



TECHNICAL BRIEF

# Local Action for Global Goals

—  
An Opportunity for Enhancing  
Nationally Determined Contributions





Title: Local Action for Global Goals: An Opportunity for Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions

HS Number: HS/081/16E

Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) All rights reserved  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)  
P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA  
Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office) [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any county, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries regarding its economic system or degree of development. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations and its member states.

Cover © Jessica Jones-Langley

Icons credits: Bim, Counloucon, Krishna, Made by Made, Ramesha, 주희 김 via The Noun Project

#### Acknowledgements

Lead author and coordinator: Lea Ranalder (UN-Habitat)

Contributing Authors: Lucia Gasser Hidalgo (UN-Habitat), Jessica Jones-Langley (UN-Habitat), Nicola Tollin (UNESCO Chair on Urban Resilience at University of Southern Denmark - SDU.Resilience), James Vener (UN-Habitat/UNDP)

Contributors: Yunus Arikian (Local Governments for Sustainability and Focal Point of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities), Bernhard Barth (UN-Habitat), Agathe Cavicchioli (Global Covenant of Mayors for Energy & Climate), Andy Deacon (GCoM), Benjamin Jance (GCoM), Asif Nawaz Shah (COP28 Presidency)

Design & Layout: Jessica Jones-Langley (UN-Habitat)

#### Recommended citation

Ranalder, L., Gasser Hidalgo, L., Jones-Langley J., Verner J., Tollin, N., Local Action for Global Goals: An Opportunity for Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions. (2024). Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme

We thank the UNESCO Chair of Urban Resilience at the University of Southern Denmark for the access to the urban content of the NDCs database.



# Table of Contents

---

<u>Message from the Acting Executive Director</u>	4
<u>Executive Summary</u>	5
<u>Introduction</u>	7
<u>Cities take centre stage in global climate talks</u>	9
<u>Local actors reflected in global goals</u>	10
<u>Review: Urban content of the NDCs at the global level</u>	12
<u>Towards enhancing urban content in NDCs</u>	13
<u>An opportunity to strengthen the NDCs in CHAMP-Endorsing Countries</u>	15
<u>A roadmap for multilevel climate action</u>	18
<u>Resources for revising NDCs</u>	19
<u>References</u>	20

## Acronyms

---

CHAMP - Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships

COP – Conference of the Parties

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LCAS - Local Climate Action Summit

NDC – Nationally Determined Contributions

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

SURGe – Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation



# Message from the Acting Executive Director

In an era marked by the climate crisis, decisive collective action is crucial. The global community is increasingly recognizing cities as key actors for addressing climate change. We witnessed this at COP28. Over 70 countries endorsed the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP), and the joint outcomes statement of the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change summarized a collective commitment to bolster local climate action and accelerate progress towards mitigating the climate crisis.

One of my key takeaways from COP28 is the need for increased collaboration between local and national governments. This technical brief shows that we have a clear opportunity for accelerated multilevel climate action. Over 70 national governments pledged to work more closely with their local governments in the development of their climate strategies. There is significant potential to bridge the gap between current commitments and global climate goals. Jointly, we can do it.

We have a prime opportunity to realize our global climate aspirations in the very near future, with national and local governments working hand-in-hand to revise Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The year 2024 will be critical in convening conversations that can facilitate such

multilevel dialogues. Key moments in this roadmap include the Innovate4Cities forum, the Summit of the Future in September, the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum in Cairo in November, and COP29 in Azerbaijan. These events are critical check-in moments for Member States to review and revise their climate commitments over the next two years.

This paper offers insights and guiding principles for policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders to create a future characterized by sustainable urban development and climate resilience. It is my hope that the ideas presented in this paper inspire meaningful action, multilevel collaboration and bold decisions on the journey towards a greener and more sustainable world.



**Michal Mlynár**  
UN Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)



# Executive Summary

Cities are culprits, and victims and potentially saviours from the climate crisis. More than half of the global population resides in cities, and cities are responsible for a large share of global emissions while at the same time vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Cities are already taking the lead in implementing climate action. They are increasingly recognized as key agents in implementing climate solutions. This technical brief identifies opportunities to strengthen the urban content across NDCs as key to raising their overall ambition and to strengthen the effective operationalization of climate adaptation and mitigation policies.

## Cities seen as crucial partners to address climate change at COP28

COP28 witnessed ground-breaking events on cities and climate action and served as a platform to highlight the critical role of cities and the urgent need for local climate finance to advance local solutions. These themes were also embedded in the Local Climate Action Summit on 2 December 2024 and the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change. The Ministerial Meeting headlined the Multilevel Action Urbanization, Built Environment & Transport day on 6 December 2024, drawing over 1,000 delegates, featuring the (t)winning programme of multilevel partnerships and a segment dedicated to unlocking local climate finance.

Key outcomes include the Joint Outcomes Statement, a ten-point strategy aimed at boosting local climate action, fostering multilevel collaboration, and accelerating local climate finance for an efficient and effective response to the climate crisis. In addition, COP28 saw the establishment of a Loss and Damage fund where subnational governments can access funds directly, highlighting the opportunity to strengthen the interconnection between climate change and urbanization.

## Opportunity identified to support greater climate action at the local level

This recognition of cities' importance at COP28 was reflected in the launch of the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for climate action, endorsed by over 70 countries representing 33% of the global population, 58% of global GDP, and 35% of global emissions. The pledge provides a great opportunity to strengthen multilevel collaboration to increase the ambition of NDCs to achieve global climate goals.

An analysis of the CHAMP-endorsing countries, based on the NDC urban content data and analysis, reveals that two-thirds of countries which have committed to stronger collaboration with local governments through CHAMP currently display low or moderate urban content in their NDCs. This offers an opportunity to integrate urban priorities, such as mitigation and adaptation measures tailored to urban areas in the next NDC revision cycle in 2025, which will culminate at COP30 in Belém in Brazil.



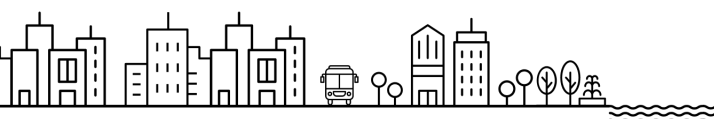
## Executive Summary (Continued)

As countries prepare to revise their NDCs ahead of COP30, the analysis summarized in this technical brief lines out:

1. which countries have the biggest potential to work towards stronger integration of urban content in their NDCs;
2. how they can reap the co-benefits of sustainable urban development, effective local adaptation measures, and reducing emissions by stronger collaboration with their local governments.

In addition, this information enables stakeholders to identify opportunities for implementing effective change to enhance climate ambition, focusing on countries where significant opportunities exist to integrate urban priorities into their national climate plans.

