



COMMUNIQUÉ

JOHANNESBURG / TSHWANE



Urban 20 2025 Communiqué

For the first time, the Urban 20 (U20) finds itself on African soil – a moment of significance. It marks the culmination of determined African advocacy to claim Africa's rightful place in reshaping global governance and advancing a more equitable world. We have gathered as U20 cities to amplify African perspectives forged through struggle, resilience, and the enduring wisdom of ubuntu – a concept deeply rooted in South African culture, emphasising interconnectedness, compassion, and community, the recognition that “I am because we are.” Our destinies are shared, and so too must be our solutions.

We meet at a moment of profound global transformation. Our most urgent interrelated challenges – including climate change, rising inequalities, digital exclusion, the global housing crisis, disinformation, financial instability, conflict and geopolitical instability, and the right to universal accessibility – are intensified by the erosion of multilateralism and a global governance system struggling to respond effectively, further exposing structural injustices that demand urgent, coordinated action.

We affirm that cities are pillars of democratic values, safeguarding fundamental freedoms, human rights, progressive principles, and the rule of law amidst threats to democratic institutions. We condemn all forms of violence against peaceful communities and stand in unwavering solidarity with mayors, local leaders and public officials who have been unlawfully targeted, detained, or subjected to violence. In standing with them, we extend our steadfast unity to all residents and cities confronting injustice, conflict, or repression. Their struggle is our shared responsibility.

Cities are on the frontlines bearing the impacts of intensifying global conflicts and instability. Whether regional, national, or transnational, these conflicts cause profound human suffering, exacerbate inequalities, and divert critical resources away from sustainable development and service provision. We reaffirm that all conflicts must be resolved through peaceful means, with all states acting in a manner consistent with international law, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and relevant UN resolutions. We call on G20 leaders to take decisive steps to strengthen multilateral cooperation, uphold human rights and international humanitarian law, and protect civilians, as essential conditions for global peace and local resilience.

As U20 cities, together we stand ready to work with the G20 to shape a collective global renewal. In a year of many landmarks for multilateral collaboration on our shared challenges – including the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, first G20 Summit in Africa, 10 years of the Paris Agreement, and 30 years of the UNFCCC COP process and the Copenhagen and Beijing Declarations and Programmes of Action – we call for the reinvigoration of a fair, action-oriented and inclusive international order, grounded in mutual respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility. The erosion of multilateralism is threatening not only global stability but also the promise of a better future for all.

Cities are indispensable partners to national governments with an essential role in this renewal. Urban centres are the spaces where our human story comes together – where innovation, economic activity, and community life unfold. Cities, which are already home to over 55% of the global population, are key actors delivering change at speed and scale, translating global ambitions into lived realities. Platforms such as the U20 exemplify the power of local multilateralism and city diplomacy as concrete spaces for cooperation and transformation, offering action-driven and inclusive avenues to rebuild trust in the international system. Without cities, national strategies remain abstract; with them, they gain purpose and impact. **Cities must be the co-authors of a renewed, people-centred multilateralism.**

Yet cities continue to face critical financial constraints that hinder their ability to plan for the long term, respond to emergencies, and meet the evolving needs of their communities. This is particularly true for African cities, which face even greater fiscal pressures amid one of the world's fastest urbanisation rates, with urban populations expected to grow by 950 million by 2050.

As the mayors of the Urban 20, we are pleased to present our joint recommendations to G20 leaders, to support the G20 in strengthening multilateralism and driving renewed global collaboration on its priorities. This collective position is the result of a series of engagements between U20 cities, including inputs solicited from the 2025 African Mayors Assembly in Tshwane, and is guided by the following **U20 2025 priority topics**, which are aligned with the priorities of the G20 South African Presidency.

U20 2025 PRIORITIES

**1.****Economic Opportunities and Financing****2.****Climate Action and Urban Resilience****3.****Social Inclusion and Equity****4.****Digital Transformation and Innovation**

We affirm that strengthening and defending multilateralism, enhanced multilevel governance, and improving city governments' direct access to finance remain the most urgent priorities of Urban 20 cities. Therefore, we call upon G20 governments to:

- 01** Recognise that cities are essential partners in multilateral collaboration and in addressing shared global challenges through inclusive action:
- a. **Commit to structurally engage with cities to accelerate the 2030 Agenda, building on the foundations set by the Pact for the Future,** and facilitate and institutionalise mechanisms that allow them to meaningfully contribute to global decision-making, as appropriate, both within UN intergovernmental bodies and in other relevant multilateral processes;
 - b. **Deliver on the COP28 Global Stocktake outcomes ¹ and the Paris Agreement by partnering with and empowering cities to deliver fair and inclusive climate action,** formalising multilevel climate action as a key implementation mechanism as we approach COP30, and recognising the concrete actions cities and subnationals are already contributing to accelerate delivery on these commitments;
 - c. **Establish multilevel mechanisms to collaborate with cities and subnational governments in the design, financing, implementation, monitoring and reporting of national strategies for sustainable development, climate action, biodiversity and resilience, in line with established multilateral processes.** This should include embedding Voluntary Local Reviews into national SDG review schemes, and enhancing multilevel collaboration on just transition plans, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), through initiatives such as – where applicable and relevant – the Coalition for High Ambition Multi-level Partnerships (CHAMP), Integrated Local Financing Frameworks (ILFFs) and Finance Your Cities Country Platforms.

