

# CITIES RACE TO ZERO

Friday 22<sup>th</sup> of January 2020

Dear [Insert recipient's name/title]

The next decade will decide the future for humanity. **Delivering a green and just recovery to the COVID-19 crisis; creating strong, fair economies that serve everyone; and cutting greenhouse gas emissions quickly enough to limit global heating to the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement, are one and the same thing. None are possible without the others. Success in all is the only way to prevent a catastrophic crisis.**

The Race to Zero is a global campaign run by the COP26 Presidency and High-Level Climate Champions to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions and investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon transition that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. The objective is to build momentum around the shift to a decarbonized economy ahead of COP26, where governments must strengthen their contributions to the Paris Agreement. This will send governments a resounding signal that cities, regions, businesses and investors are united in meeting the Paris goals and creating a more inclusive and resilient economy.

C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), CDP, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) have come together to mobilize an unprecedented coalition of cities committed to setting science-based targets and start implementing inclusive and resilient climate action ahead of and beyond the COP26 in Glasgow. This is the Cities Race to Zero effort, with the goal of recruiting 1,000 cities to the Race to Zero, in support of the COP26 Roadmap of Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency to the UNFCCC.

The Cities Race to Zero brings together all those who share our vision for a better future based on a set of principles that address equity together with the environment (below), and who strive to build a coalition across business, labor unions, youth climate activists and civil society, to transform the world.

Today we are writing to invite you to join the Race to Zero by pledging to do the following:

1. Publicly endorse the following Principles:

- We recognise the global climate emergency.
- We are committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
- We are committed to putting inclusive climate action at the center of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.
- We invite our partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it.

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2. Pledge to reach (net)-zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°Celsius.
3. In advance of COP26, explain what steps will be taken toward achieving net zero, especially in the short- to medium-term. Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO2 by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°Celsius.
4. Immediately proceed to planning at least one inclusive and equitable climate action as listed on [www.citiesracetozero.org](http://www.citiesracetozero.org) that will help to place your city on a resilient pathway consistent with the 1.5°Celsius objective of the Paris Agreement and begin implementation no later than 2022.
5. Report progress annually, beginning no later than 2022 to your usual or the recommended reporting platform.

**To join the Race please go to [www.citiesracetozero.org](http://www.citiesracetozero.org) to electronically sign the Cities Race to Zero pledge and select climate actions with the various partners. Your 1.5°Celsius target and action commitment(s) should be shared through your regular channels of reporting. If you have not reported before, you will be contacted by partners for support.**

Joining the Cities Race to Zero will bring the following direct benefits to your city or sub-national government:

**Access to the Race to Zero:** Joining automatically qualifies your city to be a part of the Race to Zero run by the COP26 Presidency and High-Level Climate Champions, ensuring formal recognition for your efforts by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). By bringing a clear focus on immediate action, equity and local coalition building, this campaign will establish our cities as the global leaders and strongest champions of the Paris Agreement and equitable climate action ahead of COP26 in Glasgow. It will also give you access to the forthcoming Race for Resilience (to be announced soon).

**Leadership and visibility:** This is a unique opportunity to join and shape a global movement capable of changing the world. If we succeed, then governments, businesses and everyday citizens are going to have to do things differently, but our prize will be a sustainable climate, a more equitable economy, and a faster recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. As a Cities Race to Zero participant, you will gain access to COP-related events leading up to COP as well as COP26 itself and beyond through the partners in the LGMA constituency.

**Endorsements by partners and access to their initiatives:** the Cities Race to Zero is the sum of its partners. Together they have been driving an ambitious climate agenda for years and are at the forefront of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Joining is compatible with the following partner initiatives:

- **The C40 Global Green New Deal:** your Pledge qualifies your city to be a part of the C40 Global Green New Deal coalition. C40 will be in touch with you shortly about how you can participate.
- **Global Covenant of Mayors City Commitments:** your pledge meets the GCoM requirements for mitigation targets and may be paired with commitments to climate resilience and energy access for full compliance with the Common Reporting Framework. More information and support will be available through your Regional Covenant: <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/journey/>
- **CDP:** Race to Zero reporting can be done through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System. CDP's free to use platform streamlines your climate reporting to different initiatives, such as

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GCoM. It improves transparency, offers access to events and webinars, and provides insights to identify areas where you can improve: <https://www.cdp.net/en/cities-discloser>

- **The One Planet City Challenge (OPCC):** with your pledge and progress reporting we invite you to participate in this global competition where frontrunners are recognized. Here you will also receive support on science-based targets, and strategic feedback on your climate action package: <https://wwf.panda.org/opcc>
- **ICLEI:** through ICLEI Climate Neutrality Framework embedded in its GreenClimateCities (GCC) Program the ICLEI network will receive guidance on how to accelerate climate action through ICLEI's 5 Pathways to urban sustainability. Reporting via the GCC is done through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System. Please visit: [https://iclei.org/en/climate\\_neutrality.html](https://iclei.org/en/climate_neutrality.html)
- **UCLG:** through its Ecological Transition Strategy will promote city engagement in a path towards the Race to Zero. It will further facilitate the engagement of other city networks through the Global Taskforce.

**Resources and support:** A range of tools and resources in multiple languages will be made available for all cities wishing to join by registering at [www.citiesracetozero.org](http://www.citiesracetozero.org), where you will find support to quickly identify the type, scale and pace of action needed.

In this unique moment in human history, where the inadequacies of the dominant financial, economic and political structures are laid bare by a global pandemic, we stand as the first generation of leaders to recognize the scale of the impending climate crisis and the last generation able to act to prevent it.

Now is the moment to deliver the future our citizens want - a future that delivers a healthy and livable planet to inhabit for ourselves and generations to come; a future that is fair, equitable and just; a future with clean air, clean water, green jobs, and healthy, thriving communities. With your help, we can build a global coalition capable of delivering that future.

We look forward to working with you to deliver the future we want,

[INSERT SIGNATURE]

[Name, title]



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