

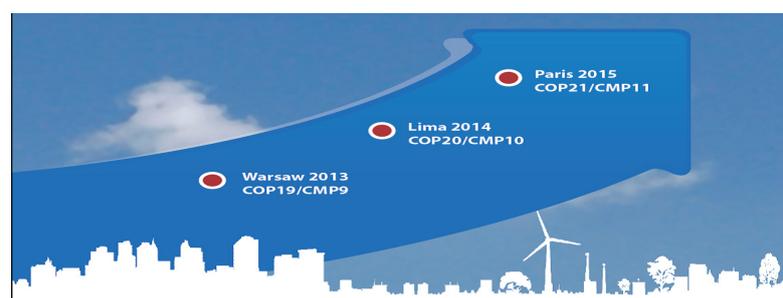
# A brief history of local government climate advocacy: the Local Government Climate Roadmap – mission [almost] accomplished!

ICLEI BRIEFING SHEET - Climate Series, No. 01

On the eve of COP21, and what is hoped to be an ambitious and breakthrough global climate agreement, ICLEI takes a look back at 25 years of climate advocacy by local and subnational governments. In particular, the Local Government Climate Roadmap is concluding its eight year quest for the recognition, engagement, and empowerment of local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders in the global climate regime.

## Key Messages

- The threats to humanity and the planet posed by climate change cannot be addressed without the engagement of local governments. However, prior to the founding of ICLEI in 1990, cities did not widely discuss the threat of climate change, nor did they have a representative voice in international climate discussions.
- In 2007, ICLEI launched the Local Government Climate Roadmap with the mission to promote the recognition, engagement, and empowerment of local and subnational governments in the international climate change arena. The history of the local government climate advocacy journey can be briefly summarized in 3 key stages:
- 1990 - 2007: **Setting the agenda for local climate action within and beyond the UNFCCC** through active participation in the UN Earth Summit and the ensuing Conferences of the Parties (COPs), as well as the launch of initiatives such as the Municipal Leaders' Summit on Climate Change.
- 2007 - 2013: the **Local Government Climate Roadmap** is conceived, leading to a number of achievements. These include: the recognition of the contribution of local and subnational governments in official COP outcome documents and the launch of the carbonn@ Climate Registry (CCR).
- 2013 - 2015: the **Local Government Climate Roadmap mission is accomplished, as the world heads towards a climate deal at COP21 in Paris 2015**. After eight years of immense mobilization at all levels, the Local Government Climate Roadmap has managed to reach its overarching goals. It has secured recognition of local and subnational governments (e.g. through COP decisions), engagement (e.g. in ADP Technical Examination Processes, Friends of Cities) and empowerment (e.g. with new financing programs) within the global climate regime.
- **What next?** Through their voluntary commitments, enormous potential, committed networks and innovative partnerships, local and subnational governments are ready to accelerate action and keep raising ambitions globally; but they need to be empowered even further. With this in mind, a number of new initiatives have been launched, including the Compact of Mayors and the Transformative Actions Program (TAP).



## Why do cities and subnational governments need a voice at the UNFCCC?

It is becoming increasingly clear that the threats to humanity and the planet posed by climate change cannot be tackled effectively without the engagement of local governments. While cities are hubs of innovation and hold great potential to fight climate change on the ground, urban areas are also responsible for over 70 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Only by recognizing, engaging and empowering local and subnational governments can we hope to bring about the type of coherent multi-level action that is needed.

Following the European regional initiative in 1990, the first historical step towards acknowledging local governments globally was taken in September 1990, when 200 city leaders from 50 countries gathered in New York to found ICLEI, the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (now renamed ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability). This event marked a dramatic shift in the global climate landscape and an important leap forward towards global cooperation on sustainable cities, which soon became known as the “Local Agenda 21” movement.

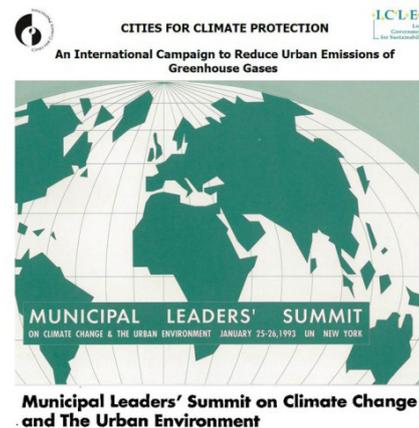
Prior to ICLEI, cities did not widely discuss the threat of climate change, nor did they have a representative voice in international climate discussions. Despite the immense potential and power of local and subnational climate action, which has continued to develop since the 1990s, neither the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) nor its Kyoto Protocol included any reference to local and subnational governments.