Minato City, Tokyo, Japan  
Photo Credit: Kentaro Toma / Unsplash



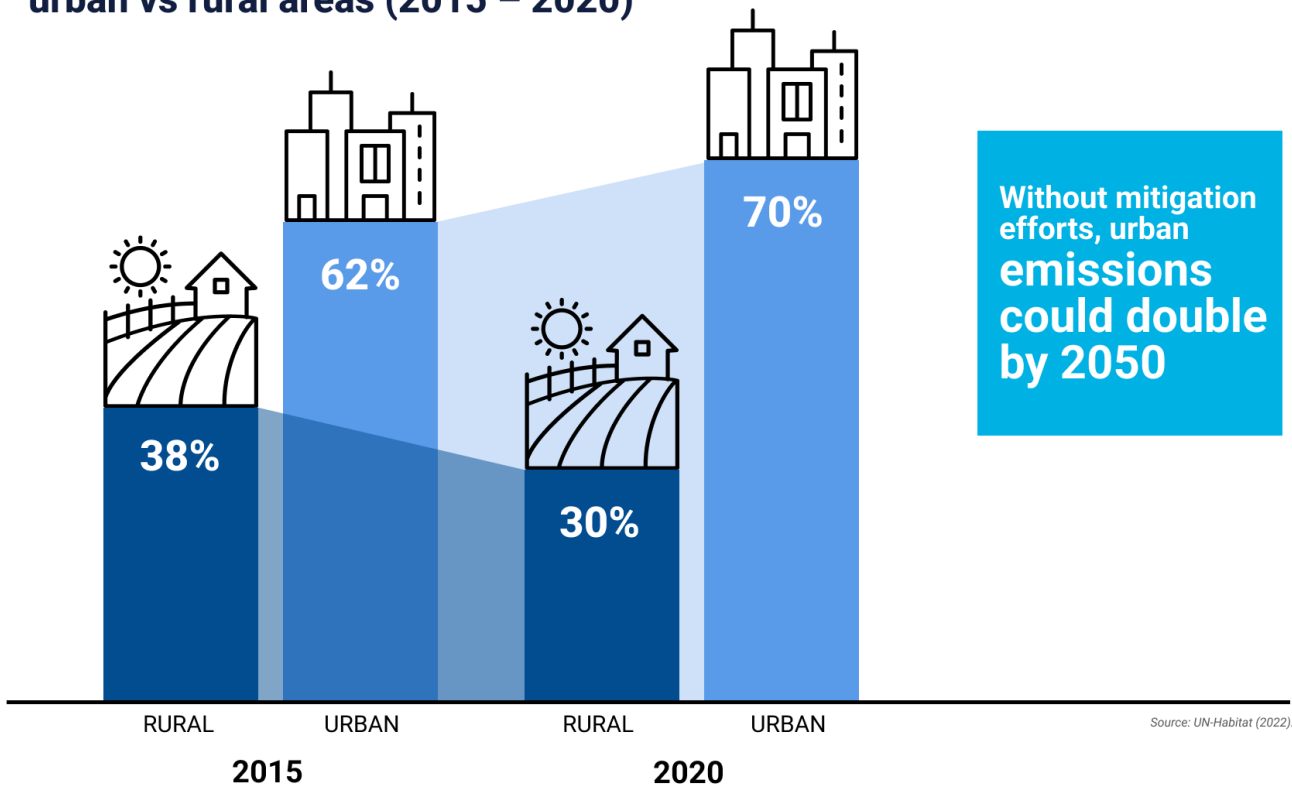
# Introduction

Against the backdrop of COP28, cities and local governments found themselves under an unprecedented spotlight, underscoring their collective role in driving global climate action. The inclusion of local leaders in key discussions at COP28 was not merely symbolic. It served as a signal that the intergovernmental process is primed and stands ready to gain significantly from collaborating with cities to achieve global climate goals. This will be critical for mobilizing more support for fortifying cities' sustainable and resilient transition, while simultaneously contributing to the broader objective of achieving global climate goals.

Urbanization and climate change are closely intertwined global trends, with over half of the world's population residing in urban areas, projected to reach 68% by 2050, (UNDESA 2018). Growing urbanization and population growth, coupled with economic development and rising prosperity have contributed to a surge in greenhouse gas emissions generated by urban-based activities and residents. As of 2020, cities were responsible for around 70% of global emissions, up from 62% in 2015 as well as around three-quarters of energy consumption (see *figure 1*) (UN-Habitat 2022). Without mitigation efforts, urban emissions could double by mid-century, exacerbating climate change impacts, (IPCC 2022).

**FIGURE 1**

## Share of greenhouse gas emissions in urban vs rural areas (2015 – 2020)



**Yet, cities are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.** Approximately 70% of urban areas are already experiencing the effects of climate change, such as extreme heat. This is exacerbated by the urban heat island effect, where temperatures rise up to 15 degrees warmer than surrounding rural areas, extreme weather events, rising sea levels, heat stress and landslides (see figure 2) (Mentaschi, L. et al. 2022). All of these put urban services, housing and infrastructure at risk, affecting health, livelihoods assets, economies, and urban ecosystems. Vulnerability is particularly acute for the over 1 billion people living in informal settlements, who lack access to essential infrastructure and services (UN Stats, n.d.).

**Cities are key for delivering climate solutions and halting the destruction and degradation of natural habitats.** Though cities are a significant driver of planet-warming emissions, they are also engines of climate action and at the forefront of delivering solutions. Many cities are committing to climate action, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change, and passing legislation and targets to reach net zero emissions. As centres of production, population, and innovation, cities have a triple role in the climate and climate crisis as culprits behind, victims of, and, potentially, saviours from these crises.

FIGURE 2

## Climate change impacts in cities



Source: IPCC (2022).



## Cities take centre stage in global climate talks

COP28 witnessed groundbreaking events dedicated to local climate action. The first-ever Local Climate Action Summit (LCAS) hosted jointly by the COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies, showcased the critical role local leaders play in tackling the climate crisis. The Summit highlighted innovative strategies for emissions reduction, climate risk mitigation, and strengthening national climate action efforts. The event brought together 500+ mayors, governors, and other local leaders from more than 60 countries to transform climate finance and enhance global climate action, (Bloomberg Philanthropies 2023). LCAS also witnessed the launch of the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP), where 72 national governments pledged to enhance collaboration between national and subnational governments in climate action planning (COP28 Presidency, & Bloomberg Philanthropies, 2023).

In addition, the [Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change](#) marked another significant milestone during COP28. This ministerial session delved into crucial topics such as multilevel action and climate finance, highlighting the pivotal role of resource mobilization as only around a third of climate finance has been found to be allocated to adaptation and resilience, with just 10% reaching the local level (CPI, 2021).

The outcomes of these events, focusing on the role of cities, were summarized in the [Joint Outcomes Statement on Urbanization and Climate Change](#) (COP28 2023). The Joint Outcomes Statement, a ten-point strategy aimed at boosting local climate action, fostering multilevel collaboration, and accelerating local climate finance for an efficient and effective response to the climate crisis, was presented at COP28. The document summarizes the key outcomes from the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, as well as the Local Climate Action Summit.



