



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**C40 Cities Mayors Summit
Johannesburg, 5 February 2014**

**Address by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Michael Bloomberg, President, C40 Board and former Mayor of New York City,
Frank Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen,
Michal Olszewski, Deputy Mayor of Warsaw,
Hernán Nuñez, Deputy Mayor of Lima,
May I borrow the wonderful African expression “All protocol observed”,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This is a Summit of many firsts! Mayor Eduardo Paes is the first C40 Chair from a developing country. This is the first C40 Summit in the developing world, and the first in Africa. And the first C40 meeting to invite a representative of the Climate Change Convention, may I say how delighted I am to be here.

I am delighted not only because we are discussing City Leadership and the International Climate Change Agenda, but because this is the first time that I am on a panel with my past, present and future sitting right here in front of me.

Usually that happens only when you are in the emergency room with intense heart pain. This is, of course, a much more welcome presence of the past, present and future. Let me explain.

A little more than four years ago, in the recent past, we held a famous climate change negotiation in Copenhagen. While some may remember it otherwise, I have a soft spot for that conference because it was there that the idea originally emerged among some colleagues that I should be nominated to become the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, otherwise known as the chief servant of the governments in the international climate negotiations.

As I took over soon after Copenhagen, I can personally vouch for the fact that the results of that meeting have been the backbone of climate negotiations ever since. So let me thank Copenhagen for the important guidance and congratulate Mayor Jensen on his city carbon neutrality goal, an inspiration for many peers.

Last year we were all shocked by the power of destruction of Hurricane Sandy on New York, but not all were brave enough to publicly make the link to the growing waves of devastation of climate change. Mayor Bloomberg was clear and public in his assessment.

May I congratulate you Mayor Bloomberg for your courage, and for the ambitious ‘Stronger and More Resilient New York’ plan that you developed after the storm. I am delighted that the Secretary-General of the UN recently named you Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change. May I publicly warn you that I will be frequently knocking on your door.

At the end of last year we held COP 19 and CMP9 in the beautiful Warsaw National Stadium. Maybe due to the excellent working conditions provided, national governments adopted an impressive number of key decisions, including one to invite cities and sub-national governments to the negotiations this year to share best policies and practices.

The Warsaw meeting also decided to fast forward the development of the global climate agreement. Thanks to Warsaw for speeding us on our way.

This year, in our present and immediate future, the world’s attention on climate change turns to two major cities:

- New York City, as it hosts the UN Climate Change Summit in September; and
- Lima, as it hosts COP 20 and CMP 10 in December.

May I thank Deputy Mayor Nuñez and, through you, Mayor Villarán de la Puente for the efforts you are already undertaking in preparation for this portentous meeting, which will produce the draft 2015 global agreement and help set the path of responsibly managed emissions well into our future.

So you see, dear friends, why I feel that my past, present and future is sitting right here with me. From Copenhagen to Warsaw to New York and Lima, I feel I am on my life’s pilgrimage and have earned, or still have to earn, the stamp of progress each of these cities puts in my pilgrim’s passport.

And progressed we have at the intergovernmental level. Governments have set 2 degrees Celsius as the maximum temperature rise that we will allow, they have a firm deadline for the new, universal agreement that will guide them toward that maximum temperature and they have a challenging work plan for this year and next.

Cities have also progressed in their efforts to address climate change. Of course, cities do this in a more granular way than national governments, because cities know what sustainability means on the ground, in every home, along every highway and every street, in every building and every recreation area.

From Singapore to Copenhagen, from Mexico City to Bogotá, I see cities dramatically improving urban transportation, reducing congestion and air pollution, making those cities more livable, and by the way, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

From Rio de Janeiro to Melbourne to Tokyo, I see cities upgrading homes and buildings, saving citizens money, making those cities more livable, and by the way, increasing energy efficiency and reducing emissions.

From New York City to here in Johannesburg, I see cities pursuing smarter infrastructure, making those cities more resilient and more livable, and by the way, adapting to climate change.

In all these examples I say “by the way” because addressing climate change cannot be the only or even the prime reason for these measures. That I would make that statement may surprise you, but it reflects the fact that city governments have an increasing number of competing goals and challenges and can only pursue those that advance several agendas at the same time.

It also reflects the fact that an increasing number of mayors are realizing that they can best pursue short-term solutions when they do so in the context of long-term challenges and that it is in their interest to do so.

There is no doubt that national governments are progressively constructing the international regulatory framework to address climate change. There is no doubt that cities are leading the way in implementing the specific measures that improve livability and address climate change.

But let’s be honest, there is also no doubt that we have not progressed much in integrating the efforts of cities and national governments. I am sure this is as frustrating to you as it is to me. So here is our common cause.

Ladies and gentlemen, I come to you today because we need each other. You need me, or rather the process I represent, and I certainly need you.

