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UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres to Join C40 Mayors Summit

Figueres to consult C40 Mayors on the UN climate process, in recognition of the impact of local actions to reduce carbon emissions and climate risks.

January 15, 2014 (New York, NY) – Today the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) announced that Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, will participate in the fifth biennial C40 Mayors Summit, leading a discussion on how the UN can play a greater role in working with megacities to advance their leading efforts on climate action. The C40 Mayors Summit will take place in Johannesburg February 4-6, 2014.

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, said:

“Cities and regions are a central component of the solution to climate change, given that more than half the global population lives in urban areas, which produce around 80% of energy-related emissions. Many mayors and governors already have clear, practical plans to reduce emissions and increase urban resilience. Billions of people in cities and regions need to be able to grasp the many opportunities of the low-carbon economy, as well as the urgent need to prepare for the inevitable impacts of climate change. As we approach 2015, now is the time for city leaders to interact more effectively with national governments, to ensure coherence in the design, and collaboration in the implementation of climate change policies and measures. Only byconcertedly contributing to the growing groundswell of climate action can we meet the needs of current citizens and the expectations of future generations.”

From Rio de Janeiro to Seoul to Johannesburg, the mayors of the world's megacities are leading the way by taking climate actions locally that are collectively having a significant global impact. C40 data indicates that C40 Cities are on track to reduce their collective annual emissions by 248 million tonnes by 2020, having undertaken more than 5,000 climate-related actions since 2005, in many cases without national government support. Moreover, C40 Cities have the potential to reduce their annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by over a billion tonnes by 2030, compared with business as usual. At the upcoming Summit in Johannesburg, C40 and its research partner Arup will be releasing new data in the report, Climate Action in Megacities, Volume 2.0. A first volume was released at the C40 Mayors Summit in Sao Paolo, Brazil in 2011.

“Mayors as well as Presidents and Prime Ministers have the power to take meaningful climate action,” said Mark Watts, Executive Director of C40. “The C40 data show that the world's cities can contribute to aggressive national targets to reduce emissions, and can therefore support meaningful national offers towards a common agreement at the Paris COP in 2015.”
Joining Figueres for the Summit roundtable discussion will be Mayors of Copenhagen and Lima, past and future host cities to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings; the Mayors of Warsaw and Paris have also been invited to participate. At the November, 2013 climate talks (COP 19) in C40 city Warsaw, Figueres and the parties within the official negotiations consulted with city leaders during a full-day session called the “Cities Day of the High Level Segment.”

“Cities are playing an increasingly important role when it comes to global climate action, offering innovative solutions and inspiration in the form of real, on-the-ground actions -- and the international community is taking notice,” said Johannesburg Mayor Mpho Parks Tau. “It will be an honor to host Executive Secretary Figueres at the upcoming C40 Mayors Summit in Johannesburg. Her participation marks an important step in increasing the interaction between local and state governments to tackle the critical issue of climate change.”

The C40 Mayors Summit convenes mayors from the world’s largest cities to advance urban solutions to climate change. The event will be led by C40 Chair Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes, C40 Board President Michael R. Bloomberg, and C40 Summit host, Johannesburg Mayor Mpho Parks Tau. The Summit draws mayors from across C40’s global network; to date mayors and representatives from cities including Jakarta, Mexico City, London, Los Angeles and Rotterdam have confirmed participation.

About C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40)
The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) is a network of large and engaged cities from around the world committed to implementing meaningful and sustainable climate-related actions locally that will help address climate change globally. C40 was established in 2005 and expanded via a partnership in 2006 with President William J. Clinton’s Climate Initiative (CCI). The current chair of the C40 is Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes; former Chair, 108th Mayor of New York City, Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. To learn more about the work of C40 and our Cities, please visit www.c40.org, follow us on Twitter @c40cities and like us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/C40Cities.

About the UNFCCC
With 195 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. For the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. In Doha in 2012, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period under the Protocol. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.