URBAN

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U20
Communiqué
2023

Call to G20 countries for enabling cities to ensure a resilient and inclusive urban future.

We, the leaders and mayors of the undersigned cities, have come together as the Urban 20 (U20) to call on the G20 leaders to consider the priorities and recommendations that we have jointly put forth in this Communiqué.

We live in an increasingly urbanized world, and it is evident that cities are the principal agents for addressing global developmental agendas and shaping a better future. We therefore ask G20 national governments to support our leadership and collaborate with us to achieve safe, resilient, just urban societies, and equitable, affordable, inclusive transitions and deliver on the commitment of halving global emissions by 2030 and keeping global temperatures from rising above 1.5°C. We can deliver on social justice, inclusion, climate action, resilience towards disasters and a good quality of life for all citizens, only if cities and national governments work together as valuable and equal partners.

In the last decade, cities have played a significant role in tackling global and local challenges such as pandemics, climate change impacts, bio-diversity loss, socio-economic inequalities, and geo-political issues.

[1]Countries have reiterated their national positions as expressed in other fora, including the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, which, in Resolution No. ES-11/1 dated 2 March 2022, as adopted by majority vote (141 votes for, 5 against, 35 abstentions, 12 absent) deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine. Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy – constraining growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening energy and food insecurity, and elevating financial stability risks. There were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions. Recognizing that the G20 is not the forum to resolve security issues we acknowledge that security issues can have significant consequences for the global economy. It is essential to uphold international law and the multilateral system that safeguards peace and stability. This includes defending all the Purposes and Principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and adhering to international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians and infrastructure in armed conflicts. The

use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible. The peaceful resolution of conflicts, efforts to address crises, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital. Today's era must not be of war.

U20 collectively calls for peaceful resolution of the conflict through political dialogue in appropriate platforms, mediation and other peaceful means and commits to strengthen a culture of peace, timely humanitarian response, and respect for democracy and human rights.

Urban areas are also the most susceptible to impacts of global crises and disruptions due to the sheer size and density of populations. It is their imperative to combat all forms of discrimination and include all citizens in design and decision-making, irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, disability, or socio-economic circumstance, and provide an inclusive and financially viable social safety net. Cities are therefore a crucial constituency that can work with nations to address structural inequalities, promote social and territorial cohesion, support vulnerable economic activities, improve access to food and affordable energy, promote cultural life and heritage, protect under-represented communities, and foster local public service provision as a key instrument for delivering social and social security protection along with safeguarding human rights.

In this sixth cycle of U20, under the leadership of the 2023 U20 Chair city of Ahmedabad, our goal is to move from "Intention to Action". Echoing the G20 theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future" we want to encourage more ambitious cooperation between national governments, cities, citizens, and other stakeholders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework within this 'Decade of Action'. We urge national governments to acknowledge the crucial role local and subnational governments play in realizing the 2030 Agenda as shown by the Voluntary Local Reviews and that could be reinforced by the Global Stocktake at COP28.

Our Communiqué puts forth strategic recommendations to the G20 at their Leaders' Summit in Delhi in September 2023 to solicit global support and national interventions that enable cities to take further action in addressing the pressing challenges faced by our planet.

01

Achieving sustainable, equitable and resilient urban development requires concerted action and behavioural change across the entire urban ecosystem, ranging from governmental policies to industrial processes to choices made by businesses and individuals. This necessitates resources to empower cities to deepen their commitment towards environmental sustainability and ensure a just and equitable transition to net zero GHG emissions. We call on the G20 to collaborate with cities and provide means to:

ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURS

01.

Localise global sustainability agendas: Place science-based inclusive climate action at the centre of all decision-making to move towards net zero development and at least a 50% global reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. Facilitate research & development in green technologies and renewable energy such as solar, wind, green hydrogen, etc. for urban services. Promote national and city-level policies and activities for net zero transition in eight critical areas: (i) regulations for new buildings to operate at net zero and old buildings to be retrofit for the same; (ii) production and use of renewable energy to maximise renewable electricity; (iii) circular economy practices and Nature-based Solutions in water, wastewater, solid waste management and construction sectors to support transition from grey to green infrastructure; (iv) reduction in use of plastic and phasing out of single-use plastic; (v) prioritisation of public transport, zero-emission vehicles and active travel (including walking, cycling), and reduction in CO_2 emitting private car usage; (vi) urban food security and access to sustainably grown food through urban farming; (vii) responsible and local supply chains in all urban sector products and services to prevent the loss of biodiversity and green cover; and (viii) increased area and quality of green and blue spaces in cities for all urban residents to access their health-related benefits.

