



UNITING MAYORS: LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHALLENGES

In partnership with



UNITING MAYORS: LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHALLENGES

Reflections on the impact of climate change and the rise
of sea levels on climate-related migration and the
recommendations of mayors to go forward

**High Level Meeting by the British Council
and the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM)**

20 April 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

High Level Meeting

This report covers the lively debate of more than twenty mayors and city leaders regarding the urgent issue of climate-forced displacement. Representing 19 countries from around the world, they debated how to move forward both in their own communities, to protect their citizens from the threats of climate change, and together as a governance body to build up a coalition of mayors and communities to have a global impact. The debate was opened by keynote speaker António Vitorino, Director General of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM). City networks and international organisations including UN-Habitat, OECD, MMC and ICLEI joined the debate as well. Ian Klaus, Senior Fellow on global cities at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, led the participants through the programme as moderator.

During the high-level event on 20 April 2021, mayors and city leaders addressed the cities' preparedness regarding climate-related migration, the implications of migration on sending and receiving cities, as well as the impact these movements have on cultural heritage and city leadership. The outcome of the meeting is consolidated within this report and represents a crucial input to establish a mayoral Call to Action in the run up to the UN-Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) and to guarantee its advancement worldwide.

Urgency of the matter

Approximately 21.5 million people per year over the past decade have had to flee their homes due to storms, floods, wildfires, droughts, and other extreme weather events. According to estimates, approximately 200 million people will be forced to leave their homes in Africa, Latin America and South Asia for climate-related reasons by 2050. Entire nations in the Pacific Ocean are facing complete destruction.

Given the lack of legal protection for climate-forced migrants and the stalled action at the international level, mayors and city leaders are optimally placed to address the local challenges associated with climate displacement. They are prepared to take the lead on this urgent issue.

Many mayors and city leaders have already dealt with extreme weather events, as well as displacement of people and communities. Mayor Rio of Braga opened the event by highlighting that climate displacement "is not a problem that we will face in a decade – or a generation – but it is a problem that we face today." Stephen Stenning, Head of Arts and Society of the British Council and partner of



the GPM, spoke about the opportunity mayors have to raise their common voice on the issue of climate-related migration in the lead up to COP26, as part of the international Climate Connection programme of the British Council.

Goals of the project

The high-level event was part of the project 'Uniting Mayors: Local Solutions to Global Climate Challenges' organised by the GPM in partnership with the British Council. The project aims to empower mayors and city leaders - in particular from Official Development Assistance countries and low-lying areas threatened by rising sea levels - to share experiences and contribute to strategies for climate displacement and migration and to specifically engage female city leaders. The project focuses on climate displacement and the most vulnerable groups affected by climate change through an inclusive mayors' dialogue. The high-level event will be followed by another mayoral event in July to develop a Call to Action, raising the voices of mayors from around the world, which will be published in October ahead of the COP26 taking place in Glasgow, 1-12 November 2021. Mayors will discuss their plans to expand the Call to Action to leaders at all levels of government at the GPM Annual Summit in Palermo, Italy, on 21-23 October 2021.

About the Global Parliament of Mayors

The Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) is a governance body of, by and for mayors from all continents with a vision of the world in which mayors, their cities and networks are equal partners in building global governance for an inclusive and sustainable world. The mission of the GPM is to facilitate the debate between mayors, national governments and international organisations, drive systematic action to take on global and national challenges and opportunities to achieve political change on a global scale. Mayors take leadership and ownership of the global challenges that they face on a local level.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. "We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language". The British Council is leading the [Climate Connection global programme](#) to add value to COP26 through these three pillars. Last year the organisation reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall through online communication, broadcasts and publications. The British Council was founded in 1934 and is a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

2. PROGRAMMATIC OUTLINE

2.1. Research Findings

Research Setting

Kamal Amakrane, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs from Columbia University, and Sheila Foster, Professor of Law and Public Policy from Georgetown University, investigated the level of awareness among mayors about how climate-forced displacement and migration is affecting their communities, as well as the extent to which they are preparing, with or without support from other levels of government, to protect displaced communities and help receiving ones. The research was also designed to identify the desired, and required, city leadership and to propose a toolkit with options for leaders to address the issue of climate-forced displacement.

As part of the project, the researches discussed with, interviewed, or surveyed some 40 mayors and local leaders representing a range of towns and cities - from a town of roughly 22,000 to major cities with populations ranging from 1 to over 3 million inhabitants.

Facts and Projections

Facts	Projections
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Forced migration is the human face of the climate crisis- Some 21.5 million people per year on average over the past decade have had to flee their homes due to storms, floods, wildfires, droughts, and other weather events- In 2018 alone, it was estimated that 17.2 million people were newly displaced as a result of disasters linked to natural hazards, most of which were climate and weather-related- For most climate-forced migration, climate change is a contributing rather than singularly causal factor- When they decide to move, people are likely to migrate to cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- According to some estimates, by 2050, some 200 million people will be forced to leave their homes for climate-related reasons- New research shows that some 150 million people are now living on land that will be below the high-tide line by 2050- According to the World Bank (2018), climate change may result in the internal migration of some 86 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 40 million in South Asia and 17 million in Latin America- Many people may be trapped and unable to leave high risk areas- Entire nations in the Pacific Ocean are facing complete destruction- Developing countries and vulnerable communities will be the hardest-hit- Most climate-forced migration will be primarily internal

