

Last updated: 2 July 2024

Concept Note:

4th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities

Background

Asia-Pacific regions contribute to over 55 per cent of the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and more than 70 per cent of the GHG emissions in Asia-Pacific are generated urban areas¹. The North-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, with their rapidly expanding urban landscapes, are at a crucial crossroads on the path towards sustainability and carbon neutrality. As urban populations surge, the demand for integrated, sustainable urban planning and development becomes increasingly imperative. As such, amidst the escalating challenges posed by climate change, urban cities worldwide are increasingly adopting innovative and sustainable solutions aimed at reducing carbon emissions and strengthening resilience. To this end, local governments are engaging more closely with businesses and residents in community-based approaches to tackle these challenges.

The global development agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda, highlight the significant actions needed by cities in the region. ESCAP resolution 79/7² on enhancing regional cooperation for sustainable development and the localization of the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific emphasizes the valuable role of national, subnational, and local governments in implementing and localizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is especially evident for SDG 11, highlighting unity, solidarity, multilateralism, and international cooperation.

At the regional level, ESCAP has convened the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF), the region's premier event on sustainable urban development, for over three decades. APUF addresses inequality and climate crises, and promotes inclusive, resilient growth through innovative solutions and partnerships. In 2023, APUF-8 highlighted the crucial role of cities in sustainable development, focusing on transformative urban planning, climate action, digital innovation, and diversified financing, while calling for stronger regional cooperation to tackle urban challenges.

The outcomes of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP28), including the first global stocktake³, emphasize the critical role of municipalities in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development. It reaffirms that effective climate solutions must involve all stakeholders, including local governments, which are key in driving meaningful social dialogue and participation⁴. The global stocktake calls for enhanced renewable energy and efficiency, emphasizing local actions to meet these goals. Furthermore, CoP28 outcomes capitalize on international cooperation and knowledge exchange at the municipal level⁵.

¹ IPCC (2022). Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.

² [ESCAP_RES_79_7_E \(unescap.org\)](#)

³ FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/16/Add.1, Decision 1/CMA.5. [cma2023_16a01E.pdf \(unfccc.int\)](#)

⁴ Ibid, para. 9.

⁵ Ibid, para 158, 162.

To capture this momentum at CoP28, COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies convened the Local Climate Action Summit for the first time of its kind to scale up multi-level climate partnerships⁶. This led to the “CoP28 Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership (CHAMP) for Climate Action⁷” involving over 70 countries, with an emphasis on strong multilevel cooperation through the provision of nearly USD 500 million in climate finance for urban infrastructure. In addition, several initiatives were launched to further support municipal engagement. For example, the “Buildings Breakthrough” initiative, led by France and Morocco and supported by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), aims to decarbonize the building sector by 2030, making clean technologies and sustainable solutions accessible globally⁸. These initiatives are a testament to the world's strong commitment and hope at the community level to build resilience through low-carbon policies and technologies on the path towards a zero-carbon world. Against this background and building upon the previous forums, the 4th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities sets the main theme as “Empowering Urban Resilience: Transformative Solutions for Sustainable Low Carbon Cities”. The forum will discuss the critical need for cities to enhance their resilience to climate change while transitioning to sustainable, low-carbon urbanization. By focusing on transformative solutions, the forum highlights innovative approaches and technologies that can fundamentally reshape business-as-usual to more adaptive and sustainable lifestyles.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, the forum seeks to unite city leaders, policymakers, experts, private sector, and youth, sharing insights, experiences, and best practices in developing and implementing low carbon and sustainable urban strategies. The forum will also discuss cross-sectoral and international collaboration, leveraging technology, innovation, and evidence-based policymaking to move towards resilient and sustainable urbanization.