02.

Create a framework for sustainable and just transitions that leave no one behind: Promote fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in the development and enforcement of socio-environmental policies, regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or income. Enact regulations to promote green career opportunities in all sectors, especially for youth and women. Support formal and informal sector workers in the transition to a green and wellbeing economy and provide incentives through skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling, ensuring living wages, workplace safety, universal health coverage and social protection benefits. Create specialised funding mechanisms to support just transition initiatives and develop community resilience to shocks. Address energy insecurity through appropriate subsidies and creation of local renewable energy communities to support phasing out of environmentally harmful fossil fuels and transition to clean energy for all, including the most vulnerable.

03.

Enable whole-of-society behavioral change towards environmentally responsible practices: Enable behavioral change at grassroots by adopting an interdisciplinary approach towards achieving environmental and human well-being. Support action by local governments, civil society and industry champions, raise awareness and create mechanisms to engage with the private sector. Institutionalise multi-stakeholder collaborations, participatory planning and decision-making to ensure fair, equitable and resilient transitions towards zero-carbon, resource-efficient urban growth. Facilitate civil participation in climate and environmental action through targeted subsidies that encourage zero-carbon consumer choices, solar and other renewable energy installations and adoption of Nature-based Solutions.

02

Freshwater scarcity and flood risks are major global crises. Increased ecological vulnerability of water resources is going to severely limit the potential of future development and result in public health issues and social conflicts. Water should be treated as a global common good and sustainable water management should be mainstreamed to ensure water security and flood resilience for future generations. We call on the G20 to collaborate with cities and provide means to:

ENSURING WATER SECURITY

04. **Mainstream sustainable water management practices:** Enact and implement national regulations for maximising treatment and reuse of wastewater and promoting new and emerging technologies for water saving and water generation, including from unconventional sources such as atmospheric water and cloud seeding. Adopt green city planning practices that protect drainage channels and increase retention areas and pervious surfaces for recharging ground water and preventing water logging and urban floods. Adopt regulations to ensure that polluters are held accountable for preventing or paying for their impact on water quality. Prioritise preparedness and mitigation for urban water hazards such as floods and droughts and promote innovative means such as water plazas and water-sensitive urban design to conserve water and develop flood resilience.

05. **Protect and revitalise water ecosystems:** Create public databases of all water resources and ecosystems including assessment of vulnerabilities and potential threats to ensure no more of these assets are lost. Adopt stringent regulatory frameworks to protect all water bodies and associated biodiversity. Increase the application of Nature-based Solutions including rejuvenating natural drains and traditional water systems as priority projects under various environmental/climate funds.

06. **Strengthen effective water governance:** Institutionalise mechanisms for urban and regional water governance, resource sharing, monitoring wastage and ensuring equitable and safe access to all. Support a global campaign to raise cross-sectoral awareness about the value of water and enable individual and collective water saving. Enhance participation of cities in international forums for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

03

Increased investment and direct access to sustainable financing is critical for cities to deliver their climate ambition. Orienting climate financing towards increasing investment needs in urban infrastructure, Nature-based Solutions and low-emissions technologies is a huge opportunity to build the readiness of cities for climate adaptation and reduce emissions. We call on the G20 to collaborate with cities and provide means to:

ACCELERATING CLIMATE FINANCE

07.

Overhaul development finance to increase support for climate action in cities: Disincentivise investment in fossil fuel, including gas and orient focus of donors, finance institutions and public banks to set up dedicated urban climate finance initiatives (including for small-scale urban projects) and massively step up their support for climate adaptation as a key priority. Expand the scope of multilateral and national finance to consider just transition and socio-economic aspects as part of project appraisal and include funding for technical assistance, capacity building and workforce preparedness. Establish a Loss and Damage Fund directly accessible by cities to promote climate justice and include this proposal in the ongoing discussions around the reform of Multilateral Development Banks.