Implications for the Cities and Challenges

Implications for the Cities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing pressure on urban infrastructure and services - Jeopardizing economic growth - Increasing the risk of conflict - Worsening health, educational and social indicators among migrants - Threatening the social, cultural and economic fabric of affected communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of international protection frameworks - Absence of committed champions - Inadequate data and projections - Non-recognition of migration as a credible adaptation measure - Absence of dedicated international financing platforms and financial facilities - Absence of comprehensive and dedicated support structures

Findings and a toolkit for the way forward

Findings	Proposed solutions for the way
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate–forced migration is undeniably happening, particularly in Africa - The climate crisis is a driving force of current migrations - Increased severity and changes in weather patterns is an important factor of internal and urban climate-forced migration - Rising sea levels and frequency of floods are directly impacting human settlements - Affected populations are turning to cities in higher grounds to seek refuge - Absence of proper planning and preparation are resulting in increased pressure on urban infrastructure and services - Children, women, disabled persons, agricultural workers, and slum dwellers are the most affected - Vulnerable populations experience homelessness, poverty, and food insecurity when forcibly displaced by the climate crises - Cultural heritage is seriously impacted by climate-forced migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Glocal” Champions - Better data - A climate displacement response fund (CDRF) - A technical and human capacity platform for local expertise - Adoption of migration as a credible measure of adaptation

Preliminary recommendations:

- Advocacy: Raise Awareness
 - o Stress urgency on addressing climate-forced migration
 - o Foster data collection and knowledge development
 - o Encourage sharing of best practices
 - o Commit to change
- Capacity Building: Invest in Local Communities
 - o Empower vulnerable groups
 - o Foster circular migration
 - o Invest in skills and training
 - o Enable technical cooperation
- Innovative Financing: diversify and pool funding sources
 - o Diversify funding
 - o Pool resources
 - o Build capacity for engagement



2.2. Keynote and Plenary Debate

Keynote by António Vitorino, Director General of the International Organisation of Migration

Keynote speaker António Vitorino, emphasised that greater numbers of people are moving to urban areas exposed to serious climate threats. This puts pressure on the limited urban resources and vulnerable communities. The impact on rural and coastal communities is of particular concern. Especially subareas in Africa and Central America are the regions experiencing the fastest rates of urbanisation in the world.

While highlighting that more environmental assessments and better urban planning is needed, he also emphasised the increasing awareness that broader climate conditions and environmental degradation have profoundly reshaped contemporary migration patterns worldwide. The importance of climate as an adverse driver for migration has been recognized in the state led [Compact of Safe, Orderly and Regularly Migration](#). This year, the United Nations Network on Migration will prioritize climate migration as a key issue and will bring the UN-System together to support complementary efforts towards COP26. Thus, the first global review of the Global Compact will be compiled in 2022. Director General Vitorino said: “We are committed to making sure that the role and expertise of cities and local and regional authorities is systematically recognised and integrated in the work and structure of the UN Network of Migration. Your experiences and insights as leaders directly impacted by climate and environmental changes are essential in this discussion and your proposals for action will be key”. Finally, António Vitorino underlined that local leaders have a critical role to play to ensure that cities avoid worse case scenarios and, instead, reap the benefits of migration in a fast-changing climate.

Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyers of Freetown, Sierra Leone

The importance of climate migration and its impacts are painfully visible in the destruction of parts of the Susan’s Bay community in Freetown by a recent fire, forcing thousands to evacuate. Mayor Aki-Sawyers said that climate displacement affects cities and their residents, especially putting the most vulnerable in a position of increased risk. The Mayor outlined the “exponential impact” of that process in the local context of Freetown. On the one hand, migration growth is pushing people up to the mountains, leading to deforestation and potential landslides. On the other hand, informal settlements on the coastline are growing, leading to the destruction of mangroves (respectively a reduction in biodiversity) and the pollution of the ocean through the common use of garbage as reclamation of land and living space. As the already vulnerable are exposed to even more vulnerability, that vicious process puts more pressure on the infrastructure, transportation and public service delivery.



Mayors can act by including climate actions in their urban policies such as the 'Freetown, Tree town' project to plant one million trees, reducing the risks of landslides, restoring biodiversity, creating 'green jobs' and ensuring that environmental policies are integrated in urban planning and development control. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr also eluded that: "We have to be serious about making finances available to address the issue of climate change and climate change related migration. We have to be serious about ensuring that local councils, local governments have the ability to manage their local spaces so that we can effectively absorb those who will inevitably move towards the cities".

Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe of Banjul, the Gambia

Climate change is expected to cause a rise in the sea level with a significant impact on coastal areas, especially coastal cities like Banjul. Insofar, Banjul will be inundated under a one-meter rise, affecting the lives and livelihoods of the inhabitants. Mayor Lowe pointed out that we are at a crossroad of climate change and urged mayors to take action towards mitigating the climate crisis, to protect the environment and future generations. "Talking about climate change includes a transition to clean and renewable energy, away from fossil fuel industries, investing in climate financing, loss of damage, and nature-based solutions" explained Mayor Lowe.



Mayor Lowe referred to a series of successful local environmental projects including:

- planting mangroves at wetland areas and thousands of coconut trees at Banjul beach,
- "Greening the city", where trees will be planted across the city,
- the establishment of a sustainable development center, a hub that will promote gardening, renewable energy initiatives, etc.,
- work on the waste management system transformation,
- training for grassroots organisations on the environment and the promotion of renewable energy in the city of Banjul.