National and local government representatives gather for the Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change and Urbanization  
Photo Credit: Dean Alexander / UN-Habitat

## Local actors reflected in global goals

Growing recognition of the importance of local climate action to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement has also been integrated into COP28 outcomes. This was evident in the negotiation and agreement texts, including the [outcome of the first Global Stocktake](#)<sup>1</sup> where the engagement of cities and subnational actors to collectively progress towards the Paris Agreement was explicitly mentioned (UNFCCC 2023). The [Global Goal on Adaptation document](#) acknowledged adaptation as a global challenge that required action at all levels, reinforcing the recognition of local efforts alongside national initiatives. (UNFCCC 2023) A financial safety net is crucial for cities facing climate change impacts, and while not yet operational, COP28 saw the establishment of a Loss and Damage fund which will allow developing countries to directly access resources from the Fund, including through subnational entities.

This builds on a growing international awareness that the climate battle will be won or lost in cities. Encouraged by the work and contributions of non-party stakeholders, including cities, towns, states and regions to the Paris Agreement process since its adoption and the work of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA)<sup>2</sup> constituency to the UNFCCC, the importance of cities for climate action is not only referenced in the Paris Agreement, but also the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact, and the Sharm-El-Sheikh Implementation Plan, recognizing the need for multilevel and cooperative action beyond national level engagement (UNFCCC 2022).

At COP27, the first-ever COP Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change was convened with over 60 member states, a significant step by national governments in delivering the alignment needed for multi-level urban climate action (UN Habitat 2023). Similarly, COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Global Biodiversity Framework, which includes the first global target on conserving and planning green and blue spaces in urban areas, and endorsed the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity 2020).

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has highlighted the role of cities and communities as critical for responding to the climate crisis. As part of the Seventh Assessment cycle, the IPCC will also feature a Special Report on Climate Change and Cities (Dodman, D. et al. 2022). This Special Report will also be informed by the ongoing efforts to close research gaps under the Global Research and Action Agenda (GRAA) and the Cities Research Innovation Agenda (CRIA) (GCoM 2021).

At COP27, national governments, city networks and other stakeholders took bold action pledging their support for the first COP Presidency led urban initiative – [Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation \(SURGe\)](#) – dedicated to enhancing urban climate action through multi-level governance, multi-stakeholder engagement and delivery, contributing to the Paris Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (see box 1).

<sup>1</sup> Outcome of the first Global Stocktake, 158, pp. 20. "Acknowledges the important role and active engagement of non-Party stakeholders, particularly civil society, [...], cities and subnational authorities, [...] local communities, [...] in supporting Parties and contributing to the significant collective progress towards the Paris Agreement temperature goal and in addressing and responding to climate change and enhancing ambition, including progress through other relevant intergovernmental processes". UNFCCC (2023)

<sup>2</sup> LGMA has represented networks of local and regional governments under the UNFCCC. They have served as the voice of cities and regions since the first COP in 1995 and advocate for multilevel action in the climate, nature, and desertification processes





## BOX 1: Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation Initiative (SURGe)

The Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation Initiative (SURGe) is a COP27 initiative dedicated to connecting local, national, and global levels for climate action. It responds to the challenge that current national pledges are not sufficient to reduce harmful emissions to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement. National climate action often focuses only on priority sectors and does not systemically and effectively guide local climate action in cities. In addition, local governments lack the technical and financial resources to implement local climate action at scale.

In response, multilevel collaboration is necessary to raise ambition and provide solutions on the ground that help achieve the Paris Agreement through implementation at the local level.

SURGe was launched at the first-ever Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP27 and backed by the *Resolution on Enhancing the Interlinkage between Urbanization and Climate Change Resilience* at the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Coordinated by UN-Habitat and ICLEI, SURGe was designed to be a convening

space to connect local, national, and global levels to coordinate collective climate action and to improve collaboration between sectoral initiatives – all with the objective to build more strategically on cities and sustainable urbanization as allies to help deliver the targets of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. This is delivered through five integrated sectoral tracks and track partners. The tracks are: buildings and housing, urban energy, urban waste and consumption, urban mobility, urban water.



SURGe was launched at the first-ever Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP27  
Photo Credit: UN-Habitat

# Review: Urban content of the NDCs at the global level

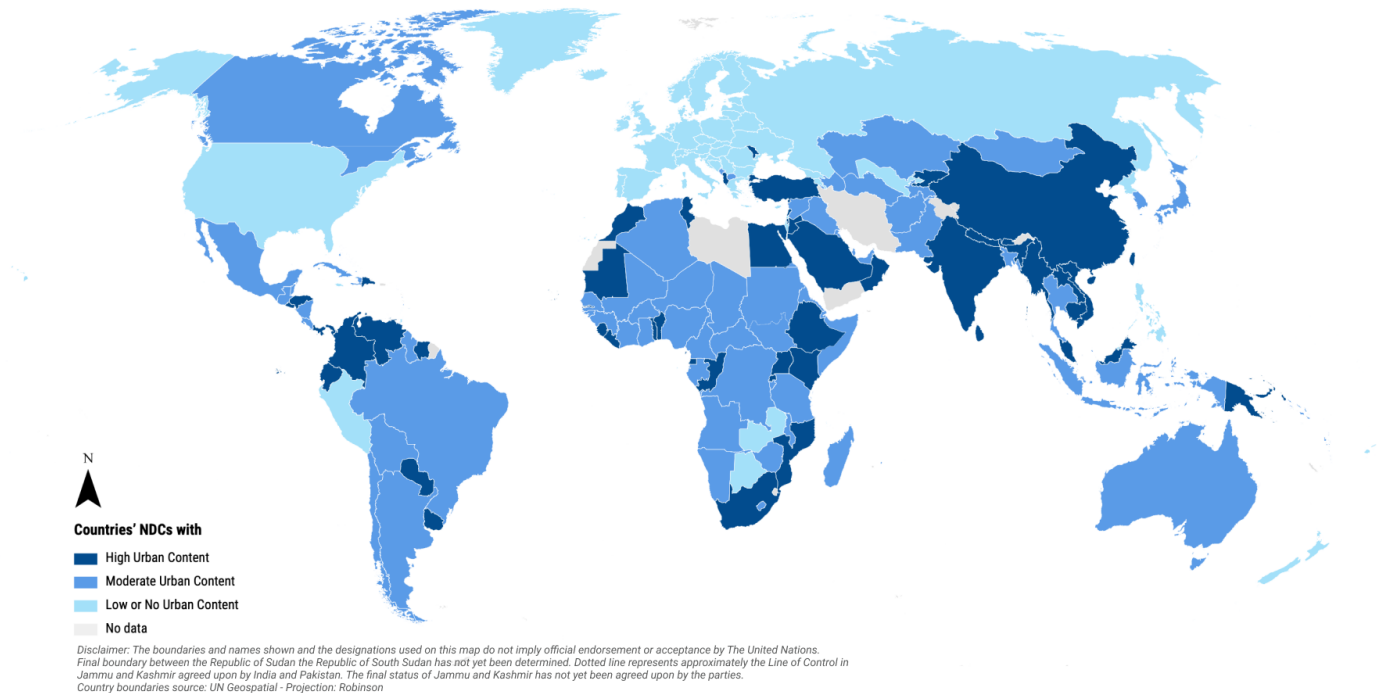
The results of the Global Stocktake have demonstrated that the world is not on track to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement. (United Nations 2023) With countries expected to submit their updated NDCs in 2025, discussions emerged about what needs to be done to narrow the emission gap and – and what cities could do to keep the 1.5°C target alive. Despite progress in enhancing urban content in NDCs, an analysis conducted by UN-Habitat, UNDP, and University of Southern Denmark in partnership revealed that 129 of the 194 NDCs or 66% of the NDCs contain either moderate or strong levels of urban content (see figure 3) (Tollin, N. et al., 2024).

