



Congresso Mundial ICLEI  
ICLEI World Congress  
Congreso Mundial ICLEI

São Paulo, Brasil • 2024



Local Governments  
for Sustainability



CITY OF  
SÃO PAULO

# TRANSFORMING COMMITMENTS INTO ACTION

# ICLEI World Congress 2024

*Outcomes report*

*18 - 21 June 2024 | São Paulo, Brazil*

## Publisher

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# Introduction

*Every three years, ICLEI hosts the ICLEI World Congress to showcase how local and regional governments across our network are advancing sustainable urban development worldwide.*

The ICLEI World Congress connects local and regional government leaders and representatives with their peers and strategic partners, and provides a platform for discussions that will inform and enhance their work going forward.

The ICLEI World Congress is a platform to highlight how local and regional governments can collectively push for action and policy change that better positions local and regional governments to reach their potential. The Congress demonstrates the impact and potential of taking action together and demanding more effective global and national policy.



WATCH THE RECAP  
**ICLEI World Congress 2024**

Additionally, as a content-rich event, the ICLEI World Congress facilitates learning and idea sharing, ultimately conveying what sustainability looks like on the ground and what it really means for those who transform concepts and goals into policy and action. Technical staff and policymakers in city and regional governments get exposed to new and alternative ideas that they are able to bring back to their local contexts.

The ICLEI World Congress 2024, hosted by the City of São Paulo, Brazil, was a pivotal gathering focused on advancing sustainable urban development and equitable adaptation to local and regional challenges. Running from 18 - 21 June, this year's Congress delivered a journey of reflection and forward-looking vision, emphasizing the critical challenges and opportunities facing cities, towns, and regions due to rising global risks and changes.

Over 1500 attendees, including more than 100 mayors, from 95 countries came together to exchange with and inspire one another on the best practices in sustainable urban development.

Central themes included leveraging ICLEI's strategic pathways for sustainability, understanding the unique role of regions like the Amazon region in global biodiversity and sustainability, and exploring the impact of climate and sustainability at all levels of government. Through these thematic lenses, the Congress aimed to inspire, equip, and mobilize local and regional governments towards a sustainable and resilient future.

The theme of the Congress in 2024 was ***Transforming commitments into action***. We explored how leaders can enable action despite the ever-changing contexts in which they must operate, ensuring continued implementation of sustainable development policies that work toward transforming our systems and achieving our targets and commitments.



In 2025, the world will turn its eyes to Brazil for UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, a critical moment in the global climate agenda. The ICLEI World Congress 2024 helped to deepen the dialogue on the ongoing global processes in the areas of climate, nature, and broader sustainability and highlight the relevance of these processes on the local and regional levels, underscoring the critical element of multilevel governance to achieve these broader global goals. Additionally, the ICLEI network also had the chance to weigh in on the IPCC Special Report on Cities and Climate Change during the seventh triennial Global Research & Innovation Symposium at the Congress, and offered an unparalleled chance to gain insights from leading IPCC experts on the objectives and content of the Special Report.

Cities, towns and regions in the ICLEI Network are united on a shared journey towards a sustainable and equitable world. The ICLEI World Congress 2024 provided a unique opportunity for the ICLEI network of over 2500+ cities, regions, and towns, from 125+ countries across the world, to gather and share practical knowledge that can drive local action for zero emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular urban development.

## ICLEI World Congress 2024 in numbers

**1500+** attendees from **95** countries **100+** mayors and governors

Supported by **150+** ICLEI Staff and **20** local volunteers

**A special thanks to our volunteers:** 20 local volunteers were selected to support the ICLEI World Congress 2024 main activities. These included: preparing reports for the plenary and thematic sessions; translating Portuguese, English and Spanish; organizing event logistics; providing support for side event accreditation; and other activities to support session leaders and congress participants. Our volunteers were key in the success of the Congress.



## SECTION I

# The power of a network

*With more than 2500 cities, towns and regions from around the world engaged in our work, ICLEI is the largest network of local and regional governments advancing sustainable development worldwide.*

ICLEI is driven by our Members. They shape our organization, and with their leadership, we stand as a united global force of local and regional governments committed to sustainability. Every three years, we invite representatives from ICLEI's Member cities, towns and regions to stand for governance elections to help guide the direction of our network.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR  
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

At the ICLEI World Congress 2024, we introduced [our newly elected leaders - the ICLEI Council](#), who will serve for the next three years - and [the new ICLEI Presidium](#), who have taken up the mantle to lead our network in achieving our goals at home and globally.

While ICLEI uses the full power of our network to ensure that local sustainability delivers on the goals and aspirations of the global sustainable development agenda, we continue to extend and measure our impact on the ground through programs, projects and initiatives.

Our flourishing network represents small, large, and fast-growing cities, vast metropolitan areas, provinces and regions. ICLEI, as a network, IS the diversity of the urban world and the challenges and opportunities that come with it.

Through our São Paulo Strategic Vision 2024 - 2030, released during the Congress on 19 June 2024, local and regional governments of the ICLEI network set a way towards the transformation to sustainable development. This vision, set forth in the voice of our local and regional governments, creates a picture of what is needed for a truly sustainable urban world.



O poder de uma rede  
The power of a network  
El poder de una red

WATCH THE FULL PLENARY  
**The power of a network**

**MEDIA SPOTLIGHT**

**CitiesToday**  
Connecting the world's urban leaders

[Mayor of Malmö elected president of ICLEI](#)

Mayor of Malmö has been chosen to lead ICLEI – the largest network of cities and regions committed to sustainability.



## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### **The ICLEI São Paulo Strategic Vision 2024 - 2030 released**

[The Power of Our Network in a Changing World](#) - ICLEI's strategic vision for the next three years - sets a way towards the transformation to sustainable development. ICLEI is and has always been committed to creating global change through work that starts on the local level. Together, we must demonstrate visionary leadership, lead by example, share our knowledge actively and openly and speak with a united voice. Our *ICLEI São Paulo Strategic Vision 2024 - 2030* is a critical part of that promise.

## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### **The 2024 report on our activities, *Our network of impact*, released**

Every year, ICLEI undertakes hundreds of activities, alongside our local and regional government Members, to deliver sustainable development through our five pathways of zero emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. [Explore our activities and impact in this report, produced for the ICLEI World Congress 2024.](#)

## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### **ICLEI Gender Declaration announced**

[ICLEI's new Gender Declaration](#) marks a significant commitment to embedding gender equity into the organization's core mission. This declaration will serve as a guiding framework for ICLEI's network, focusing on empowering women, addressing gender-specific challenges, and fostering inclusive governance and planning. The announcement highlighted the critical need for gender-responsive urban planning to ensure equitable benefits for all genders, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and equitable urban development practices.



## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### ICLEI and Climate Bonds Initiative partner to boost sustainable development projects

On 18 June, ICLEI and the Climate Bonds Initiative announced a strategic partnership to empower local governments by linking high-impact subnational climate projects with essential financial resources and expertise. The partnership focuses on project mobilization, capacity building, technical assistance, and joint fundraising to promote sustainable investment and climate-resilient development. It is conducted under the [Transformative Actions Program \(TAP\)](#), a global initiative that brings together financial institutions, project preparation facilities, and the private sector to assist subnational governments and local businesses in turning their sustainable infrastructure ideas into solid and investment-ready projects.

## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### ICLEI-Kaohsiung Smart and Net Zero Cities Community announced

The City of Kaohsiung announced a new partnership with ICLEI to host a community of practice for cities that are committed to net zero by 2050 goal. The community of practice invites Asia-Pacific cities to participate and contribute to capacity building and peer exchange on climate neutrality topics. The community also will have visibility at global advocacy events to raise the profile and ambition of cities in the region.





## SECTION II

# Our changing world

*We are living in times of rapidly accelerating technological change and economic uncertainty, as the world is plagued by two dangerous crises: climate and conflict.*

These crises exacerbate the challenges that our cities, towns and regions already face worldwide, and further complicate the work that local and regional governments have already accomplished in advancing sustainability efforts in their communities. Our cities, towns, regions and communities must already plan for and adapt to a future beyond 1.5°C.



LEARN MORE  
**CityTalk**

[Navigating our changing world: Insights on local urban climate action](#)

Introduction

The power of a network

**Our changing world**

Spotlight  
on South America

From global  
to local to global

A sustainable and  
equitable Congress

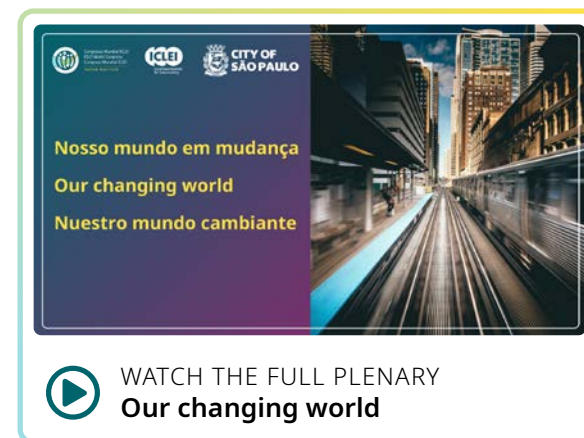
Accelerating forward

At the Congress, ICLEI leaders from around the world shared how they have been able to advance local sustainable development in spite of - or in response to - our changing world, and how they are preparing their communities for a new climate normal. The experiences of ICLEI Members from Brazil were especially highlighted, focusing on their efforts to adapt their communities to this new climate normal in a just and equitable way.