Deputy Mayor Anuela Ristani of Tirana, Albania

The city of Tirana has experienced increasing intensity of rainfall and changing weather patterns have brought about flooding, riverside erosion, as well as contributing to droughts and dry days, which increases spending for cooling and health services for the elderly and vulnerable population. Insofar, Deputy Mayor Ristani explained that Tirana is constantly dealing with extreme climate change and that the consequences of climate change are part of Tirana's day-to-day reality. She also emphasised that the conception of cities historically focused on serving productivity and efficiency. Now is the time to change that legacy, putting the individual and citizen at the center of decision-making.



Therefore, Tirana has a focus on a long-term urban planning process. That process should serve the next generations in a way which minimises the impact of climate change for its citizens and the costs for the city. It is crucial not to be caught up in handling the daily consequences of climate change, but to plan and build strategies in the long run. "We are already at work and to make it stop, we need to both fight it and look into the future of how it will stop". Supported by the EU, Tirana is developing a post-green city plan including a roadmap on how green financing works. Deputy Mayor Ristani explained: "Our goal is to show in financial terms how an in-nature investment in the local setting has a strong financial return, even more than classical infrastructure projects".

Mayor Raúl Emilio Jatón of Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz, Argentina

Mayor Jatón emphasized the diverse natural settings of South America and Santa Fe with its surrounding rivers and lagoons. He also described the extreme consequences of climate change, such as flooding and heavy rain, and advocated a collaborative agenda to address the challenges of climate change. "Climate change impacts us all, but mostly those who have the least quality of life. We need to put people at the heart of our policies and our agenda on climate change so that we can have a just and sustainable green economy and corporation between cities. Mayors need to feel involved and take ownership." While having a shared agenda, policies must be differentiated, and context driven.

Referring to the research presented, he also underlined the lack of resources at the local level and the necessity to discuss and focus on inequalities. The people have to be at the heart of the agenda, which is why local solutions are the only viable way. That is why political leaders must engage in forums of exchange and develop a collaborative agenda. Creating such a shared approach includes a change of common perceptions and it is now the time to do so.

3. THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Culture and Heritage

3.1.1. Contextualisation

Moderator Dr. Ege Yildirim, independent heritage planning consultant and scholar, recalled that culture is recognized by the UN as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. Hereby, she emphasized that culture and heritage naturally incorporate a diverse composition of characteristics and facets. While representing a valuable resource, culture and heritage is also a vulnerable resource, being under-recognized and under threat of loss and damage. To integrate culture and heritage as part of sustainable solutions into cities and regions, she stated:

- cultural and creative industries should be part of economic development strategies,
- culture has a significant non-monetary value that contributes to inclusive social development,
- implementations of tailored solutions to each city are needed, highlighting the uniqueness and importance of local contexts,
- global movements are emerging and synergizing: networks seek to share data on good practice and peer-learning (many examples were given, e.g. UNESCO World Heritage and Climate Policy, UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, Our World Heritage Initiative)
- leaders and policy makers at all levels can support, collaborate, and benefit from culture and heritage networks/expertise/actions,
- culture should be empowered with adequate policies and funding.

The main questions that were discussed in this session:

- Is the culture or cultural heritage in your city threatened due to climate change and migration?
- How can the city best respond to protect its tangible and intangible cultural heritage?
- How can cities leverage their cultural resources to build back better post-pandemic and to ensure more resilient communities?
- What are some important experiences, positive/negative, and lessons for the future?
- What are our key takeaways for the Mayors' Call to Action for COP26?

Participants/Speakers:

Mayor Leoluca Orlando of Palermo, Sicily, Italy

Mayor Philippe Close of Brussels, Belgium

Mayor Hélder Sousa Silva of Mafra, Portugal

Mayor Mochamad Nur Arifin of Trenggalek, Indonesia

Deputy Mayor Katrin Habenschaden of Munich, Germany
 Kamal Amakrane, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, USA
 Eric Corijn, Professor of Urban Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium, member of the GPM Advisory Committee
 Renuka Thakore, Founder of Global Sustainable Futures, UK
 Moderator Dr. Ege Yildirim, Independent Heritage Planning Consultant and Scholar, Turkey

3.1.2. Mayoral Panel and Discussion

Mayor Leoluca Orlando of Palermo, Italy

- Mayor Orlando exposed the multidimensional challenges of mobility. The mobility of people, the mobility of viruses, and the move to digital change our ways of life in fundamental ways. Consequently, our minds and our understanding of the current situation must change fundamentally as well.
- The interrelation of climate change consequences with peace and security were also emphasized.

Migrants can open our eyes and our collective understanding for what is at stake. They deliver a message of suffering and destruction, manifested in the consequences of climate change and insecurity. That is why Mayor Orlando called for a collective understanding of our shared identity as human beings, all with our own unique identities and cultures.



Mayor Philippe Close of Brussels, Belgium

- Mayor Close pointed out that Brussels has a multi-cultural DNA including around 184 nationalities. While this diversity is perceived as a blessing, it also poses challenges. Such challenges evoke questions of how to create a shared identity. The question is not only how to keep traits of the traditional identity, but rather about how to adapt towards a new collective one. Uniting different identities in one body leads to plurality and diversity, which in turn helps to identify the right policy decisions.
- He also stated that the Covid 19 pandemic has shown how fragile current healthcare policies are. Especially the inequality within that system is the “true challenge of tomorrow”. “Policy-makers have to ensure that migrants



and the problems of management should not pitch different worlds against each other, but that they rather bring them together through services such as healthcare”.

