

Mayors Launch a Green and Just COVID-19 Recovery Plan & Demand National Governments End Fossil Fuel Subsidies

C40 Cities release a detailed agenda for delivering a sustainable and equitable recovery in the world's cities. The C40 Mayors' Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery is led by mayors and supported by business leaders, youth climate activists and trade unions.

Mayors outline bold steps to create green jobs; invest in fundamental public services; protect mass transit; support essential workers, and give public spaces back to people and nature.

Mayors call on national governments to support their vision with an end to fossil fuel subsidies to avert climate breakdown.

London, 15 July 2020 – C40 Cities today released *C40 Mayors' Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery* outlining bold steps to deliver an equitable and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The agenda includes specific measures, already being delivered in many cities around the world, which must become the 'new normal' to contain and better prepare for future pandemics, address systemic injustices and keep global heating below the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement.

Amongst the measures championed by mayors today include green job creation programmes; increased rights and support for all workers whose efforts have proved essential during the COVID-19 crisis; investments in green industries such as guaranteed access to resilient public services, particularly for the most vulnerable; building retrofit programmes; investing in safe and reliable mass transit; and new protected spaces for pedestrians and cyclists.

Recognising that delivering an equitable, low carbon recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will require a global effort, C40 Cities and their allies have also called on national governments to support their efforts. C40 mayors call for commitments to “ensure that all economic recovery funds and stimulus packages support a fair and sustainable transition.” Calling for an end to all public investments in fossil fuels, C40 mayors are clear: “Nations must seize this moment to decisively move away from investments in high carbon and fossil fuel intensive industries and increase investments in a low carbon future.”

The mayors' agenda makes clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has starkly exposed deep inequalities in cities and across cities in different regions of the world, including by disproportionately impacting Black people, Indigenous communities and people of colour, low-income communities, isolated elderly, and those living in informal settlements. Mayors commit to addressing these injustices, and call on national governments to ensure stimulus investment and recovery funds create more just and inclusive societies and communities,

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and directly address long-standing inequalities and ongoing discrimination based on race, gender and income.

This vision of a green and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis was immediately welcomed by leaders and activists around the world, including the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, representatives of business, trade unions, youth climate activists, economists, citizen groups, and many more. It is based on the principles of the Global Green New Deal announced by C40 Chair and Mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, at the C40 World Mayors Summit in Copenhagen.

The mayors' agenda was released by the C40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, established at the direction of C40 Chair and Mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, and chaired by Mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala. The Task Force was guided by a [Statement of Principles](#), already endorsed by more than 40 city leaders from around the world.

In contrast to national governments and multilateral organisations, mayors have been collaborating throughout their response to the COVID-19 crisis. This unparalleled co-operation will form the basis of the just and green recovery in the world's leading cities.

Supportive Quotes

- [Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles & C40 Chair](#)
- [Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan & Chair of C40 Mayoral Task Force](#)
- [Yvonne Aki Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone](#)
- [Fernando Medina, Mayor of Lisbon, Portugal](#)
- [Sally Capp Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Australia](#)
- [Wong Kam-sing, Secretary for the Environment, Hong Kong, China](#)
- [Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal, Canada](#)
- [Jenny Durkan, Mayor of Seattle, USA](#)
- [LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans, USA](#)
- [Daniel Quintero Calle, Mayor of Medellín, Colombia](#)
- [Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam, Netherlands](#)
- [Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, UK](#)
- [Michael R. Bloomberg, C40 Board President and Mayor of New York City, 2002-2013](#)
- [António Guterres, UN Secretary-General](#)
- [Briana Carbajal Climate Activist and University of California, Los Angeles \(UCLA\) Undergrad](#)
- [Daniel Villamar, General Secretary, TANDARI Youth Assembly for Sustainability, Ecuador](#)
- [Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value, Founding Director, Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose \(IIPP\), University College London \(UCL\)](#)
- [Carol M. Browner, Board Chair, League of Conservation Voters and former Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- [May Boeve, Executive Director, 350.org](#)
- [Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#)
- [Nick Godfrey, Programme Director, Coalition for Urban Transitions](#)
- [Alexandra Palt, Executive Vice President - Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer and Executive Vice President of the Fondation L'Oréal](#)
- [Mads Nipper, CEO, Grundfos Holding A/S](#)

- [Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen, President and chief executive officer \(CEO\), Novo Nordisk A/S](#)
- [Dr María Mendiluce, CEO, We Mean Business Coalition](#)
- [Ben Smith, Director, Energy, Cities and Climate Change, Arup](#)

Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles & C40 Chair, said: “Mayors see the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis as they are: global challenges that pose massive threats to our lives and livelihoods — and demand urgent action to correct structural inequities, improve public health, and create more inclusive economies. The way we shape our recovery will define our cities for generations to come, and this C40 agenda will leverage the collective power that mayors wield to help protect our planet and lay the foundation for a more just and resilient future.”

Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan, Italy and Chair of C40 Mayoral Task Force said: “Right at the outset of the pandemic, C40 Mayors felt the need to collaborate even more closely, to be able to rapidly learn from each other and take the most appropriate decisions to tackle the COVID-19 challenge. A visionary Mayoral Task Force was created to elaborate on a pathway towards a new, better normal, to the benefit of all cities of the world. The future of our cities is built on this collective strong vision for a Green and Just recovery. We present today the concrete actions we are taking and will continue to take for job creation and for the protection of our essential workers, for increased equity and resilience and for health and wellbeing of all our citizens. There is also a strong call to action to national governments and other institutions to move in that same direction. I am confident that the Green and Just Recovery agenda will be helpful for the individual action of all C40 mayors in their cities and regions.”

Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone said: “Freetown’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will be an uphill climb. But as a city, we will ensure that like our response, recovery is focused on bringing some of the city’s most vulnerable along. Freetown’s commitment to improving public services post-COVID, particularly sanitation, will make our city more livable for all whilst creating much needed jobs in the circular economy.”

LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans, USA said: "New Orleans, like many cities, bears the dual burdens of climate crises and COVID-19. I'm proud to partner with my colleagues from around the world in developing future-oriented solutions for an equitable and green recovery."

Sally Capp, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Australia said: “The COVID-19 crisis has shown us all what can be done for our communities when we are determined to get the right outcome. We are already creating green jobs in Melbourne through investing in projects such as new footpaths, bike lanes and parks. There are multiple benefits for our city when we fast-track projects that help our climate and create jobs during this economic downturn. Now is the time for bold thinking and swift action to support jobs and economies by investing in projects that deliver cleaner and greener cities.”

Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam, Netherlands said: “In times of uncertainty citizens and businesses turn to government for answers and guidance. It is our duty to involve everyone to achieve our aim - a better, greener, more equal and just society. We can and will build on the sense of community that the COVID-19 lockdowns have awakened in our cities. In the end we will prevail and our cities will continue to be attractive and lively, stronger, more balanced, than before”.

Wong Kam-sing, Secretary for the Environment, Hong Kong, China said: "Hong Kong, China has adopted a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to contain the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the community. The Government is also using part of its USD21.5 billion anti-epidemic fund to launch a Green Employment Scheme which will create more than 500 time-limited green jobs. Apart from stimulating economic recovery, this Scheme will bring substantial benefits to the environment, by upgrading electric vehicle charging infrastructure; supporting community-based waste reduction and recycling projects; and promoting nature conservation as well as cleansing our shorelines. Also using the anti-epidemic fund, a separate Graduates Subsidy Programme has been launched to subsidise private companies and organisations who employ fresh local graduates to work in environment-related areas, hence creating further job opportunities and attracting more young people to pursue a green career."

Jenny A Durkan, Mayor of Seattle, USA said: “The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the same inequities that are exacerbated by climate change, which disproportionately impacts communities of color. To truly combat the lasting effects of these dual crises, we must pursue solutions that not only address the short-term impacts, but contribute to long-term wealth creation that advance the health and wellbeing of Black and Indigenous communities. In Seattle, we’re committed to centering the principles outlined in the C40 Mayors Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery as we reopen and recover from COVID-19, and I hope to see these principles integrated at a national and international scale.”

Daniel Quintero Calle, Mayor of Medellín, Colombia said:

“It has been an honor and pride for me to represent Latin America in this international network of collaboration between cities. Among the main challenges that the pandemic leaves us is to strengthen our voice of local experiences to contribute to the transformation of the world. All cities have the obligation to innovate to lead the future we want for the next generations, for this, all my appreciation and thanks to the other cities for sharing their experiences and for the results achieved in this process. This will be a very valuable guide to advance a healthy, equitable, and sustainable recovery of our communities. The future is what we build from today. Medellín wants to become the city of the Software Valley, the Latin American headquarters for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and we are ready to continue sharing our experiences with the world because there is definitely no time to go back to the past. The future looks like us”.

Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal, Canada said: “In order to face the challenges ahead of us, we must spare no effort to increase our actions towards ecological transition. We need a forward thinking approach to accelerate our economic recovery through green, sustainable and inclusive initiatives and create new industries and jobs that will drive wider benefits for our residents and businesses. Economic recovery must first come through investments in infrastructure that will help us rethink a greener and fairer city, including through public transit, parks and social housing.”

