



G100
SMART and SUSTAINABLE CITIES WING
POLICY PAPER

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FORWARD - G100 Founder



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Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WICCI) | SHEconomy**

It is deeply moving to go through the universal spirit of the global recommendations made by women leaders and experts from across the world. In this comprehensive document with relevant recommendations emerging from a universal inclusive vision of progress and prosperity for all, especially through the integrative spaces of cities, we all can see how each one of us can participate and be the change.

The delivery of the recommendations is incumbent on solidarity and partnerships - bringing together citizens along with private and public actors for change with ever new governance mechanisms mobilizing people, projects and partnerships toward bridging all kinds of gaps that limit access and opportunities. Indeed, it is only in togetherness that we can co-create smart and sustainable cities with intuitive responsiveness and integrated planning to serve the needs of citizens in order to ensure city structures and systems where all can thrive.

In this decade of delivery of the UN SDGs, the visionary leadership of Zeynep Bodur Okyay, G100 Global Chair for Smart & Sustainable Cities, and the abiding endeavours of all chairs and denim club (he for she) partners in this wing, has given us a definitive document with clear guidelines on the next steps for envisioning and implementing change in cities across the world. We are committed to working together across cultures and continents, for finding ever more intersections and interdisciplinary synergies in solidarity. Together we can.

FORWARD - G100 Global Chair



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In an age when the pulse of civilization is driven by its cities, the relevance of understanding and shaping the future of urban centers has never been more pressing. The very roots of the words "city," "citizen," and "civilization" derive from the Latin civis and civitas. This linguistic linkage serves as a reminder of the intrinsic relationship between cities and their citizens, a bond that has historically nurtured societies, economies, and cultures.

We are undeniably in the era of the metropolis. Cities are the engines of progress, drawing diverse populations and businesses, fostering skill development, and giving birth to networks of exchange. Their might is evident, with cities like New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo consistently maintaining their dominant positions in global rankings, year after year.

Furthermore, cities have taken the lead in confronting global challenges. When the pandemic struck, urban areas became pivotal in emergency responses. Governments implemented measures such as curfews and lockdowns for public safety, which disproportionately affected vulnerable groups. Amidst this unpredictability, numerous cities turned to participatory governance, engaging communities in key decisions. On the climate front, ten cities have already been adorned with the EU Mission Label award, a recognition of their ambitious visions to reach climate neutrality by 2030. This move is emblematic of Europe's drive to position its cities at the vanguard of decarbonization.

However, as the world urbanizes, new obstacles emerge. Detailed community data is essential for strengthening urban resilience. The G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, has been endorsing effective open data policies in select cities, yet there is a need to bridge city-level discrepancies. Cities are heavily affected by the climate crisis, and current preventive measures are not adequate. Proper infrastructure to combat and reduce the effects of climate change requires funding, political commitment, and a conducive environment. The global financial structure needs recalibration to provide cities with more resources for sustainable growth. At the heart of it, cities need nothing short of a radical overhaul to confront these intertwined challenges.

The Global 100 (G100) and its wing on Smart and Sustainable Cities are not just observers in this transformative journey. Comprising 100 powerful women leaders from across the globe, the G100 is invested in ensuring a future that resonates with inclusivity and sustainability. This paper dives deep into eight core recommendations. From fostering a city's global role, assuring equal rights to urban amenities, or promoting innovative governance principles, the recommendations connect the dots, creating a holistic picture of a city's ecosystem. More importantly, they underscore the critical importance of creating cities that are not only equipped to address modern challenges like climate change and technological transformation but also fundamentally built on principles of equity and inclusivity. Ultimately, each recommendation is a testament to the G100's commitment to pushing boundaries and advocating for policies that pave the way for an inclusive, sustainable future in alignment with the Agenda 2030. It is our hope that these insights light the way forward, inspiring collective action and forging a brighter future for cities around the world.

One area demanding deeper reflection is leadership qualities essential for sculpting a more promising urban future. Celebrating World Cities Day on 31 October 2023, the World Economic Forum rallied seven Young Global Leaders from diverse sectors to share their pioneering endeavors in city design, architecture, and growth engines via collaboration, innovation, and arts. Particularly striking was the viewpoint that envisioned architecture not just as infrastructure, but as a space of consciousness, a platform to regenerate history, and a medium to amplify the voices of the marginalized. The dialogue emphasized the irreplaceable value of empathetic leadership, underscoring the need for leaders who genuinely tune in to their communities.