Mayor Hélder Sousa Silva of Mafra, Portugal

- Mayor Silva related to the diversity of Mafra with its vast territory, coastal and inland landscapes, but also with its world heritage sites, the royal building of Mafra and Ericeira’s World Surf Reserve. Moreover, the mayor elaborated on how climate change carries several threats to the safeguarding and preservation of these heritages and traditions. While rising sea levels puts the beaches at risk, rural areas face rising temperatures and the decrease of rain, possibly leading to forest fires.
- To protect the cultural heritage, Mafra reacts based on four pillars of action: (1) national and international recognition of the cultural assets, (2) local strategies adapting to and reducing consequences from climate change, (3) creation of synergies with national authorities, local entities and other associations, (4) raising the awareness of local communities regarding the importance of the heritage.



Discussion:

- Mayor Close: A major difficulty is the question of what culture and heritage actually means, especially considering the different local contexts. Therefore, a definition and a shared understanding of culture and heritage is needed, which takes into account the fluid and subjective characteristics of culture and heritage. Europe is at a crossroad regarding its openness towards others. Answering the question of what culture is will help to integrate new identities into existing and changing ecosystems.
- Mayor Orlando: A crucial focus of Palermo is the integration of new residents. Through that integration, it makes no difference where people come from - the new citizens automatically belong to the community and the security network. In doing so, Mayor Orlando emphasized his priorities of making people visible and ensuring security. He exemplified one manifestation of that lived visibility and belonging, expressed in a civil flash mob against Islamic terrorists in Palermo.
- Mayor Silva: Security is a key priority for investment, otherwise cultural and economic activities are not possible. Insofar, security serves for the purpose of integration as well. Mayor Silva exemplified that process in Marfa’s successful integration of the Brazilian, Chinese and Indian communities. Finally, he highlighted the necessity to share cultural heritages, which belong to all people.

- Renuka Thakore, founder of 'Global Sustainable Futures: Progress through Partnerships Network', highlighted the importance of multiplicity and its framing within good public initiatives. She emphasised the need for best-practice examples in which multiplicity is explicitly addressed through transdisciplinary and transnational measures.
- Professor Kamal Amakrane: The research clearly shows that policy makers need to put people in the center of climate responses. The overall approach so far has focused on the interrelation between carbon vs. people. While heads of state are focused on the big agenda, it is necessary to shift toward the details through a bottom-up transformation. Only through the integration of people and citizens can a commitment to the social framework be achieved. One example is that Africa with just under 1,5 billion people contributes to only 2-3% of the carbon footprint. That is why Africans are still not at the heart of the narrative.
- Professor Eric Corijn: Climate policies are oriented towards technological emission policy, while not recognising social inequality enough. Without solving this problem, it will not be possible to gain enough support for green policies. Immigration integrates three level of policy matters: (1) the right of arriving people to reproduce their own identity and home culture, (2) introduction into local citizenship, (3) a policy of how to reconfigure the heritage and culture with all their differences. The local state is closer to the world than the nation and should not be culturally neutral. It is not possible to build cities on the basis of local communities if they are closed. Rather communities have to open up to become part society. The more cities become multiple, the more they have to reinvent a new culture which unites people.
- Kamal Amakrane: Cultural heritage is not static but evolves with us. While fully embracing our past, we must fully embrace our common future. "There will always be forces on the narrow me vs. the global we". Only from the local to the global we can achieve the necessary shift of a bottom-up approach. So, focussing on the people and our common global tomorrow is key.
- Mayor Orlando: Cultural heritage is alive, diverse and changes every day. As cultural heritage is not in the past, a focus on the cultural future is needed.

3.1.3. Summary

All panellists agreed that the nature of culture is complex and fluid. Culture is also transformational and enriches the social fabric. That is why cultural traditions and world heritages should be made visible and shared collectively. To do so, a Call to Action should include:

Uniting narratives: It is necessary to develop a shared understanding of what we mean by culture in the context of migration. It is about recognising plurality

and diversity which will enrich communities and decision-making, whilst seeking to create a shared sense of identity as human beings facing similar challenges, such as climate change, working towards a common cultural future. Culture and heritage are dynamic and not static, and will evolve with the changes of people and places, as an essential part of city responses to climate-related challenges, including rising sea levels and migration.

People at the center: The Call of Action must put people at its center. That requires collective integration policies. As cities become more diverse, they have to open up and reinterpret their culture, in a way which unites people towards society as a whole. That process of opening-up requires cities to make migrants visible and to learn from them. Special attention must be given to social inequality, which should be explicitly addressed by concrete policies such as in healthcare. Concerning immigration, three levels of policies are crucial: (1) the right of arriving people to reproduce their own identity and home culture, (2) introduction into local citizenship, (3) a policy of how to recognise heritage and culture with all their differences and fluidity. Only through a bottom-up transformation, led by mayors, the integration of citizens and their commitment to a common social framework can be achieved at a national level.