#### CONGRESS OUTCOME

### Urban Infrastructure Insurance Facility Project (UIIF) announced first seven city signatories

[The Urban Infrastructure Insurance Facility \(UIIF\)](#) was launched to enhance urban resilience against natural hazards with innovative insurance solutions. Seven cities from Mexico, Brazil, Jamaica, and Honduras—Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Recife, Reynosa, Mérida, Tegucigalpa, and Kingston—are the first to join. Funded by KfW Development Bank on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), UIIF helps cities measure risks and provides tailored insurance solutions. This initiative is vital for mitigating natural disaster disruptions and fostering sustainable urban development in Latin America and the Caribbean, setting a global example for urban leaders.



# Cases from our network: *Adapting to our changing world*

Across the globe, cities and regions within the ICLEI network are spearheading diverse initiatives to tackle the climate emergency. Urban areas are becoming hubs of innovation and environmental stewardship, implementing projects that range from enhancing resilience against natural disasters to promoting renewable energy, and integrating green infrastructure. Cities are also addressing food security and waste reduction, often engaging local communities in the process. This global wave of urban transformation underscores a shared commitment to building sustainable, resilient, and inclusive cities for the future.



# Cases from thematic track: *Adapting to our changing world*

## AFRICA

### eThekwini, South Africa: Gardening roofs

The ongoing [Green Roof pilot project](#) aims to mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding. It tests modular and direct green roof methods with various growing media and indigenous plants, focusing on temperature reduction, runoff quality, and biodiversity.

### Chefchaouen, Morocco: Promoting healthier eating habits

Honoring its UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status, the city promotes the Mediterranean diet as a lifestyle “from farm to table.” Its recently opened [Mediterranean Diet Museum](#) offers awareness workshops, garden tours, and tastings.

### Quelimane, Mozambique: Restoring mangroves







The city lies below sea level alongside the Bons Sinai River and near the coast, making it prone to flooding. The mangrove forests nearby had been severely impacted by deforestation for building and cooking, so in 2013 the municipality began [restoring large areas of mangroves](#), which now serve as the city’s frontline defense against floods.

## EAST ASIA

### Kaohsiung, Chinese Taipei: Pioneering digital public transport

Kaohsiung is Chinese Taipei’s first city to fully digitize its public transportation system. The [MeNGo MaaS](#) platform integrates all transport modes, allowing users to plan journeys and pay via mobile devices. This user-friendly service encourages people to use public transportation.

### Session recordings from this track

-  19 JUNE, 14:15 BRT  
**Transforming local food systems for global impact**
-  19 JUNE, 14:15 BRT  
**A force to be reckoned with: New ICLEI Members in the spotlight**
-  19 JUNE, 14:15 BRT  
**Hopeful solutions in a post-1,5 °C world: Moving from inequity to city-scale resilience**
-  19 JUNE, 16:30 BRT  
**Greening our urban tapestry: Collaboration and solutions for nature and biodiversity**
-  19 JUNE, 16:30 BRT  
**From two billion tons to zero: Taking on our big waste problem through the circular economy**
-  19 JUNE, 16:30 BRT  
**Harnessing opportunities and reducing risks: Using artificial intelligence for local climate**

## EUROPE

### Ludwigsburg, Germany: Speeding up equitable energy transition

Under the [INCLU:DE project](#), the city's subsidy scheme for plug-in solar devices allows tenants to reduce electricity bills by 10-20%. Its "carefree package" for low-income households ensures all residents benefit from renewable energy.

### Malmö, Sweden: Embedding equity in urban sustainability

Malmö integrates social equity into its climate strategy with initiatives like sustainable food, an equitable economy, and affordable housing. These efforts align with the [Malmö Commitment on Inclusive and Equitable Communities](#), co-founded in 2022 by Mayor Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh, ICLEI President, which pledges social equity as the core of sustainable development.

### Rome, Italy: Controlling energy consumption

Piloted in two public buildings, the [PLATOON project](#) aims to implement an energy audit scheme, deploy an advanced multi-scale energy management system, and optimize energy infrastructure to enhance comfort and reduce costs.

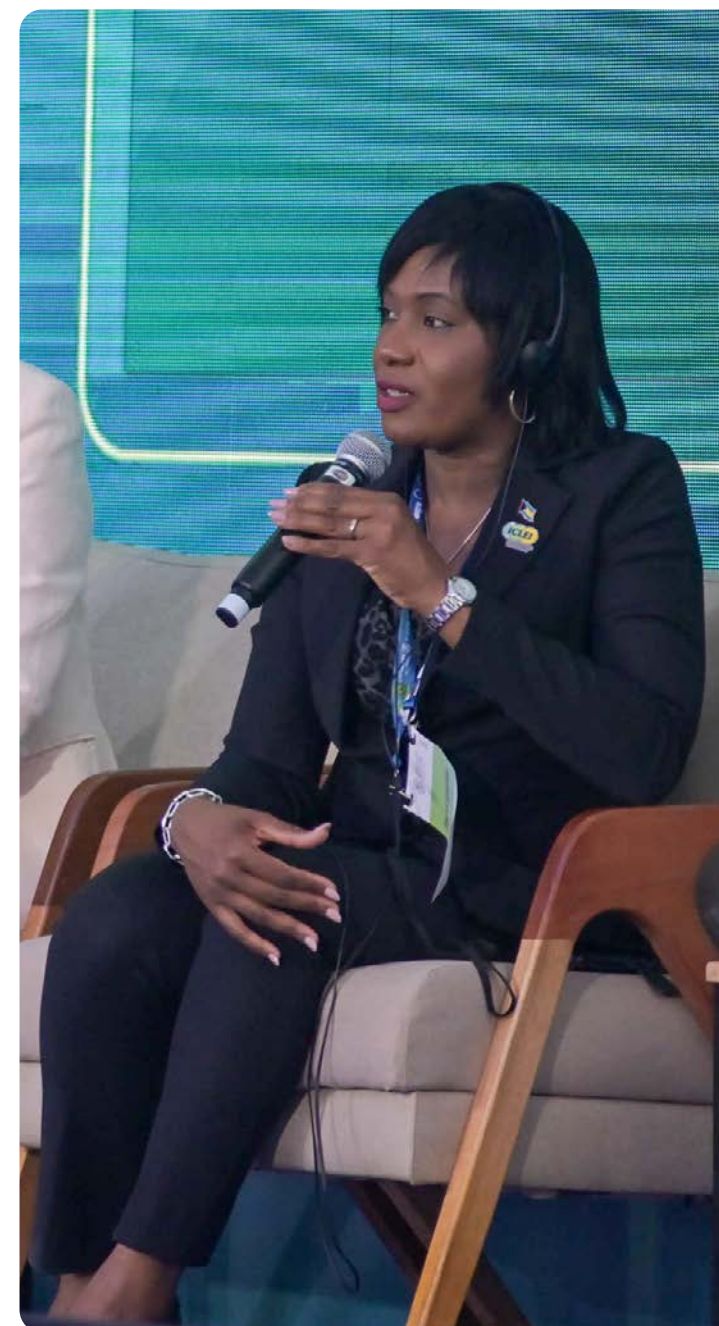
## MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### Freeport, Bahamas: Reviving disadvantaged urban areas for resilience

Under the [Cities Forward program](#), Freeport is working with Coral Springs, USA, (the cities were paired through the program) to revitalize an economically depressed area. The initiative aims to create a sustainable, resilient community by improving housing, boosting the economy through agritech, and promoting social well-being.

### Mérida, Mexico: Greening bus stops

In 2023, the city launched Mexico's first green bus stop under the [Vía Verde pilot project](#). It features a pollinator garden roof that mitigates heat and irrigates itself, improving users' waiting conditions during extreme heat waves while enhancing biodiversity.



## Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Mapping risk areas to climate hazards

The city is developing a risk management map through the [Urban Infrastructure Insurance Facility \(UIIF\) project](#). This will improve the city's resilience against natural hazards, as 6% of its territory faces a permanent risk of flooding and landslides.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Boulder, USA: Empowering youth for climate resilience

As the city experiences more intense heatwaves and fires, it has implemented the [Community Forestry Corps initiative](#), employing young people to maintain city trees and collect data on how trees impact heat and climate change.

### Boulder, USA: Reducing plastic bag use

Since 2012, Boulder's [ten-cent fee on single-use plastic bags](#) has reduced their use by 70%, with revenues funding reusable bags for low-income residents.

### Cleveland, USA: Advancing racial equity in climate action

The city's Climate Action Plan includes a [Racial Equity Tool](#) to ensure just distribution of climate benefits. Developed by an advisory committee, the tool assesses each action for equity relevance, guiding decision-makers in recognizing and addressing inequities.

### Coral Springs, USA: Implementing a sustainability office

Founded in 2021, Coral Springs' [Office of Sustainability](#) balances the city's environmental, economic, and social needs. It manages the city's Sustainability Action Plan, develops policies, coordinates initiatives, provides education, and partners with the community and external organizations.

### North Miami, USA: Charging electric cars

The city is installing [electric vehicle charging stations and parking](#) throughout its jurisdiction. By downloading the ChargePoint app, users can locate charging stations and receive step-by-step instructions on how to plug in their cars.