## How did local government climate advocacy develop over the years?

### 1990 - 2007: the early days, setting the agenda for local climate action within and beyond the UNFCCC

ICLEI played a unique coordinating and technical role in establishing the recognition of local governments as a key stakeholder group in the UN Convention processes which arose from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - UNCED): the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – where

*The first Municipal Leaders' Summit on Climate Change was held in 1993 in New York.*



Local Government and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) were included as one of the nine Major Groups of Agenda 21.

However, the UNFCCC – as well as the 1997 Kyoto Protocol – overlooked the critical role that local and subnational governments (should) play in the reduction of GHGs and in tackling climate change adaptation. In response to the slow uptake of local government action within national-level climate frameworks, in 1993 ICLEI provided the launching pad for multi-level climate leadership at the Municipal Leaders' Summit on Climate Change in New York, followed by a second edition in Berlin in 1995, which coincided with the first Conference of Parties (COP1) to the UNFCCC. The Summit resulted in the establishment of the Local Authorities and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, alongside business and environmental NGO groups.

### Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA)

The Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency gathers networks of local and subnational governments that are accredited to the UNFCCC as observers.

ICLEI is the focal point of the LGMA since 1995, which together with the Local Government Climate Roadmap (since 2007) is the main advocacy channel for inputs of local and subnational governments into UNFCCC negotiations.

### 2007 - 2013: the Local Government Climate Roadmap (LGCR) is born - with a mission!

In 2007, with the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol pending, climate negotiations entered into a new phase. The Bali COP13 in 2007 saw commitment from various nations through the development of the Bali Action Plan, which



Angela Merkel, current Chancellor of Germany, attended the 2nd Municipal Leaders Summit on Climate Change - convened by ICLEI - on 23-24 March 1995 in her then capacity as the COP President

pushed national governments to adopt “measurable, reportable, and verifiable” GHG mitigation actions, and laid the foundation for further progress on emissions mitigation in a post-2012 climate agreement. A key outcome of COP13 was the establishment in 2007 of the Roadmap adopted at the 2009 COP15 in Copenhagen to gear nations towards long-term cooperative action that reduces global emissions up to and beyond the 2012

### Mission of the Local Government Climate Roadmap

**1. Recognize:** Local and subnational governments are recognized as “governmental stakeholders” of the global climate regime as achieved with para.7 of Cancun Agreements adopted by the COP16 in 2010.

**2. Engage:** Local and subnational governments should be fully engaged in agenda setting and implementation of global climate regime through partnerships at all levels.

**3. Empower:** Availability of and access to financial resources through existing and additional national, international and global finance schemes should be enhanced, in order to enable local and subnational governments to fully mobilize their potential, capacity and ambitions for local climate mitigation and adaptation.



## Local Government Climate Roadmap

Recognize • Engage • Empower

Climate Agreement in Doha. As the UN Roadmap did not include subnational governments. As the UN Roadmap did not include subnational governments, ICLEI responded to the void by designing the “Local Government Climate Roadmap” as a parallel and accompanying process.

When the Local Government Climate Roadmap was created, the LGMA had only a handful of members, but was – exactly for that reason – always kept open. This allowed cities and networks that were not accredited to the UNFCCC access to the UN events in order to contribute to the negotiations through interventions and dialogue with national delegations at various Preparatory Committee meetings and sessions.

The Local Government Climate Roadmap is a coalition and advocacy process that aims to recognize, engage and empower local governments in global climate negotiations. As the focal point of the LGMA to the UNFCCC, ICLEI continues to facilitate the Local Government Climate Roadmap with the support of other city networks.