Co-Organizers/Collaborative Organizations/Partners

- **Organizers**
 - City of Kitakyushu
 - Incheon Metropolitan City
 - Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
 - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- **Collaborative Organizations**
 - Ministry of the Environment, Japan (TBC)
- **Partners**
 - CityNet
 - iGDP
 - ICLEI East Asia
 - Climate Change Center
 - The Incheon Institute

⁶ [COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies kick off historic Local Climate Action Summit to celebrate and scale multi-level climate partnership](#)

⁷ [Coalition For High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships \(CHAMP\) \(cop28.com\)](#)

⁸ [The Buildings Breakthrough: Global push for near-zero emission and resilient buildings by 2030 unveiled at COP28 \(unep.org\)](#)

- GCF (TBC)

Objectives

The objectives of the Fourth Low Carbon Cities Forum are to:

1. **Facilitate Knowledge Exchange:** Establish a vibrant platform for disseminating innovative strategies, policies, and practices for low carbon urban development, encouraging learning from both successes and challenges encountered by cities in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.
2. **Bolster Partnerships:** Promote collaboration among city governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia, and civil society to expedite the adoption of sustainable urban solutions.
3. **Highlight Innovative Solutions:** Showcase advanced technologies, initiatives, and methodologies that contribute to carbon reduction, sustainability, and urban resilience.
4. **Strengthen Regional Dialogue and Platform:** Utilize the forum as a mechanism to fortify regional networks and cooperation, sharing adaptable and scalable insights and strategies across diverse urban contexts.

Date and Venue

- Networking Session: 7 October 2024 (Optional for partner organizations)
- Main Session / Booth Exhibition: 8 October 2024
- Site Visit: 9 October 2024
- Location: Kitakyushu, Japan

Tentative programme

<u>Monday, 7 October</u>	
<u>14:00-17:00</u>	<u>Networking Session for Partners</u>
<u>Tuesday, 8 October</u>	
<u>08:30-09:00</u>	<u>Registration</u>
<u>09:00-10:00</u>	<u>Opening session</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Opening and welcome remarks</u> • <u>Congratulatory remarks</u> • <u>Introduction of the forum</u>
	<u>Keynote speech</u> The keynote speech will set the stage by emphasizing the main theme “Empowering Urban Resilience: Transformative Solutions for Sustainable Low Carbon Cities”. The

	<p>speaker will introduce recent discussions on this topic at global, regional, and national levels, fostering a dialogue on how cities can enhance resilience in various ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Group photo</u>
<u>10:00-10:20</u>	<u>Break</u>
<u>10:20-12:00</u>	<p><u>Session 1. Policy & governance: Co-benefit & synergistic approaches for resilient and sustainable urbanization</u></p> <p>This session will explore how integrating decarbonization efforts can enhance resilience and improve well-being in urban areas. The focus will be on identifying and promoting co-benefit and synergistic approaches, where enabling policies and action plans designed to reduce carbon emissions also yield additional positive outcomes, thereby creating a more holistic approach to urban sustainability.</p>
<u>13:30-15:10</u>	<p><u>Session 2: Innovations and technologies for green transformation for resilience in cities</u></p> <p>This session will delve into how innovations and technologies can drive green transformation and enhance resilience in urban areas. The discussion will highlight cutting-edge advancements and practical solutions that contribute to sustainability and urban resilience. Cities can also serve as laboratories for experimentation, suitable for testing waters for new technologies and innovations.</p>
<u>12:00-13:30</u>	<u>Lunch</u>
<u>15:10-15:30</u>	<u>Break</u>
<u>15:30-17:10</u>	<p><u>Session 3. Means of Implementation/Partnerships for Resilience in Cities</u></p> <p>This session will explore the various means of implementation and the importance of partnerships in enhancing resilience in urban areas. The discussion will focus on collaborative efforts, resources, and institutional mechanisms that can drive urban resilience.</p>
<u>17:10-17:20</u>	<u>Closing session</u>
<u>Wednesday, 9 October</u>	
<u>9:00-15:00</u>	<u>Site Visit</u>

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