As you delve into this paper, remember: our cities are not just conglomerates of infrastructure and people. They are the cradles of civilization, and their evolution will dictate the trajectory of our shared global narrative. The leaders of cities, buoyed by collective ambition and the support of groups like the G100, are tasked with a responsibility that is both momentous and transformative. As the age of the city unfolds, may this document serve as a compass guiding us towards a horizon of equity, resilience, and sustainability.

Finally, I would like to hereby thank Dr. Harbeen Arora on behalf of G100 for providing this opportunity, the Denim Club Partner of our Wing, my dear friend Dr. Alfonso Vegara and the esteemed Policy Paper Task Force members of the G100 Smart and Sustainable Cities Wing who contributed to this valuable study.

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We live in a world of cities; ours is an increasingly urban planet. Cities are the new engines of the global economy, and at the same time they have the potential to be the main actors engaging the challenges of climate change and the struggle against inequality and poverty. The ever-greater interdependence between cities goes hand in hand with increasing physical and digital connectivity. The size of our cities is also changing, with traditional administrative boundaries becoming less and less relevant to the framing of responses to the major objectives of development, balance, and environmental sustainability. If the past was shaped by periods in which the world was organized into empires and later into nation-states, in the future we will live more and more in a world of cities, a world of SuperCities.

These SuperCities are the magical places where the intelligence of the territory is expressed in all its plenitude, also the nodes of innovation and creativity of our planet. From the smallest rural settlement to the most complex mega-region we can imagine, each city and each territory can design an intelligent project for the future and implement effective actions to achieve relevance in this new global scenario of competition and cooperation, and of vital commitments to sustainability, to social integration and to the eradication of poverty. A new generation of SuperCities is emerging as part of the solution to the great challenges facing humanity.

Cities have an ever more important place in our society, and they function in a highly complex context, with undeniable challenges but also with a range of opportunities that did not previously exist. The city is the paradigm space in which to engage these challenges, and the supreme space of social and cultural creativity. Science, art, and technological innovation flourish more readily in the city, as do social change and the advances that enable universal improvements in people's quality of life.

Our cities, which almost always have significantly limited economic resources, governments whose terms of office are relatively short, and little political power, must address formidable challenges. Cities with coherent leadership, creativity and shared vision are generating a special magnetism and developing initiatives and projects of great impact in our society. Supercities concept come from "superintelligence", the integration between human intelligence and artificial intelligence when we apply the world of cities.

In this context, G100 SMART and SUSTAINABLE CITIES WING POLICY PAPER is a powerful contribution to face the challenges of our generation.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations' 2016 report "Leave no one behind: A call to action for gender equality and women's economic empowerment"¹ presented the evidence and made a substantive case for actions to address the systemic constraints and persistent gaps in women's economic opportunities.

Making progress for women and girls is crucial for achieving the internationally agreed 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The 2030 Agenda has Gender Equality as one of its main ambitions, with a dedicated goal (SDG 5) to end discrimination between women and men, as well as references to gender-specific concerns in numerous other SDG targets. Specifically, SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality by ending all forms of discrimination, violence and any harmful practices against women and girls. It also calls for the full participation of women and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. Measuring progress on SDGs for women and girls is seen as a core development indicator but also a key statistical challenge.

The Global 100 (G100) is a group of 100 powerful women leaders from around the world united by the shared vision to create more opportunities for women everywhere as part of a future that's inclusive and sustainable.

As a result of 30 global meetings and consultations in 29 countries, along with G100 wings' activities between September 2021 - December 2022 ten top ten thematic areas of action for gender equality and empowerment worldwide have been jointly agreed as relevant for empowerment and economic inclusion of women by the members of the G100. The ten thematic areas of improvement are encapsulated in the acronym (ELLEGOSSE²):



The recommendations in this paper examine the opportunities of improvement within the 10 ELLEGOSSE areas in the context of the city and the role of women within the urban environment. The paper was developed by the G100 wing on Smart and Sustainable Cities. It sets out the guiding principles and challenges, core values and recommendations to support policies and initiatives to achieve the goals of the Agenda 2030. The recommendations aligned with the core SDGs of interest to smart and sustainable cities are listed below with details provided further in the document:

- 1. Foster the global role of the city**
- 2. Assure an equal right to city for all**
- 3. Encourage sustainable and inclusive mobility**
- 4. Enable effective water and waste management**
- 5. Accelerate transition to sustainable and affordable energy**
- 6. Facilitate safe and affordable housing**
- 7. Support the development of the local economy**
- 8. Promote innovative governance practices**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Foster the global role of the city

The global stage has traditionally been occupied by nation-states and international organizations. It was only in the last decade and a half that cities gained legitimacy and recognition as international actors. Several global agenda documents emphasize the key role of cities and urban environments in solving the most urgent planetary and societal problems. Cities are at the center of global sustainability agreements such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda. Yet not all cities have the competence, the confidence, the economic potential or the political independence to participate in the global conversation or policy making.