Specifically, the analysis classified each NDC into one of three clusters depending on their urban content. ‘Strong’ urban content encompasses NDCs with specific urban sections or those in which urban is identified as a priority sector<sup>4</sup> ‘Moderate’ urban content includes NDCs featuring urban mentions within the text that are not within a dedicated urban section. ‘Low or no’ urban content includes NDCs with a low level or no explicit urban references in the text. It is important to note that the lack of urban content in an NDC does not necessarily mean that there is a lack climate urban policies and actions in that country.

The analysis of the NDCs shows that 39% have moderate urban content, 34% have low or no urban content, and only 27% included strong urban elements. Local climate action can

**FIGURE 3**

## Urban content in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)



<sup>3</sup> The full analysis is set to be published in mid-2024. See p. 19

<sup>4</sup> NDCs from City states like Singapore, Vatican City, and Monaco are grouped within this cluster.

Based on data from SDU Resilience, to be published by UN-Habitat and UNDP in the forthcoming report "Urban Climate Action - The Urban Content of the NDCs 2023"

contribute to national climate goal and strengthening adaptation and resilience; yet this potential remains under-utilized and offers an opportunity in highlighting the role of cities in upcoming NDCs.

Strengthening the urban content of the NDCs is key to raise the overall ambition of the NDCs and for the effective operationalization of climate adaptation and mitigation policies. This is especially important as cities are responsible for a large share of emissions and are increasingly exposed and vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The integration of urban climate action can be an entry point to increase the effectiveness of policies and actions and avoiding silo approaches.

## Towards enhancing urban content in NDCs

There is a golden opportunity to strengthen the nexus between climate change and urbanization and enhance the urban content in the NDCs. At COP28, the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for climate action was launched to spur greater collaboration between national and subnational governments in climate action planning (COP28 Presidency, & Bloomberg Philanthropies, 2023).

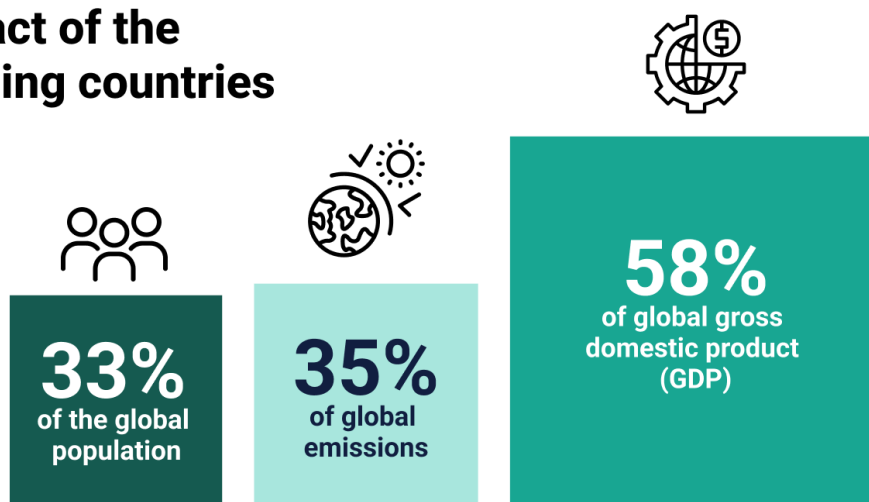
The objective of CHAMP is to unlock and realize mitigation and adaptation action opportunities at the subnational level by involving cities, towns, states and regions in the planning, financing, and implementation of NDC climate strategies by 2025 (see box 2). Thereby, it is scaling up support and resources for subnational and local governments to drive impactful climate action. Notably, CHAMP complements the [SURGe initiative](#) launched at COP27, providing an additional platform to translate national commitments into localized, cross-sectoral climate action.

CHAMP was endorsed by over 70 countries, including the European Union. Geographically, endorsing countries represent a broad global spread, with 20 countries in Europe, 17 in Asia, 14 in Africa, 12 in North America, 5 in South America, and 4 in Oceania.

Collectively, CHAMP-endorsers represent 33% of the global population, 58% of global GDP, and 35% of global emissions (see figure 4). With this, CHAMP signified substantial international support for the indispensable role that collaboration between local and national governments plays in realizing global climate goals.

**FIGURE 4**

### The global impact of the CHAMP-endorsing countries



\*Countries who endorsed CHAMP (Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships) as of 14 February 2024  
The World Bank (2022a); The World Bank (2022b); Our World in Data (2022); COP28 Presidency (2023)



## Box 2: Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP)

Launched at COP28 by the Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies, along with partners including UN-Habitat, CHAMP has been endorsed by national governments, pledging to enhance cooperation, where applicable and appropriate, with subnational governments in the planning, financing, implementation, and monitoring of climate strategies.

This included, but is not limited to, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Long Term Low-Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS), to maximize climate action, including through coalitions such as the NDC Partnership, with a view towards collectively pursuing efforts to limit the

temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and increase adaptation and resilience.

The first significant test for CHAMP endorsers will be to submit enhanced NDCs in 2025 that reflect contributions from their subnational governments and score higher on urban content.

### List of endorsers

#### Strong urban content

1. 🇦🇱 Republic of Albania
2. 🇦🇩 Principality of Andorra
3. 🇧🇹 Kingdom of Bhutan
4. 🇵🇹 Republic of Cabo Verde
5. 🇨🇴 Republic of Colombia
6. 🇩🇴 Dominican Republic
7. 🇸🇻 Republic of El Salvador
8. 🇪🇹 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
9. 🇯🇴 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
10. 🇰🇪 Republic of Kenya
11. 🇰🇾 Kyrgyz Republic
12. 🇱🇧 Republic of Lebanon
13. 🇲🇦 Kingdom of Morocco
14. 🇵🇦 Republic of Panama
15. 🇵🇬 Independent State of Papua New Guinea
16. 🇵🇷 Republic of Paraguay
17. 🇷🇼 Republic of Rwanda
18. 🇲🇩 Republic of Moldova
19. 🇸🇯 Republic of Sierra Leone
20. 🇩🇸 Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
21. 🇹🇷 Republic of Türkiye

