








#MayorsAction

GENEVA DECLARATION OF MAYORS

-  Strengthen the **resilience** of our cities
-  Take ambitious **climate action**
-  Make our cities **greener**
-  Accelerate the transition to **sustainable energy**
-  Ensure urban **transport** is sustainable
-  Ensure **housing** is affordable, healthy and adequate
-  Make cities more equitable and **inclusive**



Geneva Declaration of Mayors

Times of Change: Reshaping our Urban Realities

Our cities had to face an unprecedented emergency that found us, as well as our governments, unprepared. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a threat to all of us and our health, severely damaged our economies and put to test the administrations of our cities. In dense urban areas, the crisis was felt particularly strongly; it hit the most vulnerable groups of society hardest.

While many cities were in lockdown – and many industries, transport networks and businesses closed – we also started to experience an unknown urban life: better air quality, the return of nature to our cities, and empty streets giving space to cyclists and pedestrians. We stood up in solidarity and recognized the critical work of frontline workers who kept our societies functioning, including medical workers and employees operating essential services. The pandemic provided a testing ground for what cities could look like; the transformation of urban spaces happened overnight. If there is only one lesson to learn from this crisis, it is that rapid change of our urban reality is possible, behaviour patterns can be adapted, and humans can stand in unprecedented solidarity for a common cause.

We, the Mayors of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, want to use the current momentum to rebuild our cities into places where all of us can thrive, quality of life is the guiding principle, nature and biodiversity are an integral part of urban planning, sustainable economies generate wealth for all, solidarity among city-dwellers prevails, and inequalities are actively narrowed. We align ourselves with the initiative of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to “build back better”, and turn the recovery into a real opportunity for shaping a healthy and resilient future. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 calls for action to work towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities – it is now in our hands to place the SDGs at the centre of our recovery efforts and create new urban realities for the benefit of all.

With this vision in mind we, the Mayors of the UNECE region, aspire to:



Strengthen the resilience of our cities



Take ambitious climate action



Make our cities greener



Accelerate the transition to sustainable energy



Ensure urban transport is sustainable



Ensure housing is affordable, healthy and adequate



Make cities more equitable and inclusive



Turn these aspirations into reality



Strengthen resilience of our cities

Increase our cities' ability to anticipate, manage and recover from any future emergency, be it a pandemic, extreme and changing climate, or a disaster arising from natural or man-made hazards. We strive to make resilience and disaster risk reduction part of our urban development planning, and allocate funds for contingency plans. Smart city solutions are an important step in the development of sustainable and resilient cities. This shift from crisis mode to medium- and long-term resilience strategies will help us protect the health, lives and safety of our city residents.

Build healthy cities, by creating environments which improve the physical, mental and environmental health of our communities. By integrating health in urban planning, we strive to improve access to urban green spaces, tackle air and noise pollution, improve sanitation and water

management, improve sustainable mobility and promote healthy lifestyles. We recognize the role of spatial planning as a key instrument for building sustainable cities, and the importance of actively involving all stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes for healthier cities and city-dwellers.



Take ambitious climate action

Accelerate the transition to carbon neutrality, by setting clear decarbonization goals, promoting the use of renewable energy, and increasing energy efficiency and low-carbon alternatives, especially in housing and transportation. We are strongly committed to tackling climate change at the local level by playing our part in limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C and achieving net-zero carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2050.

Focus on climate change adaptation, by developing and implementing local adaptation plans with a view to enhancing cities' resilience to extreme and slow-onset climate impacts, based on participatory processes and with the involvement of civil society and the private sector. We commit to building adaptive capacity in line with local circumstances, and making full use of scientific, local and indigenous knowledge, where appropriate. In doing so, we will pay special attention to cost-effective, no-regret

ecosystem restoration, conservation and nature-based solutions for adaption. We recognize that natural solutions bring a range of co-benefits for local sustainable development beyond climate action. When designing and implementing adaption measures, we will cater for local communities that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.



Make our cities greener

Promote urban biodiversity, by integrating green spaces and trees into urban planning. Make sure green spaces are properly and evenly located and distributed in the city, and allow access to all citizens and residents in a safe manner. These measures will help improve air quality, reduce urban heat islands, and improve the health of inhabitants and the liveability of our cities.

Create opportunities for the increase of urban micro-farming and the inclusion of surrounding rural areas, as a means to promote food security and enhance the social and environmental benefits of local farming.

Tackle food waste and provide opportunities for the redistribution of currently wasted and lost food, which will reduce carbon emissions and the waste of natural resources.



Accelerate the transition to sustainable energy

Improve the energy efficiency of cities to save energy, and reduce emissions and costs, leading to economic, health, and environmental benefits. By integrating energy-efficiency options into buildings, transport and urban planning, we will set our cities on a path of green growth.

Promote high performance buildings with no- or low-carbon energy sources to reduce the carbon footprint of cities and energy costs for residents.



Ensure urban transport is sustainable

Plan and design sustainable urban transport systems, with the aim of reducing traffic congestion, and environmental pollution, and increasing road safety. Ensure that urban mobility systems are accessible

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