Policy Action 1.1: Promote City Networks for Practical Knowledge Exchange

To foster the global role of the city, it is crucial to promote city networks that go beyond political representation and focus on practical knowledge exchange. These networks should facilitate collaboration among cities from different regions, with a special emphasis on bridging the global North/South divide but also encouraging South-South Cooperation. This can be done by establishing Knowledge Sharing Platforms, facilitating Peer Learning and Accessible Knowledge Resources to name but a few.

Call to Action:

- 1.1.1** Establish, strengthen or expand existing city networks comprising representatives from concerned stakeholders such as civil society organizations (CSOs), women's groups, marginalized and vulnerable communities or their federations, media, business sector, academicians and the local governments.
- 1.1.2** Recognize the role of such city networks in determining the future development path of the cities achieving SDGs.
- 1.1.3** Introduce cities to new approaches such as polycentric urban planning which aims to distribute the population, jobs, services, and amenities more evenly across the urban area, reducing congestion, travel time, and carbon emissions, and increasing accessibility, diversity, and resilience (ex: connecting medium-sized cities by high-speed rail to achieve an integrated and united system of cities, intelligent territories). This will help the future transformation of such territories as a reference of our generation for working in the world of cities.

Policy Action 1.2: Strengthen City Diplomacy and International Representation

To foster the global role of the city, it is essential to strengthen city diplomacy and enhance international representation. This can be achieved through the establishment of City Diplomatic Offices, engagement in Global Policy Forums, Strengthen International Relations and advocating for City Interests and Cultural and Economic Diplomacy.

Call to Action:

- 1.2.1** Set up / strengthen existing international relations units within the municipalities for building new relationships or for strengthening existing relationships in partnership with sister cities and international agencies.
- 1.2.2** Connect with national level municipality associations for wider discussion to promote common agenda on the role of the cities in the country and its representation and relationship with the global agencies and global platforms.

Policy Action 1.3: Promote citizen engagement in areas relevant to the SDG's

Cities are the level of government closest to people and possess extensive and detailed knowledge of their territories and communities. This makes them a natural channel to communicate and generate ideas in areas related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By promoting citizen engagement, local communities can play an instrumental role in shaping the direction of sustainable development. This involves providing platforms for citizens to voice their opinions, contribute ideas, and collaborate with local authorities, businesses, and organizations. Through these interactions, cities can harness collective wisdom to address pressing challenges such as poverty, environmental degradation, and social inequality. By fostering an environment where citizens are empowered to participate in decision-making processes and take ownership of local initiatives, cities can pave the way for more effective and inclusive SDG implementation while fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the city's well-being and progress.

Call to Action:

1.3.1 Ensure regular interactions with the CSOs and community federations working on various themes in the cities and understand the issues and challenges they are facing towards achieving SDGs.

1.3.2 Partner and make funds available for the CSOs and community federations to undertake relevant hardware and software projects for implementation of community led initiatives that gives practical and sustainable solutions to the urgent issues.

Recommendation 2: Assure an equal right to the city for all (gender, race, ethnicity, age, etc.)

Assuring an equal right to the city for all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, or other characteristics, is a fundamental aspect of building inclusive and equitable communities. Achieving this is crucial for SDG 5 that looks to end discrimination between women and men, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2023. Equal right to the city includes not only equal access to urban services and resources (public transit, housing, green spaces) but also equal opportunity for participation in the democratic process (local elections, town hall meetings, etc.) The right to the city is usually at risk in a multifaceted crisis in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, migratory, climatic spheres.

Policy Action 2.1: Promote and advocate for the right to the city

Take proactive steps on a global scale, leveraging various international events centered around urban development, to ensure the inclusion of the right to the city within the framework of monitoring the progress of the New Urban Agenda³ (NUA) 2016-2030. Emphasize and advocate for the right to the city, with a particular focus on advancing the rights of women and girls. Recognize that the right to the city for each citizen carries associated responsibilities for both public and private entities holding decision-making authority and influence over urban matters and encourage reporting on progress, starting with public entities. Foster initiatives that enhance awareness, knowledge dissemination, and the exchange of successful practices related to the right to the city in alignment with the New Urban Agenda's implementation and alignment, it's essential to mobilize Municipal Networks and Mayors from both the Global South and North.

