

MEDIA RELEASE

## **Daring Cities: Global urban leaders showcase decisive actions in largest gathering for cities on climate change**

*Bonn, Germany (28 October 2020)* - Daring Cities 2020, the virtual forum co-designed by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and the City of Bonn, brought together more than 4500 participants from over 150 countries to engage in nearly 100 technical and interactive workshops, setting out an action plan to tackle the climate emergency during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Urban areas are at ground zero. As urban leaders, you are on the front lines of these solutions. As we embark on this vital year before COP26, I count on you to raise your ambition and bring concrete commitments to COP26.” said António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General, in a special address. “I am grateful to ICLEI for its continued leadership on climate action,” he continued.

Speakers included Secretary-General Guterres, seven UN agency chiefs, eight national ministers and more than 150 Mayors, Governors, Councillors and other urban leaders.

“Nearly 1000 cities and regions have taken at least one of four critical actions: declaring the climate emergency, committing to carbon neutrality, divesting from fossil fuels or committing to 100% renewable energy,” said Gino Van Begin, ICLEI’s Secretary General. “Daring Cities 2020 showed many more cities can move in this direction and turn their commitments into action,” he continued.

The virtual event was the first and largest of its kind - a forum for urban leaders on climate change.

“Amidst countless challenges, starting with the climate emergency, our threatened biodiversity and the loss of fertile land and of course the global pandemic, there is hope - shining bright throughout Daring Cities is the fact that we are in an era of innovation, collaboration and alliances,” said Bonn Mayor and ICLEI President Ashok Sridharan.

Among the announcements at the event was the release of a climate neutrality framework for the ICLEI network, the launch of UNDRR’s Making Cities Resilient 2030 campaign, the launch of EcoLogistics Principles for sustainable urban freight, and the release of the Green City Finance Directory.

Daring Cities 2020 was supported by Bonn, the German Ministries for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), and the Foundation for International Dialogue of the Savings Bank in Bonn.

## KEY DARING CITIES ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ICLEI's Climate Neutrality Framework

ICLEI's climate neutrality framework calls for the necessary level of ambition and leadership from all cities, towns and regions around the world. This framework is built on three pillars of action to help all levels of government achieve climate neutrality: 1) drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 2) divest, repurpose and reinvest, and 3) offset and compensate any remaining emissions that cannot be otherwise reduced, removed or avoided. [Learn more.](#)

### Making Cities Resilient 2030 is launched

MCR2030 is a global platform of practitioners, thought-leaders, financiers and donors, policy makers, technical agencies, and networks with a collective commitment to contributing towards delivery of the 2030 Agenda. The platform links planning, policy, and strategy with on-the-ground support for implementation and leverage for delivery of specific actions. MCR2030 is a unique cross-stakeholder initiative for improving local resilience through advocacy, sharing knowledge and experiences, establishing mutually reinforcing city-to-city learning networks, injecting technical expertise, connecting multiple layers of government, and building partnerships at international scale. [Learn more.](#)

### Newly launched EcoLogistics Principles show how to transform low-emission urban freight transport

ICLEI launched [Eight EcoLogistics Principles](#) that local governments can follow to lead the transition to sustainable urban freight for livable cities. ICLEI's EcoLogistics initiative promotes transportation of goods by giving priority to health, safety, low-emission, and people-centered urban development. It encourages circular and regional economies while limiting the impact of freight transport. Through this, ICLEI aims to transform the urban logistics scene in cities through effective regulatory, planning and administrative instruments at all levels of government. [Learn more.](#)

### Green City Finance Directory is announced to help cities access sustainable finance

The Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance ([the Alliance](#)) announced the launch of its [Green City Finance Directory](#), an open, online resource to help subnational governments and stakeholders identify project preparation facilities (PPFs). PPFs assist cities by supporting activities in the project preparation stage of the project cycle with the goal of successfully connecting them to finance. As a result, PPFs can help cities develop green and resilient infrastructure, including implementing more efficient heating and cooling systems, building renewable energy, setting up sustainable transit, or climate-proofing resilient infrastructure. Developed in partnership between the Alliance and the Penn Institute for Urban Research, the Green City Finance Directory is the first and only directory of PPFs targeted to help cities access sustainable finance. [Learn more.](#)

### **Bonn presented its first Voluntary Local Review on the SDGs**

As one of the first cities in Germany and worldwide, the City of Bonn presented its first Voluntary Local Review on the status of implementation of Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The structure of the Bonn VLR follows the systematics of the City of Bonn's municipal Sustainability Strategy. A series of indicators and trend patterns illustrate how sustainable development is progressing in Bonn. The report also demonstrates the contribution cities in particular are making to Agenda 2030's implementation. [Learn more.](#)

### **Daring cities use their public procurement power to tackle the climate crisis**

In three action-oriented sessions organized by ICLEI's Global Lead City Network on Sustainable Procurement (GLCN), participants from over 45 countries explored how public buyers can navigate the race to zero-emissions in an environment where 'lowest-price' still is the deciding factor. GLCN is a group of 16 cities committed to drive a transition to sustainable consumption and production by implementing sustainable and innovation procurement. The City of Pittsburgh, USA, is the latest member that joined the network during Daring Cities 2020. [Learn more.](#)

## KEY QUOTES FROM DARING CITIES 2020

**António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations:** “I am urging Governments, businesses and cities to take six climate-positive actions as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Invest in green jobs. Do not bail out polluting industries, especially coal. End fossil fuel subsidies and place a price on carbon. Take climate risks into account in all financial and policy decisions. Work together. And, most important, leave no one behind.”