Protection measures: Security and peace are key priorities for investment as fundamental necessities. Without security, cultural or economic activities are not possible. Insofar, security directly serves the purpose of integration as well. Concrete protection measures must be put into practice considering their local context, for instance: (1) national and international recognition of cultural assets, (2) local strategies adapting to and reducing effects on heritage from climate change, (3) creation of synergies and shared responses with national authorities, local entities and other associations, (4) raising the awareness of local communities regarding the value and the importance of the heritage.

3.2. Innovative Policies on Financing Tools

3.2.1. Contextualisation

Moderator Sena Segbedzi, coordinator of the OECD mayors' network: 'Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative', explained that the OECD has worked with cities on climate change for over two decades. Special focus is given on advising local governments climate consciousness, urban planning and green growth policies. She also introduced the OECD's new territorial approach to climate action and resilience, aiming for a multi-level governance approach in which the national, regional and local level can align their climate change objectives.

Ultimately, the OECD developed an online physical database to track sub-national climate investment and online companions that facilitate sub-national action. It will help sub-national governments access the existing sources of finance, including innovative ones like land value capture and green bonds. Farebox revenues, developer contributions, tax supplements could be some of the mechanisms that can be explored to fund projects across different sectors. It is also important for city governments to think about how small businesses, non-governmental organisations and other private bodies can be incentivised.

The main questions that were discussed in this session:

- Where should cities seek financing when there is a lack of awareness about climate-induced migration?
- How can cities build innovative financing tools to fund their implementation of policy to tackle the issue?

Participants/Speakers:

Mayor Ricardo Rio of Braga, Portugal

Mayor Rasamimanana Honoré Gabriel of Antsirabe, Madagascar

Mayor Mochamad Nur Arifin of Trenggalek, Indonesia

Deputy Mayor Jakub Mazur of Wroclaw, Poland

Former Mayor Naseer Lilizai of Puli Alam, Afghanistan

Vittoria Zanuso, Executive Director, Mayors Migration Council

Moderator Sena Segbedzi, Coordinator of the OECD mayors network Champion

Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative

3.2.2. Mayoral Panel and Discussion

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga, Portugal

- Mayor Rio reported about the developed adaptation strategy in Braga, which is tailored to the complex reality, including a wide range of domains like territorial differences. However, he also emphasised that the concrete implementation of measures always lacks adequate funding. So far, several funding sources have been utilised: EU's Climate Action framework, funding from Scandinavian governments and the Portuguese Environmental Fund.
- To translate funding at a local level to specific actions, it is crucial to reinforce the capacities of local authorities. Therefore, Mayor Rio constituted that the decisive matter at hand is the decentralisation towards local entities.

Naseer Lilizai, Former Mayor of Puli Alam, Afghanistan

- Former Mayor Lilizai contextualised the unique challenges of Afghanistan. Thanks to collaborations with the US-government and UN-Habitat, projects in capacity building, urban development and technical support were implemented. Still, major challenges remain: through war and natural disasters, insecurity and unemployment stay omnipresent, leading to a large influx of people towards the cities. That is why cities do have huge informal settlements and municipalities cannot deliver services to all.
- The city developed an agenda for smart cities and small businesses. However, due to the matter of insecurity, the implementation of such plans was not possible. Hence, the private sector was not able to invest as planned. That is why the policy focus is on peace and the collaboration with international partners. Only through that synergy it will be possible to drive essential services on district levels adequately.



Deputy Mayor Jakub Mazur of Wroclaw, Poland

- As a fast-growing city and capital of the surrounding region, Wroclaw intends to implement a strategy of sustainability and long-term development. The aspiration is to be a top location for present and future inhabitants and partners. The key for Deputy Mayor Mazur is to focus on transparent communication towards economic migration and the necessary preparations to ready the city for climate change and its effects.
- Deputy Mayor Mazur elaborated on the necessity of a holistic approach to resilience, including several dimensions: circular economy, finance, social cohesion, developing green areas, and rainwater renewals. That also includes a focus on the self-sufficiency and responsibility of other stakeholders like small neighbourhoods and local businesses. Such interactions lead to positive changes, which can be spread and upscaled afterwards. Acting as platform for the whole region, added value can be given through upscaling innovation, solidarity and partnership.



Mayor Rasamimanana Honoré Gabriel of Antsirabe, Madagascar

- Mayor Rasamimanana Honoré Gabriel emphasized that Antsirabe is also confronted with severe problems of climate change. Thanks to the Norwegian twin city Stavanger it was possible to finance a reforestation programme and to plant trees within the municipality.
- Mayor Rasamimanana Honoré Gabriel also spoke of the importance and the advantage of mayors sharing their experiences. Finally, he called for local solutions as the best suitable measures to adapt to climate change.



Vittoria Zanuso, Executive Director Mayors Migrations Council (MMC)

- While mayors are at the forefront and move faster than national counterparts, their needs normally exceed existing resources. In 2021 cities are expected to lose 25 % of their municipal revenues globally. The MMC's response to the financial deficit was a mayoral campaign, calling on the international community to step in and to support local ground efforts. The successful channelling of funding towards city governments creates a 'fiscal feasibility precedence'. Currently, the fund supports city-level projects, which protect migrants, refugees and internally displaced people due to the covid-pandemic.
- In the MMC's perspective, a joint message, integrating the following aspects, is crucial:
 - (1) The international community must recognise migration as a predominant adaptation strategy. Only such framing would allow the integration of climate induced mobility into the existing climate funding or financing mechanisms.
 - (2) It is crucial to ensure that climate action is people centred. Through the integration of an equity lens, projects would be financially attractive, because they respond to the needs of the vulnerable population.
 - (3) International actors need to be motivated to channel more resources towards the cities. Last year, only 4 % of the global climate funding was directed to the city levels.