Call to Action:

- 2.1.1** Ensure that there are no barriers to women participating in politics at local levels and that there is gender balance with targets or quotas for women's representation in national, provincial, metropolitan and city level decision-making agencies.
- 2.1.2** Review current public institutions within city administrations to assess their gender balance, set targets according to local contexts. Resource and incorporate actions and measures to achieve these within reasonable timelines.
- 2.1.3** Invest in training and capacity building with women to identify high potential women and work with men to redress stereotyping and bias.
- 2.1.4** Strengthen the alliances of the people's network for people led advocacy for inclusion of their voices and demand to make the right to city inclusive and ensure implementation of the right to city.

Policy Action 2.2: Promote alliances with the Private Sector

Promote alliances with the Private Sector, in global and national spheres, to consolidate common actions and commitments based on the New Urban Agenda and the Global Compact principles.

Call to Action:

- 2.2.1** Create public /private sector programs and alliances that support women and other underrepresented groups to enter the political and commercial realms.
- 2.2.2** Provide fiscal and other financial incentives for lenders to provide finance for women to create businesses and jobs.
- 2.2.3** Invite private sector representatives to the discussions and explore how CRS can be best implemented for the achievements of NUA and other global goals.

2.2.4 Work with the governments to incentivize private sector for their investment in inclusive and sustainable urban development.

Policy Action 2.3: Ensure equal access to city services and resources

Proactively plan and distribute urban services and resources in a manner that ensures equitable access for all residents, regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or location (equitable distribution). Establish mechanisms for meaningful community engagement in the decision-making processes, such as community meetings, advisory boards, or participatory budgeting, to involve residents in identifying their specific needs and priorities so that urban services and resources are tailored to the unique requirements of each community.

Call to Action:

2.3.1 Establish ‘urban community development fund’ at the city level to be headed by the mayor/ local administration with membership from community organizations, women led saving and credit groups and cooperatives, and other stakeholders. The fund to be managed by the women’s saving groups with the collective decision from the autonomous body. The source of the fund is to be city administration, donors and communities for leveraging resources and ensuring poorest people have access to financial resources allocated by the government.

2.3.2 Local administrations to consult with the communities for planning and allocating resources for the collective process and initiations led by the people with city wide perspective for transforming the poor communities and city.

Policy Action 2.4: Improve urban mobility and green spaces in historically marginalized or disadvantaged areas

Identify areas with limited access to public transportation or lacking sufficient green spaces and prioritize infrastructure development and upgrades in these communities to encourage inclusivity. This targeted investment can help bridge the gaps in service provision and ensure equal opportunities for all residents (targeted investments). Prioritize the maintenance and upkeep of urban mobility infrastructure and green spaces in all neighborhoods. Neglected or poorly maintained areas can hinder access and discourage utilization. Regular inspections, repairs, and maintenance routines should be implemented to ensure that these resources remain safe, functional, and inviting for all residents (maintenance and upkeep).

Call to Action:

2.4.1 Work with transport providers to ensure services are assured, which in some cases may require social tariffs.

2.4.2 Protect green space from development and gentrification with local by-laws and standards.

2.4.3 Encourage participatory planning of the urban mobility infrastructure where local residents are given priority during improvement of mobility as per the need of the local people.

2.4.4 Map the existing situation within the communities for identifying the status of the spaces and infrastructure including open space, garden, vacant land, traditional, heritage and religious areas, temples and buildings so that conservation and safeguarding of these places is ensured for the promotion of green growth.

Policy Action 2.5: Data-driven policy and decision making

Collect and analyze disaggregated data on service utilization, accessibility gaps, and residents' needs to inform policy creation and decision-making processes. Use data-driven insights to identify areas with inadequate access or resource distribution and to prioritize interventions accordingly. Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and initiatives to ensure ongoing improvement and equitable outcomes.

Call to Action:

2.5.1 Invest in the collection of gender disaggregated data. The current lack of evidence and inattention to gender data limits the ability of governments and other stakeholders to understand the impact of inequalities, to make informed decisions or to accurately measure any progress and ensure accountability.

2.5.2 Engage and train residents and particularly local youth on generating data, analysis and use this information for evidence-based advocacy for inclusive urban development.

