



FORUM OF MAYORS 2020

6 OCTOBER 2020 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | ROOM XVII | GENEVA | SWITZERLAND

CITY ACTION FOR RESILIENT FUTURE

Updated Concept Note for the
Fifth meeting of the Steering Committee
on 12 May 2020 (WebEx)

Draft 1 May 2020

#MayorsAction

I. Introduction

1. The UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management agreed “to dedicate one of the three days of the Committee session to discussions, and the participation of, local authorities, in particular mayors” (ECE/HBP/201). This document presents a draft concept note on the organization of the Forum of Mayors.
2. The draft concept note was presented and discussed at the Committee Bureau meeting on 17 December 2019 and is being regularly discussed at the Forum Steering Committee meetings.
3. This document presents an updated draft based on conclusions and outcomes of the Fourth Steering Committee meeting which took place on 8 April 2020 via WebEx.

II. Background

4. The [Day of Cities](#), organized by UNECE on 8 April 2019 in Geneva, featured two roundtables in which mayors and deputy mayors from UNECE member States presented best practices from their cities, described challenges encountered in trying to make their cities smarter and more sustainable, and elaborated their vision for the future of urban sustainability in the region. The first roundtable was themed “Improving the quality of life of urban inhabitants”. During this roundtable, the mayors were invited to discuss smart tools for a more sustainable environment, increased resilience to disasters and climate change; as well as affordable and healthy housing, improved access to basic services for vulnerable populations and sustainable infrastructure. The second roundtable focussed on “Improving the efficiency and competitiveness of urban operations and services”. This roundtable accommodated a discussion on smart tools for road safety and sustainable urban mobility, the desired infrastructure for cities of the future, and policy instruments needed to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of urban services. Speeches of the participants were followed by a Q&A session and the audience was given the opportunity to enquire about any specific projects or initiatives mentioned. A summary of the discussions from the Day of Cities is available in the document [ECE/HBP/2019/3](#).
5. The discussion continued during the high-level segment of the [UNECE sixty-eighth Commission Session](#) on 9 April 2019, where member States further deliberated on how to harness smart sustainable cities as drivers for sustainable development in the UNECE region. Building upon discussions led both at the Day of Cities and the Commission Session, it was proposed that the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management explores “the possibility of establishing a forum of Mayors” (see E/2019/37; E/ECE/1488 paragraph 38).
6. Following the successful Day of Cities and based on its discussion, the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land

Management at its 80th session agreed “to dedicate one of the three days of the Committee session to discussions, and the participation of, local authorities, in particular mayors, following a similar format to the Day of Cities. The “Forum of Mayors” will be organized on the first day of the Committee session and will focus on a specific thematic issue related to sustainable urban development, housing and land management.” (see ECE/HBP/201 paragraph 34). The Committee “also decided to hold the Forum in 2020 and 2021. An assessment of the meeting format, based on parameters agreed upon by the Committee Bureau, will be presented at the Committee session in 2022” (see ECE/HBP/201 paragraph 34).

7. The Committee “recognized the important role of cities and local authorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs” and “invited the Forum to transmit its recommendations on how to address the challenges that local authorities/governments face in achieving sustainable urban development, housing and land management” (see ECE/HBP/201 paragraph 34).
8. The aim of the Forum of Mayors is to reinforce the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” and the New Urban Agenda. The Forum of Mayors will also support the implementation of the UN Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing.

III. Adjustment of the thematic focus of the Forum of Mayors

9. The topic for the Forum of Mayors, initially agreed by the Committee in 2020, was “Climate Actions in Cities”. This topic is of crucial importance as estimates suggest that cities are responsible for 75 percent of global CO2 emissions, with transport and buildings being among the largest contributors¹. This topic was initially selected
10. following the recommendations of the Committee Bureau meeting, which took place on 17 December 2019. The Bureau recommended to the Secretariat to focus the Forum’s discussion on the topics which are within the Committee’s mandate such as urban planning, housing and land management. The topic was further updated based on the discussion at the meetings of the Steering Committee.
11. At its meeting on 25 March 2020, the Steering Committee underlined that the spread of COVID-19 has raised significant concerns at the global level in particular vis-à-vis the long-term economic and social impacts, especially on cities. Given the relevance of the topic for cities in 2020, the secretariat invited the Steering Committee to consider adjusting the theme of the Forum of Mayors 2020.
12. The Steering Committee decided at its Fourth Steering Committee on 8 April 2020 to adjust the theme to “**City action for a resilient future: Strengthening local government preparedness and response to emergencies and the impact of disasters and climate change.**” and to

¹[UNEP, Cities and climate change](#)

submit this proposal to the Bureau of the Committee for endorsement and then of the Committee (online), so that EXCOM could be informed accordingly.