## OCEANIA

### **Banyule, Australia: Charting an urban food system pathway**

Banyule's first [Urban Food Strategy](#), 2023-2027, is a blueprint for creating, celebrating, and enhancing the city's food systems to ensure they are healthy, sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

### **Nadi Town Council, Fiji: Boosting coastal resilience**

Climate change, mangrove cutting, and coastal filling have made the city prone to floods, disrupting airport operations. Stranded tourists pose a significant issue. [Nady is actively contributing to the ICLEI - IFRC coastal cities initiative](#) to reduce risks and enhance resilience.

### **Sydney, Australia: Turning food scraps into a zero-waste solutions**

The city has launched a [one-year trial using black soldier fly larvae](#) to consume 600 tonnes of residents' food scraps. This process creates a circular commodity: protein-rich animal feed and natural fertilizer, both essential for sustainable food production.

## SOUTH AMERICA

### **Avellaneda, Argentina: Transitioning to 100% renewables**

Under the 100% Renewables Cities and Regions Roadmaps project, [Avellaneda launched its roadmap](#) prioritizing bioenergy for electricity and heating. The plan includes shifting transport to renewable energy, implementing energy efficiency measures, and developing a 5 MW solar park.

### **Brejo da Madre de Deus, Brazil: Building local capacity for tourism**

The city offers [free driver courses](#) to certify individuals as tourism drivers, providing qualifications for those currently working or aspiring to work in this sector. Lessons include hospitality, local development, and digital marketing. This initiative boosts the economy, builds local capacity, and leverages the city's tourism potential.



### **Contagem, Brazil: Powering solar energy**

The city has launched its [first solar energy plant on a public building](#), an outcome of the ICLEI Energy Transition Program in cities project. Located at the Environment Secretary's office, the 80 solar panels supply the building with clean energy, making it self-sufficient. The initiative is expected to expand to other public buildings in the city.

### **Cuenca, Ecuador: Engaging community to protect water**

In 2021, 80% of Cuenca voters supported banning mining in water recharge zones to protect the city's five main rivers that supply water to the area. The unprecedented citizen referendum resulted in an Action Plan to monitor and improve drinking water quality.

### **Fortaleza, Brazil: Improving climate and health conditions**

[Rachel de Queiroz Park in Fortaleza](#) features green areas and native vegetation to combat the urban heat island effect and enhance local biodiversity. It incorporates climate adaptation measures like rainwater absorption to reduce flood risks and uses solar-powered lighting for sustainability.

### **Portoviejo, Ecuador: Warning climate risks**

The city implemented [Portoviejo Previene](#), a free app that provides early warnings for tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, flood-prone areas, and evacuation routes.

### **Recife, Brazil: Integrating gender equity**

In May 2022, heavy rains left 3,500 people homeless, with black women in vulnerable areas being the most affected. The [ProMorar Recife program](#) addresses this crisis by providing safe housing and essential infrastructure. It prioritizes granting property titles for women-led households and offers training in productive inclusion and climate disaster risk management.

### **São Paulo, Brazil: Cultivating food security**

The [Fight Food Waste and Loss Program](#) collects surplus fruits and vegetables, preventing disposal from fairs and markets. Similarly, the city's food bank buys fresh produce from family urban farms and redistributes surplus food from retail chains to assistance institutions.



## São Paulo, Brazil: Preserving green areas

Last February 2024, the City of São Paulo [declared the acquisition of 32 private green areas as a public utility](#). Combined, they encompass 16,531 hectares, representing 11% of São Paulo's territory, equivalent to the size of Paris or 15,500 football fields.

## State of Minas Gerais, Brazil: Assessing climate vulnerability

The [Climate Vulnerability Index](#) ranks the state's 853 municipalities from low to extreme. This index measures a municipality's susceptibility to adverse climate change effects by assessing three main components: sensitivity, exposure, and adaptability.

## Teresina, Brazil: Greening low-income communities

Under the [Transformative Urban Coalitions project](#), Teresina prioritizes urban afforestation to mitigate extreme heat and drought. By planting native and food seedlings, the initiative improves access to green spaces, reduces heat effects, enhances food security, and benefits mental and physical health.

## SOUTH ASIA

### Puducherry, India: Reviving indigenous knowledge to store rainwater

The city uses an indigenous system of tanks and ponds to collect and store excess rainwater for later use. This project involves significant community engagement, as the tanks and ponds are spread across the city.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

### Melaka, Malaysia: Expanding car-free zones

Previously, the city's historic center was car-free from 6:00 PM to midnight on Saturdays. Now, it's [car-free from Friday evening to Sunday at midnight](#), offering over 50 hours of pedestrian-friendly exploration. Despite initial concerns from local businesses, this extension has boosted the economy by adding night markets and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### 100% Renewables Roadmap Project launched three roadmaps

ICLEI, in collaboration with the governments of Avellaneda (Argentina), Kisumu County (Kenya), and West Nusa Tenggara Province (Indonesia), [unveiled tailored roadmaps to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050](#). These customized plans, adapted to each region's specific needs and resources, highlight the proactive leadership of cities and regions in the global energy transition. The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### ICLEI and IFRC kick off a coastal cities initiative

Building on a [global partnership announced at COP28](#), ICLEI and IFRC kicked off the development of a coastal cities initiative for the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America regions to reduce risks for coastal cities and nurture resilience. Coastal city leaders and practitioners were invited to develop and pitch potential project ideas to build a foundation for future collaboration opportunities.



[Equity in Action: Shaping Local Climate Solutions for All](#)

Aligning equity and climate mitigation priorities is crucial for developing sustainable cities that serve all residents, especially marginalized communities. Cities are increasingly integrating social equity into their climate strategies. Initiatives like the INCLU:DE project in Germany and the Malmö Commitment on Inclusive and Equitable Communities highlight successful efforts to align climate and equity goals in the cities of Malmö, Cleveland, Ludwigsburg, Rosario, and Teresina.



## SECTION III

# Spotlight on South America

*Our Congress was hosted by the City of São Paulo, a long-standing ICLEI Member since 1991. The largest city in Brazil and South America and the fourth largest metropolis in the world - home to over 12 million residents - it also serves as Brazil's main economic and financial center. More than 20 million residents live in the Greater São Paulo metropolitan area.*

The City of São Paulo plays a leading role in sustainability commitment, action and innovation. As a key player in the international forums, the city has participated in UN conventions since UNFCCC COP21 in Paris, as well as the Convention on Biodiversity COP15 in Montreal. At climate COP28 in Dubai, with the biggest delegation actively participating, the City announced they would host the ICLEI World Congress 2024, as well as a robust pack of initiatives to promote sustainable urban development for 2024 totaling more than R\$15 billion (2.4 billion EUR) in investments.



The City has committed to creating solidarity and city-to-city cooperation opportunities as an essential part of addressing the global environmental, humanitarian, economic and health crises of our time. Since 2023, the City of São Paulo has been host to more than 40 international events that are already considered legacies for the city, such as the Virada ODS, the International Diplomacy Week, the Expo Internacional Dia da Consciência Negra, and the São Paulo International Summit; and has demonstrated a strong political commitment with city networks as Presidency of Mercociudades network and of the National Forum of International Relations (FONARI), the Vice Presidency of Metropolis and Co-chair of Urban 20 process.

Zooming out on the region, we see the iconic Amazon biome, encompassing the world's largest rainforest and one of only three global hotspots for biocultural diversity. Its vast expanse crosses nine countries (Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana) and countless cities with an estimated 50 million residents - identified as "Amazônidas" - who speak 86 languages and more than 650 dialects. According to the Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute, IBGE, 72% of the population of the Brazilian Amazon resides in urban centers, and according to IDB, only 22.3% of the urban population in the Andean Amazon cities has limited access to electricity, contributing to the complexity of delivering sustainable public services.



[Three ways São Paulo charts a greener today - and tomorrow](#)

In 2009, the City of São Paulo made history by passing the Municipal Policy for Climate Change, making it the first city in Brazil to pass such legislation. Since then, this 12 million-people megacity has emerged as a shining example of dedication and progress towards sustainability.



Since 2021, ICLEI has promoted a robust Urban Amazon agenda: promoting the Forum of Pan Amazon Cities, a pioneering initiative that has brought together mayors and strategic partners to find solutions for urban social and environmental risks, running capacity building and training activities with an approach in adaptation and biodiversity, supporting inventories, risk and ecosystem services assessments and mentores for project preparation, as well as delivering Local Climate Action Plans.

Latin America, as the world's most urbanized region, plays a pivotal role in global climate action due to its rich natural resources and unique environmental challenges. With all three UN conventions meeting in 2024, including the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16) in Colombia in October, the region's significance in the global environmental agenda is more pronounced than ever.

Operating in South America since 2000, ICLEI connects 139 Members of local and regional governments in eight countries in the region. Since 2021, ICLEI South America has three offices—located in Medellin, Colombia; Rosario, Argentina; and São Paulo, Brazil—and employs more than 50 staff. It implements 40 cooperation projects and a service portfolio and organizes several events each year to promote sustainable and equitable cities and regions throughout the region.



# Cases from thematic track: *Spotlight on South America*



From sprawling metropolises to small urban centers, South American cities in the ICLEI network are advancing sustainable urban development through comprehensive and equitable environmental strategies. By involving citizens in climate action planning, they promote resilience, zero emissions, and circular development. Initiatives range from urban reforestation and biodiversity protection to water conservation, ensuring all communities benefit from these advancements.