2.5.3 Sensitize local media to report the gaps and support the initiations taken by the other stakeholders for solidarity and strengthened advocacy.

2.5.4 Partner with the academicians for study, research and data generation to influence the governments.

Policy Action 2.6: Foster collaborations to create innovative solutions

Promote an equal right to the city for all, by implementing a living lab concept that engages diverse communities in co-creating inclusive urban spaces. By involving individuals from different genders, races, ethnicities, ages, and backgrounds, this approach ensures their meaningful participation in decision-making processes, fostering social cohesion and addressing the multifaceted challenges faced in the realms of politics, economy, society, culture, environment, migration, climate and helping community leaders to actively drive the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (Quito 2016).

Call to Action:

2.6.1 Create trust funds to finance Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society to manage Living Labs and multistakeholder partnerships.

2.6.2 Create forums where decision makers and citizens can exchange views and perspectives and co-create solutions.

Policy Action 2.7: Invest in human resources

Invest in human resources, knowledge and capacity building to improve the diversity of voices that are used in decision making. This should especially include youth, women, individuals with disabilities, seniors and community leaders to be able to become active in driving the New Urban Agenda (Quito 2016) and accelerate programs for social inclusion, climate change and health.

Call to Action:

2.7.1 Advocate for targets or quotas that ensure the representation of women, youth, seniors, and individuals with disabilities in urban governance and policy making.

2.7.2 Push for policies that incorporate gender-sensitive urban planning, addressing the specific needs of women, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities in city design by establishing a care system that allows more women to incorporate into the labor market.

2.7.3 Mobilize corporate responsibility to align with sustainable city goals, fostering investments in community leadership training and inclusive urban innovation.

2.7.4 Create consultative councils that follow the strategies and actions driven by government administrative units so that they adopt inclusion in a transversal manner.

Recommendation 3: Encourage sustainable and inclusive mobility

SDG 11 sets out the challenge to make cities and human settlements "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Mobility is crucial to providing accessibility for all and greater efforts and investments are needed to achieve sustainable mobility for all. This includes promoting policies on an intelligent, data driven, integrated and carbon neutral mobility; by enabling sustainable and inclusive urban mobility plans; by empowering policy makers to accelerate the adoption of technologies in an accountable and responsible manner, and support active mobility that promotes healthier living.

Show leadership to accelerate gender parity at decision making levels and invest in gender equitable initiatives and programs that would benefit all those who are currently disadvantaged by car centric development. This would deliver greater equity for all as well as help deliver other SDG targets. The transfer to and mainstreaming of low carbon technologies needs to include more women, who currently only represent 16.8% of the workforce as well as other minority groups⁴. Programs need to be created to diversify the transport workforce, especially in respect to the transition to Electric Mobility.

Policy Action 3.1: Promote a data driven, evidence based, integrated, inclusive and carbon neutral mobility

Increase international support for knowledge transfer of existing successful frameworks on integrated, smart and inclusive transport that meet the climate agenda's objectives. Examples of integrated and data driven mobility good practices facilitate capacity building and technology transfer and sharing tools that can be replicated to a larger network of cities, support inclusive mobility. South /South as well as North/ South exchanges should be fostered.

Community engagement and education are also key to implementing inclusive mobility practices successfully through assessment of topics related to mobility for quality of life and citizens' health.

Call to Action:

- 3.1.1** Organize public forums, roundtables and workshops to request input from residents on transportation policies and infrastructure projects; identify gaps, barriers and provide expert solutions.
- 3.1.2** Develop educational programs for schools and NGOs, community groups and residents to promote safety awareness and sustainability in transport.
- 3.1.3** Partner with local organizations and businesses to sponsor events like street festivals; car-free days that show alternative modes of transportation.
- 3.1.4** Launch campaigns to educate residents about alternative mobility-focus on public transport options; promote behavioral change.
- 3.1.5** Organize community workshops, events and outreach programs in collaboration with local schools, civic NGOs, environmental experts (for modelling) local air quality.

Policy Action 3.2: Include peri-urban and rural area to cities' mobility plans

Decision makers should encourage transport accessibility and inclusiveness for peri-urban and rural areas by incorporating key aspects into cities' sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) with integrated links between rural, peri-urban and urban areas. Metropolitan area centers of interest such as employment,

health and education centers need to be linked with integrated mobility plans. This concept considers the functional urban area and foresees that mobility plans are developed to support the entire development of a city-region, the actual tendency of development within urban agglomerations. In addition, the transport of fresh, locally grown produce needs to be included in the planning of peri-urban areas to support sustainable food supply chains.

