

## **“No Return to Business as Usual”: Mayors Pledge on COVID-19 Economic Recovery**

*C40 mayors issue call for a healthy, equitable and sustainable economic recovery to COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Statement endorsed by mayors of Los Angeles, Athens, Austin, Barcelona, Bogotá, Boston, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Copenhagen, Curitiba, Durban, Freetown, Hong Kong, Houston, Lima, Lisbon, London, Medellín, Melbourne, Mexico City, Milan, Montréal, New Orleans, New York City, Oslo, Portland, Quezon City, Rotterdam, Salvador, São Paulo, San Francisco, Santiago, Seattle, Seoul, Sydney, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Vancouver*

**London, 07 May** - Mayors from many of the world’s most powerful cities have warned that the recovery from COVID-19 “should not be a return to ‘business as usual’ - because that is a world on track for 3°C or more of over-heating.”

The C40 group of cities released a statement of principles to shape the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Mayors, representing more than 750 million people worldwide, pledge “to build a better, more sustainable and fairer society out of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.”

The principles were adopted in the first meeting of C40’s [Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force](#), supported by C40 Chair, Mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, and have been endorsed by scores of city leaders from around the world, including Los Angeles, Athens, Austin, Barcelona, Bogotá, Boston, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Copenhagen, Curitiba, Durban, Freetown, Hong Kong, Houston, Lima, Lisbon, London, Medellín, Melbourne, Mexico City, Milan, Montréal, New Orleans, New York City, Oslo, Portland, Quezon City, Rotterdam, Salvador, São Paulo, San Francisco, Santiago, Seattle, Seoul, Sydney, Tel Aviv-Yafo and Vancouver .

Today’s announcement comes after a series of virtual meetings attended by more than 40 mayors, demonstrating how they are working together globally to overcome both the coronavirus and climate change crises.

### **The Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force**

The Task Force will establish a common framework that all of C40’s global membership can use to create a "new normal" for city economies; agree upon concrete measures they can put in place for recovery; how to communicate about the climate crisis in a post-COVID-19 world; and how can they influence stimulus packages and interventions to support the necessary transition to a more sustainable, low-carbon, inclusive and healthier economy for people and the planet.

The Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force will draw on the expertise of leading economists, including Kate Raworth, creator of internationally acclaimed framework Doughnut Economics and Senior Research Associate at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute; and heard at its first meeting from Michael Jacobs, Professorial Fellow at the Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute (SPERI) at the University of Sheffield.

## **Statement of Principles:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the world's cities. It is not just a global health crisis, but a social and economic crisis, the effects of which will be felt for years to come. In many ways it is also an urban phenomenon, with its roots in environmental destruction and humanity's relationship with nature.

As mayors, we are committed to supporting the residents of our cities and protecting their health, based on the guidance of expert advice. As members of C40 Cities, we are sharing what we have learned over the past months, and the knowledge we have gained in responding to other crises - public health, economic and environmental.

It is clear that the harm caused by COVID-19 has not been equitable. The most vulnerable and the most disadvantaged are being hurt the most by both the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. It is also clear that the world was not fully prepared for this crisis, despite lessons learned from SARS, MERS, Ebola and other recent public health and climate emergencies. This is, in part, a consequence of the undermining of international mechanisms and institutions which were built to bring peace and prosperity to all. It is, in part, a consequence of ignoring science-based knowledge.

We, as leaders of major cities across the globe, are clear that our ambition should not be a return to 'normal' – our goal is to build a better, more sustainable, more resilient and fairer society out of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, our joint strategy to support the recovery of our cities and their residents from COVID-19 will be governed by these principles:

1. The recovery should not be a return to 'business as usual' - because that is a world on track for 3°C or more of over-heating;
2. The recovery, above all, must be guided by an adherence to public health and scientific expertise, in order to assure the safety of those who live in our cities;
3. Excellent public services, public investment and increased community resilience will form the most effective basis for the recovery;
4. The recovery must address issues of equity that have been laid bare by the impact of the crisis – for example, workers who are now recognised as essential should be celebrated and compensated accordingly and policies must support people living in informal settlements;
5. The recovery must improve the resilience of our cities and communities. Therefore, investments should be made to protect against future threats – including the climate crisis – and to support those people impacted by climate and health risks;

