

Cities and regions invite national governments to year-long dialogue bridging the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement

A new initiative promises to accelerate engagement of the urban community in climate action, building on the synergy of sustainable urbanization and low-emission, resilient development.

[KUALA LUMPUR, 9 February 2018] In the critical year for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement, local and other subnational leaders are inviting national governments to a series of dialogues designed to strengthen national climate plans.

The “Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues”, facilitated by [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability](#) with [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#) and [UN-Habitat](#) as special partners, **are expected to take place in around 40 countries worldwide - representing half of the world’s population** - as part of a wider, global exercise called Talanoa Dialogue. The initiative was presented today at the 9th World Urban Forum, taking place in Kuala Lumpur.

The initiative builds upon [the Bonn-Fiji Commitment of Local and Regional Leaders](#) adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) in November 2017 and will be implemented in collaboration with the UN Climate Change Secretariat and the Fijian Government, which oversee the global climate negotiations process until the next UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland in December 2018.

The initiative also follows a [Call for Vertical Integration of Local Authorities in national climate investment plans](#) issued by the Global Covenant of Mayors at the One Planet Summit last December. Spearheaded by Mayor of Quito Mauricio Rodas, in collaboration with the Mayors of Buenos Aires, Medellin, Mexico City and Sevilla, the effort underlines the need to provide pathways for active participation and engagement of sub-national governments in the formulation of national climate investment plans in line with the Paris Agreement (NDC Investment Plans) and accelerated tracks for sub-sovereign financing for Latin American cities.

The [Talanoa Dialogue](#) is viewed as a major global push to bring more stakeholder engagement on board towards achieving the 1.5-degree target in the 2015 Paris Agreement. *Talanoa* is a traditional word used in Fiji to describe an inclusive and transparent dialogue and decision-making process.

The process was launched by the COP23 Presidency of Fiji and is **designed to take stock of and strengthen national climate plans** – commonly referred to as Nationally Determined Contributions – or NDCs. Only a third of NDCs are on track for implementation and, even if they were fully implemented, recent estimates by UN Environment project a global warming of over 3°C by end of century. Urban communities contribute up to 70% of energy-related global

greenhouse gas emissions and they are among the most vulnerable hotspots for climate change impacts. Current commitments by local and regional governments have [the potential to reduce emissions by 5-15 gigatons by 2020 to 2030](#). However, only around 60% countries have some sort of urban perspective in their national plans, according to UN Habitat figures.

The official decision adopted at COP23 **encouraged national dialogues to take place at the country level, involving key stakeholder groups such as local and regional governments as well as civil society**. The outcomes of such dialogues are then to be submitted through an official portal set up by UNFCCC, feeding into the next wave of negotiations.

ICLEI – lead of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency at UN climate negotiations and on behalf of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments – and partners are **taking the initiative, with a view to delivering and advancing national climate plans through** effective multilevel governance, a vision shared in spirit by the New Urban Agenda adopted in 2016. The year-round process is expected to take place in around 40 countries with the engagement of more than 15 networks and partners of local and regional governments. The dialogues will enable a more active engagement of ministries of urbanization, housing, public works, or their equivalent as appropriate, who have not been as adequately involved in the national and global climate efforts so far.

QUOTES

Maimunah Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat: “Local and regional leaders can help nations bridge national urban development and climate policy as interconnected strategic priorities. Building on my support to the Fijian government as an island mayor to the success of COP23, I am delighted to announce Cities and Regions Multilevel Talanoa Dialogues as a timely opportunity to bring urban community and relevant ministries into the climate effort.”

Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary: “Local and regional governments have become a powerful catalyst towards ever higher climate action. Their participation in the Talanoa Dialogue will be a key driver towards the New Urban Agenda and the accelerating global efforts to deliver the Paris Agreement at speed and at scale.”

Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission and Co-Chair of the GCoM: “The engagement of cities and regions, both in Europe and globally, is crucial to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Local and regional governments show leadership and determination to turn the ambition of a low-carbon economy and society into a reality. In Europe, under the leadership of my colleague Commissioner Cretu, we have set up a framework for multilevel cooperation between Member States, subnational regions, urban authorities, the European Commission and other partners. It delivers results. I am confident that the multilevel dialogues that are launched today at the global level will equally deliver concrete, tangible results. Because concrete results is what we need in the months ahead.”

Mauricio Rodas, Mayor of Quito, Member of ICLEI Global Executive Committee and Board of the GCoM: "This initiative demonstrates of the dynamism of local and regional governments on climate. These dialogues will contribute to our call for action on enhanced access to climate finance by cities and regions through vertical integration, launched at the One Planet Summit in December 2017. As the host city of HABITATIII and leader on climate, Quito is committed to contribute in these efforts."

Nazhat Shameem Khan, Chief Negotiator of Fijian COP23 Presidency: "This proactive initiative reflects on the true spirit of Talanoa Dialogue and is a perfect response to a transparent, inclusive and ambitious grand coalition proposed by Fijian government on climate action. I congratulate ICLEI and its partners for taking this bold step forward and look forward to their concrete action proposals to the climate negotiations throughout the year."

Gino Van Begin, ICLEI Secretary General: "The Bonn-Fiji Commitment adopted by hundreds of local and regional leaders at COP23 played an instrumental role in designing Talanoa Dialogues as an inclusive process. Through this process, ICLEI will be happy to collaborate with all the partners to bring every city and region actively into the national and global climate action and enhance collaboration between all levels and of governments to advance the Paris Agreement."

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Note to editors:

ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability is the leading global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future, impacting over 25% of the global urban population.

UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy is an international alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to a low emission, resilient society.

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