# Cases from thematic track: *Spotlight on South America*

## Belém, Brazil: Protecting urban ecosystems

Under the [Nature-Based Cities project](#), Belém strengthens local governance and develops financeable projects to implement its Ecosystem-based Adaptation Plan by enhancing its ecosystem services and resilience capacity by conducting two key studies: Ecosystem Services Diagnosis and Climate Risk and Vulnerability Analysis. Belém is also building its climate compliance by developing a GHG emissions inventory and a robust climate action plan through strategic partnerships with key entities, such as GCoM and IDB.

## Buenos Aires, Argentina: Housing assistance

Buenos Aires offers [financial support to prevent homelessness](#). Families and individuals receive housing-specific subsidies and guidance to find long-term solutions. Beneficiaries must report their expenditures periodically.

## Cali, Colombia: Hosting CBD COP16

Known as the "Colombian biodiversity capital," Cali is preparing to host CBD COP16, highlighting the [crucial role of Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities](#), which have historically protected over 35% of the region's natural territory.




## Campinas, Brazil: Achieving net-zero by 2050

The city recently released its [Local Climate Action Plan](#), which rethinks city building, energy consumption and generation, and transportation. It aims for net-zero emissions by 2050 and prioritizes actions that promote climate justice and public well-being.

## Cartagena, Colombia: Restoring urban nature

The [Ciénaga de la Virgen District Park Macroproject](#) aims to restore and consolidate its wetland ecosystem. It fosters a balanced transition between formal and informal urban areas and preserves the environmental connection between the wetland and the Caribbean Sea.

### Session recordings from this track

-  20 JUNE, 12:00 BRT  
**Weaving knowledge: Integrating traditional knowledge and education in environmental sustainability**
-  20 JUNE, 12:00 BRT  
**How everyone can thrive in gender-responsive cities**
-  20 JUNE, 12:00 BRT  
**Tomorrow's cities today: Megacities driving global change**

### **Cobija, Bolivia: Fostering resilient schools**

Eight schools benefit from the Unicef-led [Resilient Schools project](#), which provides renewable energy. Solar panels and a rainwater collection system aim to raise awareness about sustainability and involve youth in climate action.

### **Curitiba, Brazil: Speeding up traffic**

The city bus rapid transit system sets intelligent and dynamic traffic management, priority signaling, and real-time bus information. New bike lanes and racks near the corridors aim to integrate cycling with the transit network.

### **Despeñaderos, Argentina: Empowering women job opportunities**

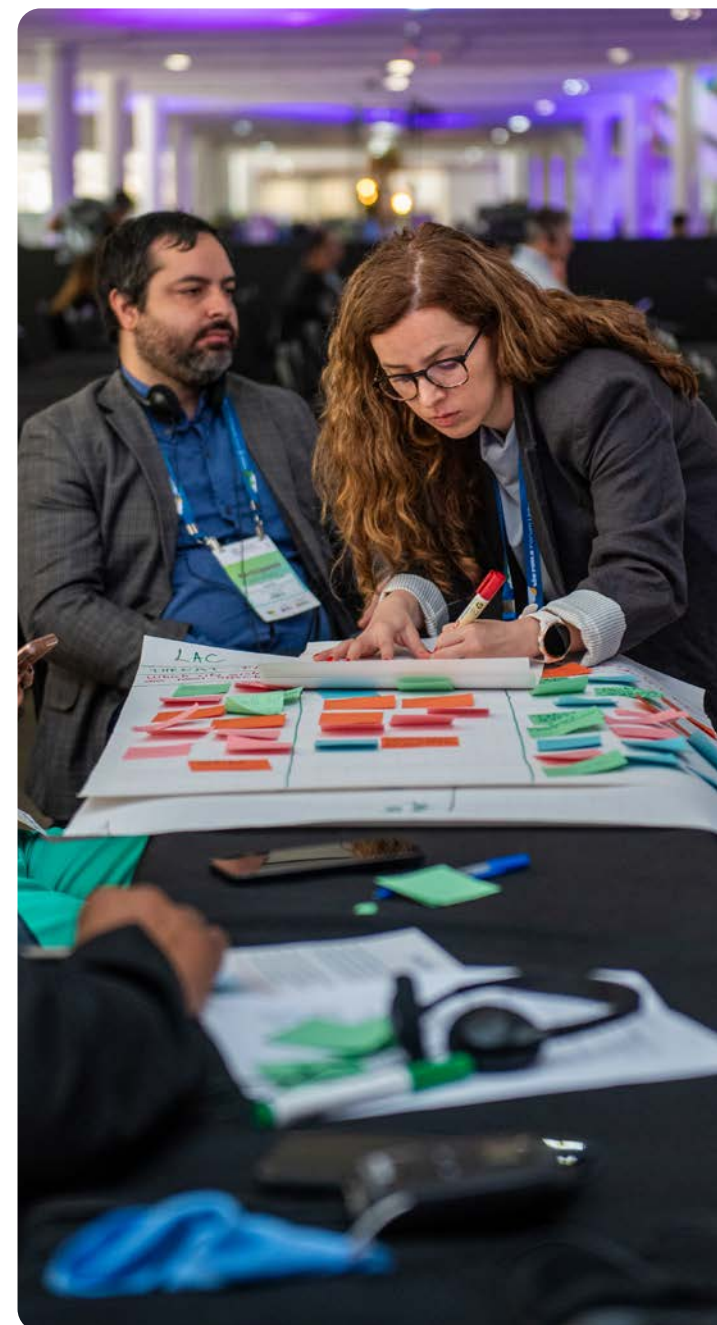
The [Resilient Women program](#) promotes financial and digital inclusion for women through green jobs, advancing the circular economy. In collaboration with Industrial Design students from the University of Córdoba, women learn textile recycling techniques, creating new employment opportunities.

### **Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador (representing the Consortium of Provincial Governments of Ecuador): Protecting the unique Chocó ecosystem**

The [Path of the Jaguar](#) is the province's newly declared Conservation and Sustainable Use Area totaling more than 200,000 hectares in the Chocó bioregion, one of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems. The area faces constant threat due to excessive logging and rapid urbanization.

### **Independencia, Chile: Growing a sustainability park**

In 2018, Independencia transformed an abandoned sports court into its signature [Sustainability Park](#), an urban forest using the Miyawaki method for fast-growing native plants. The community was actively involved in planting seeds. The park also features a center for environmental practices and education, a waste management and recycling drop-off, and a nursery garden.



### **La Estrella, Colombia: Promoting circular economy and dignity**

In La Estrella, [companies exchange new clothes for recyclables](#) from vulnerable communities, promoting a circular economy while providing dignity to the underprivileged.

### **Manaus, Brazil: Reforesting indigenous urban areas**

Under UNEP's [Generation Restoration Cities program](#), this Amazonian city is reforesting degraded areas in an informal urban indigenous settlement to enhance resilience against landslides. Over 300 fruit trees were planted, and the community will manage the harvest to boost the local economy.

### **Maynas Province, Peru: Fostering sustainable schools**

In partnership with FAO, the [Sustainable Schools project](#) works with 30 schools to improve health, food security, and nutrition. The project focuses on implementing school gardens, composting and recycling solid waste, promoting family farming, and conducting nutrition and healthy eating workshops.

### **Medellín, Colombia: Promoting circular economy and landfill management**

The [District Development Plan 2024-2027 Medellín Te Quiere](#) is transforming La Pradera landfill into an example of circularity and efficient waste management. Strategies include recycling and reuse, awareness raising, incentives for sustainable business models, material recovery projects, and the adoption of innovative technologies for waste treatment.

### **Montevideo, Uruguay: Securing water supply**

After a severe drought nearly exhausted its water supply in 2023, the city launched [Montevideo Más Verde](#). This strategy promotes cross-sectoral climate action in water supply, transport, housing, and education, focusing on responsible resource use, smart service organization, social inclusion, and biodiversity conservation.



## **Niterói, Brazil: Engaging community action through a social currency reward program**

The [Arariboia Social Currency](#) is an innovative strategy applied in the Caramujo community to engage residents in climate action. Residents are rewarded with "Arariboias," the local social currency, for achieving individual and collective targets for reducing carbon emissions, such as planting, separating waste, or composting. Financial prizes of up to 100 US will be granted to residents who significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub>.

## **Peñalolén, Chile: Lighting with a gender focus**

Following a [survey to female residents](#) about areas prone to harassment and insecurity, Peñalolén mapped nine sectors where new eco-friendly, smart LED lights will be installed. These lights, programmable for intensity and timing, will be violet to align with feminism and gender equity awareness.

## **Quito, Ecuador: Zero emissions zone in the historic center**

Through the [Sustainable Mobility Master Plan](#) and the [Climate Action Plan](#), Quito seeks to consolidate a zero emissions zone in the historic center, promoting improvements in air quality, efficiency in freight management, sustainable tourism and preservation of cultural heritage.

## **Renca, Chile: Enhancing resilience with the community**

Together with the community, Renca selected two unused lots to implement a [sustainable drainage system](#). This project aims to prevent flooding, increase green coverage, and reclaim public spaces for recreation.

## **Santiago, Brazil: Innovating green currency for circularity**

The city introduced a [sustainable coin](#) to promote circular transactions. Citizens exchange household waste at city hall for the coin, saving waste collection costs. These coins can be used to buy fresh produce from local farmers, who can then exchange them for seeds and planting implements at city hall. The city also was announced as a new member of ICLEI South America.