### From recognition to engagement: Phase I - key moments and achievements of the Local Government Climate Roadmap

**2009, Copenhagen:** At COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, the Local Government Climate Roadmap succeeded in mobilizing more than 1,200 representatives of cities and regions from around the world at the Local Government Climate Lounge. While nations were striving to agree on a global regime and to define binding commitments, the Local Government Climate Roadmap also released the Copenhagen World Catalogue of Local Commitment, capturing more than 3,000 voluntary targets worldwide. As such, Copenhagen was a clear demonstration of the success of the first phase of globally coordinated local action, with major milestones including the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2005 and the European Covenant of Mayors in 2008.

**2010, Mexico:** Despite the disappointing overall outcome of the COP15 in Copenhagen, COP16 in Cancun, Mexico, proved to be an important moment for local and subnational governments. For the first time in history, local and subnational governments were officially recognized as stakeholders in the global climate change regime, in paragraph 7 of the Cancun Agreements. There in Mexico, local governments accelerated their commitments through the adoption of the Mexico City Pact, which introduced global transparency and accountability of local commitments via voluntary reporting of their GHG inventories, climate actions, commitments and targets to the carbonn® Climate Registry. At COP16, this resulted in



Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë; Mayor of Mexico City, Marcelo Ebrard; and Mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, at COP15 in Cancun, Mexico.

the first dialogue of mayors with the COP Presidency, as well as the adoption of the first COP decision that recognized local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders.

**2011, Durban:** At COP17 in Durban in 2011, the concept of adaptation was cemented in the scope of local climate action thanks to the adoption of the Durban Adaptation Charter.

**2013, Nantes:** Upon the opening of a new phase of negotiations through a new negotiating group (the ADP) with a mandate to conclude its work in 2015, Local Government Climate Roadmap partners met in Nantes in 2013 and agreed on a revised strategy. This included creating Friends of Cities at the UNFCCC, pushing for the adoption of a 10 Year Action Plan, conducting thematic technical studies, and convening Ministerial-Mayoral dialogues.

**2013, Warsaw:** At COP19 in Warsaw in 2013, the ADP convened a workshop on urbanization and the COP Presidency hosted the first Cities and Subnationals Dialogue, gathering mayors and ministers from all geographies and scopes at a roundtable. These interactions resulted in the second COP decision recognizing the role of cities and subnational authorities in raising the global level of ambition in the pre-2020 period. This outcome was due in part to the Friends of Cities network, an essential partnership - launched by ICLEI - between the LGMA and



First COP Cities Day, in Warsaw, 2013 (Ministers, Mayors and World Bank representatives)

a growing group of national governments to explore and share effective multi-level approaches that assist the scaling up of local climate action.

Learn more about the Friends of Cities in the UNFCCC and their exemplary practices for vertically integrated climate policy in *ICLEI Briefing Sheets – Climate Series No. 02 and 03*.

**2014, UN Climate Summit:** 2014 was the most impressive year in terms of dialogues and initiatives, with the day-long sessions of the ADP Cities and Subnational Forum and Technical Expert Meeting on Urban Environment in June in Bonn; the outcomes of the 2014 UN Climate Summit, including the Compact of Mayors and the Compact of States and Regions, Cities Climate Finance leadership



Launch of the Compact of Mayors at the UN Climate Summit, 2014, New York.

Alliance and the launch of the GEF Sustainable Cities Integrated Action Program in September in New York; and the launch of the NAZCA Platform at the COP20 in Lima. Meanwhile, within the broader scope of the post-2015 development agenda, significant progress was made outside of the UNFCCC process. This included the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular Goal 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements; the acceleration of and support for local action in the

## The Compact of Mayors

The [Compact of Mayors](#) is the world's largest coalition of city leaders addressing climate change by pledging to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, tracking their progress and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It was launched at the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, Michael R. Bloomberg, and is implemented under the leadership of the world's global city networks – ICLEI, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) – with support from UN-Habitat, the UN's lead agency on urban issues.

Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction; a specific provision for financing municipal investments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development; and progress on the Nagoya 10 Year Framework for cities and subnationals on biodiversity.

## What can be expected at COP21?

As sustainability is entering the political mainstream at the local level, city leaders expect and hope for more from their national counterparts at COP21 and beyond. At COP20 in Lima in 2014, nations agreed to unite within a bottom-up climate regime, with each country submitting their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). However, the current INDCs are far below the level of ambition required to prevent global climate change reaching a point-of-no-return.