08.

Create an enabling environment for flow of climate finance to cities: Develop simple and standardised taxonomies and mechanisms for cities to directly access climate finance; complemented by climate information architecture for measuring climate impacts, disclosure standards, etc. Create appropriate legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks at the national level for strengthening fiscal autonomy, de-risking climate investments, financing just transitions, and facilitating institutional and private investments in climate finance.

09.

Improve city readiness for climate financing: Create new and strengthen existing technical assistance facilities to help cities in climate-responsive project design and identification of climate financing options. Support comprehensive planning of cities to identify a pipeline of projects that can attract climate financing. Enable cities to adopt mechanisms for improving their own revenues to attract and scale up inclusive climate investments.

04

In an ever-globalising world, understanding and strengthening local practices and economies in an inclusive manner can provide substantial benefits for long term resilience (particularly in times of global downturns and pandemic events). Thinking locally helps leverage traditional place-specific knowledge about sustainable building design, resource conservation, disaster management, etc. This will require action on several fronts such as design-thinking rationale, local economic development, boosting cultural and creative economies, protecting historical and cultural assets, etc. We call on the G20 to collaborate with cities and provide means to:

CHAMPIONING 'LOCAL' CULTURE AND ECONOMY

10. **Promote local and regional economic development and community well-being:** Adopt policies for inclusive and equitable local economic development, community wealth-building, decentralised governance and boosting local economic clusters and cooperative platforms. Promote economic diversification and regeneration for a spatially just transition for communities affected by changes in industry or technology. Promote development norms that support creative and cultural industries such as shared workspaces, artisan studios, etc. Create inclusive financial incentives and mechanisms for setting up and scaling of local enterprises and tourism infrastructure.

11. **Foster a 'sense of place':** Promote a fairly represented, equitable and diverse participation of citizens and local stakeholders in planning, design and operation of public spaces, local events and festivals. Improve access to global funding facilities for heritage management projects and promote the use of international platforms for knowledge sharing.

12. **Leverage traditional knowledge and frugal innovation:** Enhance the capacity and agency of local communities to implement local solutions and retain/reclaim ownership of community commons. Mainstream traditional practices and frugal innovation through targeted research and development and creation of innovation labs and platforms for maturing and scaling up local practices. Include local knowledge and voices of indigenous groups in policy dialogue and decision making.

Rapid urbanisation has led to the emergence of spatial patterns like city-regions, metropolitan areas, peri-urban growth, conurbations, urban-rural continuum etc., necessitating frameworks for strategic planning and multi-level governance to ensure coordination among multiple administrative jurisdictions and ensure provision of affordable housing and urban services to all. Cities also need to be supported in implementing urban renewal of degraded and vulnerable built environments. We call on the G20 to collaborate with cities and provide means to:

REINVENTING FRAMEWORKS FOR URBAN GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

13. Promote frameworks for planning and governance of emerging urban patterns: Enact legislations to support multi-level planning (regional or cluster planning approaches) and collaborative governance, by improving multi-level cooperation and reshaping current frameworks to better address the needs of emerging urban patterns. Promote peer learning and technical cooperation amongst cities. Undertake national efforts to identify strategic spatial, economic, and cultural clusters and functional urban areas and agglomerations.

14. Shift to a 'strategic' planning framework: Reform land use oriented planning to include strategies for green-blue infrastructure, economic growth, cultural development, low-carbon mobility, net zero built environment, disaster preparedness and affordable housing for all. Promote participatory planning, engaging all stakeholders irrespective of ethnicity, gender, age, class, or disability. Adopt design-thinking rationale and dynamic monitoring frameworks linked with data and analytics, whilst guaranteeing digital rights to enable course correction and realignment of strategies to achieve targeted outcomes. Adopt appropriate regulations and incentives to promote compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented developments and facilitate citizen/ private sector-led design of sustainable built environments and public spaces.