6. Climate action can help accelerate economic recovery and enhance social equity, through the use of new technologies and the creation of new industries and new jobs. These will drive wider benefits for our residents, workers, students, businesses and visitors;
7. We commit to doing everything in our power and the power of our city governments to ensure that the recovery from COVID-19 is healthy, equitable and sustainable;
8. We commit to using our collective voices and individual actions to ensure that national governments support both cities and the investments needed in cities, to deliver an economic recovery that is healthy, equitable and sustainable;
9. We commit to using our collective voices and individual actions to ensure that international and regional institutions invest directly in cities to support a healthy, equitable and sustainable recovery.

## Quotes:

“This task force is committed to helping city leaders as they work on economic recovery in ways that lead us forward into the future, not back into the past,” said **Michael R. Bloomberg, C40 Board President and Mayor of New York City, 2002-2013**. “The principles we’ve outlined will guide our efforts to develop a new normal – one that is greener, healthier, and more prosperous for everyone.”

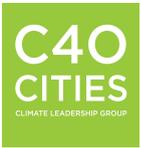
**Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London said:** “I welcome the united effort by C40 Mayors to ensure that recovery from COVID-19 is sustainable and confronts the climate crisis. These are testing times for all of us. I want to reaffirm London’s commitment to working with our friends and partners overseas to limit the impact of this pandemic as much as possible, but also to build a better future.

“Covid-19 has exposed the inequality in our society and deep flaws in our economy, which fail people from deprived communities more than anyone else. We need to come out of this embracing a new normal and with a renewed drive to address the climate emergency.

“I will do all I can to harness Londoners’ ingenuity to create a better, greener and more equal city.”

**Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City said:** “The only parallel to what we’re facing right now is the Great Depression. Against that kind of challenge, half-measures that maintain the status quo won’t move the needle or protect us from the next crisis. We need a New Deal for these times—a massive transformation that rebuilds lives, promotes equality, and prevents the next economic, health, or climate crisis.”

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**Claudia López, Mayor of Bogotá said:** "Bogotá has included legislation at the city level to ensure that recovery does not deepen the climate crisis. Balancing incentive structures to allow for clean economic growth is our best bet."

**Kosta Bakoyannis, Mayor of Athens, said:** "Historical Athens begins its recovery phase from the epidemic with an array of green initiatives aiming to fully take advantage of the lessons learnt from the health crisis; that includes - not exhaustively - increasing its recycling network, enhancing its urban nature and, on the whole, treating this challenge as nothing more - and nothing less - than a unique opportunity. An opportunity to help our cities and our citizens grow, prosper and enter a new era of environmental awareness and involvement. This should not be a time for us to simply react but to reflect and to blossom."

**Steve Adler, Mayor of Austin said:** "The COVID-19 crisis is horrible and so many are hurting in so many ways, but it also presents the biggest opportunity no one asked for. The sudden disruption of so many systems at once has laid bare our most pressing challenges as well as the corresponding opportunity to re-imagine the ways we live, travel and go about our lives more sustainably and to the benefit of more of our neighbors. The cities that seize this moment will enter the post-COVID-19 world wiser, fairer and more resilient. Austin will be one of those cities."

**Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston said:** "Creating equity and opportunity for our residents is at the forefront of Boston's policies, and like our efforts on addressing climate change, our work addressing the COVID-19 pandemic is focused on equity and the best possible science. Boston is proud to support this task force and its important work in advocating for all."

**Rafael Greca, Mayor of Curitiba said:** "Real progress only happens when innovation becomes a social process. Cities must use innovation as a tool to fight inequality and fully recover from this crisis."