I need you because right now, national governments are working towards a new, universal climate agreement and for that agreement to be an effective agent of change towards low-carbon development, key stakeholders must be engaged in the process.

And you need me because an effective international climate change agreement opens the door not only to global reduction of emissions and increase in resilience, but to shorter term gains with direct quality-of-life benefits for residents in your cities: economic opportunity, food and water security, lower energy cost and better access, and improved waste management, improved transportation and air quality.

So I invite you to work together to show national governments that a strong international agreement that is vertically integrated with city and sub-national policies and measures is in everyone’s best interest.

Yes, there are typically more layers of bureaucracy above cities than below, and yet cities, especially megacities, are driving forces in national and global economics.

So let me make three concrete suggestions on how we might collaborate.

First, use the metrics of the global conversation. As you reduce fuel dependence, hedge against price volatility and improve air quality, cities can set clean energy targets that are recognizable to the international process, and monitor progress towards meeting those targets.

Targets for greenhouse gas emission reduction, energy efficiency, and renewables shape local development in ways that resonate to national commitments in international process. Monitoring progress – setting baselines and establishing inventories – with high quality accounting and reporting practices brings city-level gains to the national conversation.

This puts cities in the position to benefit from the various incentives and financial mechanisms that are being constructed both inside and outside the climate change convention for purposes of mitigation and adaptation.

Second, cities can green their current finance, looking at value not just based on cost, but on low-carbon and high-resilience. They can place value on gains that come from conserving natural resources and smart land use.

For procurement, this makes the supply chains of city services more resilient and less susceptible to market vulnerability. For infrastructure, this changes the way value is calculated in designing, funding and building projects. For city government pension funds, this means investing in low-carbon to ensure climate change doesn't put incomes of retired emergency responders and civil servants at risk.

Third, cities can open the door to commercial funding and private investment that benefits citizens, while increasing resilience and decreasing emissions.

The World Bank is working to make municipalities more attractive to private investors. Lima spent less than \$1 million USD to attain domestic and international credit ratings, which resulted in \$90 million invested in a modernized transportation system, taking people to work and school with less emissions.

Increasing climate finance and technology resources are coming online that could benefit cities actively seeking funding for resilience and low-carbon.

It is a short list of options that could work for the long list of our planet's growing cities:

- Use international metrics, set targets and monitor progress;
- Green the current finances of your city; and
- Open the door to commercial funding and private investment.

I know that there are barriers to taking these steps, but they are barriers we can work together to overcome.

For example, the World Bank found that out of largest 500 developing country cities, only 4% had credit rating in international markets and 20% in local markets.

The cities that have both ratings took a long time to get there. I mentioned Lima, it took them 5 years to get both ratings.

If we can work together to streamline the process, remove the barrier, then we kick open the door to funding urban livability and climate action.

Another barrier is the lack of information exchange between cities and the intergovernmental process that negotiates the climate agreement. I have been working for several years to remove that barrier.

I am happy to inform you that we have progressed. We just had the first City Day at the Warsaw COP, and cities will be an important part of the discussion at the upcoming June negotiations in Bonn.

We are anxious to get city input into the new, universal climate agreement that must respond to the needs of a growing number of urban dwellers worldwide.

Clearly, there are partners willing to help cities achieve specific goals, especially if these goals align with climate goals. I am one such partner. The World Bank is one such partner. And many more:

- Other city resources like ICLEI, the WWF Earth Hour City Challenge and the Communitas Coalition;
- Private sector supporters like Carbon Disclosure Project and green finance partners like CERES; and
- A global network of resources pushing for climate-friendly energy, development, land use, transportation and resource management.

UN HABITAT has a climate friendly urban planning toolkit, and UNEP has some great Green Economy resources. We don't have time to name all of them but there are a growing number of great resources out there.

Finally, there are the regulatory barriers that prevent effective policy integration between national governments and cities. Without this integration, neither countries nor cities will be effective in their efforts.

I am confident that this barrier can be removed. You mayors are experienced coalition builders. You can exercise your leadership as drivers of local, regional and national economies to forge partnerships, bring a united voice to the climate dialogue and remove barriers to effective action.

As I have done in the past, I will continue to work with cities and help in any and every way I can.

My friends, in the end we are all pilgrims progressing along the path to a better world. It is fitting we move forward to a better world here, the hallowed ground of one of history's greatest pilgrims.

At the launch of his children's fund Nelson Mandela said "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

I believe that this generation of pilgrims' struggles with how to leave our children a world with less adverse effects of climate change, and with more opportunity. Sound governance can get us there.

Therefore, I thank you for everything you have done in the past to improve the quality of life in your city. I thank you for all you are doing in the present to address the urban and the climate change agendas simultaneously. And I thank you for what you are planning to do in the future to build more livable, more sustainable cities for today's children and future generations.

Thank you.