Fernando Medina, Mayor of Lisbon, Portugal said: “Our generation is the last one that can act in time to fight climate change. This is one of the biggest challenges we face and cities, which consume more than two thirds of the world's energy and are responsible for more than 70% of global CO2 emissions, have to lead this agenda. Moreover, with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to reinforce the commitment to a greener future on the recovery process of our cities, with strong, bold and quick measures that lead us to the future we want. Together with the largest cities in the world, present in C40 Cities, we are working to lead this agenda to ensure an equitable, healthy and sustainable future for all, a responsibility and an obligation towards today's children, tomorrow's adults.”

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, UK said: “As London and the rest of the world start to emerge from the COVID-19 lockdown, global collaboration between cities will be key to achieving a recovery that tackles climate change at a local and global level. We have a once in a generation opportunity to rebuild our cities and economies to be greener, fairer, and more sustainable. I look forward to working with fellow mayors around the world to implement the actions of this report, including championing the need for a green stimulus that boosts green jobs and divestment from fossil fuels to build a more sustainable economy.”

Michael R. Bloomberg, C40 Board President and Mayor of New York City, 2002-2013 said: “The coronavirus pandemic has inflicted deep wounds in communities across America and the world – lives lost, businesses shuttered, and injustices laid bare. City leaders are now driving the response and working not just to repair the damage, but to build a greener, healthier, and more equitable world. The new C40 Mayors’ Agenda provides them with a roadmap to do it. And with their leadership, we can recover in a way that strengthens communities, protects public health, and fulfills the goals of the Paris Agreement.”

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations said: “Once again, it is city mayors who are showing us the way forward in confronting the COVID-19 public health crisis, reducing inequality and addressing the climate crisis. City mayors understand that we must take action that protects people’s lives and livelihoods now and in the future by recovering better and building a more resilient and sustainable economy. Cities are agents and engines of change and they can deliver solutions that will reduce carbon emissions to get to carbon neutrality by 2050 while creating better and more sustainable jobs.”

Briana Carbajal, Climate Activist and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Undergraduate said: "COVID-19 made us face ourselves at our worst. We began questioning everything we know about how we exist on this planet. Out of this tragedy, I am hopeful that it has provided us with a grim enough reflection on the ways we have failed each other, and our home, so that we may move forward to remedy ourselves of racial injustice, environmental degradation, and willful ignorance. The Green and Just Recovery is a necessity on the path to healing. A path I am grateful my generation is leading."

Daniel Villamar, General Secretary, TANDARI Youth Assembly for Sustainability, Ecuador

said: "COVID-19 has shown us how vulnerable we are to natural disasters and how fast we can respond to their consequences when political leadership is held. The climate crisis is around the corner, and it will have more serious consequences than the pandemic. We MUST commit to create resilient cities, that tackle the climate crisis while promoting the reduction of inequalities through green jobs creation, redesigning our cities for sustainable mobility and a green livelihood, and putting our efforts to make a global transition to a circular economy. This also challenges us to commit to global cooperation and solidarity to provide green recovery funds and financial aid for those cities in the global south, which have been the most affected by the coronavirus crisis. There is no climate justice without social justice."

Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value, Founding Director, Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), University College London (UCL)

said: "What we need now are entrepreneurial governments, ready to create and shape markets that will enable us to build thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities -- driven by a dynamic stakeholder approach involving labour unions, business and civil society."

Carol M. Browner, Board Chair, League of Conservation Voters and former Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said: "Fifteen-minute cities, micromobility and more space for walking and biking are innovative solutions that will help our cities rebuild and restore our economy while protecting lives and cutting dangerous pollution. Cities are incubators for new ideas and the C40 mayors who developed creative solutions to cope with the COVID-19 crisis are now putting their creativity to work on bold, safe and equitable recovery solutions for the long term, including modernizing the way cities protect lives, provide essential services and foster economic opportunity for everyone."

May Boeve, Executive Director, 350.org said: "We were told there wasn't enough money in national budgets to save the planet, and then the COVID-crisis hit and pulled back the veil. Cities are ready to put relief funds into climate action creating dignified jobs, transitions for fossil fuel workers, and renewable energy systems. Building back better means seeing the struggles for racial equality and environmental justice as one and the same. A Just Recovery includes justice for black and brown communities who have lived on the front lines of poverty and pollution and in the shadows of fossil fuel infrastructure. We have an

opportunity to change that and make things right. We join the C40 Mayors in calling on governments around the globe to launch a Just Recovery."