**Mxolisi Kaunda, Mayor of Durban said:** The Covid-19 pandemic has put leadership of cities to the ultimate test as existing vulnerabilities within African societies continue to deepen. During this time we are forced to confront the fragility of the current economic system that has created a vastly unequal society and how that inequality makes it difficult for our social and health relief systems to respond effectively. I therefore fully embrace the economic recovery trajectory of this task team that allows us to approach the future with a new vision, a vision of a prosperous and climate just society for all. As we advance towards a Post Covid-19 future, let us not lose the painful lessons that we have had to learn during this

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pandemic and use those rather to become cities that are more resilient to future disasters including climate change.

**Jorge Muñoz, Mayor of Lima said:** “Lima makes the commitment to overcome this difficult moment to humankind, reaffirming our policy of having people and their needs at the center, and from it, keep building a more equal, safe and sustainable society”.

**Daniel Quintero Calle, Mayor of Medellín said:** “As Mayor of Medellín, I feel honored to be part of the Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force and to represent all the Latin American cities. Belonging to this working group will enable Medellín to implement successful actions in real time for sustainable economic recovery as a reality for the future of our city and the whole world. Our goal will be to share and complement all the knowledge of the cities to find the best ways to get ahead and overcome this great challenge, once again demonstrating Medellín's resilience in adversity”.

**Ted Wheeler, Mayor of Portland said:** “It is essential that our collective responses and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis put us on a path for a more resilient, equitable, and healthy future for all. The City of Portland is building for a better future by putting frontline communities and climate action at the forefront of our priorities.”

**Bruno Covas, Mayor of São Paulo said:** “The fight against coronavirus is a global challenge and the union of authorities is essential for the implementation of actions that benefit all populations. Our priority is to save lives. In São Paulo we are facing Covid-19 very seriously and transparently. Our main weapons are science, correct information and social responsibility”

**Secretary for the Environment of Hong Kong, China, Kam-sing Wong said:** "The COVID-19 pandemic presents unprecedented challenges to the well-being of mankind and the world economy. Hong Kong, China has managed to keep the number of confirmed cases at a relatively low level, but we need to remain alert given the volatility of the epidemic. To protect citizens against future threats, including the threat of the climate crisis, we will continue to share experience and knowledge with C40 Members on measures to promote green economy as part of our economic recovery efforts.”

**Notes to Editors:**

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**The full list of mayors to have formally endorsed the Statement of Principles are:**

Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles  
Kostas Bakoyannis, Mayor of Athens  
Steve Adler, Mayor of Austin  
Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona  
Claudia López, Mayor of Bogotá  
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston  
Horacio Rodríguez-Larreta, Chief of Government of Buenos Aires  
Lori Lightfoot, Mayor of Chicago  
Frank Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen  
Rafael Greca, Mayor of Curitiba  
Mxolisi Kaunda, Mayor of Durban  
Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown  
KS Wong, Secretary for the Environment, Hong Kong, China  
Sylvester Turner, Mayor of Houston  
Fernando Medina, Mayor of Lisbon  
Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London  
Jorge Muñoz, Mayor of Lima  
Daniel Quintero Calle, Mayor of Medellín  
Sally Capp, Lord Mayor of Melbourne  
Claudia Sheinbaum, Mayor of Mexico City  
Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan  
Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal  
LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans  
Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City  
Raymond Johansen, Governing Mayor of Oslo  
Ted Wheeler, Mayor of Portland  
Josephina Belmonte, Mayor of Quezon City  
Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam  
Antônio Carlos Peixoto de Magalhães Neto, Mayor of Salvador  
Bruno Covas, Mayor of São Paulo  
London Breed, Mayor of San Francisco  
Felipe Guevara, Governor of Santiago  
Jenny Durkan, Mayor of Seattle  
Park Won-soon, Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Seoul  
Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney  
Ron Huldai, Mayor of Tel Aviv - Yafo  
Kennedy Stewart, Mayor of Vancouver

**To arrange an interview with or to discuss the announcement please get in touch with [media@c40.org](mailto:media@c40.org)**

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## **About C40**

Around the world, 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 Los Angeles Eric Garcetti; 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](#) and [C40 Knowledge Hub](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)