¹ This must include, inter alia, delivering on the commitments to: triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030; transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner; submit more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by COP30, and to accelerate delivery through inclusive, multilevel, gender-responsive and cooperative action.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED



02 Empower cities to access direct and intermediated sources of urban finance to scale their actions on the key drivers of equality and social inclusion, including local public service provision, affordable housing and climate action:

- a. **Unlock predictable, affordable and needs-based direct funding, concessional borrowing, and financing lines for cities** – working with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), multilateral funds, subnational development banks and national institutions for local government finance – to ensure cities can deliver for and protect local residents and accelerate their action on our most pressing global challenges;
- b. **Direct funding, earmarked financing, increased investment in infrastructure and expanded access to affordable credit for local governments to leverage support for local businesses**, in particular youth and women-led small and medium-sized enterprises and empower actors of the informal economy;
- c. **Ensure Public Development Banks (PDBs), including Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and other relevant development financial institutions and funds, address the urban finance gap; are responsive to the needs of cities and regions, and include them in their governance schemes.** PDBs should prioritise cities and urban areas, establish urban climate and development programmes, and scale up direct and intermediated urban climate and development finance flows, including through concessional finance;
- d. **Scale up urban climate action by mobilising at least \$800bn annually in global public investment through 2030 for urban mitigation and adaptation projects,²** ensuring sufficient resources are dedicated to strengthening urban climate resilience through a just and inclusive approach that prioritises historically underinvested communities, **and empowering cities to access climate finance directly** by strengthening enabling policies at the national level, enhancing local fiscal autonomy and creditworthiness, and progressing dedicated access modalities for national and subnational entities to multilateral climate funds;
- e. **Deliver and implement a city-inclusive just transition finance plan that accelerates investments in urban just transitions,³** helps guide investors, improves cities' access to just transition finance and enables progress to be measured, recognising cities as just transition implementers and key partners in designing and delivering a just transition.

² The \$800 billion goal for annual public investment accounts for approximately 20% of the overall urban climate finance gap, estimated by the CCFLA at USD \$4.5 trillion for mitigation and adaptation in cities, with very conservative estimates on adaptation needs (due to the difficulty in tracking and measuring the cost of adaptation).

³ The International Labour Organisation defines a just transition as “greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.”

We further call upon G20 governments to support cities to scale their action and leadership on the following urban policy priorities:

03 Foster sustainable local economic development:

- a. **Develop a national financial architecture that strengthens local financial space through fair and progressive taxation, user charges and fees, and revenue-generating policies** to fulfil their mandates of addressing residents' needs and local development priorities;
- b. **Promote stronger local-global value chains** to support inclusive economic development, social justice, gender equality, and environmental sustainability, giving priority to circularity approaches that prioritise conscious production, responsible consumption and reducing waste;
- c. **Increase support to localise finance via city-to-city and decentralised cooperation, channelling remittances, and city-led local development;**
- d. **Mobilise national and private-sector financial support for localised skills assessment, vocational training, education and innovation ecosystems** to develop diverse and inclusive workforces, reduce the gap with the labour market and create decent, just and green work opportunities, particularly for youth;
- e. **Strengthen integrated local economic strategies that promote food security**, particularly through local food systems, sustainable agriculture, and equitable access to nutritious food, especially for vulnerable groups;
- f. **Strengthen labour protections by enhancing legislation and enforcement mechanisms in consultation with cities and social partners**, increasing opportunities for labour rights training for both workers and employers, and expanding access to social protection

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED



04 Prioritise equitable access to housing as a central urban policy priority, recognising it as a core pillar of the welfare state, social protection and urban resilience:

- a. **Prioritise equitable access to housing that is affordable, adequate, safe, accessible, energy-efficient, and sustainable, while ensuring access to basic services**, to combat growing challenges of homelessness, affordability, community belonging, and resilience. This should include ensuring cities' access to housing funds and land, strengthening cities' legal powers over housing and land, establishing joint planning platforms, and co-creating policies rooted in local realities;
- b. **Support local action through dedicated multilateral and bilateral financial and technical support to increase the affordable and sustainable housing supply**, promoting new affordable housing, including collective forms of housing, while also progressing the retrofitting of existing housing stock, in alignment with national energy transition goals and climate resilience strategies.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED



05 Promote an inclusive and human rights-based approach to human mobility and displacement, recognising that it is a phenomenon driven by various factors, including economic, political and climatic drivers – especially towards, within, and from cities:

