

Local and regional governments commit to climate action at COP 21

On Saturday 12 December 2015, at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Climate Change (COP 21), the Paris Agreement was adopted unanimously by all the Parties.

This agreement is the culmination of 6 years of discussions since the Copenhagen COP in 2009, which had thus far failed to reach such an accord. The agreement also concludes a year of strong and joint mobilization of all stakeholders launched by the UN Secretary General at the Climate Summit in New York in September 2014, and two weeks of intensive activities in Paris organized by local and regional government networks and their partners.

UCLG and its sister organizations, in particular ICLEI and C40, made sure that the voice of local and regional governments was heard during the negotiations.

UCLG particularly emphasized the need to link climate action to the 2030 and Habitat III Agendas and the importance of citizen participation and inclusive social policies to ensure the effective implementation of the sustainability agenda in its broadest sense.

In addition to the official outcomes of the COP, highlights included the joint positions adopted by the local and regional governments' constituency and the steps ahead.

COP21 text negotiated by UN Member States

At the opening plenary on 1 December, Ronan Dantec, Deputy Mayor of Nantes and UCLG spokesperson on Climate, speaking on behalf of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities' Constituency, called on States to find the deal and ensured them that under these terms the relevant stakeholders, in particular local and regional authorities, would do the job. ([full statement](#)).

Taking the floor again at the closing plenary, on Saturday 12 December, he congratulated the French Presidency on having reached a unanimous agreement but reminded those present of the need to look at all the current agendas (sustainable development, financing, urban) as complementary to the climate agenda. He also highlighted the need to adopt a territorial approach involving all local actors for efficient action and reiterated the commitment of local and regional authorities to implementing climate change actions on the ground. ([full statement](#))

The greatest strength of the Paris agreement comes from the commitment of all Parties to implementing it.

The local and regional governments' constituency welcomes the references made to its important role in climate change actions:

- In the preface:
" Affirming the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels on the matters addressed in this Agreement, Recognizing the importance of the engagements of all levels of government and various actors, in accordance with respective national legislations of Parties, in addressing climate change, "

- In article 7 :
"Parties recognize that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all with local, subnational, national, regional and international dimensions, and that it is a key component of and makes a contribution to the long-term global response to climate change to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems, taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of those developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change."

- And in Article 11
"Capacity-building should be country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, and foster country ownership of Parties, in particular, for developing country Parties, including at the national, subnational and local levels. Capacity-building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building activities under the Convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive."

We further praise the recognition of the need to base the climate actions on human rights, with a gender sensitive approach and taking into account sustainable development aims.

"Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,

Also recognizing that sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed country Parties taking the lead, play an important role in addressing climate change,"

Further reference are made to cities, local and subnational authorities in the COP decision that introduces the Agreement and set recommendations for its implementation and for the period 2016-2020 *"Agreeing to uphold and promote regional and international cooperation in order to mobilize stronger and more ambitious climate action by all Parties and non-Party stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities, local communities and indigenous peoples,"*

"74. Further decides to launch a work plan for the period 2016–2020 with the following activities:

*(d) Fostering global, regional, national and subnational cooperation;[...]
(g) Identifying opportunities to strengthen capacity at the national, regional, and subnational level;"*

"V. NON-PARTY STAKEHOLDERS

134. Welcomes the efforts of all non-Party stakeholders to address and respond to climate change, including those of civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities;

135. Invites the non-Party stakeholders referred to in paragraph 134 above to scale up their efforts and support actions to reduce emissions and/or to build resilience and decrease vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and demonstrate these efforts via the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action platform [...];"

Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA)

The COP Presidencies have recognized non-state actors – civil society, the private sector and local and regional governments – as key to the implementation of the climate agreements and have been trying to give more space to non-state actors in the official segment of the negotiations.

This has led to the launch of the **Non State Actors Zone – NAZCA platform** at the COP 20 in Lima in December 2014, which invites non state actors to register their actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

This process has been officialised as a process to be continued in the coming years, as part of enhanced actions towards 2020.

