

C40 Cities and UN-Habitat join forces to drive bold action for more resilient, sustainable and inclusive cities

- New Urban Planning Accelerator to promote climate-responsive urban development
- *“Good urban planners are key climate champions.” - C40 Cities Executive Director, Mark Watts*

Nairobi, Kenya (17 February 2025) - C40 Cities and UN-Habitat have announced a landmark partnership to transform urban planning globally. The partnership will create a new Urban Planning Accelerator to help cities cut emissions by 25% by 2050 while creating more safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban environments.

Accelerators provide a framework to help cities work together to prioritise the most impactful solutions and act fast in order to address climate challenges while promoting more equitable and resilient communities.

With urban areas expanding up to 50% faster than population growth — especially in climate-vulnerable areas — experts warn that, without intervention, cities could triple in size by 2050 ([UN-CD, 2017](#)), exacerbating emissions, sprawl, and inequality.

The Urban Planning Accelerator will provide cities with the tools, expertise and technical guidance to reshape urban development by:

- Prioritising compact, regenerative cities over urban sprawl
- Encouraging mixed-use, connected neighbourhoods to reduce car dependency and create vibrant urban communities
- Regulating construction in climate-risk urban areas and preserving natural ecosystems to protect against extreme weather events

Announcing the new partnership at the opening of the Green & Resilient UrbanShift Africa Forum in Nairobi, Mark Watts, Executive Director of C40 Cities, said:

“Good urban planners are key climate champions. By designing compact, walkable cities and adopting risk-informed development patterns, we can dramatically cut pollution while delivering safer and more livable neighbourhoods for generations to come.

“Harnessing the expertise of C40 Cities and UN-Habitat will empower cities to act decisively and equitably for all their residents.”

Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat said:

“Sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities are key to protect people and planet. With the right legal, planning and financial tools, cities can grow sustainably while creating opportunities

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and safeguarding the environment. For this, densification, and regeneration are key, preserving the social and ecological functions of land. We must do so to tackle the global housing crisis affecting billions globally, with 1.1 billion informal settlements and slums. This vision requires collaboration. Through its partnership with C40, UN-Habitat reinforces its commitment to a future of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities for all.”

Bringing together stakeholders from across Africa the UrbanShift Forum allows national and local governments officials, investors, and civil society organizations to exchange best practices, foster partnerships, and advance climate ambition.

C40 and UN-Habitat will announce more details about the Urban Planning Accelerator later this year.

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About C40

C40 is a global network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to confront the climate crisis. Mayors of C40 cities employ inclusive, science-based and collaborative approaches to cut their fair share of emissions in half by 2030, help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C, and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit unhabitat.org or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

About UrbanShift

UrbanShift is funded by the Global Environment Facility, led by the UN Environment Programme and implemented in partnership with the World Resources Institute, C40 Cities, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, the UN Development Programme, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. UrbanShift is working to transform cities for people and the planet through sustainable, integrated, zero-carbon urban development.