Cities and Climate Action

World Cities Report 2024

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World Cities Report 2024: Facts & Messages

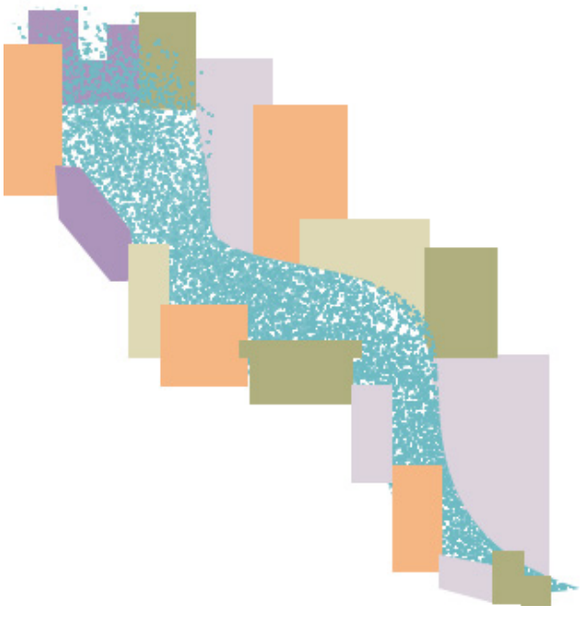
KEY FACTS

More than **2 billion people** currently living in cities could be exposed to an additional temperature increase of at least 0.5 degrees Celsius by 2040.

As much as **36 per cent of the global population in cities** could experience mean annual temperatures of 29 degrees Celsius or above.

By 2040, more than **2,000 cities** will be located in low elevated coastal zones of less than 5 metres above sea level, rising to 2,620 cities for less than 10 metres above sea level. The current population in these exposed cities is already **1.4 billion** and expected to increase further by 2040.

As of 2025, areas prone to riverine flood events with 100-year return periods host about **1 billion people:** of these, half are based in cities.



By 2030, at least **517 million people** living in cities will be exposed to riverine flooding with a 100-year return period, which is 14 per cent of the global population living in cities.

Since 1975, exposure to flooding in cities has grown **3.5 times** more than exposure to flooding in rural areas.

136 of the largest coastal cities could incur annual losses exceeding **$1 trillion by 2050** assuming moderate levels of sea-rise, without additional investment in adaptation and risk management.

On average, the share of **green spaces** in urban areas globally decreased from 19.5 per cent in 1990 to 13.9 per cent in 2020.

Cities and other urban areas require an estimated **US$4.5-5.4 trillion annually** up until 2030 to invest in new or retrofitted climate-resilient infrastructure across transport, energy, water and waste, and telecom projects. In 2021-2022, cities only secured US$831 billion per year for climate action.

In 2021-22, only US$10 billion or **just over 1 per cent** of the tracked US$831 billion - for urban climate action went towards adaptation.

KEY MESSAGES

Cities must be at the centre of global climate action as they are under critical threat. Cities urgently need to progress on net-zero targets, while building resilience against extreme weather events and shocks associated with climate change simultaneously.

Climate justice must be central to urban climate action especially for informal settlements and slums. A just climate transition, addressing structural vulnerabilities, must therefore be central to climate action in cities to ensure no one and no place is left behind.

Urban and land-use planning and design are critical instruments for climate action. Climate responsive urban and land-use planning must be used to accelerate progress towards net-zero commitments while strengthening adaptation.

Promoting low carbon and resilient housing and basic services offers major benefits for climate action. Consequently, investments in urban infrastructure should integrate climate considerations into their planning, implementation and maintenance.

Cities need to reverse the decline of green spaces for effective climate action. A shift in policies and urban planning frameworks is urgent to prioritize conserving existing green spaces and generating new ones in cities.

A stronger urban focus is needed for more ambitious national climate commitments. Strengthening the urban dimension of national climate commitments and climate action plans provides an opportunity to raise the ambition of climate targets.

Cities need significantly more financing for effective urban climate action. Cities need to strategically collaborate with regional, national and multilateral stakeholders to close the urban climate finance gap from both public and private sources.

Effective climate action requires multi-level governance and collaboration across scales. Stronger and more collaborative multi-level governance from global to national and local levels is required to accelerate climate action in cities.

Cities must accelerate climate action through an integrated process of transition innovation. A local innovation eco-system leveraging digital technology while integrating nature-based, financial, and social innovations is urgent for effective climate action in cities.

Closing the urban climate data gaps is essential for informed and effective climate action in cities: Bridging urban climate data gaps is critical to attract funding, scale impact and ensure climate action addresses the needs of those most vulnerable.

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