Call to Action:

3.2.1 Partner with local city managers and transit/travel agencies, private mobility providers, academics/researchers and technology companies to build and launch an Integrated Mobility Solutions Platform that integrates various mobility options in your city (public transport, ride-sharing, bike-sharing, etc.) with real-time information on routes, schedules, availability.

3.2.2. Develop green transport paths with a public sharing model along highly polluted corridors.

Policy Action 3.3: Responsible adoption of smart technologies

The adoption and transfer of smart technologies in the transition to a digital era (especially in some areas such as autonomous vehicles) needs to be made accountable and ensuring that no-one is left behind⁵. This requires investing in human capital and up-skills training, especially for women, to avoid people being put out of jobs and ensuring that new jobs and employment opportunities are open to all, while promoting sustainable and active mobility in cities.

Call to Action:

3.3.1 Advocate for inclusive technology adoption strategies that prioritize upskilling programs for vulnerable groups, particularly women, youth, and individuals at risk of job displacement due to automation.

3.3.2 Push for public-private partnerships where technology companies commit to providing equitable access to training, tools, and employment opportunities in smart technology sectors.

Policy Action 3.4: Real-time transport information is a pre-requisite of inclusive and sustainable mobility.

In keeping with the goal of urban inclusivity, regulations, innovation and new technologies should make information available to all sectors and age-groups of the population, including people with disabilities. Information should be specially designed and available for technically challenged groups (such as the elderly, mental, physical, other impaired or mobility challenged group).

Call to Action:

3.4.1 Collect gender disaggregated data on consumption of public transport services to design data-driven inclusive services.

3.4.2 Develop accessible information channels for all abilities to provide real-time transport information through multiple formats such as audio, large-text displays, braille, sign language video in order to meet diverse user needs.

3.4.3 Introduce training programs for transport staff on inclusivity needs in collaboration with gender equality, disability and senior advocacy organizations to understand user-specific challenges and co-design solutions.

3.4.4 Monitor and publish performance metrics on inclusive accessibility.

Policy Action 3.5: Foster collaboration on how to create safe and secure infrastructure

Create safe and secure infrastructure for all inhabitants no matter the mean of transportation, everyone from pedestrians to self-driving vehicles. The city should promote different means of transportation and should therefore also consider demands and needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, the young, and other vulnerable populations in the planning and development phase with the aim to have a transport network which is safe and secure as much as possible from severe injuries or deaths. Collaboration and sharing of best practices can increase the use of physical technologies and solutions, change in regulations and education of authorities and inhabitants which can save lives.

Safe and secure infrastructure will also help promote active mobility by identifying existing infrastructure for walking and cycling in the city, including pedestrian zones, bike-sharing and dedicated lanes, safe crossings.

Call to Action:

- 3.5.1** Conduct a city-wide survey to identify key areas for improvement.
- 3.5.2** Allocate necessary resources to launch campaigns to raise awareness about links between health & environment and the benefits of walking and cycling.
- 3.5.3** Partner with city's policy makers to develop and enhance infrastructure dedicated to active mobility.
- 3.5.4** Work with city's manager(s) to create incentives for businesses to provide facilities & logistics (bike storage) and encourage employers to commute by walking or /and cycling.

Recommendation 4: Enable effective water and waste management

Globally 771 million people lack access to clean drinking water. The world generates 2.01 billion tons of municipal solid waste. The main causes of water scarcity are pollution, lack of infrastructure and changing weather patterns, and about two thirds of the waste generated is not managed in a manner that is environmentally safe. Additionally, inadequate and ageing water sewage infrastructure can lead to serious risk of floods and mixing of sewage with water. Political will is the most challenging factor to address these issues while lack of management of water and waste is affecting human health and hinders people from creating safe and sustainable living.

Policy Action 4.1: Circularity of waste and water

In order to create a safe and sustainable living environment, circularity of waste and water is crucial and should be promoted as far as possible. Circular solutions can minimize the footprint as well as securing resources long term.

Call to Action:

4.1.1 Promote method and technology for the recycling water and waste at household level.

Policy Action 4.2: Facilitate Water Conservation

Conserve sources of natural drinking water and promote rainwater harvesting, promote change in farming practices and ensure fair distribution of water to water stress areas.