Table 1. Adjusted Theme of the Forum of Mayors 2020

City Action for A Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impacts of Disasters and Climate Change

Theme	City Action for A Resilient Future
Focus	Immediate and long-term responses by local authorities to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to climate change and natural disasters. Actions presented by mayors can include local stimulus plans, urban infrastructure and city partnerships, long term plans for resilience on climate change impacts.
Output	Declaration of Mayors addressing responses to emergencies, including pandemic, climate change and natural hazards. An online tool or database/ platform to be developed jointly by Mayors and other UN agencies, which facilitates the exchange of best practices
Key partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UN System partners: UN Habitat, UN Environment, FAO, UNFCCC, WMO, UN Women, ITU, ILO ▪ City alliances: Geneva City Hub, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), PLATFORMA ▪ Potential partners from academia, civil society and the private sector.
Added value of UNECE	UNECE Nexus on “Sustainable Smart Cities for all Ages”, UNECE’s, as well as “Natural Resources Management” Nexus, various Conventions and ECE tools

IV. Proposed organization of the Forum of Mayors

13. The Committee “agreed on the following theme to be covered by the 2020 Forum of Mayors: Cities Climate Action” (see ECE/HBP/201 paragraph 34). At its fourth meeting, the Steering Committee adjusted the theme to “City action for a resilient future: Strengthening local government preparedness and response to emergencies and the impact of disasters and climate change.” The first Forum of Mayors will be convened on the first day of the 81st session of the Committee on 6 October 2020. The list of actions which are necessary to complete its organization, as well as provisional timing, are listed in Annex 1.

14. The preparation of the Forum is coordinated by the secretariat of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management where responsible officers are Ms. Paola Deda, Director, Forests, Land and Housing Division, paola.deda@un.org; and Ms. Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, gulnara.roll@un.org. Ms. Elise Zerrath, Elise.Zerrath@un.org is the project coordination for the Forum.
15. In line with the Committee's decision during its 80th session, "the Forum will be supported by a Steering Committee composed of Bureau members, the ECE sustainable smart cities nexus and experts based on the thematic session of the Forum" (see ECE/HBP/201 paragraph 34).
16. The Committee Bureau at its meeting on 17 December 2019 agreed on the composition of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee includes representatives of the Committee Bureau, UNECE staff who are members of the UNECE Nexus on "Sustainable Smart Cities for all Ages" and external experts.
17. The members of the Steering Committee for the year 2020 are:

Committee Bureau members

Ms. Joana Balsemão, Portugal, Co-Chair, joana.balsemao@cm-cascais.pt
Mr. Edouard Jay, Switzerland, Co-Chair, edouard.jay@seco.admin.ch
Ms. Doris Andoni, Albania, doris.andoni@financa.gov.al;
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Mr. Olzhas Sartayev, Kazakhstan, olzhas.sartayev@gmail.com
Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni, Italy, g.bambagioni@tecnoborsa.com
Ms. Marie-Pierre Meganck on behalf of Mr. Yves Laurent Sapoval, France, marie-pierre.meganck@diplomatie.gouv.fr
Ms. Beatriz Corredor, Spain, bcorredor@registradores.org

Representatives of the Canton of Geneva

Mr. Olivier Coutau, Canton de Genève, olivier.coutau@etat.ge.ch

Representatives of other organizations

Ms. Kamelia Kemieva, Geneva City Hub, kamelia.kemileva@axlr.ch

Representatives of the UNECE Nexus on "Sustainable and Smart Cities for All Ages"

Mr. Tony Bonnici, Coordinator of the UNECE Nexus "Sustainable Smart Cities for all Ages Nexus"
Mr. Anders Jonsson, Chief, UNECE Innovation Section
Ms. Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

Ms. Lorenza Jachia, Secretary to the UNECE Working Party on standards

Ms. Franziska Hirsch, Secretary to the UNECE Convention on Industrial Accidents

Mr. Scott Foster, Director, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division

Mr. Roel Janssens, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE Transport Division.

On the outcomes of the Steering Committee meeting on 3 March 2020, it was also decided to establish an expert panel, which will be established on a later stage.

Experts

Mr. Oleg Golubchikov, Professor, Cardiff University, UK

Additional experts may be added

V. Expected outcomes of the Forum of Mayors

18. The Forum is expected to adopt a Joint Declaration of Mayors addressing local responses to emergencies, including pandemic, climate change and natural hazards.
19. An online database/ platform is to be developed jointly with Mayors which facilitates the exchange of best practices and successful strategies to urban resilience.
20. The outcomes and recommendations of the Forum of Mayors discussions will be presented on 7 October 2020 at the 81st session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.
21. Given the cross-cutting character of the Forum theme, the Forum outcomes will be also transmitted to other UNECE intergovernmental committees, as appropriate.

VI. Structure/ proposal agenda of the Forum of Mayors

22. The Forum of Mayors will be held on 6 October 2020 at Palais des Nations. Online participation will be possible; thus ensuring that the Forum will take place regardless of potential travel restrictions.
23. The Mayors will be invited to share best practices and local actions related to the overall theme in 3-minute interventions. The official languages of the meeting are English, French and Russian. In exceptional cases, mayors will be permitted to speak in their own languages if the city provides a professional interpreter who will translate the presentation into one of the official languages. Costs of such interpretation are to be covered by the respective city.