Discussion:

How has the Covid 19 pandemic impacted your climate strategies, especially when borders are closed?

- Mayor Rio: The citizens and visitors have valued even more the national environment. Therefore, the pandemic was not only an opportunity to show our natural resource, but also a chance to promote certain strategies and to bring people closer to nature. Activities ranging from sport to culture have been intensified towards a more rural and natural environment. That is accompanied by the individuals' responsibility to take care of those spaces.

- Deputy Mayor Mazur: The pandemic was and is an opportunity to accelerate projects, especially investments in urban areas. Mayor Mazur also pointed out the imperative to reflect. Insofar, Wrocław's strategies were readjusted in several ways: (1) long-term developments of green areas, (2) implementation of the farm-to-fork strategy, (3) creating a symbiosis between urban and rural areas, (4) modifying the identification process for further investments.
- Mayor Naseer: Afghanistan received a lot of refugees from neighbouring countries as additional burden. The government was not able to cope with the challenges and to fight the high unemployment. As the private sector supported the common people who are in need, a learning process of how to be kind with humanity emerged.

Global collaboration of mayors – how do mayors see that as part of their strategy?

- Mayor Naseer: The global collaboration of mayors is necessary to understand the complexity of reality. Mainstream media does not always present valid data. However, such data is crucial for a better decision-making process. That is why Mayor Naseer appealed to increase the number of such conferences, especially in moments of crisis like now.
- Deputy Mayor Mazur and Mayor Rio: Both mayors underlined the importance of the mutual learning process. Shared experiences and perspectives are crucial and “We are here to build together”.

3.2.3. Summary

Budgets must follow the ambitious plans to tackle climate change. Even though mayors are at the forefront of the implementation processes, their needs normally exceed existing resources. While the pandemic has enabled the acceleration of existing projects, the cities are expected to lose 25 % of their municipal revenues globally. The need for urgent actions to reduce future costs stands opposite to the immanent lack of funding. To overcome that serious deficit, a Call to Action should include:

Decentralisation and local capacities: To translate funding at a local level to specific actions it is crucial to reinforce the capacities of local authorities. The decisive matter at hand is the decentralisation towards local entities. That also includes a focus on the self-sufficiency and responsibility of other stakeholders like small neighbourhoods and local businesses. Such interactions lead to positive changes, which can be spread and upscaled afterwards.

Holistic strategies: Sustainability, long-term development and resilience must be at the core of the strategizing process. These integrated plans are

multi-dimensional and should be aligned to the local specifics. Crucial areas of investment are for example: the development of green areas, a symbiosis between urban and rural areas and the circular economy. The identification process for further investments must respond according to the specific strategy.

Call in the international community: The international community must recognise migration as a predominant adaptation strategy. Only such framing allows the integration of climate induced mobility into the existing climate funding or financing mechanism. It is crucial to ensure that climate action is people centred. Through the integration of an equity lens, projects would be financially attractive because they would respond to the needs of vulnerable populations. International actors need to be motivated to channel more resources towards the cities. Last year, only 4 % of global climate funding was directed to the city level.

3.3. Governance

3.3.1. Contextualisation

Moderator Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of Urban Practices at UN-Habitat, framed the session with several propositions:

- Every city will be impacted differently. Not only geography and climate condition, but also the different capacities, governance frameworks, policy environments etc. matter. Hence, tailored and contextualised responses will be crucial.
- In 2018 the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) was adopted by a vast number of UN member states. The Global Compact acknowledges the role of local authorities for shaping and implementing not binding international commitments. The current system of international law does not protect climate migrants explicitly.
- The [Marrakech Mayors Declaration](#) reaffirmed cities as key actors, as they pledged solidarity and intercity collaboration. The focus of UN-Habitat is also on building such a positive narrative, in which positive impacts of migrations can be harnessed.
- Since migration is a national responsibility and policies on a national level are not proximate, local authorities are often hindered through incoherence, narrow mandates and limited resources.
- The failure to cope with a growing population forces people to operate outside the formal system, what in turn deepens urban poverty. That illustrates how important it is to include the migrant community in policy-making discussions and to safeguard and connect the migrant and the host communities as a whole.

- Lastly, it is necessary to improve the data and its collection systems. Only accurate information on mobility and on migration scenarios can improve evidence-based policy making.

The main question of the session was:

- What should be the (governance) framework to address climate migration, and how can mayors raise that awareness?