#### Moderate urban content

22. 🇦🇺 Commonwealth of Australia
23. 🇦🇿 Republic of Azerbaijan
24. 🇧🇩 Commonwealth of the Bahamas
25. 🇧🇩 People's Republic of Bangladesh
26. 🇧🇷 Federative Republic of Brazil
27. 🇧🇫 Burkina Faso
28. 🇨🇦 Canada
29. 🇨🇩 Republic of Chad
30. 🇨🇱 Republic of Chile
31. 🇨🇷 Republic of Costa Rica
32. 🇨🇮 Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
33. 🇪🇸 Kingdom of Eswatini
34. 🇬🇦 Republic of Ghana
35. 🇬🇹 Republic of Guatemala
36. 🇯🇵 Japan
37. 🇰🇮 Republic of Kiribati
38. 🇰🇷 Republic of Korea
39. 🇱🇸 Kingdom of Lesotho
40. 🇲🇽 United Mexican States
41. 🇲🇶 Mongolia
42. 🇳🇮 Republic of Nicaragua
43. 🇳🇮 Federal Republic of Nigeria
44. 🇲🇰 Republic of North Macedonia
45. 🇵🇰 Islamic Republic of Pakistan
46. 🇸🇨 Republic of Seychelles
47. 🇹🇲 Turkmenistan
48. 🇦🇪 United Arab Emirates

#### Low or no urban content

49. 🇦🇬 Antigua and Barbuda
50. 🇦🇲 Republic of Armenia
51. 🇧🇪 Kingdom of Belgium
52. 🇧🇳 Negara Brunei Darussalam
53. 🇧🇬 Republic of Bulgaria
54. 🇩🇰 Kingdom of Denmark
55. 🇪🇪 Republic of Estonia
56. 🇫🇷 Republic of France
57. 🇩🇪 Federal Republic of Germany
58. 🇭🇺 Hungary
59. 🇮🇸 Iceland
60. 🇮🇹 Republic of Italy
61. 🇯🇲 Jamaica
62. 🇳🇱 Kingdom of the Netherlands
63. 🇳🇴 Kingdom of Norway
64. 🇬🇹 Republic of Guatemala
65. 🇵🇭 Republic of the Philippines
66. 🇵🇱 Republic of Poland
67. 🇵🇹 Portuguese Republic
68. 🇻🇨 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
69. 🇷🇸 Republic of Serbia
70. 🇺🇦 Ukraine
71. 🇺🇸 United States of America
72. 🇾🇪 Republic of Yemen

# An opportunity to strengthen the NDCs in CHAMP-endorsing countries

An analysis of the CHAMP-endorsing countries, based on the NDC urban content data and analysis, reveals that two-thirds of countries which have committed to stronger collaboration with local governments through CHAMP currently display low or moderate urban content in their NDCs (see figure 5). This offers an opportunity to strengthen the urban content of NDCs in the next NDC revision cycle in 2025, which will culminate at COP30 in Belém, in Brazil.

Specifically, an analysis of CHAMP endorsers, urban content of the NDCs, and geographical clusters revealed noteworthy trends and distinctions among endorsing countries (see figure 6).

## Low or no urban content

Of the CHAMP-endorsing countries, 24 have been classified as **having low or no urban content**<sup>5</sup> in their NDCs, many of which are in the Global North. Interestingly, 20 out of

FIGURE 5

## Distribution: urban content in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of CHAMP endorsing countries



\*Countries who endorsed CHAMP (Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships) as of 14 February 2024  
Based on data from SDU.Resilience, to be published by UN-Habitat and UNDP in the forthcoming report "Urban Climate Action - The Urban Content of the NDCs 2023"

<sup>5</sup>This includes Yemen which has endorsed CHAMP but where data on the NDCs is unavailable.



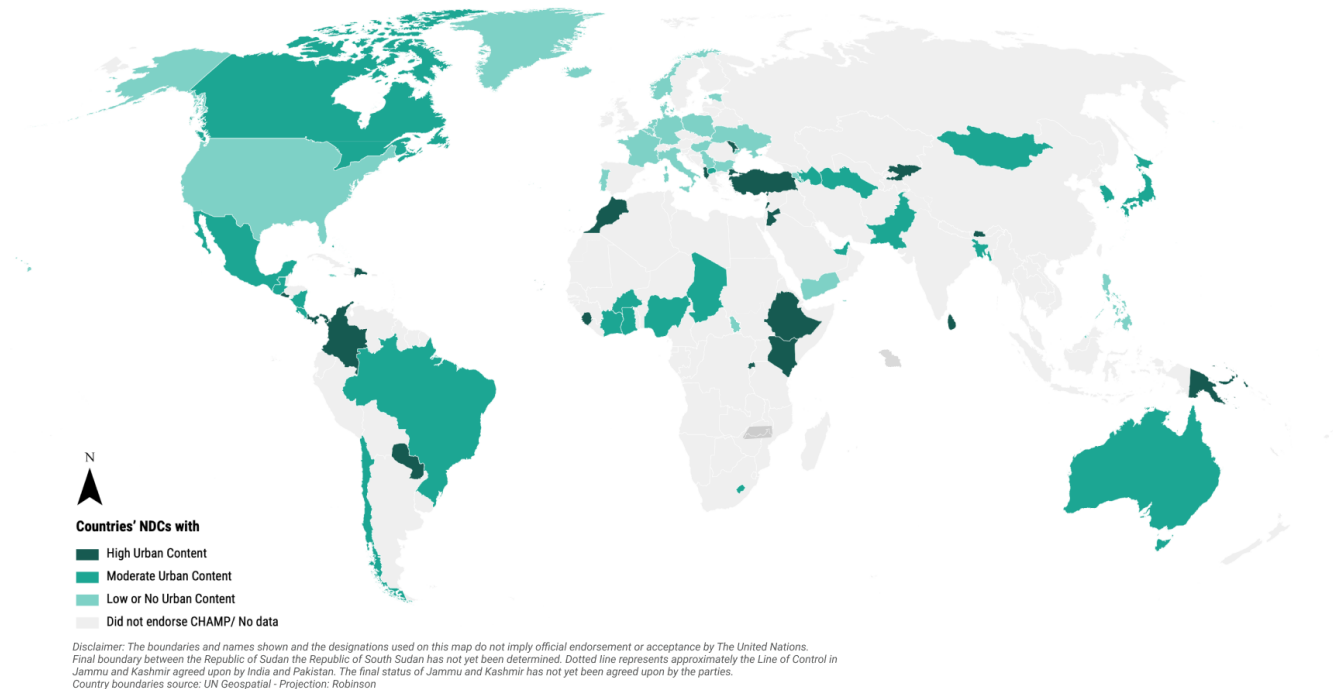
these 24 countries have higher urban populations than the global average of 55%. These include highly urbanized countries such as Belgium (98% urban population), Iceland (94%), the Netherlands (93%), Denmark (88%), Norway (84%), USA (82%), and France (81%) (The World Bank 2022c). The exceptions to this trend are Antigua and Barbuda, the Philippines, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Yemen, which have lower urban populations than the global average.

In addition, this category also contains some of the highest emitting countries in terms of annual emissions among CHAMP-endorsing countries. Collectively, the 24 CHAMP-endorsing countries with low or no urban content are responsible for around 20% of global annual CO2 emissions – albeit with stark differences among them. This includes the USA (13.6% share of global CO2 emissions in 2022), Germany (1.8%), Italy (0.9%), and France (0.8%), but also countries which are responsible for less than 0.01% of annual CO2 emissions, such as the island countries Palau, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Antigua and Barbuda (Our World in Data 2022).