"117. Acknowledges with appreciation the results of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, which build on the climate summit convened on 23 September 2014 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

118. Welcomes the efforts of non-Party stakeholders to scale up their climate actions, and encourages the registration of those actions in the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action platform;³

119. Encourages Parties to work closely with non-Party stakeholders to catalyse efforts to strengthen mitigation and adaptation action;

120. Also encourages non-Party stakeholders to increase their engagement in the processes referred to in paragraph 110 above and paragraph 125 below;

121. Agrees to convene, pursuant to decision 1/CP.20, paragraph 21, building on the Lima-Paris Action Agenda and in conjunction with each session of the Conference of the Parties during the period 2016–2020,"

Actions and Declarations from Non-Party stakeholders

Cities, local and subnational governments were invited to support the joint Declaration throughout the last two weeks of negotiations of the Paris agreement.

The Paris City Hall Declaration

Concluding a successful **Climate Summit for Local Leaders** at Paris City Hall on 4 December, at the invitation of Mayor of Paris and UCLG Co-President, Anne Hidalgo, 700 representatives of cities, regions and local governments and their organisations from around the world signed the [Paris City Hall Declaration](#).

The **Paris City Hall Declaration** reaffirms the commitment of city and regional leaders to act to tackle climate disruption. The Declaration recalls the common responsibility of all to act, calling cities and regions to engage in actions and partnerships to deliver up to 25% of the reductions required to close the gap between the COP21 agreement and the 2 degrees target. It also recalls significant existing local government initiatives (the Compact of Mayors, the Covenant of Mayors, the Compact of States and Regions, the Local Government Climate Roadmap and the NAZCA platform).

The Paris City Hall Declaration was conveyed by Mayor Hidalgo and UN Secretary General Special envoy for climate and cities, Michael Bloomberg during the UNFCCC Action Day on 5 December.

Lima-Paris Action Agenda

In the framework of the LPAA, local and regional authorities and their networks were invited to join the Five-year vision, reflecting on the particular place local and regional authorities have in this process.

UCLG has followed the preparatory process of the LPAA during 2015, advocating for that process to become an official space of dialogue and consultation between States and all relevant stakeholders, in particular local and regional authorities.

As part of the COP, a special segment was dedicated to cities and subnational authorities on the 8 of December, which showcased the actions and initiatives they are already implementing (such as the Compact of Mayors and the Covenant of Mayors) and launched a **“Five-Year Vision” launched around 4 objectives mobilizing all actors:**

- Increasing the number of cities and regions deciding to implement an Action Plan and climate objectives;
- Building resilience in the greatest number of cities and regions, with particular attention to vulnerable populations;
- Improving project preparation and climate planning to ensure increased financial flows to the territories, whilst accelerating the deployment of innovative economic and financial tools;
- Supporting multi-partnership initiatives between different levels of governance (State- local governments, decentralized cooperation, etc.).

Further to the officialisation of the process in the COP Decision, the three ministers from Peru, France and Morocco – Manuel Pulgar Vidal, Ségolène Royal and Hakima El Haité – expressed their strong will and commitment to strengthening the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, as an important place of exchange between Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders.

The Compact of Mayors

Following a year of intensive work to define the processes of the Compact of Mayors and an information and mobilisation campaign by members of the three main international networks involved in the project, it was encouraging to see the high number of signatories ([more than 400 presented on the 4th of December](#)) – among them Paris, Rio, Vancouver, Istanbul, Seoul, Dakar...

The Compact has gained a lot of interest and the side-event about the Compact of Mayors that took place in the negotiation zone was hosted by ICLEI and UCLG in front of a packed room. ([Report and video available here](#)).

The Compact of Mayors is an ambitious agreement by mayors and other city officials to publically commit to deep GHG emissions reductions, making existing mitigation and adaptation targets and plans public and reporting on their progress annually using a newly-standardized measurement system that is compatible with international practices.

Through this initiative, cities commit to meeting the same requirements proposed by the international climate negotiations that will lead to a global climate treaty in 2015.