Participants/Speakers

Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe of Banjul, the Gambia

Mayor Geoffrey Ngiriker of Nebbi, Uganda

Mayor Landing B. Sanneh, Mansakonko Area Council, the Gambia

GPM Honorary Member Daniel Termont, Former Mayor of Ghent, Belgium

Clare Hart, Vice-President Montpellier Mediterranean Metropole, France

Helen Neale-May, Councillor - Member of Mayoral Executive Committee at Buffalo City, South Africa

Kobie Brand, Executive Director ICLEI Africa

Moderator Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Chief Urban Practices, UN-Habitat

3.3.2. Mayoral Panel

[Helen Neale-May, Councillor - Member of Mayoral Executive Committee of Buffalo City, South Africa](#)

- The climate change management and adaption process should be a part of the overall strategic vision, which is in the case of Buffalo City, concretised in the Metro Growth and Development Strategy (MGDF). MGDF is a concept, aiming to harvest advantages from the natural environment through building capacities in green systems, such as the protection of rivers and the waste minimisation. Through the experience of diverse natural disasters, the development of sustainable energy and climate change migration strategies were first implemented in 2009. A comprehensive climate change strategy followed in 2015.
- More specifically, the strategy established an environmental and climate change committee, mainstreaming climate change into an integrated development plan. Several measures followed: (1) hosting of a green forum to strengthen the commitment to sustainable livelihoods and green initiatives, (2) collaboration with other stakeholders aiming for a greener city, (3) partnership with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, (4) minimisation of waste in collaboration with the industry as well as the community.

Geoffrey Ngriker, Mayor of Nebbi, Uganda

- Mayor Ngriker illustrated that Uganda is experiencing different impacts of climate change, that these impacts are self-inflicted and that we have the responsibility to restore that destruction process. He also welcomed the established framework of the Uganda government with a committee exclusively responsible for dealing with climate change and migration issues. The local governments are ready to work within that top-down approach.
- Several measures were stated to ensure progress: (1) full information exposure to convey the severity of the situation (2) the deployment of technical staff into the wards, (3) extension of electricity and decentralisation of basic services to all areas, (4) focus on the utilisation of solar networks (5) replanting trees (with the proven modality, in which the government transfers the responsibility of the trees to the community six months after planting).



Mayor Landing B. Sanneh, Mansakonko Area Council, the Gambia

- Mayor Sanneh emphasised that it is crucial to strengthen the local government system, which includes the grassroots level as well. That is why village development committees, ward committees and local government authorities have been established and strengthened in the Mansakonko Area.
- Especially drought and a high concentration of salt endanger agricultural areas and its livestock, mainly affecting the young and the women. For that reason, one major focus is to foster economics activities and generate income. For instance, a project called “Jobs, Skills and Finance” was initiated with the UN Capital Development Fund. That project creates employment for young people, develops different skill areas and enables access to financial services for their main beneficiaries. Other lines of action are the sensitisation of the citizens through the development of a curriculum on climate change and the restoration of trees and mangroves.

Clare Hart, Vice-President Montpellier Mediterranean Metropole

- Clare Hart reported that Montpellier is clearly starting to feel the consequences of climate change, for instance in a major frost this year, destroying 80% to 90% of the vineyards harvest. To cope with such challenges, an integrated approach is needed, including different aspects of governance: green and clean energy, more autonomous and local capacities, electricity production system, transport with hydrogen and electric bus systems, an enormous cycling network, urban planning, creation of more green areas, waste management towards a zero-waste situation, establishment of a citizen reserves working alongside emergency services.
- Another focus of Montpellier's work is on climate smart agriculture, containing three essential areas of improvement: food security, adaption, and mitigation. The achievement of a sustainable agricultural development also serves as a bridge to other development priorities as well, for instance in increasing income and covering the national food and development goals. That work is done scientifically with major local research institutions. Lastly, Montpellier is actively accompanying the citizens into the idea of accepting climate refugees in the future. Only by raising awareness will the citizens be prepared for an adequate and decent integration process.



Kobie Brand, Executive Director ICLEI Africa

- ICLEI advocates a pathway around equality and a people-centred development. The Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency hereby represents the voice of the cities and regions. One of the seven pillars of the LGMA-roadmap, on multilevel action for COP26, is climate justice and social equity. Within that roadmap, climate migration is prominently textualized. That is why Kobie Brand sent out an invitation to join that multilevel action effort and to start working together concretely on that pillar. She also highlighted the need to collectively join the race to zero, to join the race to resilience and to put the leadership of cities at the forefront.

3.3.3. Summary

Since migration is a national responsibility, local authorities are often hindered through incoherence, narrow mandates and limited resources. It is crucial to clearly articulate and fill the gap in governance processes. In doing so, a narrative must be built, in which positive impacts of migrations can be harnessed.

Multi-level institutionalisation: The established strategies have to mainstream climate change through the manifestation and institutionalisation of specific governance bodies. Such governance bodies can have various forms like environmental and climate change committees on national and regional levels. It is crucial to include the grassroots level as well, for instance with village development committees and ward committees. Equally important is to include the migrant community into the policy-making discussions and to safeguard and connect the migrant and the host communities as a whole.

Decentralisation: To let local authorities manage their local spaces effectively, it is necessary to empower them through decentralisation. That includes the extension of service deliveries into small towns, for instance: the deployment of technical staff into the wards, the extension of electricity to all areas and the utilisation of solar networks.

Integrated approaches focussing on green policies: To build capacities in green systems and to harvest advantages from the natural environment, an integrated approach is needed. Such approaches can incorporate different policy areas, such as: green and clean energy, hydrogen and electric transportation, creation of green areas, waste management or the establishment of a citizen's reserve units. Within these policy areas, a major focus is the diversification of local economic development strategies. Other lines of action are the sensitisation regarding climate change consequences and the proactive support to introducing citizens to the idea of accepting climate refugees in the future.