Call to Action:

4.2.1 Promote rainwater harvesting at the household, public and school buildings.

4.2.2 Conserve source of water areas as recharge zone.

4.2.3 Experiment change in farming methods to conserve water.

4.2.4 Sensitize on sensible use of water.

Policy Action 4.3: Promote the waste management hierarchy

Promote the waste management hierarchy by committing to support the process of knowledge transfer of existing successful best practices and frameworks on waste management, like the waste management hierarchy, that meet the climate agenda's objectives. Educate institutions about how they can approach and use the waste management hierarchy in order to implement relevant system solutions regarding waste. In order to implement a sustainable waste management (or resource management) system, a holistic view is necessary and all actors should be involved in order to identify the necessary solutions.

Call to Action:

4.3.1 Make waste management profession respectable and equip the waste workers with necessary facilities such as insurance, medical-personal protection kits and policy framework.

Policy Action 4.4: Encourage PPP to increase investment in water sector and management of solid waste

Promote policy and regulations that creates viable business cases for all that will eventually create higher engagement of the private sector to increase investment in water sector and management of solid waste including e-waste without harming the land and water environment or affecting social aspects in the city. Such actions need to be making use of PPP (Private-Public Partnership) agreements, blended finance options and risk-sharing mechanisms for ensuring their realization.

Call to Action:

- 4.4.1** PPP approach should give space to the communities for their equal stake in the decision making process.
- 4.4.2** Encourage governments to implement robust monitoring guidelines and performance indicators for assessing the performance of the private sector.

Policy Action 4.5: Make quality drinking water easily accessible and affordable

Make use of innovation in design and technology and promote best practices in policy approaches that can contribute to making quality drinking water easily accessible and affordable for the mass of the low-income people in rural and urban areas utilizing venture capital financing, impact investing techniques and funds that align with the SDGs where applicable.

Call to Action:

- 4.5.1** Ensure that performance of the utility operator is regulated.
- 4.5.2** Help prioritize the needs of hard to reach and poor communities for investments.
- 4.5.3** Promote resilient systems and infrastructures.
- 4.5.4** Invest in alliances and organizations of the NGOs/CBOs for sustained advocacy and their role in monitoring the system.

Policy Action 4.6: Advocate long term accountability and responsibility is set on all waste fractions

Systems like Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR) is to be seen as good examples but in the cases where EPR is lacking it is crucial that responsibilities are made on all waste types. Accountability and responsibility should be implemented on a country but also on a local level, since local competence and expertise is necessary to understand the needed system solution in order to create a close-to circular solution on waste and water.

Call to Action:

- 4.6.1** Implement capacity-building programs to ensure that communities, municipalities, and small businesses are equipped to implement and benefit from waste accountability systems.
- 4.6.2** Urge corporations to take responsibility for their waste through mandatory programs that are tied to sustainability goals and social equity.
- 4.6.3** Formalize and integrate informal waste workers into the supply chain with fair wages, training, and safety measures, prioritizing gender equity in recruitment.
- 4.6.4** Implement universal waste accountability frameworks that mandate accountability and responsibility for all waste fractions, including hazardous, industrial, agricultural, and municipal

waste, ensuring that compliance mechanisms, incentives for responsible waste management, and penalties for non-compliance are also included.

4.6.5 Advocate for EPR programs to cover a broader range of waste categories, including single-use plastics, electronics, textiles, and construction materials.

4.6.6 Establish transparent waste reporting systems that track waste generation, disposal methods, and recycling rates at the local level and encourage municipalities to publish annual waste management reports with measurable targets for waste reduction and recycling, enhancing public accountability.

4.6.7 Support the adoption of circular economy principles in local and national legislation, promoting closed-loop systems for water and waste that prioritize reuse, reduction, and recycling. Also encourage setting clear targets for waste diversion, recycling rates, and landfill reduction, ensuring regular policy reviews to address emerging waste challenges and technological advances.

4.6.8 Encourage cross-border collaboration on waste and water management to share best practices, technologies, and data for tackling cross-border waste and water management challenges.

Policy Action 4.7: Regulate the management of run-off in urban areas

Cities can prevent contamination of groundwater and aquifers by providing biofilters, which ensure that precipitation running through city streets is fed back into aquifers after being cleaned and filtered.

Call to Action:

4.7.1 Promote CWIS (citywide inclusive sanitation) approach for sustainable and inclusive sanitation system in the city.

Policy Action 4.8: Share best practices and common knowledge

Taking into consideration the urban-rural divide, clusters of local authorities should be incentivized to work together in bioregional partnerships, in geographical regions that are defined by major river basins to share best practices and common knowledge.