15. Facilitate equitable and sustainable urban regeneration of existing areas: Formulate national guidelines for participatory land pooling and readjustment to facilitate renewal of ageing built fabrics and vulnerable urban areas to enhance their climate resilience, improve quality of life, access and safety, enhance availability of services, green areas and public spaces, and unlock latent economic potential. Formulate policies to ensure affordable housing and reduce gentrification induced displacement. Promote circularity in regeneration models by supporting adaptive reuse and retrofitting of good quality and safe-for-occupancy built-stock.

06

Digitalisation and data can become an 'equalising' force globally by enhancing transparency and enabling evidence-based policies and programs, provided issues of privacy and security, unequal access, barriers to data sharing and lack of opportunities for innovation are addressed. Data is a vital public good underpinning public infrastructure, service delivery, growth and innovation, with an impact on policies for several priorities like new jobs, community safety, affordable housing, good health and sustainable development. We call on the G20 to collaborate with cities and provide means to:

CATALYSING DIGITAL URBAN FUTURES

16. **Ensure that benefits of the digital economy are shared universally:** Enable open and fair international cooperation by creating shared global standards for digital infrastructure that countries and cities can implement at their respective paces. Maximise benefits of the digital economy through provision of robust digital infrastructure, encouraging inclusive technologies, and providing uninterrupted and affordable internet services and open data as public goods. Promote integrated vertical and horizontal value chains across industries (including SMEs and local cooperatives) to foster sustainability, efficiency, and innovation. Ramp up efforts for digital literacy, especially to empower children, youth, women, persons with disability and older persons. Provide for legal, ethical and operational frameworks to advance inclusive digital environments. Address the impacts of digitalization on workers (replaced due to automation or skill mismatch) through appropriate social protection strategies for facilitating technology transition in all industries and guaranteeing respect for workers' rights. Analyse, monitor and mitigate the environmental impacts and carbon emissions associated with digitalisation and identify environmental tradeoffs to demonstrate sustainability potential of substituting high environmental impact digital solutions with non-digital technologies.

17. **Facilitate data-informed decision making:** Support evidence-based policy and decision-making with data as the transparent, strategic and deliberative instrument for steering sustainable development. Formulate protocols, frameworks and toolkits for ethical, fair and inclusive data generation, management, security and sharing. Mobilise public and private data to meet outcomes and make cities digitally smart with predictive systems that provide advance warning about various risks, thereby preventing loss of life and resources. Collect and utilise disaggregated data (while protecting privacy and digital rights) on multiple parameters like gender, age, and spatial distribution and others in the design and impact assessment of policies and programmes to ensure inclusiveness. Adopt multi-level strategies for managing and interpreting Big Data through application of human resources as well as AI to respond to the needs and priorities of cities.

18. **Encourage digital innovations:** Provide avenues for public and private investments in development of digital innovations and technologies, at all stages of incubation, maturation and scale-up. Ensure space allocation, infrastructure and services to innovators, start-ups and gig economies, in particular those developed and/or operated by women and youth. Encourage interoperability and open, transparent, non-discriminatory data platforms to eliminate functional bottlenecks and maximise the benefits of innovations.

105 ENDORSEMENTS

This Communique is endorsed by the Mayors and City Leaders of the following U20 Cities

01	Ahmedabad	17	Mexico City
02	Amsterdam	18	Milan
03	Barcelona	19	Montreal
04	Bengaluru	20	Mumbai
05	Berlin	21	New York City
06	Buenos Aires	22	Osaka
07	Delhi	23	Paris
08	Durban (eThekwini)	24	Rio de Janeiro
09	Istanbul	25	Rome
10	Izmir	26	Rotterdam
11	Jakarta	27	Sao Paulo
12	Johannesburg	28	Seoul
13	Lisbon	29	Strasbourg
14	London	30	Sydney
15	Los Angeles	31	Tokyo
16	Madrid	32	Tshwane

And by the Mayors and City Leaders of the following U20 Observer Cities

33	Amman	44	Narayanganj
34	Cobourg	45	Port Louis
35	Despeñaderos	46	Portland
36	Dhaka North	47	Rajshahi
37	Dhulikhel	48	Recife
38	Fukuoka	49	Shahin Shahr
39	Glasgow	50	Skopje
40	Kitchener	51	Thimpu
41	Lusaka	52	Topaga
42	Matale	53	Ungheni
43	Montevideo	54	Utrecht