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European Committee  
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MEDIA RELEASE

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## COP28: A Turning Point for Cities and Regions in Climate Action Leadership

*The world's cities, regions and other subnational governments are calling on Parties to adopt multilevel collaboration to ensure that the goal of 1.5 degrees can still be met.*

Dubai, UAE (30 November 2023) – As the COP28 climate summit unfolds, cities, regions, local and subnational governments and countries unite to demonstrate their indispensable role in climate action, setting the stage for an integrated, inclusive, and impactful global climate agenda.

At a press conference to preview the position of cities and regions at COP28, leaders including Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines, US and President of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability; Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku in Finland and ICLEI Vice-President; Maria Auxiliadora, Deputy Secretary of International Relations for the City of São Paulo, Host City of the ICLEI 2024 World Congress, and other speakers shared how this year's COP emphasizes the importance of subnational involvement, highlighted by the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) advocacy, the Local Climate Action Summit, and the Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion. Since 2015's Paris Agreement, thousands of cities and regions have declared climate emergencies, adopted ambitious targets and helped elevate national commitments.

### **LGMA POSITION PAPER: A UNIFIED CALL FOR SUBNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN CLIMATE ACTION AND DECISION MAKING**

The Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, which voices subnational governments in the UNFCCC process, presented its position paper (in [English](#) and

[French](#)). The LGMA Position Paper was endorsed by 65 partner organizations and entities, it was announced at the Press Conference.

The paper emphasizes a strategic response to the IPCC's warning of likely exceeding a 1.5°C temperature rise by 2027. It calls for an integrated approach involving cities, regions, and local governments to limit global warming and enhance adaptation measures. The endorsers stress the urgency of translating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) into tangible local strategies, advocating for a robust multilevel governance model to facilitate this transition.

The LGMA Position Paper for COP28, guided by ICLEI as the focal point and with leadership from Regions4, the European Committee of the Regions, the Under2 Coalition and UCLG, outlines a unified stance for the summit.

Shared broadly with national parties and other negotiators in the run-up to COP28, the messages found in the paper are also reflected in the EU Council's pre-cop position, the G7 and G20 outcomes, UN-Habitat Assembly resolution and others.

The Scottish Government has taken a leading role in tackling climate change. **First Minister of Scotland, European Co-Chair of the Under2 Coalition and member of Regions4, Humza Yousaf** said: *"It's clear that Scotland can play a significant role in calling for greater international action as an outward-looking nation that has already shown global leadership on climate change. Through ambitious action at both the domestic and international level, Scotland has demonstrated that we are prepared to walk the walk where many others, to this point, have merely talked the talk. We are calling for greater inclusion and empowerment of states, regions and devolved governments in COPs and global climate negotiations. Scotland has much to offer and we simply do not have the time to work alone. Collective action is needed to tackle the climate emergency and address the devastating effects of climate change, including loss and damage."*

## **LOCAL STOCKTAKES: INTEGRATING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES INTO GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION**

The press conference highlighted the role of local stocktakes in shaping climate dialogue at COP28 from a local, community perspective.

In the lead-up to COP28, many initiatives were organized to feed into the Global Stocktake from local level. Under the banner of the LGMA, different partners engaged actively into this process,

such as UCLG through its sections and ICLEI through local stocktakes. ICLEI has gathered over 25 cities and regions around the world to actively engage in local stocktakes - assessments where cities and regions evaluate their climate actions and progress, contributing to the broader climate dialogue at the global level.

Facilitated by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability with the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, this initiative integrates local perspectives into the broader UNFCCC Global Stocktake process. These assessments allowed cities to critically evaluate their climate strategies against national climate plans, particularly the Nationally Determined Contributions, with a specific focus on climate justice at the community level.

*“Our goal is to accelerate the ambition and commitment of national governments, and local and regional governments are stepping up to show that multilevel action is the only chance we have to reach the 1.5 degree target. 2023 has been a milestone year for multilevel action and cooperation in the global climate agenda. One of the highlights has been the 25+ local stocktake events that have transformed city halls and regional parliaments into mini-COP venues, allowing for local inputs into the first global Global Stocktake. Cities like Turku - which will be climate neutral by 2029 - as well as regions and other subnationals can help lead our nations in combating climate change,”* noted **Mayor Minna Arve, Mayor, Turku, Finland and Vice President of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability.**

A notable element of this initiative is the substantial involvement of youth in the climate dialogue, realized through a partnership with YOUNGO, the youth and children's constituency of the UNFCCC. This collaboration led to the majority of participating cities incorporating youth insights into their stocktakes.

The findings from these local stocktakes will be showcased on 4 December 2023 at COP28, highlighting diverse experiences and lessons learned. This effort marks a critical step in recognizing the role of cities and regions in the UNFCCC process. The upcoming Local Climate Action Summit (LCAS), led by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the COP28 Presidency, will further amplify these local actions on a global stage.

