

Beat: Lifestyle

Cities Towns and Regions Partner to Achieve Paris Goals

Global Climate Action at COP22

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USPA NEWS - Cities, towns and regions are making big impacts in implementing their climate commitments by acting locally and partnering globally, a trend which is underlined at today's Global Climate Action day on Cities and Human Settlements at the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech, COP22, to 18 Nov.

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Civic leaders at the event, co-organized by UNEP and ICLEI "Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)", also outlined the main actions that national governments can now take in partnership with them to help achieve their local goals as a significant input to the success of national climate action plans "the nationally-determined contributions (NDCs).

"The Paris Agreement entering into force is very good news. It means that we can finally get down to the business of rapidly implementing the commitments it contains" said Gino Van Begin, ICLEI Secretary General. "Nations gathered at COP22 now need to show leadership by providing a strong framework to support action and a powerful roadmap to scale up climate action and bridge the emissions gap before it is too late. Climate action in and by cities, towns and regions will be instrumental in ensuring that we stay on a 2°C pathway, aiming for 1.5°C," he said.

COP 22 is dubbed the "implementation COP" and Cities and Human Settlements day showcased the potential of local action for implementation, focused on resilience and building efficiency.

For example, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, building on work done by the Compact of Mayors and EU Covenant of Mayors, is promising to be a powerful platform for local governments worldwide to monitor and report their own climate commitments.

Highlights of Cities and Human Settlements Day

"A wide coalition of partners " local government networks, academia and international organizations " will organize an International Scientific Conference on Climate Change and Cities in 2018. A call for a host city for the event will be announced at the Thematic Day.

"A new assessment tool, which will be presented during the Resilience showcase of the morning, will allow standardized qualitative reporting of adaptation commitments to the Global Covenant of Mayors.

"The Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA) will deliver the main results of the Scoping report of the Alliance member's initiatives on subnational and local finance. The report confirms that early stage project development (readiness and upstream phases) are crucial to build on appropriate climate strategies and projects, and highlight financial engineering approaches supporting the development of urban climate strategies into concrete urban investment projects, including climate co-benefits and risk management perspectives.

WHY ARE URBAN AREAS IMPORTANT TO IMPLEMENT THE PARIS AGREEMENT ?

Urban areas represent an estimated 70% of energy-related global emissions. The buildings and construction sector alone accounts for over 20% of global GHG emissions. Achieving the sector's potential 80% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2050 (as forecast by the International Energy Agency) will be critical to the success of the Paris Agreement.

But climate change is already happening putting a priority also on adaptation to extreme climate by sub-national governments. The World Bank says that, adapting to the changing climate could cost between USD 80-100 billion every year, 80% of which will need to be invested in urban areas.

A Special Dialogue on Financing Urban Resilience, organized by FMDV and the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA), addressed the issue of how to secure funds for resilience projects with a longer-term investment horizon.

Many actions to adapt urban areas to climate change also have positive mitigation impacts, and vice-versa, providing a double win for city climate action. Examples include renovation of old and construction of new low-energy and energy-efficient buildings. The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction launched a roadmap for buildings, with a focus on low energy buildings in hot and tropical areas, and improving access to finance, particularly for developing countries.

Governments at all level need to take into account the buildings and construction sector as it has the largest potential for a cost-effective mitigation of greenhouse gases. This requires an integrated vision, looking not only at the direct and indirect emissions in

buildings, but also the materials that go into them, in order to ensure that the Paris Agreement will have a long-lasting impact on our cities, and on the world. Urban areas are also at the center of converging global frameworks, not only the Paris Agreement, but also the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Cross-sector and multi-level action at the local level hold the secret to a multiplier effect that can change the face of urban environments, while providing a key contribution to the fulfillment of ambitious climate goals.

WHY THE SECTOR EXPECTS FROM PARTNERING WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS-----

The aggregate ambition captured in current NDCs does not get the world on track to the goal of keeping global temperatures well below 2 degrees Celsius. National governments need to support sub-national governments in close partnership, providing enabling frameworks for local climate action and funding consistent with the challenges they face. Local government is often most able to establish effective vertical integration through all levels of government to scale up climate action in both the developed and the developing world. Achieving the pledge by developed nations to achieve USD 100 billion per year of finance by 2020 to support action in the poorest and most vulnerable countries is also a critical factor in driving this agenda forwards ““ some of the fastest urbanization is now in the developing world and such countries require timely and adequate support to avoid high-carbon infrastructure and to put in place resilient and low-carbon solutions as soon as possible.

About Global Climate Action

France and Morocco's global climate champions have set out their detailed agenda to boost cooperative action between governments, cities, business, investors and citizens to cut emissions rapidly and help vulnerable nations adapt to climate impacts and build their own clean energy, sustainable futures.

Message from the Climate Champions:

“A year after COP 21, the great dynamic of climate action is now growing strong. As we all gather to Marrakech time has come to start to take stock of what has been achieved during the last year. To be consistent with the long-term goals, all actors will have to work together, not only to achieve the national targets of the NDCs, but also to go further and bridge the gap of emissions. This sense of urgency should guide us all into accelerating immediate efforts and delivering ambitious action. We must identify what concrete policy options and what tools we will have to mobilize in the short term. The science is clear: the path towards achieving the long-term goals should bring us to peaking GHG emissions by 2020. This is a challenge, and we are not there yet. On the current trends, we will be in 2030 between 11 to 14 GT above Paris-compatible pathways. The purpose of these days is to strengthen all efforts and take them to the next level to stay on track for the objectives: stay well below 2°C and if possible 1,5°C, increase adaptation and resilience capacities and reorient financial flows. It is our responsibility, as champions, to make the link between the real world and the COP process. Political leaders from all around the world should hear and be inspired by the solutions at our reach.”[?]-----

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS LAURENCE TUBIANA (FRANCE) AND HAKIMA EL HAITE MOROCCO

ICLEI is the global network of over 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future. Find more information on www.iclei.org The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. FMDV is the International Alliance of Local Governments dedicated to promote and develop financial solutions for a sustainable development. www.fmdv.net The CCFLA is a multi-stakeholder and multilevel coalition whose mission is to identify, scale up and develop solutions to catalyze and accelerate investments into low carbon and climate-resilient infrastructures. Source UNFCCC/COP22

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