**EUROCITIES’ Contribution to the Talanoa Dialogue**

**October 2018**

**Introduction**

EUROCITIES is the network of major European Cities. At our EUROCITIES Environment Forum in Tampere, Finland, on 18 October 2018, which 130 participants, representing 44 cities attended, we facilitated a Talanoa Dialogue. Below is a high-level summary of key points raised during the discussion in which the Finnish Ministry of Environment and a representative from the UNFCCC also took part[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Where are we now?**

Cities expressed that we are at a critical point in making a decision on the level of global temperature rise which is collectively deemed acceptable. The recent IPCC report analysing the impacts of 1.5C and 2C average global temperature rises, and the necessary trajectory to restrict global temperature rise to an average of 1.5C has shown that a global commitment to 1.5C is crucial.

Cities have been experiencing the impacts of climate change for quite some time, particularly through heatwaves, drought and flooding. These extreme weather events will become more common, and it is cities who will have to deal with the human and physical impacts.

Many EUROCITIES members have climate strategies which are in line with a goal of net zero GHG emissions by 2050, and some are even more ambitious. In many cases, cities have more ambitious targets than their national governments.

Cities are delivering actions on the ground which contribute to GHG emissions reduction: decarbonising the local energy system; implementing low-carbon mobility; requiring low emission buildings and initiating building retrofit programmes; improving the size and quality of green spaces; and developing more circular economies.

However, despite cities having higher climate ambitions and delivering emissions reduction, they have little or no role in the governance that determines global and national climate targets or the legislation that is needed to deliver.

Additionally, cities have very few fiscal levers at their disposal to influence local decision-making and have limited financial and human resources to deliver climate action at the scale and pace necessary to limit average global temperature rises to 1.5C.

**Where do we want to go?**

Cities during the discussions expressed the need to successfully limited global average temperature rise to less than 1.5C and have embedded a net zero carbon economy and society, in particular where:

* Citizens are aware, engaged and living in a way that is consistent with net zero emissions;
* The easiest and most affordable decisions/choices are those which are most sustainable;
* Different indicators of wellbeing and happiness are developed that do not rely on GDP (or similar economic indicators), where genuine quality of life is valued;
* We are living within our means – One Planet Living – and are not consuming resources that are beyond ecological capacity;
* Fossil fuels are phased out;
* The full social and environmental costs are internalised;
* Cities are part of a multi-level, multi-stakeholder governance framework which develops and delivers actions which further sustainability and continue to reduce GHG emissions;

**How do we get there?**

Cities emphasised the need for action at scale and pace, reinforcing the imperative to large-scale emissions reduction in order to meet the trajectory recommended by the IPCC, which specifically included:

* The need for systemic change to most areas of our society – economy, energy, transport, buildings, and consumption;
* Develop integrated solutions – looking at problems and solutions holistically to capture the benefits of inter-related elements and ensuring that negative side-effects are avoided;
* Phase out all direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies, and ensure that the taxation and subsidy systems incentivise only actions that support the achievement of a net zero world before 2050;
* A carbon price which incentivises the low/zero carbon options;
* Developing funding/financing models which are of sufficient scale to invest in the transition to net zero emissions, and support cities in the infrastructure investments to realise these systemic changes at local level;
* Ensuring that the transition is a just one, where those citizens adversely affected by economic and financial changes are protected and supported through the process;
* A strong legislation framework at all levels, particularly national governments, to embed the trajectory for net zero emissions, ensuring that there is a clear foundation for long term investment, and competition and innovation are focused on delivering the ambition.
* A collaborative approach to the development and implementation of legislation, long-term climate strategies and action plans, involving all levels of government, citizens, businesses and civil society.
* A global governance system that formally includes cities in the development of NDCs and other negotiations which directly affect them;
* Re-thinking our approach to consumption and resource use, including addressing embedded carbon (in all products and materials) and making virgin/raw materials more expensive to incentivise the use of recycling, re-used or reclaimed materials.
* Increased transparency on progress to GHG emissions reduction targets through regular reporting of emissions at all levels (globally, nationally, regionally and locally);
* Leadership by politicians at all levels, businesses, citizens, and civil society – both to lead the change but also to lead by example and be prepared to make brave decisions at certain points.

1. The information contained in this document reflects the outcomes of the collective discussion only and does not necessarily reflect the official position of individual cities or EUROCITIES as an organisation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)