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CITIESIPCC CONFERENCE OPENS WITH GLOBAL CALL FOR COLLABORATION AND SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Today, scientists, policymakers, researchers, and development experts opened the inaugural CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference in Edmonton, Canada. The conference is a unified call to advance global understanding of climate change, its impacts on cities, and the critical role localities play in solving this challenge. It commenced with remarks by Mayor of Edmonton **Don Iveson**, Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks **Shannon Phillips**, Canada Minister of Environment and Climate Change **Catherine McKenna**, IPCC Chair **Hoesung Lee**, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Secretary-General **Emilia Saiz**, and Head of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand **Shobhakar Dhakal**, who called for a global, collaborative research agenda to empower cities around the world with the scientific, technical and policy knowledge necessary to move quickly to find and implement solutions to climate change.

They also announced a series of research papers from the CitiesIPCC Scientific Steering Committee, including [five commissioned research papers](#) and a separate batch of [four research papers](#) published in *Nature* and *Nature Climate Change*. These papers frame some key issues being discussed at the conference this week.

Co-sponsored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the conference will assess the current state of academic and practice-based understanding of cities and climate change, forge stronger partnerships among the more than 750 leaders, innovators, and influencers attending, and chart a course for increased global collaboration on scientific research, funding, and knowledge-sharing. This work will support a new special report on climate change and cities prepared by the IPCC and develop a blueprint for new scientific research supporting effective climate action strategies in cities around the world.

"With over half the world's population, cities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as well as being a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. So cities offer particular opportunities for mitigation and adaptation. The IPCC wants to encourage research into cities and climate change for its future assessments, and the CitiesIPCC conference in Edmonton is an essential stage in that process," said **Dr. Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC**.

"The climate-related realities we face make it all the more relevant that local governments remain steadfast on enacting science-based policy. Cities continue to listen to hard scientific

evidence as they prepare their communities for the many risks associated with climate change and this conference is a shining example of bringing together the scientific community with practitioners and politicians,” said **Don Iveson, Mayor of Edmonton**.

“The mayors of the world’s great cities are committed to urgent and bold climate action. As they develop their climate action plans to deliver their share of the Paris Agreement goals, mayors need the strongest possible data and research to guide them. Whether understanding the impacts of climate change on our cities or identifying the benefits that accompany climate action, science and cities need to collaborate as never before. CitiesIPCC will be a key milestone in our collective effort to realise the ambition of the Paris Agreement,” said **Mark Watts, Executive Director, C40 Cities**.

“The CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference marks a unique opportunity for urban practitioners and scientists to come together and begin the hard task of connecting a global debate to local realities, and to the lives of ordinary people,” said **William Cobbett, Director, Cities Alliance**.

“The world’s cities are hubs of innovation – home to people exploring new ideas for how to design infrastructure, ensure the health and wellbeing of urban populations and merge science and art. CitiesIPCC is an important step in mobilizing that tremendous wisdom and creativity to solve the most pressing challenges facing our cities,” said **Amy Luers, Executive Director of Future Earth**.

“When it comes to acting on climate change, the stakes are high and the science is clear. Local and regional policymakers increasingly feel the need to translate the latest scientific evidence into actionable intel that will allow them to enact the most efficient and cost-effective measures to keep their communities safe and to do their part in curbing climate change. The CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference is the first real forum where researchers and mayors from all over the world have an opportunity to discuss how to turn science into policy, while providing important feedback for the next IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities,” said **Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability**.

“The future city can be clean, green, fair, inclusive, healthful and should be,” said **Jeffrey Sachs, Director of UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**.

“There needs to be a link between scientific research and policy development. Local and Regional Governments' networks can play an important role in facilitating dialogue between policymakers and researchers in the future,” said **Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**.

“We know that cities have the potential to be positive drivers of innovation and climate action but to harness this we will need comprehensive and cohesive data to guide us and targeted activities with partners across the spectrum. As our world becomes increasingly urban, we must ensure our cities expand in a sustainable manner if we are to have any chance of meeting the commitments in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda,” said **Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT**.

“Cities represent the next frontier in climate science. There is a need for both long-term projections of climate change over decades and centuries to help us design resilient and sustainable cities of the future right now. And we also need very localized weather forecasts and climate predictions on timescales from hours to years to decades in order to optimally manage complex urban systems and protect life and property,” said **Dr. Deon Terblanche, acting director of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP)**.