### **São Paulo, Brazil: Mitigating flooding effects**

São Paulo has the [largest network of rain gardens](#) in Latin America, with 320 established and plans for 400 by 2024. Using recycled materials, especially concrete for underground infiltration mattresses, the city ensures these gardens are sustainable in urban functionality and material usage.

### **Tolhuin, Argentina: Empowering women in construction**

The [Imagen Colectiva program](#) trains and promotes women in public-built projects like sidewalk construction. The program aims to increase women's participation in historically male-dominated fields, enhance autonomy, improve quality of life, and contribute to a more equitable city.

### **Villavicencio, Colombia: Mapping biodiversity and its benefits**

Under the [NaBa: Nature-Based Resilient Cities project](#), Villavicencio co-created a participatory map highlighting biodiversity and its benefits for city residents. Outcomes were featured in the city's [Illustrated booklet](#). This effort increased understanding and built capacity around the city's nature-based solutions and natural assets.



# Congress Outcomes: South America

The Congress marked a milestone in the international urban sustainability events agenda. Important announcements for the region, including the Brazil's Ministry of Environment National Tree Planting Plan kick off, which will receive technical support from ICLEI. Additionally, South American mayors and the youth constituency delivered a series of declarations impacting local public policies.

## ICLEI and Brazil's Ministry of Environment announced partnership

A cooperation between ICLEI and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change of Brazil (MMA) to develop the National Urban Afforestation Plan, was announced during the ICLEI Global Council meeting at the Tomie Ohtake Institute on 18 June, by Adalberto Maluf, National Secretary for Urban Environment and Environmental Quality.

## Declaration of South American Cities

Seventy-four cities from seven South American countries expressed the need for financing and resources to create urban resilience strategies and improve the ability to plan and implement solutions adapted to local and regional contexts. The *Cities Declaration: Regional Commitment in Action* represents a joint commitment by South American cities towards a more sustainable future and recognizes the imminent need to act with urgency and determination in the face of the current threat posed by the climate emergency. English version available [here](#).

## Youth Manifesto for just transition

The Youth Manifesto, launched at the Congress, aims to promote a fair transition, prioritize human rights protection, and advocate for the political independence of young people. It includes recommendations for local governments and society as a whole and was developed through discussions and meetings of the Youth Advisory Board for the ICLEI World Congress 2024. At the Congress' closing plenary, Júlia Bonitese, youth activist and ambassador for climate justice, highlighted the importance of active young people's participation in local and global climate action.



## Additional announcements:

- **New FAO - ICLEI [Guide for public managers on sustainable food systems](#)** launched, with a new term for the LUPPA project, Latin America's largest urban food systems laboratory.
- **New ICLEI partnerships on resilience** announced [between the governments of the State of Piauí and the Cities of São Sepé and Itabirito](#) for Climate Compliance plans.
- **New ICLEI - Fortaleza technical collaboration** for the Re-Ciclo program on selective waste collection by waste pickers using electric vehicles (tricycles). A technical collaboration protocol was also signed with [CITinova](#) to replicate the project in other cities.
- **New ICLEI - Tip Magazine issue [Paradiplomacy and Environmental Agendas](#)** on innovative strategies in climate change, energy transition and sustainable development released during the side event on Global Cities organized by Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB).
- **New ICLEI project kick-off** between the [Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities \(UCCI\)](#) that consists of a regional comparative study of heat waves and cities' adaptation initiatives and a joint manifesto of Ibero-American cities to be presented at COP29.



MEDIA  
SPOTLIGHT

TheCityFix™

### [Unique and Irreplaceable Cities Making the Urban Amazon Visible](#)

Amazonian cities are diverse in opportunities and needs. The region's biodiversity is among the world's most important, but its cities' sustainability challenges are less well-known. These jurisdictions require financial support and capacity building to create sustainable, conservation-oriented, equitable, urban green spaces with circular development. At the ICLEI World Congress 2024, mayors from this region convened to amplify the voices of these unique cities.

# Sustainability up close and personal: Site visits in São Paulo



On 20 June, more than 200 participants fanned out across São Paulo for technical site visits with city leaders, program staff and technical experts. The site visits represented an opportunity to connect Congress discussions with policies undertaken by both the São Paulo City Hall and the Government of the State of São Paulo. In total, eight site visits featured relevant cases involving cross-cutting approaches on waste management, circular economy, and environmental education; green infrastructure with wildlife and public health; or electric and waterways mobility solutions, where Ricardo Nunes, Mayor of the City of São Paulo, presented to ICLEI's Global Council on the city's first public water transportation.



## CREN - Center for Recovery and Nutritional Education

LED BY: SÃO PAULO CITY HALL

For 30 years, the Center for Recovery and Nutritional Education (CREN) has worked in nutritional education and treating malnutrition and obesity in children and adolescents. During the visit, participants learned about CREN's operations and the multifunctional facilities, such as the classrooms and the garden. The garden functions as both an educational tool and a source of fresh produce, and there is also a composting area on the premises. Visitors had the chance to sample dishes made with ingredients harvested directly from the garden, emphasizing the center's commitment to incorporating fresh, locally-grown produce into their daily meals.



## Kitchen School Network and Municipal Market of Pinheiros

LED BY: SÃO PAULO CITY HALL

Municipal Law 17.819, enacted on 29 June, 2022, introduced programs to support vulnerable populations. One initiative, the Kitchen School Network, aims to provide food security training and produce at least 400 meals daily for distribution to São Paulo's vulnerable residents in partnership with civil society organizations.

The Pinheiros Municipal Market implements sustainability policies to raise awareness about recycling among customers and employees. Visitors learned from partner company representatives about recycling processes for cooking oil and materials like plastic, paper, and glass.



## Ambiental Transport Company Garage

LED BY: SÃO PAULO CITY HALL

Run by Ambiental, one of São Paulo's transport operators, this garage houses a fleet of 40 battery-electric buses and 201 trolleybuses, along with their respective charging infrastructure. Visitors learned about São Paulo's bus operation system and the steps taken to adopt electric buses. Representatives from São Paulo's transportation agency, SPTrans, and Ambiental provided technical overviews, and participants also explored the garage's water reuse infrastructure.



## São Paulo's first waterway transportation and the Cantinho do Céu Linear Park

LED BY: SÃO PAULO CITY HALL

Mayor Ricardo Nunes accompanied this visit, specially designed for ICLEI's governance members and mayors from around the world. Participants boarded the Aquatico SP, the city's first public waterway on the Billings Reservoir. They also toured the Cantinho do Céu Linear Park, built under the Mananciais Program, an important initiative responsible for urbanization and land regularization projects to protect the city's water sources.



## Environmental Adventure Program - UMAPAZ and Viveiro Manequinho Lopes

LED BY: SÃO PAULO CITY HALL

During this visit, the group got to know the facilities and workings of UMAPAZ - Coordination of Environmental Education and Culture of Peace and Open University for the Environment and Culture of Peace. UMAPAZ plays a key role in formulating and promoting Environmental Education through a variety of activities and courses.

Participants also visited the Manequinho Lopes Nursery to take part in its Environmental Adventure Program, aiming to raise awareness of socio-environmental issues through immersive experiences, addressing topics such as biodiversity, climate change, and policy approaches while encouraging reflection on human-nature relationships.



## Carolina Maria de Jesus Mechanized Sorting Center

LED BY: SÃO PAULO CITY HALL

Managed by Ecourbis, this Center can sort up to 250 tons of materials a day. Visitors were introduced to São Paulo's waste collection and sorting system. The tour sparked a discussion on common urban waste management challenges and solutions, with presenters sharing relevant data. They also highlighted the city's support program for Cooperatives and the management program for Recycling Cooperatives.



## Bruno Covas Linear Park

LED BY: SÃO PAULO STATE GOVERNMENT

Visitors learned about the process of requalifying urban spaces, leading to the creation of public parks. They also discovered how urban parks enhance human-wildlife interaction, though these interactions can pose public health risks and generate negative feelings towards wildlife. The Wildlife Management Department works to mitigate these risks and provides guidance. Additionally, the tour addressed managing domestic animals with an integrated health approach for people, animals, and ecosystems.



## The Aquapolo water recycling case

LED BY: SÃO PAULO STATE GOVERNMENT

The visit presented the case of Aquapolo, Latin America's largest water recycling company, using treated effluent to supply water to industries in the Greater São Paulo's industrial area, known as the "ABC Region." Participants toured the treatment plant and learned about the company's advanced tertiary treatment process.



## SECTION IV

# From global to local to global

*Building on the unprecedented COP28's multilevel action momentum and with the upcoming CBD COP16 and Climate Change COP29 by year-end, cities and regions have a window of opportunity to amplify their voices in the global climate discussions.*

The powerful interplay between these two critical global agendas and their impacts on policy-making will also shape the roadmap toward Climate Change COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in 2025. These global processes influence local and regional initiatives, stressing the need for global strategies to address on-the-ground challenges faced by cities, towns, and regions worldwide.



**Do global ao local e ao global:  
Moldando o futuro da sustentabilidade**

**From global to local to global:  
Shaping the future of sustainability**

**De lo global a lo local a lo global: dando  
forma al futuro de la sostenibilidad**

**WATCH THE FULL PLENARY  
From global to local to global:  
Shaping the future of sustainability**

At the Congress, mayors and climate leaders, including Razan Al Mubarak, COP28 High-Level Champion and President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature; and Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Special Advisor to COP29 Presidency, emphasized that now is the time for local and regional governments to push for an integrated approach to the climate and nature crises, as well as cross-government action to achieve the urgently needed transformations toward a sustainable world.