**Ibrahim Thiaw, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations; Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):** “In the past weeks, at Daring Cities, representatives from local and regional governments from everywhere around the world have shown us that they are part of – and providing for – the solutions. Moving forward, we will need to marshal our efforts and resources to secure rural livelihoods and create green jobs, support community resilience and maintain the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services from the land.”

**Sergio Costa, Minister of the Environment, Italy; Host of UNFCCC PreCOP26:** “We now have the opportunity to move towards a green recovery, focused on the fight against climate change and the preservation of biodiversity: this is an objective that the EU is strongly committed to and which implies a courageous rethinking of the current economic paradigm. In the light of these considerations, we are preparing the next international meetings of the Convention on Climate Change, which, due to the pandemic, have been postponed to next year and which see us as protagonists.”

**Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Government of the United Kingdom; UK COP26 President-Designate:** “We are urging all countries to come forward with ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions. And to commit to net zero targets. We are also asking all cities and regions to sign-up to Race to Zero. That means committing to reach Net Zero by 2050 at the latest. Having a plan to get there. And, importantly, reporting on your progress”.

**Norbert Barthle, Parliamentary Secretary of State from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development:** “Cities must not only prepare themselves against the immediate consequences of climate change, but also increase their resilience to other external shocks.”

**Valerie Plante, Mayor, City of Montreal, Canada; ICLEI Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity:** “We are at a critical juncture in terms of commitments and actions that the international community must make in the area of biodiversity. COP 21 was a major step forward in the field of climate change. The upcoming COP 15 on biodiversity needs to be just as decisive a moment. The international community will in fact be called upon to adopt a new Global Biodiversity Framework. In this framework, all the players involved must make the kind of commitments that will lead to actions commensurate with the challenges that confront us”.

**Svenja Schulze, Germany's Minister from the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature**

**Conservation and Nuclear Safety:** "The goal now is to use the economic recovery in the wake of the coronavirus crisis for greater climate action. Cities can become the key to overcoming both crises... Sub-national governments are often already taking the lead with daring concepts. Cities need daring national governments that invest in climate-friendly and green recovery," said

**Ashok Sridharan, Mayor, City of Bonn, Germany; President, ICLEI – Local Governments for**

**Sustainability:** "Amidst countless challenges, starting with the climate emergency, our threatened biodiversity and the loss of fertile land and of course the global pandemic, there is hope - shining bright throughout Daring Cities is the fact that we are in an era of innovation, collaboration and alliances."

**Farhana Yamin, lawyer/activist, Camden Think&Do:** "Paris gave us the North Star of Net Zero by 2050.

So where are the other compass points?... I think it's the age of Covid and economic collapse in many countries, the debt crisis. Social equality, racial justice, the legacies that have been left ... Those are going to have to be part and parcel of the way in which we look at climate. So, to me, climate justice is social justice, is racial justice, and we must put all of those as the compass points to what we are going towards and doing".

## MEDIA PARTNERS

Daring Cities 2020 is supported by official media partners including All Things Urban, Cities Today, City Monitor, EKOIQ, GovLoop, İKLİM HABER (Climate News), Impakter, Shareable, Smart Cities Dive, TheMayor.EU, URBANET, urbanNext, World Architecture Community, and WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities.

## DARING CITIES CORNERSTONE PARTNERS

Daring Cities 2020 is supported by major contributions from the Federal City of Bonn, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), and the Foundation for International Dialogue of the Savings Bank in Bonn.

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## NOTE TO EDITORS

### **About Daring Cities 2020**

Even as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, the climate crisis continues to impact our cities, towns and regions around the world. Daring Cities is the global, action-oriented virtual forum, designed by ICLEI and the city of Bonn, to empower urban leaders - such as mayors, city councilors, administrators, and urban thought leaders, as well as national government representatives, researchers, technical staff, business leaders, civil society decision-makers and community organizers - to tackle the climate crisis, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Running from 7 to 28 October 2020, Daring Cities featured ambitious global action in a variety of time zones, languages, and formats.

For more information about Daring Cities 2020, please visit <https://daringcities.org/>.

Full event program is available here: <https://daringcities.org/program/>.

Video recordings of the virtual forum are available. Registration is required: <https://daringcities.org/register/>.

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

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (known as "ICLEI") is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ 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 about ICLEI, please visit: <https://iclei.org/>.

### **About the Federal City of Bonn**

Daring Cities 2020 is co-designed by the Federal City of Bonn. An ICLEI Member since 2000, Bonn has been the seat of the ICLEI World Secretariat, while Lord Mayor Ashok Sridharan currently serves as the President of ICLEI. Bonn is constantly working on improving its sustainable performance by adopting local action programs, successfully establishing forms of cooperation with cities all over the world and by launching activities in the field of education for sustainable development.

## CONTACT

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