The three-day conference, organized by a Scientific Steering Committee made up of engineering, science, humanities, and urban development experts, will focus on four major themes:

- **Cities and Climate Change** – Global commitments like the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development goals, New Urban Agenda, and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction require cities to implement new sustainable development plans to adapt and respond to climate change. This theme will explore gaps in knowledge of climate mitigation and adaptation in the context of meeting these global commitments, including the costs of climate action/inaction, equity and justice issues related to climate change, and the imperative for actions resulting in low-carbon, climate-resilient, sustainable development.
- **Urban Emissions, Impacts, and Vulnerabilities** – Cities are some of the largest contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions, and as such, experience some of the worst effects of climate change. This theme will explore current and future urban emission drivers, urban climate impacts, and climate risks and vulnerabilities to provide science-based pathways for cities to pursue emissions reductions and resilience strategies.
- **Solutions for the Transition to Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Cities** – With the advent of advanced technological and scientific solutions to climate change, this session will explore the transformative nature of cutting-edge sustainable development strategies. The theme will include discussions about disruptive technology, urban infrastructure and design, and institutional innovation.
- **Enabling Transformative Climate Action in Cities** – City climate action takes place in the context of diverse social, environmental, economic, and developmental realities. This theme will explore new and existing avenues for enabling climate action that addresses poverty and inequality, re-shapes power relations, and re-conceptualizes our vision of what cities are, could be, and should be.

In addition to the **IPCC**, the other CitiesIPCC partner organizations providing practical support to the Cities and Climate Change Science conference are **C40 Cities, Cities Alliance, Future Earth, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), UN-Habitat, and World Climate Research Program (WCRP)**.

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For Information about The CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference visit:
<https://citiesipcc.org/>

About C40 Cities

C40 Cities connects more than 90 of the world's greatest cities, representing 650+ million people and one quarter of the global economy. Created and led by cities, C40 is focused on tackling climate change and driving urban action that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks, while increasing the health, wellbeing and economic opportunities of urban citizens. The current chair of the 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 www.c40.org, follow us on Twitter [@c40cities](https://twitter.com/c40cities) or Instagram [@c40cities](https://www.instagram.com/c40cities) and like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/C40Cities>.

About Cities Alliance

Cities Alliance is the global partnership supporting cities to deliver sustainable development. Working in cities where it matters most, the Brussels-based organisation promotes long-term programmatic approaches that are focused on strengthening local skills and capacity, developing national urban policies, investing in infrastructure, enabling strategic city planning, and engaging citizens. Its diverse membership includes multilateral organisations, national governments, international associations of local government, international NGOs, private sector, foundations, and academia.

About City of Edmonton

Nestled on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, Edmonton is home to nearly one million people from all walks of life including Indigenous people and new Canadians. Our city's strength is founded in this diversity and the varied languages and traditions that create our cultural fabric. Home to six post-secondary institutions, humming research parks and creative start-up organizations, Edmonton is an international destination for advanced technologies, healthcare and green energy. Edmontonians enjoy a strong connection with nature and work together to adapt to the reality of climate change and create environmental sustainability and resilience for future generations.

About Future Earth

Future Earth is an international platform of research, innovation and collaboration to support and accelerate transformations to a sustainable world. It operates from five global hubs – in Montreal, Stockholm, Colorado, Paris and Tokyo – and is connected to over a dozen regional and national offices across the globe. The Governing Council of Future Earth is composed of the [International Council for Science](#) (ICSU), the [International Social Science Council](#) (ISSC), the [Belmont Forum](#) of funding agencies, the [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO), the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP), the [United Nations University](#) (UNU), [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#), the [STS forum](#) and the [World Meteorological Organization](#).

About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability is the leading global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future, impacting over 25 percent of the global urban population.

About Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a partnership of scientists and policymakers. It is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change. The IPCC was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and

future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation. IPCC assessments provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate-related policies.

About United Cities and Local Government (UCLG)

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the world organization of local and regional governments and their associations, representing and defending their interests on the world stage. UCLG's network of members represents 70% of the world's total population and is present in all world regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, the Middle East and West Asia, and North America; organized into 7 regional sections, 1 metropolitan section and 1 Forum of regions. This network includes over 240,000 towns, cities, regions and metropolises, and over 175 associations of local and regional governments in 140 countries. Among UCLG's key areas of political interest are: local democracy, climate change and environmental protection, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, local finance, urban development and city diplomacy in peace building.

About UN Environment

UN Environment is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UN Environment works with governments, the private sector, the civil society and with other UN entities and international organizations across the world.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

About the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) mobilizes scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector to support practical problem solving for sustainable development at local, national, and global scales. The SDSN has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. The SDSN is building national and regional networks of knowledge institutions, solution-focused thematic networks, and the [SDG Academy](#), an online university for sustainable development.

About World Climate Research Program (WCRP)

World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) – co-sponsored by the International Council for Science (ICSU), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) – is the primary coordination mechanism for international climate research. WCRP focuses on fundamental and underpinning cutting-edge climate science where international coordination enables scientific advances that would not happen otherwise; its research and climate modeling efforts provide the foundation for national and international climate assessments. WCRP serves as the community's preferred voice advocating the importance of climate research; for use in an increasing range of practical applications of direct relevance, benefit and value to society.