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) said:

"Cities are key to a better future where employment and decent work walk hand in hand with the necessary shift to net zero in all sectors. Support for economic stimulus must be conditional on decent work and just transition. No worker and no community can be left behind if we are to move to an inclusive future. Congratulations to C40 and the mayors for their leadership. Their commitment to action on inequality, on employment and on climate action is commendable and the only basis on which we can secure a world where people and planet are aligned with the economy."

Nick Godfrey, Programme Director, Coalition for Urban Transitions.

"We recognise the vital contributions of national governments alongside mayors and city governments in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Our forthcoming work on building back better cities—which contributed to the Green & Just COVID-19 Recovery Plan—shows there are a wide range of investments governments can quickly implement in cities. These will not only have significant economic and job multipliers, they also reduce emissions and enhance resilience. From clean and active mobility to low-carbon construction, national governments have an opportunity to ensure a green post-pandemic recovery with cities at its heart."

Alexandra Palt, Executive Vice President - Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer and

Executive Vice President of the Fondation L'Oréal, said: "As a long-standing partner of the C40 cities and a company that has demonstrated that decoupling environmental impact from growth is possible, L'Oréal welcomes this initiative. The economic, ecological and social transition needs to move urgently beyond good intentions. We need strong commitments, and quick and effective action to address the major social crises that our societies will face in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, and to fight climate change, which now threatens to even more profoundly shake our lives. We all have a role to play in building the world of tomorrow."

Mads Nipper, CEO, Grundfos Holding A/S said: "Grundfos fully supports the C40's Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force's ambition to seize the moment by phasing out fossil fuels and carbon industries and instead investing in the fundamental public services that we know are crucial to the health of both the planet and its peoples. Clean water is a precondition for hygiene, healthy lives and nearly all economic activity, and investments in the water sector can provide high quality, green jobs to spur the economic recovery. We call on the international community to help us create a new normal that is greener, more resilient, healthier and fairer."

Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen, President and chief executive officer (CEO), Novo Nordisk A/S said: "We have a unique opportunity to secure a sustainable future at all levels of society by returning to "a new normal" rather than just "the normal". I welcome C40's Global Mayors

COVID-19 Recovery Task Force's Agenda, aiming at rebuilding cities and economies in a way that improves public health, reduces inequality and addresses the climate crises. Focus should be on delivering a better future where the health and wellbeing of city residents is at the centre of all decisions while removing systematic injustice and delivering on the Paris Agreement. Winning this battle requires not only investments through green economic recovery funds and stimulus packages, but collaboration from all corners of society and from all sectors. Novo Nordisk is ready to take our responsibility for making this happen."

Dr María Mendiluce, CEO of the We Mean Business coalition, said: "Business leaders from all over the world are calling on governments to redesign the future and build back better. We must collectively accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy that is inclusive and works for everyone, creates good jobs, ensures clean air, and increases resilience to systemic shocks like climate change. Businesses, national governments and other cities should take confidence and inspiration from the C40 mayors' principles for a green and just recovery."

Ben Smith, Director, Energy, Cities and Climate Change, Arup said: "It's been so positive to see the number of C40 Mayors using the C40 network to share knowledge and ideas about a green recovery post-COVID-19, and to see how quickly C40 have been able to organise, host, collate and make available useful content to support cities around the world. In delivering climate action it is possible to also prioritise other benefits – like job creation, citizen engagement, improved health and wellbeing and nature recovery, all vital for a green recovery. Mayors can also inspire other leaders – in national government and in the private sector."

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors:

Key Actions from C40 Mayors' Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery

Together as C40 mayors, we have collectively identified key actions that are critical to achieve our vision for a green and just recovery.

- We will lead in taking action for jobs and an inclusive economy by:
 - Creating new good green jobs fast
 - Supporting and protecting essential workers
 - Support and deliver training programmes to upskill and reskill the workforce, and those currently unemployed, to enable a just transition to an inclusive economy.
- We will lead in taking action for resilience and equity – providing fundamental public services for all, that underpin a fair society and strong economy, and that are resilient to future shocks, by:
 - Delivering a post COVID-safe and resilient mass transit system
 - Providing and investing in fundamental public services for all such as clean water, food, sanitation and affordable, healthy housing.

