

Third Edition of Cities & Regions Summit Convenes at the Margins of UNEA-6



Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, and Mr. Michal Mlynar, Acting Executive Director, UN-Habitat, take a picture on the stairs at the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, with speakers and participants of the UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit.

On February 23, 2024, the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with UN-Habitat and other partners – held the [Third Edition of the UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit](#) as an associated event to the sixth session of [the United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA-6\)](#).

The UNEA-6 Cities and Regions Summit convened at the United Nations Environment Programme headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and discussed various ways to strengthen multi-level governance and urban financing to support effective and inclusive multilateral actions to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

This year, the Summit brought together over 600 attendees in person and online, including representatives of national governments, local and subnational authorities, city networks, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector.

The event demonstrated that cities and regions, being close to their communities, are uniquely positioned to support the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Bridging the environmental action gap through multi-level governance and cooperation

The Summit participants underlined an increasing importance of multi-level governance (MLG) which enables cities through cooperation with national governments to effectively mobilize actions towards mitigating and adapting to climate calamities. In unison, voices from local and subnational authorities, national governments, and international organizations

resoundingly underscored the importance of working together, including local communities and the private sector.

The Summit also emphasized the urgency for enhanced international environmental governance to combat the triple planetary crisis. It called for the stronger involvement of local and subnational authorities in the implementation of the many Multilateral Environmental Agreements, following the best practices that can be observed in the Paris Climate Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Urban funds and financing: a critical component to address environmental problems

Participants of the Summit highlighted that despite the potential of local governments to address the triple planetary crisis, they often lack sufficient resources to do so. The global requirement for urban infrastructure investment exceeds 4.5 trillion dollars annually, with up to 27 per cent needed for low-emission and climate-resilient infrastructure. The Summit made it clear that cities require new financial mechanisms and governance systems to scale up actions rapidly over the next two decades to meet climate goals.

Participants highlighted the potential of innovative financing mechanisms, such as public private partnerships, guarantee mechanisms for cities; and the success of ongoing initiatives, including the GEF Sustainable Cities Programme, Catalytic Finance, Generation Restoration and many others.

Reporting back on the Summit at UNEA-6

On Monday, 26 February 2024, Josefina Belmonte, Mayor of Quezon City, the Philippines, and 2023 UNEP Champion of the Earth, reported back on the Summit at the opening plenary of the United Nations Environment Assembly. “Local governments often lack resources and funding to address the triple planetary crisis effectively,” explained Josefina Belmonte, Mayor of Quezon City, the Philippines, and [Champion of the Earth 2023](#). “Cities need new financial mechanisms and governance that scale up effectively and quickly over the next 20 years.”

To achieve such goals, UNEP is working with its partners, including UN-Habitat, other UN agencies, cities networks; to mainstream environmental considerations into local, regional, national, and global urban policymaking. The Summit also helped to highlight that UNEP is also promoting the engagement of subnational governments in the implementation of MEAs.