This trend suggests that the most urbanized and highest emitting countries have the lowest urban content in their NDCs. With most of the emissions coming from cities, there is a strong opportunity to reduce their emissions by including urban priorities and actions in their upcoming NDC commitments.

**FIGURE 6**

## Urban content of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of CHAMP endorsing countries



Based on data from SDU Resilience, to be published by UN-Habitat and UNDP in the forthcoming report "Urban Climate Action - The Urban Content of the NDCs 2023"



## Moderate urban content

The largest cluster comprises 27 countries, whose NDCs exhibit **moderate urban content**; this cluster encompasses a moderate prioritization of urban issues as part of their national climate strategies. This category includes some of the countries with the largest populations. Collectively, the 27 CHAMP-endorsing countries with moderate urban content are home to around 1.4 billion people, or 18% of the global population (The World Bank 2022). This includes Pakistan (235 million inhabitants in 2022), Nigeria (218 million), Brazil (215 million), Bangladesh (171 million), Mexico (127 million) and Japan (125 million), many of which are expected to experience population growth in the future.

In addition, this category also includes countries that have a large share of their urban population living in informal settlements, such as Chad (82% of urban population living in informal settlements), Nicaragua (67%), Pakistan (56%), Cote d'Ivoire (53%), Bangladesh (52%), Nigeria (49%), Guatemala (38%) and Ghana (33%) (The World Bank 2020).

While efforts have been made to prioritize cities in the NDCs, there remains untapped potential for improvement in view of the next NDC revision cycle. With many of the countries having large populations as well as high shares of urban populations living in informal settlements, a stronger collaboration between national and local governments may also provide opportunities for addressing the needs of the urban poor.

## Strong urban content

Of the 72 countries endorsing CHAMP, 21 demonstrate already **strong urban content** in their NDCs, showcasing strong efforts to recognize the important role that urban areas play in terms of exposure to climate risks, contributions to emission mitigation, and in supporting the achievement of national and global commitments.

This category contains several countries where cities are experiencing rapid growth, characterized by high annual urban population growth rates, including Ethiopia (4.7% urban population growth rate in 2022), Kenya (3.7%), Rwanda (3.2%), and Sierra Leone (3.2%), (The World Bank 2022b). In addition, this category includes several coastal countries at risk of experiencing increased climate impacts, including Panama, Papua New Guinea, El Salvador, Cabo Verde, and Colombia.

This trend suggests that countries with high urbanization rates already have strong urban content in their NDCs. Continued efforts between national and local governments in the development and implementation of climate strategies will be critical: not only to continue anchoring urban priorities in the upcoming NDCs but also to ensure sustainable urban development in these countries with rapidly growing cities.

*For full background data and analysis of CHAMP-endorsing countries see Reference Table 1 at the end of this document.*



# A roadmap for multilevel climate action

As COP28 concluded, a clear message emerged: cities are not just the culprits and victims of the climate change, they are dynamic leaders driving action. They are the battleground where the climate crisis will be won or lost.

With the endorsement of 72 national governments, CHAMP represents a significant step to increased multilevel climate action that strengthens NDCs and collaboration with local governments. Yet, urgent efforts are required from two-thirds of CHAMP endorsers and beyond to fulfil their commitments.

Increasing the urban content in the NDCs in the next revision cycle will provide an entry point for supporting accelerated local action as an opportunity for reducing emissions, while advancing sustainable urban development, bolstering resilience and addressing the needs of the millions of urban poor.

Concentrated efforts towards global sustainability governance must be made a focus of 2024. Opportunities for stronger collaboration between local and national governments and delivering on CHAMP commitments include:

- **Review** previous NDC and identify gaps and opportunities and take stock of existing national planning processes and their alignments with National Urban Policies, existing city plans, etc.<sup>6</sup>
- **Dialogues** to bring together different Ministerial portfolios, local leaders, and technical experts to work together in the 2025 NDC revision process and discuss how to use the NDCs as entry point to accelerate local climate action, while considering the local and regional contexts.
- **Create peer-to-peer learning opportunities** across national, regional, and local governments - as well as academia, business, and civil society - to better understand good practices.
- **Generate opportunities** to showcase advances in ambition across national climate strategies, take stock and consolidating efforts.

The calendar year and beyond offer a clear engagement roadmap to facilitate this conversation. This includes – among others:<sup>7</sup>

- **UNFCCC Bonn Climate Conference (SB60) (03 – 13 June)**, happening back-to-back with the Daring Cities Forum 2024 where urban leaders discuss how to tackle the climate emergency.
- **High Level Political Forum in New York (08 – 17 July)**, the HLPF convenes world leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to review successes, challenges, and opportunities related to the SDGs. Through interactive discussions, presentations, and voluntary national reviews, the HLPF facilitates global cooperation and accelerates collective action towards achieving a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

<sup>6</sup> A possible resource for this process is the UN-Habitat guide Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions through Urban Climate Action (UN-Habitat, 2020).

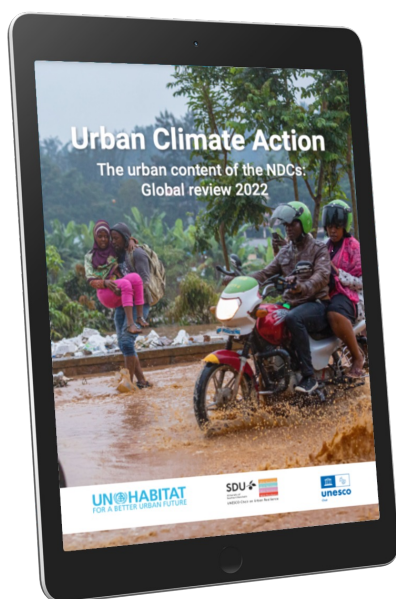
<sup>7</sup> Further events on the calendar can be found on the LGMA Bulletin (Cities & Regions in the UNFCCC Process, 2024)



- **Innovate4Cities Conference in Montreal (10 – 12 September):** which will convene leaders from cities, academia, civil society, and industry at the intersection of cities, climate change science, and policy innovation to inform the 7th Assessment Report Cycle of the IPCC – particularly the Special Report on Climate Change and Cities - and progress on innovative cross-sector solutions that address critical sustainability gaps.
- **The Summit of the Future in New York (22-23 September)** gathers innovators and leaders to address pressing climate challenges and chart a sustainable path forward. Through dynamic discussions and collaborative initiatives, the summit aims to inspire action and drive positive change for a resilient future.
- **Urban October:** Each October, everyone interested in sustainable urbanization from national and local governments to universities, NGOs and communities is encouraged to part of the conversation about cities, including to hold or participate in activities and events.
- **World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo (04 – 08 November)** which will focus on localizing the Sustainable Development Goals, shedding light on the local actions and initiatives required to curb the current global challenges affecting the daily life of people, including unaffordable housing, rising living costs, climate change, the lack of basic services, and ongoing conflicts.
- **COP29 in Baku (11 – 24 November)** offers an opportunity to take stock of progress, consolidate efforts, and facilitate the conversations that need to happen to strengthen the urban content of the NDCs – as well as broader national climate and sustainability strategies. This presents an opportunity for first movers to present their new and enhanced NDCs.