- a. **Adopt and fund inclusive and multilevel human mobility and development strategies that reflect on-the-ground realities and enable city-led efforts to deliver services, combat discrimination, and foster integration**, supporting regular pathways and the role of cities in regularisation processes, ensuring access to services and rights for all, including refugees and displaced persons;
- b. **Reinforce and expand existing multilateral frameworks to address emerging challenges, ensure the rights and contributions of migrants, protect displaced populations, and support long-term social and economic inclusion**, facilitating access to decent work and opportunities for growth in cities of origin, transit and destination of migrants and refugees, thereby contributing to sustainable development and a green and just transition.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED



06 Co-develop national care plans, creating integrated, community-based strategies that prioritise care, equity, rights for all, and accessibility, ensuring inequalities are addressed and no one is left behind:

- a. **Invest in local public health systems with a care- and people-centred approach to ensure accessible and community-based services that address both physical and mental health needs**, recognising emerging challenges among youth, including those linked to digital environments;
- b. **Collaborate to create greener, innovative, and accessible public spaces as vital connectors that foster well-being, mental and physical health, and social inclusion**, while recognising and actively promoting accessibility as a public good;
- c. **Actively and systematically involve local governments in the co-creation and implementation of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty's Policy Basket** to simultaneously address food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty – issues that mutually reinforce poor health outcomes.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED

3.

07 Collaborate with cities on urban mobility reforms that deliver improved health outcomes, connectivity and accessibility, reduce air pollution, and tackle spatial inequality:

- a. **Design, adopt and implement comprehensive accessible urban mobility reforms that promote sustainable transport and the transition towards zero-emission public transport**, to support progress toward a just and equitable phase-out of fossil fuels, respecting countries' differentiated contexts and timelines and with targeted support for those affected by the energy transition;
- b. **Ensure that urban planning strategies incorporate a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) approach, prioritise improved mass transit links between and within cities, and enhance connectivity with under-served neighbourhoods;**
- c. **Work with cities to ensure that all urban mobility strategies are gender-sensitive and centred in social dialogue with local stakeholders**, and especially transport workers, including informal workers, to guarantee a just transition, protect labour rights, improve residents' livelihoods, and reduce costs.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED

2. **3.**

08 Leverage transformative digital technologies to enhance public service provision and engagement with communities, with equity at the forefront:

- a. **Promote investment in technology and social initiatives that bridge the digital divide, protect digital rights, and lead to improved service delivery and efficiency**, particularly for youth, marginalised groups and vulnerable communities;
- b. **Collaborate with cities to implement AI-driven digital public service platforms**, specifically addressing the risk of exclusion faced by marginalised groups and vulnerable communities, while strengthening information security measures to protect residents;
- c. **Deliver strategic national support and shape policies that enhance cities' technological capacity and efficiency**, and foster local knowledge economies that integrate education, talent and digital innovation;
- d. **Align national and international priorities with local innovation priorities**, including through dedicated national blended finance facilities to de-risk investments and ensuring that cities have the necessary resources to drive inclusive, impactful and sustainable technological advancements.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED



09 Implement a comprehensive, human-centred AI governance framework:

- a. **Ensure equitable access to innovation and foster public trust**, delivering new international agreements within the UN framework on data security and AI governance that uphold fairness, inclusivity, and a protection framework for local government data;
- b. **Recognise, regulate and contrast digital violence, and tackle cybercrime** by investing in digital literacy programs and ensuring legal systems are modernised;
- c. **Combat disinformation** in line with the key proposals from the UN Secretary-General's Countering Disinformation report, recognising the increasing risk that disinformation, including electoral, policy, conflict, climate and other forms of disinformation, poses to cities' efforts to protect and improve the lives of their residents.

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED

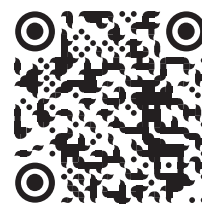


THIS COMMUNIQUÉ IS ENDORSED BY

AS OF 12 SEPTEMBER:

CITIES

Accra	Mayor Hon. Michael Kpakpo Allotey
Ahmedabad	Municipal Commissioner Mr. Banchhanidhi Pani
Amsterdam	Mayor Femke Halsema
Banjul	Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe
Barcelona	Mayor Jaume Collboni
Berlin	Governing Mayor Kai Wegner
Buenos Aires	Chief of Government Jorge Macri
Cape Town	Executive Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis
Copenhagen	Lord Mayor Lars Weiss
Freetown	Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr
Helsinki	Mayor Daniel Sazonov
Istanbul	Mr. Nuri Aslan, Acting Mayor
Izmir	Mayor Dr. Cemil Tugay
Jakarta	Governor Pramono Anung
Johannesburg	Mayor Dada Sello Morero
Lisbon	Mayor Carlos Moedas
London	Mayor Sadiq Khan
Los Angeles	Mayor Karen Bass
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Mexico City	Chief of Government Lic. Clara Brugada Molina
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Rome	Mayor Roberto Gualtieri
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Sydney	Lord Mayor Clover Moore
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Tokyo	Governor Yuriko Koike
Toronto	Mayor Olivia Chow
Tshwane	Mayor Nasiphi Moya



SCAN FOR UPDATED
ENDORSEMENT LIST