4. CONCLUDING: CALL TO ACTION

This event, hosted just one day before World Earth Day on 22 April, highlighted the important role that city leaders play in addressing the interrelated global challenges of climate change and migration. At the High-Level Meeting, mayors discussed how they can support international collaboration and cooperation, and increase awareness and understanding of sustainable and innovative solutions to environmental challenges. Mayors also addressed ways to move forward in their own communities to protect their citizens from the threats of climate change. The research findings and the contributions of the mayors are complementary and presented as consolidated framework. That framework will lay the groundwork for the Call to Action and intends to see migration not only as a challenge, but also as an opportunity. Several pillars of action and recommendations can be established:

Capacity Building: Invest in Local Communities

- Empower vulnerable groups
- Foster circular migration
- Invest in skills and training
- Enable technical cooperation
- Diversify local economic development
- Improve urban planning

Reinforce Governance: Institutionalisation and Decentralisation

- Mainstream climate change and migration in governance bodies
- Institutionalize governance on different levels
- Include the grass root level
- Decentralise decision-making power
- Spread service deliveries

Innovative Financing: Diversify and Pool Funding Sources

- Diversify funding
- Pool resources
- Build capacity for engagement
- Align potential investments strategically
- Actualise funding sources

Collective Culture: Share and Protect Cultural Assets

- Encourage a common cultural future
- Create a sense of shared identity and goal to address climate change
- Celebrate cultural diversity and value shared heritage
- Integrate openly and respond to multiplicity

Advocacy: Raise Awareness

- Stress urgency on addressing climate-forced migration
- Foster data and knowledge
- Encourage best practices
- Engage for change
- Protect cultural assets together

Collaborate with the International Community:

- Recognise migration as predominant adaptation strategy
- Direct more funding to the cities
- Enhance research and environmental assessments

Strategize Holistically

- Focus on sustainability, long-term development and resilience
- Integrate different dimensions and local specifics
- Focus on green policies

Put People at the Center

- Integrate an equity lens
- Sensitise and disclose information
- Accompany into the integration process

The Mayoral Call to Action will be a uniting front to accelerate action on climate migration by promoting, guiding, monitoring and sharing experiences on climate resilience amongst mayors. It establishes an integral framework, bringing together mayors to present their plans and push for climate-resilient action at COP26.



5. ANNEXES

Annex 1

Registered mayors or city representatives (alphabetically by city)

- Mayor Rasamimanana Honoré Gabriel Antsirabe, Madagascar
- Mayor Ricardo Rio Braga, Portugal, member GPM Daily Board
- Mayor Philippe Close Brussels, Belgium, GPM member
- Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe Banjul, Gambia, member GPM Executive Committee
- Mayor Emil Boc Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- Councillor Helen Neale-May Buffalo City, South Africa
- Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr Freetown, Sierra Leone, GPM member
- Former Mayor Daniel Termont Ghent, Belgium, GPM Honorary member
- Mayor Hélder Sousa Silva Mafra, Portugal, GPM member
- Mayor Landing B. Sanneh Mansakonko Area Council, the Gambia, GPM member
- Vice-President Clare Hart Montpellier Mediterranean Metropole, France
- Deputy Mayor Katrin Habenschaden Munich, Germany
- Mayor Geoffrey Ngiriker Nebbi, Uganda, GPM member
- Former Mayor Naseer Lilizai Puli Alam, Afghanistan, GPM member
- Mayor Raúl Emilio Jatón Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz, Argentina
- Mayor Leoluca Orlando Palermo, Italy, member GPM Executive Committee
- Deputy Mayor Anuela Ristani Tirana, Albania
- Mayor Mochamad Nur Arifin Trenggalek, Indonesia
- Deputy Mayor Jakub Mazur Wroclaw, Poland, GPM member

Annex 2

Participating experts (alphabetically by name)

- Kamal Amakrane Columbia University
- Kobie Brand ICLEI Africa
- Eric Corijn Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium, member GPM Advisory Committee
- Sheila Foster Georgetown University
- Ian Klaus Chicago Council on Global Affairs, member GPM Advisory Committee
- Rosanna Lewis Culture and Development lead, British Council
- Shipra Narang Suri Urban Practices at UN-Habitat
- Raghuvier Ramkumar ARUP Group
- Sena Segbedzi OECD mayors' network Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative
- Stephen Stenning Arts and Society, British Council
- António Vitorino International Organization for Migration
- Ege Yildirim Independant Heritage Planning Consultant
- Vittoria Zanuso Mayors Migration Council

Annex 3

Polling questions and results during the online event on 20 April

1. Do you see evidence of climate forced migration in your city or region?

Yes	19
No	6
I don't know	2

2. If you see evidence of climate forced migration, is it because of migration into or migration out of your city?

Migration into my city	15
Migration out of my city	4
Both	10

3. What do you believe are the causes of this migration or displacement in your city or region? Check all that apply

Sea level rise	11
Flooding	4
Cyclones	3
Drought	18
Increased Heat	15
Other	6

4. Who are the groups or communities most vulnerable to climate displacement in your city or region? Check all that apply

Urban poor	19
Agricultural workers	18
Women	16
Children	16
Youth	13
Disabled people	13
Other	1
N/A	0

5. Are there impacts on cultural heritage from climate-induced migration in your city or region?

Yes	7
No	2
I don't know	2

6. If you do notice impacts on cultural heritage, which best describe those impacts?
Check all that apply

Cultural and spiritual rituals	5
Traditional medicinal systems	4
Culturally significant landscapes	5
Historic landmarks	4
Other	2