Multilevel climate action and strong collaboration in 2024 and beyond will be critical with the anticipation of an urban-focused COP30 in Belém and towards strengthening the urban content in the updated NDCs in 2025. The real success of the COP28 outcomes will be tested at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in 2025, when the next generation of national climate plans come due.

## Resources for revising NDCs



### Updated review scheduled for mid 2024

This technical brief builds upon the work of an unpublished report from UN-Habitat, UNDP, and the UNESCO Chair on Urban Resilience at the University of Southern Denmark together with support from C40 Cities and Global Covenant of Mayors. The updated technical analysis of the urban content found in the most recently submitted 194 NDCs, entitled Urban Climate Action - The Urban Content of the NDCs 2024, will be released in mid-2024 with an eye toward raising urban climate ambition, strengthening climate action at the sub-national level, and producing a unique set of climate data to inform policymaking that bridges the national-to-local levels. The report will also feature 194 country briefs and 16 deep-dive analyses of existing NDCs.

[The last version of the report, Urban Climate Action - The Urban Content of the NDCs: Global Review 2022, is available to download from UN-Habitat's website.](#)

# References

- Bloomberg Philanthropies. (2023). Hundreds of local leaders convene at first-ever COP28 local climate action summit, eight years after inaugural local leaders summit outside COP21. <https://www.bloomberg.org/press/hundreds-of-local-leaders-convene-at-first-ever-cop28-local-climate-action-summit-eight-years-after-inaugural-local-leaders-summit-outside-cop21/>
- Cities & Regions in the UNFCCC Process (n.d.), The Voice of Cities and Regions in the UNFCCC Climate Process, <https://www.cities-and-regions.org/>
- Cities & Regions in the UNFCCC Process (2024), From the LGMA Focal Point, <https://mailchi.mp/iclei/lgma-bulletin-toward-cop29-february?e=495c5f1ab4>
- COP28 Presidency, & Bloomberg Philanthropies. (2023). Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action. <https://www.cop28.com/en/cop28-uae-coalition-for-high-ambition-multilevel-partnerships-for-climate-action>
- COP28. (2023). Joint Outcomes Statement on Urbanization and Climate Change. unhabitat.org. [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/12/draft\\_joint\\_outcome\\_statement\\_on\\_urbanization\\_and\\_climate\\_change\\_final.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/12/draft_joint_outcome_statement_on_urbanization_and_climate_change_final.pdf)
- Convention on Biological Diversity. (2020). Plan of action on subnational governments, cities and other local authorities for biodiversity58. <https://www.cbd.int/kb/record/decision/12288>
- Dodman, D., B. Hayward, M. Pelling, V. Castan Broto, W. Chow, E. Chu, R. Dawson, L. Khirfan, T. McPhearson, A. Prakash, Y. Zheng, and G. Ziervogel (2022). Cities, Settlements and Key Infrastructure. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, pp. 907–1040. Retrieved from <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-6/>
- IPCC. (2022). WGII summary for policymakers headline statements. WGII Summary for Policymakers Headline Statements, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/resources/spm-headline-statements/>
- Mentaschi, L., Duveiller Bogdan, G.H.E., Zulian, G., Corban, C., Pesaresi, M., Maes, J., Stocchino, A. and Feyen, L., (2022). Global Long-Term Mapping of Surface Temperature Shows Intensified Intra-City Urban Heat Island Extremes, Global Environmental Change-Human and Policy Dimensions, ISSN 0959-3780, 72, P. 102441, JRC123644.
- Our World in Data (2022). CO2 emissions, <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-emissions>
- Tollin, N., Vener, J., Liu, Y., Gagnani, P., Pizzorni M. (2024). NDC Urban Content Analysis 2023. Nairobi: UN-Habitat and New York: UNDP.
- UN Stats. (n.d.). SDG 11 Indicators - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. United Nations. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-11>
- UNDESA. (2018). 68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, says UN, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>
- UNFCCC. (2022). Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, Decision -/CP.27. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27\\_auv\\_2\\_cover%20decision.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27_auv_2_cover%20decision.pdf)
- UNFCCC. (2023). Outcome of the first global stocktake. UNFCCC.int. <https://unfccc.int/documents/636584>
- UNFCCC. (2023). Outcomes of the Dubai Climate Change Conference - Advance Unedited Versions (AUVs) and list of submissions from the sessions in Dubai. Unfccc.int. <https://unfccc.int/cop28/outcomes>
- UN Habitat. (2022). Urban Climate Action - The Urban Content of the NDCs: Global Review 2022. Available at: [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/12/ndc\\_urban\\_content\\_2022\\_report.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/12/ndc_urban_content_2022_report.pdf)
- UN Habitat. (2023). Ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate change. [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/04/cop27\\_ministerial\\_meeting\\_on\\_urbanization\\_and\\_climate\\_change\\_final.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/04/cop27_ministerial_meeting_on_urbanization_and_climate_change_final.pdf)
- UN Habitat. (2023). Enhancing the linkage between urbanization and climate change, UNHAI Resolution. [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/05/resolution\\_on\\_enhancing\\_the\\_linkage\\_between\\_urbanization\\_and\\_climate\\_change.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/05/resolution_on_enhancing_the_linkage_between_urbanization_and_climate_change.pdf)
- UN Habitat. (2024). Ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate change: Summary report. [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2024/01/ministerial\\_meeting\\_-\\_cop28\\_5.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2024/01/ministerial_meeting_-_cop28_5.pdf)
- United Nations. (2023). Global Stocktake reports highlight urgent need for accelerated action to reach climate goals. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/global-stocktake-reports-highlight-urgent-need-for-accelerated-action-to-reach-climate-goals>
- The World Bank (2020), Population living in slums (% of urban population), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS>
- The World Bank (2022a). Population, total | Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>
- The World Bank (2022b). Urban population growth (annual %) | Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW>
- The World Bank (2022c). Urban population (% of total population)
- The World Bank (2022d), GDP (current \$), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>

