick and soil. However, as was made evident when Cyclone Idai struck Quelimane in 2019, these elements are no match to water, unless careful preparedness measures are in place.

In response to climate risk, Quelimane took the step to develop Africa's first local adaptation plan. The City worked through the UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Making Cities Resilient campaign's 10 essentials, which include creating early-warning systems and rehearsing preparedness with the community, mapping risk from flooding and other impacts, and making critical infrastructure disaster-resilient. One of the toughest "essentials", however, is creating financial incentives. After all, most of the tiny portion of global climate financing flowing into the region is allocated to climate change mitigation, not adaptation, despite the need. Still, Mayor Araujo remains committed. *"Mayors are there to protect public health while ensuring security and well-being of residents in cities"*, he said. *"We must ensure effective citizen engagement, implement multilevel collaboration and secure staffing as our best ways to overcome"* the challenge of climate change.



Watch session

In Japan, the number of zero carbon cities, local governments announcing their commitments to zero carbon emissions by 2050—have surged to 163 from just four within a year. "The coverage exceeds over half of Japan's population at 70 million people. I am confident that this positive trend will lead to the realization of zero carbon cities by 2050." Just five days later, Prime Minister, Yoshihide Suga, announced that Japan is committed to climate neutrality by 2050. Local governments will be central partners in meeting the target.



*"It's not an easy thing in an increasingly polarized world to be a daring city leader."*

**Lisa Helps**

Mayor, City of Victoria, Canada,  
at the Daring Cities 2020 Opening, Session 2



**4**  
**DARING**  
**CITIES**  
**OUTCOMES**



*If you are one of the more than 4,500 people who tuned into a Daring Cities' session (or perhaps several), you might have felt swept up in the stories of audacious action happening in communities around the world. Somewhere between Bonn and Bogor, you might also have become convinced that the battle for a 1.5-degree future will be won or lost in cities—and that progress is being made. You would not be wrong.*

At the same time, we should not forget that Daring Cities aligns with more than 25 years of international climate processes and that, for most of that time, cities and regions struggled to be heard. Not until COP 20 in Lima in 2014, with the launch of the NAZCA portal, was the visibility of local contributions made evident to the parties of the UNFCCC. This connectivity between local authorities and the national-level negotiations was a milestone: Only one year later, it helped to ensure that the Paris Agreement is an inclusive compact complete with a preamble that recognizes the engagement of all levels of governments. The United Nations Secretary General, eight ministers, and seven UN agency chiefs spoke at Daring Cities. Their many inspiring messages chart a course through the uneven waters ahead. But between their words, is there something being said by the degree of high-level representation alone?



Perhaps it is this: Cities matter! Or, as Manuel Pulgar Vidal, former Minister of the

Environment for Peru and President of UNFCCC COP 20 said during a TEDxDaringCities session, “Cities are places of convergence. They are places where authority converges with citizenry [...] where climate, health, and nature converge. They are the places where we can connect national aspirations with local needs.”

The three decades of advocacy on behalf of local governments by ICLEI and our partners has moved from a largely voluntary task to now form part of our official contribution. When the global pandemic pushed back key moments of international climate negotiations, Daring Cities was able to offer a space for reflection and acceleration on climate to continue. It opened a new moment of opportunity, tailor-made for cities and regions, and many leaders showed up to be welcomed into this space.

With this recognition—that local action is global action—we hope that these three main outcomes of Daring Cities will continue this spirit of collective, concerted momentum and steer us into the Decade of Action.

## OUTCOME 1: CITIES AND REGIONS ARE ALREADY ACTING ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

“I am urging governments, businesses and cities to take six climate-positive actions as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, at the opening of Daring Cities. “Invest in green jobs. Do not bail out polluting industries, especially coal. End fossil fuel subsidies and place a price on carbon. Take climate risks into account in all financial and policy decisions. Work together. And, most important, leave no one behind.”

Daring Cities proved that cities are heeding this call. Already, [nearly 1,000 cities and regions around the world have committed to one or more forms of ambitious climate action, including declaring climate emergency, adopting carbon neutrality targets, divesting from fossil fuels, and transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy.](#) As a unique example, all local governments in the Republic of Korea have declared a climate emergency over the course of 2020. From Barcelona to Bonn, Turku and Tokyo, cities are making progress toward climate-neutrality goals and transitioning to all-renewable energy. New York City, Cape Town and Dunedin have pledged divestment from fossil fuels. Daring Cities 2020 also revealed that many more have the potential to move in these directions.

We also learned that local governments are not working in isolation but pushing their nations forward. Because [cities have primary authority over nearly one-third of urban emissions abatement, this multilevel climate action will be critical.](#) The Government of Japan is a bold example highlighted in this report, building its 2050 climate-neutrality target on the foundation in cooperation with net-zero cities.



