



Cities and Regions

Summit

2024

Sixth session of the United Nations
Environment Assembly (UNEA-6)

23 February 2024
Nairobi, Kenya



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UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit

Theme: *Multi-level governance and urban finance in support of effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution*

Date and time: 23 February 2024, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Location: Conference Room 14, UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya

Format: Hybrid (In-person with possible online participation – Zoom link will be sent to registered participants)

Languages: English only

Register here [at this link](#).

Overview

The [UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit](#) is an Associated Event to [the Sixth United Nations Environment Assembly](#) (UNEA-6); it is a recurring event organized since UNEA-4 in 2019. The Summit aims to bring together mayors and other representatives from cities and regions worldwide to engage in a collaborative dialogue on the pressing issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Set against the backdrop of UNEA-6, this Summit will provide a unique platform for cities and regions to exchange experiences, strengthen inter-city and multilevel cooperation; and based on that exchange, to relay the voices of the local and regional governments to the Member States participating in the UNEA-6.

About UNEA-6

The UNEA-6 will take place at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 February to 1 March 2024. It will be organized under the title “Effective, Inclusive, and Sustainable Multilateral Actions to Tackle Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution”. The Assembly will discuss implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) among other topics. The Assembly is expected to adopt a series of resolutions and decisions, including ones on tackling [the triple planetary crisis](#), promoting circular economy and nature-based solutions.

Please see the UNEA-6 schedule of events at [Programme \(unep.org\)](#). – Please note participation in the UNEA-6 plenary meetings require UNEA-6 accreditation.

About the Cities and Regions Summit

Like the previous summits, this third edition will contribute to deliberations at the UN Environment Assembly. It will showcase concrete examples of cities and regions supporting their national governments in achieving the SDGs and the MEAs’ goals. This Summit will focus on two key questions regarding the cities and regions’ engagement: (1) strengthening the multi-level governance (MLG) for achieving the SDGs and the MEAs goals; and (2) Funding and financing to accelerate the local climate and environmental actions. The Summit will be organized in two thematic sessions.

The first session will focus on the engagement of cities and regions in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementation of the MEAs. This session will discuss experiences of the existing institutional arrangements which support the engagement of subnational actors through support from the national and international levels and strengthen the multilevel governance approach. Within the framework of the localization of the SDGs, it will particularly focus on institutional arrangements and policy processes under the Paris Climate Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In regard to the Paris Agreement, there are successful examples of institutionalization of multilevel governance, based on the decades-long efforts of the Local Governments and

Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, as the voice of towns, cities and regions in the UNFCCC process¹. As part of the Twenty-Eighth United Nations Climate Conference (COP28)² which reviewed the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the [Local Climate Action Summit](#) (Dubai, 1-2 December 2023) hosting the and the launch of the [Coalition for High Ambition Multi-Level Partnerships \(CHAMP\) Initiative](#), the [second Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate](#) were organized as part of the official programme of the COP28 Presidency, supported by [2-weeks COP28 engagement of the LGMA Constituency](#) coordinated at the [Multilevel Action and Urbanization Pavilion](#). Both the LCAS and the CHAMP directly support cooperation between national, regional and local governments on planning, financing and implementing national climate goals; they provided an unprecedented platform for subnational governments to deliver inputs into the negotiations of the Member States on the Agreement. This engagement is paving the way for an increased inclusion of cities and regions into the revision of the Parties' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with its [Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity](#) has already created an important space for subnational actions. The adoption of the CBD [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (GBF) in December 2022 with a dedicated target for urban areas ([Target 12](#)) and an associated decision on the engagement of subnational governments to enhance implementation of the GBF ([Decision 15/12](#)) institutionalized multi-level governance as part of the process of achieving the CBD goals.

However, among the existing 250 MEAs, there are still very few examples of the formal engagement of subnational authorities in their implementation³; and therefore, there is a need for an in-depth discussion on how to promote this process in a more systematic way. In this context, it should be noted that the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his concern about the limited support and resources available to local authorities to support the global commitments.⁴ He also stressed that the cities “are critical battlegrounds” for environmental sustainability as they generate 70 percent of global emissions;⁵ ... the cities are where the climate battle will largely be won or lost.⁶

To strengthen the voices of cities and regions in the United Nations system, the UN Secretary-General established [the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments](#) which will develop approaches for making the cities' and regions' voices heard at the [UN Summit of the Future](#) (New York, 22-23 September 2024).