- We will lead in taking action for health and well-being – giving public space back to people and nature, reclaiming our streets and guaranteeing clean air to ensure liveable communities, by:
 - Creating ‘15 minute cities’ where all residents of the city are able to meet most of their needs within a short walk or bicycle ride from their homes
 - Giving streets back to people, by permanently reallocating more road space to walking and cycling, investing in city-wide walking and cycling networks and green infrastructure
 - Building with nature to prioritise 'nature based solutions' eg. parks, green roofs, and permeable pavements, to help reduce the risks of extreme heat, drought, and flooding, and improve liveability and physical and mental health

C40 mayors call on national and regional governments, central banks and international financial institutions to join them in delivering a green and just recovery from COVID-19.

Our calls to action are:

1. The only stimulus should be a green stimulus

Governments and multilateral agencies should invest in a green and just recovery by conditioning all stimulus packages, corporate aid and recovery funds to support the low-carbon transition we need and to prioritise investment in sustainable, climate-resilient industries and infrastructure.

2. Commit to an equitable and inclusive recovery

Plans and investments for the recovery need to address the root causes of economic inequalities by: providing direct and equitable access to green jobs and equal employment opportunities in the low-carbon transition; increasing equitable participation in the labour force through training and upskilling, especially for currently marginalised groups; and developing and applying appropriate regularisation mechanisms (ie. formal recognition, documentation, etc.) to provide better employment conditions and social protections for essential informal workers.

3. Protect and champion mass transit

Invest, subsidize and support affordable zero-emission mass transit. To keep our air clean and prioritise the health of our residents, governments must use stimulus funds to make public transportation more accessible, reliable, frequent, affordable, well-integrated, safe, and more resilient in the face of future potential crises. Governments must also make it easier for cities to procure electric buses whilst reallocating road space to public transit, cycling, and pedestrian infrastructure, and help cities maintain and enhance some of the successful air quality, climate and road safety improvements introduced during lockdowns.

4. Prioritise and invest in clean energy

Invest in renewable energy and building retrofit city programmes to create thousands of jobs, help residents save on energy bills and protect people’s health and safety with better and more energy efficient, healthier homes and offices.

5. Invest in resilient cities as the engines of the recovery

Cities have been on the front-line of the pandemic and national governments, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and other relevant financial entities must channel financial support directly to cities and ensure that cities can easily access this finance, recognising the need to combat the existing barriers they encounter.

6. End all public fossil fuel investments and subsidies

Accelerate the global and urban energy transition as a cornerstone of the COVID-19 green and just recovery by ending all public fossil fuel investments and subsidies. It has been 11 years since G20 governments pledged in Pittsburgh to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, yet no action has been taken. With a clear need to invest in clean power, public transport, and cities, and fossil fuel prices at historic lows, all national governments must decisively move away from investments in high carbon and fossil fuel intensive industries and increase investments in a low carbon future.

The members of the Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force are:

Chair of the Task Force Mayor of Milan, Italy, Giuseppe Sala; Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, Yvonne Aki Sawyerr; Secretary for the Environment of Hong Kong, China, KS Wong; Mayor of Lisbon, Portugal, Fernando Medina; Mayor of Rotterdam, Netherlands, Ahmed Aboutaleb; Mayor of Medellín, Colombia, Daniel Quintero Calle; Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Australia, Sally Capp; Mayor of Montréal, Canada, Valérie Plante; Mayor of New Orleans, USA, LaToya Cantrell; Mayor of Seattle, USA, Jenny Durkan; Mayor of Seoul, South Korea, Park Won-soon, was a member of the Task Force until his death.

Fossil Fuel Subsidies

- It has been more than a decade since the [Pittsburgh declaration](#) in 2009, in which G20 governments agreed to cut subsidies for fossil fuels in order to combat climate change.
- Government support for the production and consumption of fossil fuels totalled [USD 478 billion in 2019](#), according to OECD and IEA analysis of 77 economies.
- Since 2015, G20 countries have acted directly counter to the legally binding goals of the Paris Agreement, by providing at least [USD 77 billion a year](#) in finance for oil, gas, and coal projects through their public finance institutions.
- There is [still no plan](#), deadline or comprehensive tracking system for G20 governments to meet their 2009 pledge.

Data made public today on the [Energy Policy Tracker](#), a new website tracking climate and energy-related recovery policies, shows G20 governments have committed USD 151 billion to fossil fuels in COVID-19 recovery packages. Of them, only 20% make financial support conditional on green requirements, such as setting climate targets or implementing pollution reduction plans.

The C40 Knowledge Hub

C40 is supporting cities to better understand and respond to the pandemic, including by sharing insights and expertise from cities around the world which have been managing the spread of COVID-19. Learn more at our dedicated COVID-19 Portal on the [C40 Knowledge Hub](#).