## Table 1: Background data and analysis of CHAMP-endorsing countries

List of CHAMP endorsers	Urban content	Continent	Population (2022)	Share of urban population (2022)	Urban population growth rate (2020)	% of global CO2 emissions (2022)	% of urban population living in informal settlements (2020)
Albania	Strong	Europe	2.8 million	64%	0.1%	0.01%	3%
Andorra	Strong	Europe	79,800	88%	0.9%	> 0.01%	No data
Antigua and Barbuda	Low or No	North America	93,700	24%	0.4%	> 0.01%	No data
Armenia	Low or No	Asia	2.8 million	64%	-0.2%	0.02%	8%
Australia	Moderate	Oceania	26 million	86%	1.4%	1.06%	No data
Azerbaijan	Moderate	Europe	10.1 million	57%	0.7%	0.10%	27%
Bahamas	Moderate	North America	410,000	83%	0.7%	> 0.01%	No data
Bangladesh	Moderate	Asia	171.2 million	40%	3.0%	0.27%	52%
Belgium	Low or No	Europe	11.7 million	98%	0.9%	0.21%	No data
Bhutan	Strong	Asia	782,400	44%	2.2%	0.01%	No data
Brazil	Moderate	South America	215.3 million	88%	0.7%	1.30%	15%
Brunei Darussalam	Low or No	Asia	449,000	79%	1.2%	0.03%	No data
Bulgaria	Low or No	Europe	6.5 million	76%	-5.7	0.12%	No data
Burkina Faso	Moderate	Africa	22.6 million	32%	4.6%	0.02%	27%
Cabo Verde	Strong	Africa	593,200	68%	1.5%	> 0.01%	No data
Canada	Moderate	North America	38.9 million	82%	1.9%	1.47%	No data
Chad	Moderate	Africa	17.7 million	24%	4.3%	0.17%	82%
Chile	Moderate	South America	19.6 million	88%	0.7%	0.24%	7%
Colombia	Strong	South America	51.9 million	82%	1.1%	0.27%	10% <sup>o</sup>
Costa Rica	Moderate	South America	5.2 million	82%	1.3%	0.02%	4%
Côte d'Ivoire	Moderate	Africa	28.2 million	53%	3.4%	0.03%	53%

List of CHAMP endorsers	Urban content	Continent	Population (2022)	Share of urban population (2022)	Urban population growth rate (2020)	% of global CO2 emissions (2022)	% of urban population living in informal settlements (2020)
Denmark	Low or No	Europe	5.9 million	88%	0.9%	0.08%	No data
Dominican Republic	Strong	North America	11.2 million	84%	1.8%	0.06%	11%
El Salvador	Strong	North America	6.3 million	75%	1.2%	0.02%	17%
Estonia	Low or No	Europe	1.3 million	70%	1.6%	0.03%	No data
Eswatini	Moderate	Africa	1.2 million	25%	1.6%	0.01%	11%
Ethiopia	Strong	Africa	123.4 million	23%	4.7%	0.36%	64%
France	Low or No	Europe	67.9 million	82%	0.6%	0.85%	No data
Germany	Low or No	Europe	83.8 million	78%	0.9%	1.79%	No data
Ghana	Moderate	Africa	33.5 million	59%	3.0%	0.06%	33%
Guatemala	Moderate	North America	17.4 million	53%	2.2%	0.05%	38%
Hungary	Low or No	Europe	9.6 million	73%	-0.3%	0.13%	7%
Iceland	Low or No	Europe	382,000	94%	2.6%	0.01%	No data
Italy	Low or No	Europe	58.9 million	72%	0.1%	0.91%	No data
Jamaica	Low or No	North America	2.8 million	57%	0.6%	0.02%	No data
Japan	Moderate	Asia	125.1 million	92%	-0.3%	2.84%	No data
Jordan	Strong	Asia	11.3 million	92%	1.4%	0.06%	17%
Kenya	Strong	Africa	54 million	29%	3.7%	0.07%	51%
Kiribati	Moderate	Oceania	131,230	58%	3.1%	> 0.01%	51%
Republic of Korea	Moderate	Asia	51.6 million	81%	-0.2%	1.35%	No data
Kyrgyzstan	Strong	Asia	6.9 million	37%	3.8%	0.03%	2%
Lebanon	Strong	Asia	5.5 million	89%	-1.7%	0.06%	5%
Lesotho	Moderate	Africa	2.3 million	30%	2.6%	0.01%	26%

List of CHAMP endorsers	Urban content	Continent	Population (2022)	Share of urban population (2022)	Urban population growth rate (2020)	% of global CO2 emissions (2022)	% of urban population living in informal settlements (2020)
Mexico	Moderate	North America	127.5 million	81%	1.0%	1.38%	18%
Mongolia	Moderate	Asia	3.4 million	69%	1.7%	0.19%	18%
Morocco	Strong	Africa	37.5 million	65%	1.8%	0.18%	11%
Netherlands	Low or No	Europe	17.7 million	93%	1.3%	0.38%	No data
Nicaragua	Moderate	North America	7 million	60%	1.9%	0.01%	67%
Nigeria	Moderate	Africa	218.5 million	54%	3.8%	0.35%	49%
North Macedonia	Moderate	Europe	2.1 million	59%	0.2%	0.02%	No data
Norway	Low or No	Europe	5.5 million	84%	1.3%	0.11%	No data
Pakistan	Moderate	Asia	235.8 million	38%	2.7%	1.02%	56%
Palau	Low or No	Oceania	18,050	82%	0.8%	> 0.01%	No data
Panama	Strong	North America	4.4 million	69%	1.8%	0.03%	16%
Papua New Guinea	Strong	Oceania	10.1 million	14%	2.9%	0.02%	No data
Paraguay	Strong	South America	6.8 million	63%	1.7%	0.02%	15%
Philippines	Low or No	Asia	115.6 million	48%	2.1%	0.49%	37%
Poland	Low or No	Europe	36.8 million	60%	-2.4%	0.87%	No data
Portugal	Low or No	Europe	10.4 million	67%	1.3%	0.11%	No data
Republic of Moldova	Strong	Europe	2.5 million	43%	0.09%	0.01%	7%
Rwanda	Strong	Africa	13.8 million	18%	3.2%	0.02%	38%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Low or No	North America	103,900	54%	0.4%	> 0.01%	No data
Serbia	Low or No	Europe	6.7 million	57%	-2.1%	0.12%	No data
Seychelles	Moderate	Africa	120,000	58%	1.5%	> 0.01%	No data
Sierra Leone	Strong	Africa	8.6 million	44%	3.2%	0.01%	51%

List of CHAMP endorsers	Urban content	Continent	Population (2022)	Share of urban population (2022)	Urban population growth rate (2020)	% of global CO2 emissions (2022)	% of urban population living in informal settlements (2020)
Sri Lanka	Strong	Asia	22.2 million	19%	1.0%	0.05%	No data
Türkiye	Strong	Asia	85 million	77%	1.6%	1.17%	14%
Turkmenistan	Moderate	Asia	6.4 million	53%	2.3%	0.24%	9%
Ukraine	Low or No	Europe	38 million	70%	-14.0%	0.38%	1%
United Arab Emirates	Moderate	Asia	9.4 million	88%	1.1%	0.55%	No data
United States of America	Low or No	North America	333.3 million	83%	0.6%	13.61%	No data
Yemen	No data	Asia	33.7 million	39%	3.8%	0.07%	44%

Sources: Tollin, N., Vener, J., Liu, Y., Gragnani, P., Pizzorni M. (2024); Our World in Data (2024). The World Bank (2022a); The World Bank (2022b); The World Bank (2022c); The World Bank (2020)







**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME**  
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya  
unhabitat-info@un.org  
www.unhabitat.org