**THE COP28 LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT: A MILESTONE EVENT FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP**

The press conference also recognized the particular importance of the upcoming Local Climate Action Summit (LCAS). Hosted by the COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies on 1-2 December 2023, LCAS is a first-of-its-kind event recognizing the vital role of local leaders in reducing emissions, addressing climate risks, and energizing national climate efforts. The summit will bring together hundreds of climate leaders to transform climate finance, enhance global action, accelerate energy transitions, and strengthen local resilience.

Support from leading networks and organizations, including the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, UCLG, US Conference of Mayors, Under2 Coalition, and UN-Habitat, underscores this event's collaborative and global nature, aiming to accelerate progress and amplify impact both locally and globally.

*“The Local Climate Action Summit at COP28 is bringing together leaders from all over the globe to advance multi-level partnerships and equip local and regional leaders with ambitious approaches to scale climate solutions. ICLEI commends the leadership of the COP28 Presidency, led by Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, COP28 President, and the UN Special Envoy Michael R. Bloomberg, in ensuring that local and regional leaders have a seat at the climate table within the official COP agenda this year,”* said **Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines, US and ICLEI President.**

## **THE MULTILEVEL ACTION & URBANIZATION PAVILION AT COP28: A PLATFORM FOR CLIMATE ACTION LEADERSHIP**

Subnational leaders at the press conference also weighed on the crucial role of The Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion - the global stage for the city and subnational climate agenda at COP28. The Pavilion is co-convened by UN-Habitat and ICLEI in its role as the focal point of the LGMA Constituency on behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. Located within the Blue Zone at COP28, the Pavilion is co-hosted by the Scottish Government and Bloomberg Philanthropies, in partnership with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) and C40 Cities.

Open during the entire COP28 program, 30 November - 12 December, the Pavilion provides a space for local, national and international leaders to meet and exchange within the Blue Zone at COP28. It will host in-person and hybrid events, in addition to a dedicated networking space for informal discussions. On 6 December, the Pavilion program will feature complementary programming alongside the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change – the

headlining event of the thematic day Multilevel Action, Urbanization and Built Environment/Transport.

*“Through the Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion at COP28, which we have organized with our partners like ICLEI, we want to showcase the role of mayors and cities as climate action leaders. We will use this space for critical discussions and events to highlight the important role of sustainable urbanization and cities in achieving the climate targets and creating a better future for next generations,”* said **Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat.**

COP28 emerges as a crucial platform for reinforcing the global climate action narrative, with a strong focus on the proactive involvement of cities and regions. As leaders and organizations converge to share insights and forge collaborations, this summit is set to catalyze significant advancements in collective efforts and multilevel action to address the climate crisis.

## **QUOTES FROM LGMA MEMBERS**

*“The voices of states, regions and cities are being raised like never before to call out the urgency of climate change and the need to involve all levels of government in tackling it. Bringing about change at scale and pace is impossible without subnational governments. Their expertise and experiences of being at the frontline of climate change are needed in developing and implementing the strongest possible NDCs and adapting to a fast-changing world. I hope COP28 is just the start of a fundamental re-think of how governments at all levels can work together to address the many threats of climate change,”* said **Dr. Champa Patel, Executive Director of Governments and Policy, Climate Group.**

*“The world is off-track not only to reach the 1.5° target but also the SDG goals. Localization of the SDG targets through Voluntary Local Reviews embedded in Voluntary National Reviews are helping to not only address the political gaps in the 2030 Agenda, but also to accelerate Climate Action through key enablers. This is our vision for the Paris Agreement goals and the new set of NDCs to be published in COP 30, a strong local and regional component in the NDCs,”* said **Uğur İbrahim Altay, Mayor of Konya, President of UCLG.**

*“Regional governments from across the globe are at the forefront of the climate emergency, experiencing direct impacts on their communities, economies, institutions and critical infrastructure and resources. They are showing bold leadership for the necessary transformations towards resilient economies and territories, from coastal protection to sustainable water management, from nature-based solutions to community engagement. However, as the Global Stocktake and UNEP Adaptation Gap report reveal, a significant shortfall*

*exists in financing adaptation, leaving an estimated annual gap of US\$194-366 billion per year. To drive change locally, climate finance should pivot to support subnational levels, empowering regional authorities to have direct participation and a voice of their own, thereby accelerating climate action,”* said **Ms. Aranxa Tapia, Regions4 President, Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment of the Basque Country Government.**

*“A territorial approach to the Climate fight is crucial to achieving positive impacts on the ground. However, the Paris Agreement aims cannot be reached if the local and regional level are not able or allowed to play an essential role in transforming the international ambitions into practical realities. Let’s fight together, let’s advance together, let’s make of this challenge a real opportunity,”* said **Marianne Overton, Councillor of Lincolnshire (UK), Spokesperson on Climate and Energy at the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).**