The compact was launched at the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit in New York City in September 2013 by the Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and endorsed by UN-Habitat, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, UN Secretary General's Climate Change Support Team.

For information or to make a commitment, write to: compactofmayors@uclg.org.

World Summit on Climate and Territories follow-up

Advocating for a real space of dialogue and joint work between all levels of government and involving all relevant stakeholders was also at the core of the Declaration of International Non-Party stakeholders. The declaration was adopted on 2 December at le Bourget during the event "From the World Summit Climate and Territories to the COP21 and beyond: proposals and dynamics of Non-Party Stakeholders".

This text was conceived as complimentary to the [Declaration adopted in Lyon](#) and was supported by the majority of organizations representing the Non-Party Stakeholders (sub-national governments and local authorities, NGOs, businesses, trade union confederations, indigenous people, youth, etc.).

This declaration underlines deep concerns about the national contributions which will likely led to global warming of 3°C. It insists on the necessity of a progression principle of commitments to be applied through an evaluation mechanism. It also reiterates the essential issues brought up in the Lyon declaration: recognition of the territorial approach, inseparable connection between the climate and the development agendas and the need for easily accessible financing for climate actions in territories.

National Governments are called upon to open the Action agenda's governance to all Non-Party stakeholders, as proof of efficiency and transparency, taking into account the fact that national Governments will not be able to meet their greenhouse gas reduction targets without action and mobilization by Non-Party stakeholders.

The event also saw the announcement of a global summit, the CLIMATE CHANCE, which aims to **become a regular event for all non-state actors** involved in the fight against climate change.

Local authorities, businesses, associations, trade unions, the scientific community and citizens are invited to attend this meeting, which should enable a global plan of action to be drawn up, offer more in-depth discussions on both achievements and obstacles, encourage the sharing of experiences and innovations, as well as

highlight the opportunities emerging from this resolute fight against climate change.

Hosted in Nantes, the European Green Capital 2013, and climate representative for UCLG, the first [CLIMATE CHANCE summit](#) will take place from 26 to 28 September 2016.

Paris Pledge for Action

Confident that the Paris agreements are laying the groundwork for enhanced action and support of the local and subnational authorities, UCLG as well as C40 and ICLEI are joining the [Paris Pledge for Action](#). **By signing this pledge**, Non-State actors showcase their support for the outcomes of the Conference and commit to contributing to global efforts to remain under the 2 degrees target. They will do this by taking concrete steps immediately, without waiting for the COP21 agreement to enter into force in 2020.

The Paris pledge for action and its signatories will be made public on Wednesday 16 September.

Cities and Regions pavilion at the COP 21

UCLG partnered in the [Cities and Regions pavilion](#), sharing the reception desk with ICLEI, C40 and R20.

The pavilion received a lot of visits and was an interesting place for communication and promotion of UCLG activities and advocacy.

Within the Pavilion, UCLG supported the organisation of two side-events:

1- A side-event organised by the UCLG Committee on Local Finance for Development on "Financing resilient urban investments: what agenda for action?" on Tuesday 8 December, featuring representatives from the OECD, UNCDF, the Green Municipal Fund, FMDV, MAEDI-France, AFD and CCFLA.

2- And a workshop on sustainability reporting. This workshop opened with a presentation of practical experiences, showcasing sustainability reporting strategies developed by various pioneers, as well as reviewing achievements and limitations to help other local governments identify relevant choices and practical steps (on the scope, frequency, formats, integration with other municipal reports, etc.). Participants were then invited to engage in an open discussion on the potential and requirements for sustainability reporting to be useful in their different contexts. ([read the study here](#))

Reports from partners

<http://www.ccre.org/en/actualites/view/3177>

<http://www.iclei.org/activities/cop21>; <http://bit.ly/1P5hohw>; <http://bit.ly/1RPMz1a>

http://www.c40.org/blog_posts/photos-c40-in-paris-cop21

<http://www.nrg4sd.org/>

<http://www.regionsunies-fogar.org/es/media-files/noticias/137-las-regiones-participan-activamente-en-la-cop21-de-paris>