The UNEA Cities and Regions Summit will discuss already existing successful examples of multilevel governance for climate and environment and will deliberate on how UNEP, other UN agencies and international organizations could further support the stronger role of the cities and regions in achieving the SDGs and objectives of the MEAs. The Summit recommendations will be submitted to UNEA-6.

¹ [Home to the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency \(LGMA\) in the UNFCCC – The Voice of Cities and Regions in the UNFCCC Climate Process \(cities-and-regions.org\)](#)

² COP-28 was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates from 30 November through 12 December 2023, see more at [UN Climate Change Conference - United Arab Emirates | UNFCCC](#)

³ See [Environmental agreements since 1900 — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ [UN calls for global action to turn cities into engines of sustainable development | UN News](#)

⁵ [Cities 'critical battlegrounds' for a sustainable future: Guterres | UN News](#)

⁶ [Guterres: “Cities Are Where the Climate Battle Will Largely Be Won or Lost” | UNFCCC](#)

The second session will focus on the topic of leveraging financing for local actions on the environment and climate. According to the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA), the global need for urban infrastructure investment amounts to over \$4.5 trillion per year, of which an estimated premium of 9-27% is required to make this infrastructure low-emissions and climate resilient. Cities today confront a global financial architecture designed largely by and for nation states, therefore not fit for purpose. While some development banks have implemented city-oriented programs (such as the EBRD's Green Cities program), structural and socio-political barriers continue to slow urban investments. In order to deliver on targets and ambitious climate goals, cities need new financial mechanisms and governance systems that can scale up effectively and quickly over the next 20 years.

This session will discuss how to facilitate access of subnational governments to development and climate finance, building on the finding of the [Global Commission for Urban SDG Finance](#), and recent publications, such as the CCFLA report "[Accelerating Urban Climate Finance in Low- and Middle- Income Countries: An important strategic dimension of MDB reform](#)".

Expected outcomes of the Cities and Region Summit

- An Outcome Document will be prepared and presented by Summit Rapporteur⁷ at a plenary meeting of UNEA-6 on Monday, 26 February 2024 in the morning plenary meeting (10 a.m.–1 p.m. under Agenda Item 7. Stakeholder engagement). It will be posted UNEA Webpage as an information Document.

The Summit organization is also expected to result in strengthening partnerships between UN agencies, national and local governments, experts, and stakeholders to support more effective implementation of climate actions, biodiversity conservation, and pollution control through a multi-level governance approach.

Participants and format

- The summit will be organized in a hybrid format - both in person and online participation will be possible. In-person participation will take place at the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and virtual participation through Zoom. Registration for both is required [at this link](#).
- The Summit will bring together mayors, governors, regional leaders as well as senior government officials from national governments, representatives from international organizations, academia, civil society, and the private sector.
- The UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit will feature keynote addresses, panel discussions and networking sessions.

Follow-up Actions to the Summit

⁷ The Summit organizers will appoint one participating Mayor as a Rapporteur

- **Reporting back during the UNEA-6 Morning Plenary** by the Summit Rapporteur at a plenary meeting of UNEA-6 on Monday, 26 February 2024, in the morning plenary meeting (10 a.m. – 1 p.m. under Agenda Item 7. Stakeholder Engagement).
- **Interventions by the Summit organizers and participants at sessions of the UNEA-6 and other affiliated events, such as the Science Policy Business Forum.**

Dissemination of information on the Summit

Information on the UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit will be disseminated through the Summit organizers and partners' websites, email newsletters and social media.

The official Summit web page is available [at this link](#).

Official Summit hashtag: #UNEACitiesSummit.

Summit organization

Organization of the Summit is led by the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP) jointly with UN-Habitat and the [UrbanShift programme](#) partners: [World Resources Institute](#) (WRI), [C40 Cities](#) (C40) and [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability](#) (ICLEI), in collaboration with the Local Authorities Major Group to the UNEA. UrbanShift is a knowledge and learning platform that connects cities and regions with national and international organizations with expertise in integrated urban planning; UrbanShift is funded by the [Global Environmental Facility](#).

The Summit organization is supported by Summit Partners: [Global Environment Facility](#) (GEF), [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#); the [Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance](#) (CCFLA); the [SDSN Global Commission for Urban SDG Finance, United Cities and Local Governments](#) (UCLG); the [Penn Institute for Urban Research](#) (PennIUR); the [Global Cities Hub](#); the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP); the [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (UNDRR); and the UN Regional Commission ([ECA](#), [UNECE](#), [ECLAC](#), [ESCAP](#), [ESCWA](#)).