### ORLANDO'S 100% RENEWABLE FUTURE IS NEARING



Those who can look past the dreamy castles and Mickey Mouse ears will come to see that there are really two Orlandos. One is the

home of Walt Disney World, with 10 theme parks within its city limits. The other is a model for sustainability for midsize cities across the United States. As one of the most-visited cities in the U.S., Orlando welcomes about 200,000 people every single day, which creates enormous sustainability challenges. “I always think about the 75 million people; the amount of toilet flushes and the amount of waste that somebody produces—about a tonne per person on average here when they come to Orlando,” said Chris Castro, the City’s Director of Sustainability & Resilience, during a Daring Cities Podcast recording session.

As a peninsula, Florida does not have the ability to tap into the same renewable energy sources that other parts of the country do.

Orlando’s renewable energy strategy involves both installed rooftop solar and subscriptions to community solar projects. Before the start of 2020, Orlando had installed 1 megawatt of solar on government rooftops. By spring 2020, the City was powered by 16 megawatts of community-sourced solar and in June 2020, Orlando flipped the switch on 108 megawatts of purchased solar. Altogether, this rapid progress represents a more than 100-fold increase in Orlando’s solar capacity in a single year. To fill the remaining demand, the City is innovating with floating solar arrays, or “floatovoltaics”, which the City is piloting like big, shiny lily pads in the middle of retention ponds. These achievements have earned Orlando several designations, including as a U.S. Department of Energy Solar America City and a spot in ICLEI’s 100% Renewable Energy Cities & Regions Network.



### MANNHEIM LOCALIZES THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL



Watch session

First presented in late 2019 by the European Commission as a sweeping package of climate policies, the European Green Deal

delivers an overarching aim to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. The Green Deal gives a continent-wide boost to a clean, circular economy while at the same time restoring biodiversity and cutting pollution.

In a striking outcome from this year's Mannheim2020 Conference on European Sustainable Cities and Towns, the City of Mannheim, Germany, and its event partners issued the Mannheim Message, a local response to the European Green Deal. It calls for five core systemic changes and nine policy shifts needed to bring about transformation for a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Europe.

*"Seventy-five percent of global carbon-dioxide emissions are produced by cities, but also 65 percent of the SDGs will need to happen on the local level,"* Peter Kurz, Mayor of Mannheim said at Daring Cities, adding that cities manage two-thirds of public investment and many are responsible for supplying basic services to residents. For this reason, the Mannheim Message demands that local governments be considered partners in not only the deployment, but the early development, of Green Deals at all levels. Mayors across Europe have endorsed the Message, which will work now to become a "Mannheim Process" of localization.

But overall, only 113 of the 164 NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC show even moderate urban content. We will need many more examples like Japan, or the [City of Kigali alongside the Republic of Rwanda, where multi-level climate action delivered Africa's first Nationally Determined Contribution.](#) Rwanda's participation in the NDC Partnership, an initiative supported by ICLEI and for which more than half of participating countries have a subnational component, points to the importance of these types of collaborations.

## OUTCOME 2: A DARING APPROACH DRIVES MOMENTUM TO RESPOND TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY



Watch session

We are approaching the five-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement, Patricia Espinosa, Executive

Secretary of the UNFCCC, reminded us at Daring Cities. "Celebrations for reaching this milestone must be tempered by the sobering reality of how much more work needs to be done. The climate battle will be won or lost in our urban centers." Daring Cities put forward an approach to know more, act better, and lead together as a framework for winning this battle.

We see "knowing more" as a prerequisite for any city or region to take bold climate commitments and actions. Cities and regions must have access to and be enabled to turn locally relevant scientific findings into policy. At the same time, local leaders must be able to communicate the need for change to residents and stakeholders and include them in the transformation.

We have seen unprecedented citizen engagement over the past few years, and youth voices in particular have pushed city leadership to act better. Heeta Lakhani, an environmental



educator and youth activist who works with YOUNGO, the official children and youth constituency affiliated with the UN, reminds us to be mindful of the fact city agendas directly affect the future of youth: “When you’re talking about making decisions for 2030, 2040, 2050... years down the line... you’re (also) talking about young people who are going to be implementing these decisions for years to come.”

This is part of “democratizing the dialogue” surrounding climate change, said Farhana Yamin, lawyer and leading climate activist. “[The Paris Agreement] gave us the North Star of Net Zero by 2050. So where are the other compass points? To me, climate justice is social justice, is racial justice, and we must put all of those as the compass points to what we are going towards and doing.” Daring Cities is set apart from COP and other official negotiations in its openness as a place where citizens of the world can engage regardless of income or geography.

The many innovative and ambitious climate actions being implemented around the world are as diverse as the daring cities, towns and regions responsible for them. This report highlighted a few examples for how cities are “acting better”: Quelimane, in Mozambique, issued the region’s first climate adaptation plan; Bonn has reviewed its progress on and aligned its processes with the SDGs; and Delhi, in India, pursued aggressive multi-sector approaches to tackle urban air pollution.