An inclusive and ambitious climate agreement at COP21 in Paris is therefore an essential requirement for this new regime to be successful. The COP21 agreement will be seen as inclusive if it engages all non-Party stakeholders – in particular, local and subnational governments – as governmental stakeholders in global efforts and in the implementation of all outcomes. Some relevant paragraphs that have been adopted in the draft text provide reason for optimism in this regard.

However, an inclusive regime without the necessary ambition will resemble a bicycle without a chain. In Paris, nations must demonstrate their ambition by a) ensuring the global greenhouse gas emissions peak before 2030 and aim for carbon neutrality or 100 percent renewables before 2050, b) developing a long term vision on adaptation to climate change, and c) creating a robust framework that addresses loss and damage from climate change.

## “Recognize-Engage-Empower”: Mission [almost] accomplished... What next?

After eight years of immense mobilization at all levels, the LGCR managed to reach its overarching goals:

- The **recognition** of the local and subnational level – e.g. through COP decisions, and reference to local and subnational action in around half of the submitted INDCs – has been enabled by lobbying efforts drawing on the measurable, verifiable, and reportable climate actions and commitments reported by local and subnational governments via the cCR and the Compact of Mayors.

- Their **engagement** – e.g. in ADP Technical Examination Processes, NAZCA Platform, High Level Dialogues and special accreditations – has grown with the LGMA and the Friends of Cities group including local government representatives in their delegations and dialogues.
- Finally, the **empowerment** of local and subnational governments has taken off through increased dialogue with international finance institutions and new financing programs via the Global Environment Facility and others – and with ICLEI’s launch of the Transformative Actions Program (TAP). The TAP will promote transformative local and subnational climate actions with the dual aim of facilitating access to funding and of contributing to advocacy efforts to encourage multi-level governance on climate issues.

ICLEI and partners will continue empowering local and subnational governments in the fight against climate change, in synergy with other post-2015 international processes focusing on sustainability, with our collective efforts to:

1. Inspire, expand, and scale up local climate action
2. Intensify, deepen, and integrate climate action within all areas of sustainability
3. Connect, include, and engage with governments and stakeholders
4. Encourage transparent, accountable, and open municipal actions and governance
5. Resource, empower, and advocate for transformative action

(ICLEI Paris Declaration to the Ministers at COP21, 2015)

Through their voluntary commitments, enormous potential, committed networks and innovative partnerships, local and subnational governments are ready to accelerate action and raise ambitions globally. In the past, nations have missed the opportunity to fully tap this potential. They must not repeat this mistake in Paris, as it is very likely that we will not have another opportunity.



ADP Cities and Subnationals Forum, June 2014

## More related ICLEI Briefing Sheets in the 2015 Climate Series:

- No. 02 - Vertical integration between levels of government to effectively address climate and energy
- No. 03 - "Friends of Cities": Good practices in multi-level partnerships on scaling-up climate action
- No. 04 - Forging Measurable, Reportable and Verifiable actions to tackle climate change
- No. 05 - Reporting platforms for Local and Subnational Climate Action
- No. 06 - The Transformative Actions Program (TAP): Linking with finance

No. 07 - Cities and Regions are ready for COP21!  
But what is happening and where?

Available at: [www.iclei.org/briefingsheets](http://www.iclei.org/briefingsheets)

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## Further Reading

- ICLEI (2015) ICLEI Declaration to the Ministers at COP21, Paris, France (official document is forthcoming, 06 December 2015)
- ICLEI (2015) "Vertical integration between levels of government to effectively address climate and energy", ICLEI Briefing Sheet – Climate Series No. 02. Bonn, Germany.
- Other ICLEI Briefing Sheets in the Climate Series towards the COP21: [www.iclei.org/briefingsheets](http://www.iclei.org/briefingsheets)
- Monika Zimmermann (2012) "How Local Governments Have Become a Factor in Global Sustainability", ch. 14 in State of the World 2014: Governing for Sustainability, Worldwatch Institute.



More briefing sheets here

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**ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** is the world's leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a sustainable future. By helping our Members to make their cities sustainable, low-carbon, ecomobile, resilient, biodiverse, resource-efficient, healthy and happy, with a green economy and smart infrastructure, we impact over 20% of the global urban population.

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