In addition, as the primary component of the first day of the ICLEI World Congress 2024, the ICLEI Global Research & Innovation Symposium convened researchers, innovators, urban practitioners, and investors to foster a new generation of “next practices.” Significant topics shaped this seventh edition, including high-level plenaries on the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities (SRCC) and discussions on agenda-setting innovation and emerging technologies. The event also featured its signature Research & Innovation Marketplace, offering an interactive space for bridging the gap between concepts, action, research, and financial support.



LEARN MORE  
**CityTalk**

[Seizing the moment: Local action to address biodiversity loss and climate change](#)



Introduction

The power of a network

Our changing world

Spotlight  
on South America

From global  
to local to global

A sustainable and  
equitable Congress

Accelerating forward

# Igniting innovation, accelerating action: The seventh triennial ICLEI Global Research & Innovation Symposium

The Global Research & Innovation Symposium was the primary component of the first day of the ICLEI World Congress 2024. With registration closing early due to overwhelming demand, it brought together more than 150 in-person participants and 20 invited high-level speakers, setting the stage for a high-energy and impactful week in São Paulo.

This full-day program was designed and delivered under ICLEI's [Global Research & Innovation Strategy](#) in partnership with Mission Innovation's Net-Zero Compatible Innovations Initiative, UNFCCC Global Innovation Hub, Open Earth Foundation, and Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM), and served as a complementary event to the upcoming Innovate4Cities 2024 Conference (I4C24) in Montreal, Canada. The event was hosted by the São Paulo School of Management of Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV EAESP) and supported by the University of São Paulo (USP).



Key speakers included: Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair of the IPCC and Chair of the Urban Research and Innovation Portfolio for the ICLEI Global Executive Committee; Rodrigo Ravena, Secretary of Green and Environment, São Paulo City Hall; Jose Puppim de Oliveira, Professor, FGV EAESP; Pedro Jacobi, President of the Board of Directors, ICLEI South America Secretariat, and Professor at the University of São Paulo; Amelia Clarke, Professor, University of Waterloo; Martin Wainstein, Executive Director, Open Earth Foundation; Dennis Pamlin, Chief Executive Officer, The Net-Zero Compatibility Initiative, Mission Innovation; David Ekelund, CEO of Icebug; Heiko Buch-Illing, CEO of the Outdoor Institute in Silkeborg, Denmark; Smita Rakesh, Partner, Social Alpha; Randy Sa'd, Executive Director, REFOCUS & Flourishing Enterprise Institute; Benjamin Jance, Head of Research and Innovation, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; Jeremy Eppel, Principal, NatureFinance; Urszula Kasperek, Senior Manager of International Advocacy, Climate Group; Cassia Moraes, Partnerships Manager (Strategic Programmes), EIT Climate-KIC; and Pourya Salehi, Head of Urban Research, Innovation, and Development, ICLEI World Secretariat.

In addition to high-level plenary discussions, the Research & Innovation Marketplace - delivered in partnership with I4C24 - was a highlight of the day. It gave selected pitch makers, including mayors and city representatives, urban practitioners, academics and international organizations, the opportunity to pitch and receive valuable feedback from the audience and invited experts on their concepts and projects in four thematic areas: Digitalization, Finance, Governance & Urban Planning, and Systems Transformation.



## Key outcomes of the Global Research & Innovation Symposium

Several key outcomes emerged from the day that are crucial for our collective journey toward sustainability and climate action. They include enhancing ecosystems of collaboration, integrated and human needs-centered innovation, the urgent need for innovative finance, accessibility and quality of data in digitalization, policy relevance, and the synergy of global and local efforts.

### Enhanced ecosystems of collaboration

The Symposium successfully brought together various stakeholders, including cities, academia, business, and international organizations. This collaborative environment emphasizes the importance of inclusive and co-created solutions, fostering a spirit of partnership essential for addressing complex global challenges and encourages lengthening the table to include actors such as sustainability and climate startups and incubators.

### Integrated and human needs-centered innovation

The event highlighted the necessity of innovation centered on human needs. This approach transforms challenges into opportunities by aligning business models with environmental management. The Symposium showcased how sustainable solutions can be more effectively developed and implemented, an approach encapsulated by the Expanded Climate and Innovation Agenda and associated tools led by Mission Innovation with ICLEI and the UNFCCC Global Innovation Hub.

### The urgent need for innovative finance

One of the critical discussions at the Symposium was the pressing need for innovative financial solutions to support sustainable initiatives. The Symposium underscored the gravity of this situation and the importance of developing new financial models and investment strategies that can provide the necessary resources to drive impactful change and support long-term sustainability projects.





## Accessibility and quality central to digitalization and leveraging new technologies

As digitalization and new technologies become increasingly integral to sustainability efforts, the Symposium emphasized the importance of ensuring access to emerging technologies and maintaining a high quality of context-relevant data. This means ensuring that data to inform decision-making and technological advancements are available to all, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographical context, and that they are implemented in ways that enhance, rather than hinder, sustainability goals.

## Policy relevance for research products

The discussions underscored the importance of producing reports and recommendations that are policy-relevant but non-prescriptive. This means creating documents that provide valuable insights and guidance without dictating specific actions. The IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities aims to be an example of this by incorporating the insights of both scientists and practitioners. By integrating scientific knowledge with local insights, these reports can help policymakers make informed decisions tailored to their unique contexts, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes.

## Global and local efforts

The Symposium showcased both global leadership in innovation and energy transition and local efforts in sustainability. This dual focus highlighted the interconnectedness of these initiatives and the importance of collaboration across different levels. By recognizing and supporting global and local efforts, the Symposium emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to sustainability that leverages the strengths of diverse stakeholders and addresses challenges from multiple angles. Especially highlighted was the ongoing and future work of Brazilian cities to lead on innovative solutions in the run-up to COP30 in Belém.

One key influence of the Symposium was the ongoing development of the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities. With Vice-Chair of the IPCC, Diana Ürge-Vorsatz leading the conversation in this regard, she highlighted the need for multifaceted, holistic innovation, including progressive policy and societal engagement and leveraging the knowledge and expertise of both scientists and practitioners to address complex climate challenges.



The insights and collaborations from the Global Research & Innovation Symposium were disseminated to the broader World Congress at two research and innovation panel discussions on the final day, and will inform discussions at I4C24 later in the year in Montreal, Canada, and subsequent knowledge products. This continuity ensures that the momentum and innovative spirit generated at the Symposium will drive further discussions and actions, fostering a global network of stakeholders committed to sustainable urban development and climate resilience.

To learn more about the Global Research & Innovation Symposium, visit: [placeholder for the website](#)



# Anchoring the São Paulo Urban Summit

The ICLEI World Congress 2024 was the main event of the São Paulo Urban Summit, a week full of activities that highlighted the fundamental role of cities.

During the week, in addition to the Congress, there was a [preparatory meeting of Urban 20](#), a G20 Engagement Group that brings together cities from G20 countries to inform and influence national leaders' discussions. As Brazil officially assumes the presidency of the G20, replacing India, Brazilian cities will lead the U20, elevating the voices of urban centers at the heart of the G20 economies. The aim of the U20 is to facilitate lasting engagement between the G20 and cities, raise the profile of urban issues on the G20 agenda, and establish a forum for cities to develop a collective message and perspective to formally contribute to the G20 negotiations.

The week also included the [Metropolis Board of Directors Meeting](#), further reinforcing the importance of cities on the global stage, and the Mercociudades Board meeting that warned of the serious consequences of climate change in cities in Latin America and delivered the "[São Paulo Declaration](#)".

## Side events during the Congress

On June 17, 18, and 20, the Secretary of Environment and Infrastructure of the Government of the State of São Paulo hosted ICLEI World Congress side events and partner meetings. The **27 events showcased important actions and commitments** such as the [Nature Positive Call to Action](#) of the High Level Champions Team, the [Letter of Commitment](#) for the CHAMP initiative of the National Mayors Front (FNP), and the [Sustainable Development Index for Brazilian Cities](#) (IDSC) from the Brazilian Program of Sustainable Cities, PSC. A session focused on unraveling climate finance and led by GCoM, GIZ, Gap Fund, and the ABDE, along with a matchmaking event driven by CDP and GCoM, brought together SBDs, investment facilities, and companies to discuss ways to enhance climate finance projects in cities.



The first [Hemispheric Dialogue of the Cities Forward initiative](#), - a joint venture involving 24 cities in the Americas (12 in the U.S. and 12 in Latin America and the Caribbean), the U.S. Department of State, three regional and country offices of ICLEI, Resilient Cities Catalyst, and the Institute of the Americas, facilitated by esteemed panelists, highlighted the need for cross-sector collaboration in tackling climate change and sustainability. The key takeaway was the necessity for ambition, realism, and optimism in enhancing community life.

Other ICLEI World Congress side events led by Regions4, the Mercociudades network, the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), the American Red Cross and RCRC Climate Centre, the State of São Paulo, and the ICLEI regional offices stressed a common vision to address climate and nature crisis.