Watch session

We heard from many more cities across the three weeks of dialogue. It is clear that all cities and regions can do more when “leading together” with other levels of government, civil society stakeholders and the finance sector. One example of this pillar is the Making Cities Resilient initiative, which launched its second phase at Daring Cities as a cross-stakeholder platform for improving local resilience through city-to-city learning, exchanges and technical expertise. This is the type of collaboration which can support governments like that of Dominica, which is working to become the world’s first climate-resilient nation by 2030.

## BUENOS AIRES CHARTS A POST-COVID GREEN RECOVERY WITH PROCUREMENT



Listen to podcast

Procurement accounts for 12 percent of GDP in OECD countries, and up to 20 percent in many countries of the Global South. Two-thirds of that is spent at the sub-national level. At the same time, local and regional governments operate on the frontlines of the climate emergency, committing to 100-percent renewables or aiming for zero-emission construction sites. Sustainable procurement can be used as a tool to meet these targets.

With Buenos Aires’ goal to meet climate-neutrality by 2050, the city is also one of the region’s climate leaders—and it has [added procurement to its toolbox](#). “To stay at the forefront of sustainable public procurement is a pillar to strengthen the social impact in public procurement and the fight against climate change,” said María Celeste Lemos, Environmental Policy and Strategy Directorate of the Environmental Protection Agency, City of Buenos Aires. To aid in this goal, Buenos Aires joined ICLEI’s Global Lead Cities Network on Sustainable Procurement (GLCN), a group of 16 global cities pioneering sustainability through public purchasing.

For Buenos Aires, GLCN involvement has meant focusing on the buildings and construction sectors, which account for more than 55 percent of the City’s carbon emissions. Since 2012, the city has used a flexible, staggered and progressive implementation strategy, materialized in actions, such as training supply chain purchasers; drafting sustainability recommendations and guidelines, and including sustainability criteria in the specification sheets for procurements. Renzo Morosi, who leads the City’s Environmental Protection Agency, said, “Every time a government has to buy something, they go into this registry that gives priority to companies or products with a lower environmental impact, or that are green companies or green products.” The results are showing: the city has cut back its landfill waste by 50 percent by training workers to look for wood, plastic and glass that can have a second life. Glass is being used to build sidewalks and other public equipment, and plastic has been used to build fences or traffic signs or park benches. “[This is] how the circular economy is fostered by the city.”

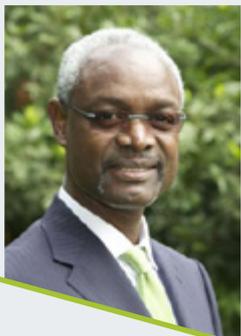


Watch session

“The goal now is to use the economic recovery in the wake of the coronavirus crisis for greater climate action,” said Svenja Schulze, Germany’s Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, pointing to how the Daring Cities approach can best serve

local governments in the immediate term. “Cities can become the key to overcoming both crises [...] Subnational governments are often already taking the lead with daring concepts. Cities need daring national governments that invest in climate-friendly and green recovery.”

## OUTCOME 3: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS NEED, DEMAND, AND DESERVE THIS CONVENING PLACE FOR INTEGRATED AND SUPPORTED LOCAL ACTION



*“In the past weeks, at Daring Cities 2020, representatives from local and regional governments from everywhere around the world have shown us that they are part of—and providing for—the solutions.”*

**Ibrahim Thiaw**

Under-Secretary-General, United Nations; Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)



It is not a coincidence that there were nearly 100 sessions at Daring Cities 2020. When we took the idea of the global forum to our network of local governments, and to our partners, all stakeholders were clearly ready and wanting to engage globally in this way. As Nigel Topping, UK High-Level Climate Action Champion, framed it, “We are in a race between the changes we have already set in motion and the changes we have to make to prevent the worst outcome—this is a race that we can only win if we are all in it.”

Daring Cities was needed as a place for everyone to be all in: to reflect, collaborate and accelerate. Not only as the usual climate conference, but instead with a focus on the urgency to act, and especially for integrating areas that, at a first glance, might perhaps seem unconventional in relation to climate action. This meant elevating discussions on climate issues to a holistic dialogue, and to include

further areas such as nature in cities, circular development, waste management, sustainable urban transport and freight, and sustainable public procurement into the solutions.

Looking back across more than 200 hours of dialogue, Daring Cities proved to the world that transformative change in cities is possible to a degree unprecedented by any other local government event. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, called Daring Cities a “vehicle to support the kind of changes we need to transform our unsustainable consumption and production patterns [...] and to build happy, prosperous and livable cities.”



*“Let’s hope it’s the beginning of a regular virtual gathering.”*

**Attendee feedback**

As we enter the Decade for Sustainability Action, local leaders will need to act better, by being decisive to ensure progress is achieved and accelerated, and by bringing others on board. With broad mobilization, enthusiasm, and solid outcomes from this year’s inaugural event, the Daring Cities forum is well positioned as the platform for leading together to keep momentum at the local level, attain the goals, and secure a prosperous, livable future for our cities.

**We look forward to seeing you at Daring Cities 2021.**



*“The forum was timely, relevant and profound.”*

**Attendee feedback**



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