*“Federal states, regions and cities are important players in combating climate change and adapting to it. As the subnational level is closer to the people, we come directly into play when it comes to protecting them from the effects of climate change. We therefore need more influence and more financial support to accomplish our tasks. The State of Baden-Württemberg supports the position of the LGMA Constituency in order to raise its voice together with the subnational governments in the fight against climate change,”* said **Thekla Walker, Minister of the Environment, Climate Protection and Energy Sector of the State of Baden-Württemberg and Member of the State Parliament of Baden-Württemberg (Landtag)**

*"The year 2023 has shown that the climate crisis is the biggest challenge of our generation, underscoring the urgent need for ambitious mitigation and adaptation action at COP28 in Dubai. The European Union has recognised that local and regional governments must play a key role in translating global climate goals into tangible, localised actions. For this, they need to be provided with the adequate financial and technical support. The European Committee of the Regions, which represents the cities and regions in the EU, welcomes the LGMA joint position for COP28 as a way to strengthen, coordinate and amplify subnational voices around the globe, with the objective to make multilevel action a reality in UNFCCC processes,"* said **Apostolos Tzitzikostas, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions and Governor of Central Macedonia.**

*“Climate action needs climate finance. We, as African subnational governments, have invested heavily in the development of climate plans but now we need support in gaining access to the finance needed to implement these plans,”* said **Yawo Winny Dogbatse, Mayor of Kloto 1 (Togo), Chair of the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Mayors Forum and Member of the Global Covenant of Mayor Board.**

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Those who wish to attend sessions at the Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion while in Dubai or tune in virtually can register for daily updates from COP28, including exclusive coverage, live sessions, announcements and interviews:

<https://cop28.cities-and-regions.org/updates>

The livestream from the Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion can be found here:

<https://www.cities-and-regions.org/multilevel-action-and-urbanization-pavilion-cop28-livestream/>

Read the full position paper of LGMA constituency towards UNFCCC COP28:

[https://www.cities-and-regions.org/wp-content/uploads/lgma\\_towardscop28\\_final.pdf](https://www.cities-and-regions.org/wp-content/uploads/lgma_towardscop28_final.pdf)

Learn about the Local Climate Action Summit (LCAS): <https://www.cop28.com/en/lcas>

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

### **About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability**

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (known as "ICLEI") is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

For more information, please visit: [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)

### **About Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency**

Since the Earth Summit in 1992, when nine stakeholder groups – including local authorities – were designated as essential partners in implementing the global sustainability agenda, the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency has represented networks of local and regional governments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The LGMA has served as the voice of cities and regions since the first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995 and continues to achieve advocacy success for multilevel action in the climate, nature, and desertification processes. The LGMA has grown to more than 45 accredited networks of local and regional governments. The LGMA coordinates inputs to the global climate negotiations all year, influencing and informing outcomes toward meeting the Paris Agreement.

For more information, please visit: [www.cities-and-regions.org/](http://www.cities-and-regions.org/)

### **About the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments**

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments is a coordination and consultation mechanism that brings together the major international networks of local governments to undertake joint advocacy work relating to global policy processes. It was set up in 2013 to bring the perspectives of local and regional governments to the SDGs, climate change agenda and New Urban Agenda in particular.

The Global Taskforce convenes elected local and regional leaders from around the world in the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, whose role in the follow-up of the New Urban Agenda is recognized in the Quito Outcome Document.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.global-taskforce.org/about-us>

### **About Under2 Coalition**

Under2 Coalition is the largest global network of states and regions committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. Today, the coalition represents 173 individual states, regions, provinces and subnational governments along with several other national and subnational entities: a total of more than 270 actors, totaling more than 50% of global GDP.

For more information, please visit: [www.theclimategroup.org/under2-coalition](http://www.theclimategroup.org/under2-coalition)

### **About Regions4**



Regions4 is the global voice of regional governments (states, regions and provinces) before UN negotiations, European Union initiatives and global discussions in the fields of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. Regions4 was established in 2002 at the World Summit in Johannesburg as the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development – nrg4SD. In 2019, it became Regions4, and now represents 47 regional governments from 23 countries in 4 continents.

For more information, please visit: [www.regions4.org](http://www.regions4.org)

### **About United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage, regardless of the size of the communities they serve. Present in 140 of the 191 UN member states in seven world regions, UCLG's members include individual cities and national associations of local governments, which represent all the cities and local governments in a single country. Over 1000 cities across 95 countries are direct members of UCLG. 112 Local Government Associations (LGAs) are members of UCLG, representing almost every existing LGA in the world. Europe boasts the largest number of LGAs, which represent around 80 per 100 of the total European population.

For more information, please visit: [www.uclg.org](http://www.uclg.org)

### **About European Committee of the Regions**

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is the voice of regions and cities in the European Union (EU). It represents local and regional authorities across the European Union and advises on new laws that have an impact on regions and cities (70% of all EU legislation). The CoR is a political assembly composed of 329 members and 329 alternates from all EU Member States (grouped by political party and headed by the President) who have been elected at local or regional level (for example as Mayors or Presidents of a region). The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission must consult the CoR in policy areas that are defined in the EU Treaties.

For more information, please visit: [www.cor.europa.eu](http://www.cor.europa.eu)

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