

The Future We Don't Want: Billions of urban citizens at risk of climate-related heatwaves, drought, flooding, food shortages and blackouts by 2050

New research reveals number of cities and citizens threatened by direct and indirect climate hazards if global greenhouse gas emissions continue unchecked

Bold climate action by cities key to prevent 1.6 billion people being exposed to extreme heat; 800 million to coastal flooding and 650 million to droughts.

[Download & explore the full research here.](#)

Cape Town, South Africa (19 June 2018) — Billions of people in thousands of cities around the world will be at risk from climate-related heatwaves, drought, flooding, food shortages, blackouts and social inequality by mid-century without bold and urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Fortunately, cities around the world are delivering bold climate solutions to avert these outcomes and create a healthier, safer, more equal and prosperous future for all urban citizens.

New research from C40 Cities, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, the Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN) and Acclimatise predicts how many urban residents will face potentially devastating heat waves, flooding and droughts by 2050 if global warming continues on its current trajectory. [The Future We Don't Want - How climate change could impact the world's greatest cities](#) also looks at indirect climate impacts and estimates how climate change under a 'business-as-usual scenario' will impact urban food security and energy systems as well as the urban poor, who are most vulnerable to climate change.

Headline findings include that, by 2050

- **1.6 billion people** living in over 970 cities, will be **regularly exposed to extreme high temperatures**.
- **Over 800 million people**, living in 570 cities, will be **vulnerable to sea level rise and coastal flooding**.
- **650 million people**, in over 500 cities, will be **at risk of water shortages due to climate change**.
- **2.5 billion people** will be living in over 1,600 cities where **national food supply is threatened by climate change**.

- The power supply to **470 million people**, in over 230 cities, will be **vulnerable to sea level rise**.
- **215 million poor urban residents**, living in slum areas in over 490 cities, will **face increasing climate risks**.

The Future We Don't Want - How climate change could impact the world's greatest cities also contains concrete examples of bold climate solutions that cities are delivering, which, if adopted at-scale, could help prevent the worst impacts of climate change. The research was launched at the Adaptation Futures conference in Cape Town, where representatives of cities around the world are sharing ideas on how to prepare and adapt their cities for the effects of climate change.

“For decades, scientists have been warning of the risks that climate change will pose from increasing global temperatures, rising sea levels, growing inequality and water, food and energy shortages. Now we have the clearest possible evidence of just what these impacts will mean for the citizens of the world’s cities, said **Mark Watts, Executive Director C40 Cities**. “This is the future that nobody wants. Our research should serve as a wake-up call on just how urgently we need to be delivering bold climate action.”

“For most C40 cities, the impacts of climate change are not a far off threat. From Cape Town to Houston, Mayors are seeing severe droughts, storms, fires and more,” said **Antha Williams, Head of Environmental Programs at Bloomberg Philanthropies and C40 Board Member**, “As this report shows, C40 mayors are on the front line of climate change, and the actions they take today—to use less energy in buildings, transition to clean transportation and reduce waste—are necessary to ensure prosperity and safety for their citizens.”

“Climate change is already happening and the world’s great cities are feeling the impact. Cape Town is facing an unprecedented drought, but thanks to the efforts of our citizens to adapt, we have averted Day Zero, when we would have had to switch off most taps,” said **Patricia de Lille, Executive Mayor of Cape Town and Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy Board Member**. “The lessons from Cape Town, and from this important new research is that every city must invest today in the infrastructure and policies that will protect citizens from the future effects of our changing global climate.”

Many of the solutions being delivered by cities, as well as regional governments, investors and businesses to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, will be showcased at the [Global Climate Action Summit](#), taking place in San Francisco, September 12-14th, 2018.

City climate solutions featured in the report include:

Extreme heat: Seoul has planted 16 million trees and expanded its green space by 3.5 million m². The city has also set up shaded cooling centres for those unable to access air conditioning.

Flooding: New York City is improving coastal flood mapping, strengthening coastal defences and building smaller, strategically placed local storm surge barriers around the city.

Drought: São Paulo has set up reward schemes to incentivise citizens to use less water, whilst investing in the city's pipeline system to reduce water leakage.

Urban food security: Paris plans to establish 33 hectares of urban agriculture within the city's boundaries by 2020. By 2050, 25 percent of the city's food supply will be produced in the Île-de-France region

Energy Supply: London is improving drainage infrastructure to ensure key infrastructure can withstand heavy flooding, whilst also encouraging decentralised energy supply to reduce the risk of blackouts if any one power source is damaged.

Extreme heat & poverty: Lima's Barrio Mío programme created a poverty map of the city helping policy makers to focus resources on the most vulnerable and under-served areas where people are most exposed to heat risks.

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Notes:**About C40 Cities:**

C40 Cities connects 96 of the world's greatest cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe. The current chair of C40 is Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo; and three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy: The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy formally brings together the Compact of Mayors and the Covenant of Mayors, the world's two primary initiatives assisting cities and local governments in their transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient economy, and helping demonstrate their global impact. Led by UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Action, Michael R. Bloomberg, and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, in partnership with local, regional and global city networks, the Global Covenant has thousands of city signatories across 6 continents and more than 120 countries, representing over 700 million people or nearly 10% of the global population. Learn more at: www.globalcovenantofmayors.org.