# Cases from thematic track: *Mechanisms for change*

Cities globally are adopting diverse mechanisms to address climate change and promote sustainability, driven by collaborative efforts across sectors and levels of government. These transformative actions include citizen-led planning processes, youth engagement programs, and integrating indigenous knowledge. Many cities are taking integrated and holistic approaches to environmental policies and their financial, energy efficiency, and sustainable procurement strategies, making their local actions resonate on a global scale.



# Cases from thematic track: *Mechanisms for change*

## AFRICA

### Cape Coast, Ghana: Community-driven tree planting

Cape Coast aligns with Ghana's policy to plant 6 million trees annually through shared and equitable responsibility. On planting day, everyone—from street vendors to the mayor—participates without compensation. [The city ensures success by engaging the community early](#), explaining the initiative's importance, and fostering a collective spirit.

### Cape Town, South Africa: Restoring urban nature

Under UNEP's [Generation Restoration Cities program](#), which includes multi stakeholder collaboration, Cape Town enhances its natural environment by restoring wetlands, rehabilitating coastal dune systems, removing invasive species, and fostering indigenous vegetation.

### Kampala, Uganda: Amplifying youth voices

Last year, Kampala hosted a [youth-led local stocktake](#) with over 100 young participants from climate NGOs, indigenous communities, and civil society. The aim was to amplify youth voices in the Global Stocktake ahead of COP28.

### Lusaka, Zambia: Advancing climate mitigation and adaptation

[Lusaka's local stocktake](#), held ahead of COP28, brought together the city's 33 Wards—localized administrative units—to establish the responsibilities of Ward Development Committees in advancing climate mitigation and adaptation. One key responsibility is contributing to a city-wide natural resource inventory.

### Nansana, Uganda: Driving youth climate action

Nansana's [2020-2025 development plan](#) prioritizes youth involvement in climate strategies. It supports innovations, education, awareness programs, and gender-responsive solutions. Youth clubs receive training on environmental protection and start-up capital for climate adaptation and mitigation.



## EAST ASIA

### Chengdu, China: Pioneering the "park city" concept

In 2021, Chengdu became [China's first national "park city"](#) standardization pilot area. The city has implemented this concept through urban planning, environmental protection, and industrial development, totaling 1,556 parks with over 80% of its original landforms preserved.

### Guangzhou, China: Leading waste management

The Likeng Waste-to-Energy Plant in Guangzhou converts waste into usable energy, processing 1,000 metric tons of garbage daily from 100,000 families. The plant generates electricity to power 15,000 households, showcasing an efficient approach to waste management and energy production.

## EUROPE

### Bonn, Germany: Building citizen-centric climate action

The [Bonn4Future Plan](#) is the city's most extensive participation initiative. Over two years, more than 320 randomly selected citizens, stakeholders, and city experts actively contributed through special climate days, forums, and a digital sustainability platform. The outcome: the Citizens' Climate Action Plan, which is now being integrated into the Bonn Climate Plan 2035.

### Istanbul, Türkiye: Mastering earthquake prevention

The [Earthquake Master Plan of Istanbul](#) offers a new approach to urban seismic risk management that considers both natural and human hazards. It involves public administration, businesses, NGOs, and local communities in unified risk management through agreements and subprojects.

### Lahti, Finland: Bridging nature and health

The ["Nature Step to Health"](#) program is a comprehensive 10-year initiative aiming to improve public health, mitigate climate change, enhance adaptation, increase biodiversity, and foster collaboration between environmental and health sectors.



## Malmö, Sweden: Encouraging sustainable procurement

The city recently developed procurement criteria for several tenders based on universal design principles to make physical infrastructure, goods and services accessible to people of all ages, sizes and abilities. For this approach, the city won the [Procura+ Innovation Procurement of the Year award](#).

## Matosinhos, Portugal: Improving energy efficiency

The [Matosinhos Energy Hub](#) provides a one-stop shop for citizens and housing managers, offering support for energy efficiency solutions, renewable energy, funding opportunities, and implementation assistance.

## MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### Yucatan State, Mexico: Cultivating for healing

Yucatan implements the [One Health approach](#), emphasizing the need to harmonize urban development with nature for the planet's and its people's well-being. Initiatives include community engagement to cultivate neglected Mayan native fruits with nutritious and healing properties.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Austin, USA: Pacting for biodiversity

Ahead of CBD COP16, Austin became a pioneer signatory of the [Berlin Urban Nature Pact](#), working towards a global biodiversity agenda. This action showcases the city's commitment to implementing the 23 targets from the Kunming-Montreal framework to curb biodiversity loss by 2030.

### Baltimore, USA: Applying climate action with effective communication

The city launched a community survey to inform its [newly updated Climate Action Plan](#). Instead of using the term "climate change" - which generates resistance in some residents - they opted for more precise questions about how individuals pay their energy bills, use public transit, and manage extreme weather conditions.





### **Fort Collins, USA: Financing the energy transition**

Under the [Epic Home program](#), Fort Collins offers tenants and owners loans up to \$50,000 for energy efficiency upgrades and solar systems. The loans have low rates and don't require any money down. Repayments are made through monthly utility bills.

### **Hoboken, USA: Advancing sustainability through accountability**

The city has [adopted a bold strategy](#) to hold big oil companies accountable for climate damages. It intends to make fossil fuel companies compensate for climate-related losses, such as storm surges and flooding.

### **Montreal, Canada: Banning pesticides**

Montreal passed a [bylaw regulating pesticide sales and use](#) to protect public health, preserve the environment, and conserve biodiversity. The bylaw bans over 35 dangerous molecules found in these products.

### **Sun Prairie, USA: Transforming a library into a resilience center**

Frequent storms that cut electricity have prompted the [transformation of the public library](#). Solar panels and batteries will enable the building to become a microgrid that supports medical equipment, hosts local radio and TV stations to keep people informed, and provides communication stations. It will also include a storm shelter.

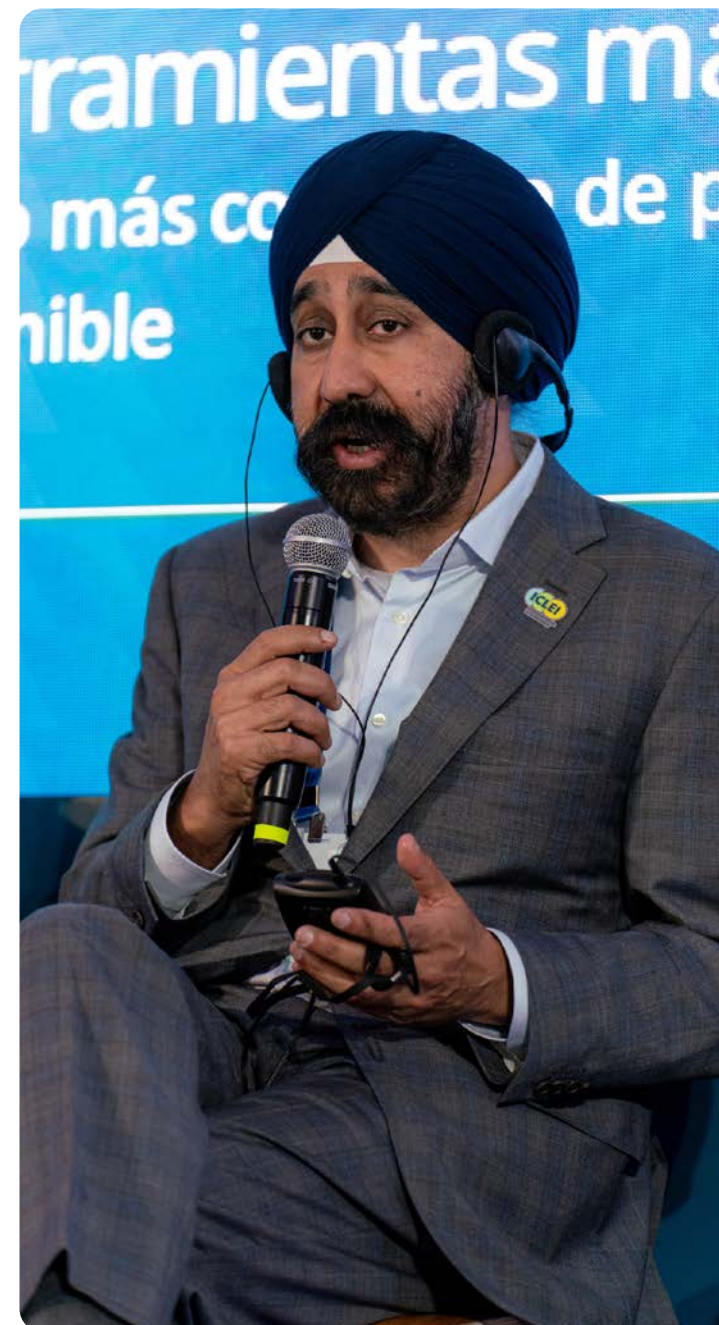
### **Toronto, Canada: Including Indigenous voices in climate action**

Toronto's [Indigenous Climate Action Grant](#) supports the city's strategy to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040. The city is committed to working with Indigenous rights holders and urban Indigenous communities to share knowledge and learning.

## **OCEANIA**

### **Yarra, Australia: Pioneering carbon neutrality**

In 2012, Yarra became the second council in Australia to achieve carbon neutrality under the [Climate Active certification](#). Working closely with the national government, Yarra's strategy included measuring emissions, eliminating waste, improving energy efficiency, and switching to zero-emission technologies powered by renewable electricity.



