Hundreds of Cities Commit to Emissions Limits

Posted by **News Editor** in **Air/Climate**, **Latest News**, **RSS** on June 9, 2016 4:18 pm / **no comments**

WASHINGTON, DC, June 9, 2016 (ENS) – Cities today host more than half of the Earth's human beings and account for about 70 percent of global energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Now, 228 cities around the world are taking the lead on climate action, setting greenhouse gas reduction goals or targets.

Action in these cities, with a combined population of 439 million people, could ensure that countries meet their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), the national greenhouse gas reduction pledges embodied in the Paris Climate Agreement.



During the Paris climate conference, Greenpeace activists created a solar symbol around the Arc de Triomphe, by painting the roads with yellow eco-paint to remind delegates of their commitments, Dec. 11, 2015 (Photo by **inmediahk**)

At the UN's annual climate conference in December 2015 in Paris, 195 countries adopted the world's first universal, legally binding global climate deal.

The agreement sets out a global action plan to limit global warming to well below 2°Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. World leaders from 175 countries signed the historic accord on April 22, Earth Day. The agreement is due to enter into force in 2020.

Cities and their inhabitants are playing a leading role in meeting global climate action goals, according to "**Can a City Be Sustainable?**," the 2016 edition of the annual State of the World report from the Worldwatch Institute.

"The challenge over the next several decades is an enormous one," write Michael Renner and Tom Prugh, contributing authors and co-directors of the report. "This requires not change around the edges, but a fundamental restructuring of how cities operate, how much they consume in resources and how much waste they produce, what they look like, and how they are structured."

"Only demand-side policies that succeed in sharply reducing energy consumption in transport, buildings, waste handling, and agriculture can address the urgent need to decarbonize energy," write Renner and Prugh. "It is cities that must step up to the front lines of that battle."

Despite the difficulties of accomplishing change, growing numbers of cities have pledged themselves to climate commitments and sustainability goals.

The Compact of Mayors, launched at the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit, is the world's largest coalition of city leaders addressing climate change, now including more than 500 cities.

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, said, "Cities are the drivers of progress and innovation, and through the Compact of Mayors, they can help nations set new, aggressive climate targets over the next year."



Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada has a vision of 100 per cent renewable energy. Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson contributed a chapter to the Worldwatch report. (Photo by Gord McKenna)

On Tuesday, the Compact of Mayors and China's Alliance of Peaking Pioneer Cities signed a memo of understanding at the Second China-U.S. Climate-Smart / Low-Carbon Cities Summit in Beijing to strengthen and coordinate efforts to combat global climate change and promote low-carbon development.

The Compact of Mayors, committed by more than 500 cities around the world, is a global coalition of mayors and city officials that has pledged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, track their progress transparently and enhance their resilience to climate change.

In addition, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has expanded to over 80 cities.

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability works with more than 1,000 cities around the world.

Urban populations are projected to increase to six billion by 2045, at which point two-thirds of all people will live in cities.

"If current trends in urbanization continue unabated, urban energy use will more than triple, compared to 2005 levels, by 2050," write Renner and Prugh.

Cities vary widely in their per capita emissions. Rotterdam in the Netherlands, for example, emitted 29.8 tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent per resident in 2005, whereas Paris emitted just 5.2 tons per resident.

Many variables, such as climate, urban form, and primary energy source, affect a city's level of emissions. Economic factors, such as the wealth and income of residents and the level and structure of economic activity, also play major roles.



Chinatown in Singapore, April 2014 (Photo by **Khánh Hmoong**)

In conjunction with policy changes, cities' success will depend on having both comprehensive data and financial support.

Current protocols, such as one developed by the World Resources Institute, C40 Cities, and ICLEI, can be used to measure or estimate greenhouse gas emissions in cities worldwide.

Financing sustainability may be easier in some cities than in others. Among the C40 cities, only three-quarters have budgetary control over property or municipal taxes. In poorer cities, multilateral development banks and a variety of donors may play an important role.

Worldwatch Institute's State of the World report examines the core principles of sustainable urbanism and profiles cities that are putting them into practice.

The Spanish Chapter of the Club of Rome and the Worldwatch Institute are launching the report in Madrid on Monday, June 13.

Copyright Environment News Service (ENS) 2016. All rights reserved.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

SEARCH

WORLD-WIRE One World. One Wire.

ENS News Categories

Air/Climate
AmeriScan
At Risk
Business
Culture
Energy
Food
Forests
Gov/Politics
Health
Land Use
Latest News
Oceans
RSS
Sci/Tech
Toxics
Transport
Waste
Water
Wildlife

share

CATEGORIES

Select Category

Subscribe to ENS

Copyright © 2016 ENS. All rights reserved. Theme by WPZOOM