

## PRESS RELEASE



### *GPM Open Letter to UN Secretary-General Guterres*

## UNITED NATIONS AND CITIES OF THE WORLD

***10 September 2020 – The Mayors that gather in the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) urge the United Nations to recognize the important role of cities for a multilateral and rules-based international political system and launch a global dialogue with cities with the aim of an institutional reform which will lead to a formalised participation of cities in international decision-making processes.***

In an Open Letter the GPM calls on UN Secretary-General Guterres to launch and lead the global dialogue with cities and leaders about the United Nations that the world needs 75 years after its founding.

The COVID19-pandemic has exposed the deficit in both global regulation and national territorial policies, with the bulk of the crisis residing in cities and other urban centres. It is clear that the current system of governance, dominated by nations interacting with nations and working to the exclusion of other political and institutional leaders is not equipped to cope with the current world's challenges the way they are now – from the climate emergency to migration, from security to identity politics, from health to tackling poverty. It is cities and their mayors who are making a very special effort to ensure the achievement of key objectives that the community of states set themselves.

This applies both to the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Experts are unanimous: these goals can only be achieved with the involvement of cities where most of the world's population lives. 70% of climate protection measures and 90% of climate change adaptation measures are being realised on a local level, while 65% of SDGs can only be achieved through implementation on a local level.

The mayors who come together in the Global Parliament of Mayors have formulated their expectations of the United Nations in an Open Letter that focuses on a call for the international political system to be updated so that cities are genuinely represented in the United Nations' decision-making mechanisms.

The UN75 anniversary is a huge opportunity to open up a transition period. GPM Chair Mayor Peter Kurz (Mannheim/Germany): "The GPM calls on the UN General Assembly to take the existing international political system into consideration, install representative bodies of cities in the UN system and become the **United Nations and Cities of the World**. We ask UN Secretary-General Guterres to lead this institutional transformation process. A first concrete step in this direction would be the proactive inclusion of city representatives in the current consultation process, for instance through a *mayors' forum*."

#### **For more information:**

For the GPM Open Letter to UN Secretary-General Guterres, please refer to [https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Open-Letter-UN75\\_GPM-Urban-Manifesto-Postcorona.pdf](https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Open-Letter-UN75_GPM-Urban-Manifesto-Postcorona.pdf).

For more information on the Global Parliament of Mayors, please refer to the GPM website <https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/> or contact drs. Caroline Schep, Executive Director GPM Secretariat, [caroline.schep@denhaag.nl](mailto:caroline.schep@denhaag.nl).