## SOUTH AMERICA

### Francisco Morato, Brazil: Strategizing through citizen assemblies

The city was part of the [Decidadania](#) program, an initiative organized by Delibera Brasil in partnership with ICLEI South America and the School of Parliament, with the aim of promoting [Citizens' Assemblies](#) focused on the climate agenda in Brazilian cities. Francisco Morato's citizens worked together, providing recommendations on contentious sustainability topics that directly impact residents to guide the city's climate strategies.

### Rosario, Argentina: Pioneering the local stocktake in Latin America

In 2023, [Rosario was the only Latin American municipality to hold a local stocktake](#), showcasing its efforts to global progress to counter climate change. With high community involvement, the event discussed the city's Climate Action Plan on energy, transport, waste, and social and economic inequalities.

### Vitacura, Chile: Piloting an organic waste plan

Vitacura's [pilot plan for organic waste](#) involves 1,100 homes, high schools, universities, and city offices. Each is provided with a kit that includes a container and compostable bag collected weekly. The waste is sent to a treatment plant and returned as compost for public and educational use. The project has 97% of residents' approval.

## SOUTH ASIA

### Kochi, India: Resettling a flood-prone community with equity

Kochi faced the challenge of resettling a slum community vulnerable to flooding. [The city allocated the best available land instead of relocating it to the cheapest land](#), as is the common standard. This approach prevented uprooting children from their schools and allowed residents to continue worshipping at local temples.



## SOUTHEAST ASIA

### Del Carmen, Philippines: Leading nature-based solutions

Since 2010, Del Carmen's [Mangrove Management Program](#) has grown and protected a forest that successfully shielded the island during a 2021 super typhoon. The city also focuses on marine protected areas, watershed management, and seagrass restoration, earning global recognition and awards for these nature-based solutions.



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CityTalk

[Cities can bring CHAMP to life](#)



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## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### Call to national associations of local governments to support CHAMP and multilevel climate action

Mayor Katja Dörner, City of Bonn, Germany, and chair of the Climate Action Governance Portfolio for the ICLEI Global Executive Committee made a [call-to-action](#) inviting all ICLEI leaders to proactively approach their national governments and national associations of local governments for multilevel NDCs by 2025. This call builds on outcomes from COP28 and the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships for Climate Action (CHAMP) initiative, which has been signed by 72 countries and is an effort intended to enhance cooperation with subnational governments in financing, implementation, and the monitoring of climate strategies.

Leaders were also invited to report their progress at the annual [Daring Cities Forum](#). This followed an announcement on the first day of the Congress that [Frente Nacional de Prefeitas e Prefeitos \(FNP\) – Brazil’s national association of cities – released a letter of commitment \(PT\) in which mayors pledged their support for CHAMP](#). This was followed by a similar [resolution by the United States Conference of Mayors](#) later in the week.

## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### Cities and Regions Biodiversity Summit announced for the CBD COP16 in Cali, Colombia

The [8th Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities](#), an official parallel event to CBD COP16, will take place on 26 October 2024 in the Blue Zone at the CBD COP in Cali, and is part of a 3-day program from 25-27 October. Announced by ICLEI and the City of Cali at the Congress, the Summit will continue a proud tradition, being the eighth such event since the first Summit convened 14 years ago.

At CBD COP16, nations will be tasked with reviewing the state of implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Parties to the Convention are expected to show the alignment of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the Framework. CDB COP16 will further develop the monitoring framework and advance resource mobilization for the Global Biodiversity Framework.



MEDIA  
SPOTLIGHT



SMARTCITIES  
DIVE

[U.S. cities are raising climate ambition through subnational diplomacy](#)

National associations of cities and city leaders, including in the United States, are taking country-level climate goals into their own hands, by advocating for stronger participation of subnational governments in climate decision-making.

## CONGRESS OUTCOME

### New contributors to the Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to end plastic pollution

In April 2024, with the Government of Quebec, Government of Catalonia, UCLG, and further partners, ICLEI [launched the Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to end plastic pollution](#). The purpose of the Coalition is to ensure that an ambitious but practical instrument is collectively shaped with local and subnational governments and ensures the participation and resourcing of local and subnational governments to contribute to ending plastic pollution. During the Congress, [cities and subnational governments from five continents](#) added their voice to the Coalition. The state of Rio de Janeiro and the city of Goyang, South Korea, were among those who joined the Coalition of Local and Subnational Governments to end plastic pollution, strengthening ICLEI's efforts in circular economy and environmental impact reduction.



# A sustainable and equitable Congress

*The ICLEI World Congress 2024 in São Paulo exemplifies a commitment to sustainability and equity in event planning and execution.*

Hosted in the eco-friendly Ibirapuera Park, the event minimized its environmental impact through thoughtful venue selection, sustainable catering, and waste reduction strategies. Simultaneously, it prioritized inclusivity with accessible facilities, multilingual support, and diverse representation. By integrating these principles, the ICLEI World Congress 2024 not only discussed sustainability and equity but embodied these values, setting a standard for responsible and inclusive global gatherings.



# Sustainability at the ICLEI World Congress 2024

To align with our mission, ICLEI endeavored to deliver a sustainable event for all attendees at the ICLEI World Congress 2024.

A special feature of the Congress was hosting the core components inside the famous Ibirapuera Park in São Paulo. This unique venue allowed participants to experience the Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica), the second largest rainforest in the world after the Amazon Rainforest. The venue, Pavilhão das Culturas Brasileiras, was designed by renowned Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer in the 1950s, featured a natural lighting system that significantly reduced the event's ecological footprint.

## Our commitment to sustainability

We committed to delivering a sustainable event for all our attendees with the support of the municipal investment and export promotion agency SP Negócios, the implementer of the event, by working to:

- Find **sustainable catering** with a variety of dietary options;
- **Limit onsite waste** including single use products;
- Offer **environmentally responsible accommodation** options;
- Provide **water bottle filling stations** on site;
- Encourage the use of **public or shared transit through accessible locations**;
- **Limit the use of paper** for event materials and communications;
- **Procure materials and services locally** where possible;
- **Utilize natural lighting** already abundant inside the venue.



Aligned with ICLEI's mandate, [Urbia Parks](#), the concessionaire responsible for managing Ibirapuera Park, uses an advanced sorting station that selects recyclables to be sent to cooperatives. These recyclables are circulated until they can be resold to industry. Organic waste is processed in a biodigester and turned into fertilizer for the park.

# Equity at the ICLEI World Congress 2024

Our goal was to create an event that was both accessible and inclusive, reflecting our commitment to equity and representation. Our approach encompassed a range of strategies designed to ensure that every participant felt welcomed and valued.

We worked to seek equity in every aspect of the Congress, from linguistic accessibility to local community support, from venue accessibility to diverse catering options. This commitment to accessibility not only enhanced the event's overall atmosphere but also ensured that everyone, regardless of background or ability, could participate fully and comfortably.

## Our commitment to equity

In line with ICLEI's Equitable Events Guidelines, developed as a part of the last ICLEI World Congress in Malmö, Sweden, we committed to delivering an accessible and inclusive Congress in 2024. In order to achieve this goal we:

- Ensured **venue accessibility** including ramps and clear tape marking on stairs;
- Ensured **event accessibility** through features such as interpretation between Portuguese, English and Spanish and the use of sign language interpreters;
- Provided catering with **diverse food options for dietary restrictions**;
- Offered a **diverse event program** that included representatives from different regions, genders, age groups, etc;
- Prioritized **accessibility in communications** and digital channels;
- Provided moderators, speakers, and key staff with **equity guidelines**;
- Provided **reliable internet connection** for digital resources and accessibility tools;
- **Facilitated opportunities for participants to share experiences** and explore the park and city together.



A special equity feature at this Congress were sign language interpreters who supported interpretation between Portuguese and Brazilian Sign Language at all plenaries and thematic sessions. [Brazil is one of 77 countries in which sign language is legally recognized](#) and it is one of the earlier countries to take this step.



# Accelerating forward: Mapping our path to 2030

*Our collective journey towards sustainable development is only gaining momentum.*

At the ICLEI World Congress 2024, we connected, collaborated, and committed to innovative projects, impactful partnerships, and strategic initiatives that will drive our network forward in our shared mission for a sustainable future. These collaborations are crucial for enhancing collective local action on sustainability and achieving the ambitious goals set out in the ICLEI Strategic Vision 2024-2030.

As instability threatens the globe, we need to prepare our communities to adapt and respond to current and future challenges. Local and regional governments need to prioritize inclusive approaches to policy-making and implementation, actively engaging and collaborating with underrepresented segments of the community. This means a transition for the role of local and regional governments from service providers to community enablers.



**WATCH THE FINAL CLOSING PLENARY**  
**Accelerating forward:  
Mapping our path to 2030**

The ICLEI World Congress 2024 featured the stories of communities that are doing just that, showcasing approaches that ICLEI Members use to equitably and sustainably adapt, anticipate and respond to present and future challenges, especially those that bring new voices to the table, including youth, vulnerable groups and community-based groups.

We are focused on charting the path ahead, ensuring that our efforts as a global network continue to accelerate. Thank you to our amazing host, the City of São Paulo, Brazil; our highly committed Members around the world; all of our partners and donors; and everyone working with us to harness the power of our network to create lasting change for communities worldwide.

**We look forward to seeing you at the next ICLEI World Congress in 2027!**

