**Provisional remarks**

**Monday 28 August 2023**

**Madeleine Forster, C40 Climate Leadership Group**

**Remarks delivered were abbreviated for time**

Thank you Madame Chair and distinguished Panellists. My name is Madeleine Forster, I am the Policy Lead for **Inclusive Climate Action** at **C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group**. C40 has the privilege of supporting the Mayors of nearly 100 of the world’s mega-cities, including cities such as Bogotá represented in the panel today, to deliver ambitious and inclusive climate action. C40 membership includes mandatory reporting on equitable outcomes as a [Leadership Standard](https://www.c40.org/news/statement-by-the-c40-cities-steering-committee/).

Based on C40’s experience and close relationship with cities I would like to contribute three reflections to the discussion today:

* We welcome recognition in Resolution 51/13 and remarks today that **cities and local governments provide substantial public services that address local needs and realise human rights.** The city’s essential role in the provision of services that support **economic, social and cultural rights** will only grow as more people seek refuge and opportunity in cities due to climate-related migration, with [70% of internally displaced people already living in urban areas](https://bit.ly/3s39ejU) and more than [216 million](https://bit.ly/3ylsNoD) people expected to be displaced by 2050 due to climate breakdown. Cities are hubs for cultural diversity, jobs and education and opportunities but with rapid urbanisation there is also [widening inequality within cities](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/06/wcr_2022.pdf) across almost all [regions](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-64569-4_1#Sec3) with [poverty rates falling more slowly in cities](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Advance%20unedited%20GSDR%2014June2023.pdf) than rural areas.
* In this context, ongoing efforts to **decentralise responsibilities, increase local administrative capacity and enhance funding to meet local needs** are critical. Increasingly many cities, particularly in the Global South, have to allocate or reallocate limited available budgets to respond to climate events and crises such as flooding. In this way the climate crisis further affects already limited, shoestring budgets and capacity to deliver across a broad spectrum of community needs that support the enjoyment of rights. For example, in South Africa, following severe flooding across Durban and the surrounding areas in April 2022, the municipal government [reprioritized](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B8OPpy2xVwD9o1SdhvQB6d7YKnEV9gEh/view?usp=drive_link) over $129M USD its yearly budget to fund response efforts.
* Despite these challenges, as the closest level of government to communities **we also see in cities and local governments some of the most innovative, and promising approaches to protecting rights during the climate transition.** Using their[**political, formal and soft powers**](https://www.c40.org/news/mayors-need-more-powers-governments-climate-crisis/), these interventions can be replicated at scale with adequate support to local-government leadership. Let me cite several examples:  
  1. **Political leadership.** The [**C40 and Mayors Migration Council Task Force on Climate Migration**](https://www.c40.org/what-we-do/raising-climate-ambition/inclusive-thriving-cities/c40-mmc-partnership-on-cities-climate-migration/) is a group of Mayors who have dedicated political leadership and established an Action Agenda to ensure that as rapid urbanisation becomes the new normal due to climate displacement, it does not need to become a crisis.
  2. **Inclusive budgeting and planning.** Many cities are developing capacity and tools to integrate participatory approaches in their climate planning including to enable the [participation of young people](https://www.c40.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/C40_GYMF_Report4.pdf) in the design of plans that will serve their futures. Several cities such as [Tokyo](https://www.zaimu.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/syukei1/zaisei/20230127_reiwa5nendo_tokyotoyosanangaiyou/5yosanangaiyou.pdf), [Oslo](https://www.klimaoslo.no/wp-content/uploads/sites/88/2023/02/Appendix-to-Climate-Budget-2023-1.pdf) and Istanbul have initiated **inclusive and participatory** **climate budgeting** exercises. These cities recognise that successful climate policy action can only be achieved with inclusion and equity at heart and planning and must be embedded from the start of action.
  3. **Inclusive action.** C40 supported **inclusive climate action pilots** are working now with **informal settlements and informal workers** in the **waste and recycling sector,** recognising the importance of waste, water and sanitation to the enjoyment of rights and climate action and the role of these essential workers. This includes Rio de Janeiro’s [**Recicla Comunidade project**](https://prefeitura.rio/acao-comunitaria/programa-recicla-comunidade-avanca-em-favelas-para-preservar-a-natureza-e-gerar-renda-a-moradores/)and[**Accra’s Global Green New Deal Pilot**](https://www.devex.com/news/sponsored/cities-lead-on-equitable-inclusive-climate-action-105640)**.**
  4. **Shared learnings.** These cities are set to **share their experience at an** [**Inclusive Climate Action Forum**](https://www.c40.org/what-we-do/raising-climate-ambition/inclusive-thriving-cities/inclusive-climate-action-forum/) **‘Academy’** with other cities in Rio de Janeiro in September on inclusive approaches to good, green jobs and just transitions, **highlighting the importance of support for peer to peer sharing.**
  5. **Addressing underlying causes of barriers to the enjoyment of rights through climate action.** Numerous cities are also taking steps to address underlying causes of energy poverty including dependence on volatile fossil fuels and to support a just local energy transition for the rights to health and an adequate standard of living. We see global best practices from [**Seoul**](https://www.c40.org/case-studies/cities100-seoul-public-private-partnership-prevents-energy-poverty/) **to** [**Barcelona**](https://www.energia.barcelona/en/noticia/agreement-to-eradicate-energy-poverty_1054386) and collective efforts of European Mayors in an [energy crisis emergency plan for cities.](https://www.c40.org/news/mayors-unions-energy-poverty-crisis-action-plan/)

Thank you Madame Chair and the Council for this initiative.

As cities stand at the cusp of major transitions due to climate change, enhanced capacity for cities and local governments to deliver **transformative** climate action that respects, protects and promotes human rights is critical and we look forward to collaborative action to achieve this.