

## Executive Summary: C40 Mayors Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery

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### **About the C40 Mayors Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery**

In April 2020, C40 mayors launched the [Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force](#), with the aim of rebuilding cities and economies in a way that improves public health, reduces inequality and addresses the climate crisis. In response to the public health, social and economic crises that the pandemic has brought with it, mayors have taken unprecedented measures to protect the health and wellbeing of city residents.

The *Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery* sets out the collective vision of mayors for a green and just recovery and the shared principles for achieving it, including actions that cities are taking and will take, examples from across the C40 network, and their calls on national and regional governments and financial institutions.

### **Report Summary:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of our society, economy and environment. We have experienced first hand the fragility of our systems and the extreme impact of a global shock – most painfully through the tragic loss of lives and livelihoods. The pandemic has starkly lit the glaring inequality in our cities, countries and globally. The most marginalised have been hit hardest, and we have been reminded that for any of us to be safe, all of us have to be safe.

The crisis has demonstrated what happens when the risks we know about become reality. It has laid bare how precarious our lives really are, compounding the evidence from the financial meltdown in 2008/2009 and the ongoing climate breakdown that already showed our systems are unsustainable. It has unequivocally demonstrated the interconnected nature of the challenges we face, and the inextricable link between our health and the health of the planet. Harm to discriminated communities and the earth is interconnected. We need social and environmental justice together: one won't be possible without the other.

The underlying causes of these crises are the same: It is clear that we need transformational change to address them. We know we must invest in a sustainable, resilient, equitable recovery not only to address the immediate COVID-19 pandemic, but to ensure we are prepared for future shocks. We are at a pivotal point in our history, we have both everything to lose and everything to gain. We must seize this moment, remembering that the risk of inaction far outweighs the risk of action.

### Recommended Actions

Cities are already leading the way in creating a green and just recovery from COVID-19. While our immediate priority as mayors is tackling the crisis we are now also preparing for recovery and how we deliver a better future. We are committing to providing the swiftest and strongest recovery for our citizens as we can and we are reaffirming our commitment to the principles of the Global Green New Deal - to protecting our environment, strengthening our economy, and building a more equitable future by cutting emissions from the sectors most responsible for the climate crisis to keep global heating below the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement and by putting inclusive climate action at the heart of urban decision making. **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**:
  - Create new, good green jobs, fast
  - Support and lift up essential workers
  - Train and upskill workers to enable a just transition to an inclusive economy.
  
- We will continue to take the lead in acting 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:
  - Deliver a safe and resilient post-COVID mass transit system
  - Provide 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, local communities:
  - Create '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
  - Give 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' such as parks, green roofs, green walls, blue infrastructure and permeable pavements, to help reduce the risks of extreme heat, drought, and flooding, and improve liveability and physical and mental health

**Actions we need from national governments and international institutions**

As mayors, together with our staff and residents, we are already building a green and just recovery. We call on national and regional governments, central banks and international financial institutions to join us. Our call to action is:

**1. The only stimulus should be a green stimulus**

National Governments and international institutions 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**

Ensure stimulus investment and recovery funds create more just and inclusive societies and communities and directly address long-standing inequalities and ongoing discrimination based on race. Plans and investments for the recovery need to address the root causes of economic inequality.

**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, nations must decisively move away from investments in high carbon and fossil fuel intensive industries and increase investments in a low carbon future.