Call to Action:

4.8.1 Collaboration between urban and rural communities through bioregional partnerships that prioritize equity, sustainable practices, and knowledge-sharing.

4.8.2 Establish collaboration agreements with academia to promote lines of research that allow the identification of best practices, especially through the comparative method.

4.8.3 Invest in national platforms that, by topic, collect the identified best practices so that local public policy designers and general public can consider the specific actions that have demonstrated to have positive results.

Recommendation 5: Accelerate transition to sustainable and affordable energy

Energy is the foundation of any city as it is a crucial resource for everyday life and is the main platform for further growth. Today energy is the core of the transition. Energy demand is expected to grow as economies develop and the access to energy is a hygiene factor for everyday life and welfare. Since the demand for electricity and energy in general is increasing in the city, it is important not to look at the energy industry itself but its position as a part of an ecosystem.

Renewables are the future solution for green transition, not only for basic electricity but for overall transformations of industries. In order to ensure affordable access to energy for all nations and their inhabitants, the transition from fossil fuels to sustainable and clean energy resources adapted after local context needs to be accelerated. One can foster global cooperations, drive technology innovations and create a more sustainable future.

Policy Action 5.1: Advocate for all countries to set renewable energy targets

Renewable energy targets have become a defining feature of the global energy landscape. Renewable energy targets can take a wide range of forms and are often embedded into integrated sector-level resource plans, national renewable energy action plans, or broader national development plans. Renewable Energy Target Setting presents a global overview of the diversity of renewable energy targets and brings together insights from a wide range of countries from a policy-design perspective.⁶

Call to Action:

- 5.1.1** Promote renewable energy targets that prioritize equitable access to energy, ensuring marginalized communities are not left behind in the shift to renewables.
- 5.1.2** Push for country-specific and region-specific renewable energy goals that reflect local resources, challenges, and socio-economic realities.
- 5.1.3** Create a technical council that (if one already does not exist), according to the institutional capacities of each country or region, determines realistic targets for each.
- 5.1.4** Support municipalities in developing Renewable Energy Action Plans (REAPs) as part of broader local development plans and encourage municipalities to set their own renewable energy goals aligned with national targets.

Policy Action 5.2: Enhance energy efficiencies

Promote implementation of stringent energy efficiency standards for buildings, appliances, and industrial processes to reduce energy consumption. Promote energy-efficient practices, such as retrofitting existing infrastructure, promoting smart grids, and encouraging the adoption of energy-efficient technologies. Current losses in electrical grids need to be fixed.

Call to Action:

- 5.2.1** Implementation of building inspection systems to ensure compliance of builders to construction zones and guidelines in real-time inspection in the face of increased urbanization.

Policy Action 5.3: Promote research and development of solutions for production on renewables

Promote research and development of solutions for production on renewables, adapted to the local context and demands, while deploying new systems that are more resilient and adapted to future climate change. All areas related to improving the existing grids or making energy systems more available should be promoted.

Call to Action:

- 5.3.1** Promote partnerships between universities, private companies, and government bodies to develop region-specific renewable energy technologies.
- 5.3.2** Emphasize research that incorporates the needs and voices of communities, ensuring renewable energy solutions are equitable and context-sensitive.
- 5.3.3** Encourage the private sector to invest in innovative renewable energy systems.

Policy Action 5.4: Promote energy access for all

Advocate for strategies to ensure access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy services. Support the deployment of off-grid renewable energy systems, microgrids and decentralized energy solutions to reach underserved communities.

Call to Action:

- 5.4.1** Push for community-led microgrid projects that provide affordable, reliable power to remote areas.
- 5.4.2** Implementation of programs that train and employ women in the deployment and maintenance of renewable energy systems.

Policy Action 5.5: Encourage green financing for energy systems

Green financing is considered as an important catalyzer to promote renewable energy development, hence use of financial means to support initiatives that promote the transition to sustainable and affordable energy use must be encouraged.

Call to Action:

- 5.5.1** Develop innovative funding solutions to support renewable energy projects.
- 5.5.2** Ensure financial mechanisms are accessible to women entrepreneurs and small community cooperatives working in the renewable energy sector.

Recommendation 6: Facilitate safe and affordable housing

Promote community led collective housing program supported by the local administration to provide and maintain the necessary infrastructure.

Policy Action 6.1: Implement community-led housing program

The program led by communities in partnership with government and development stakeholders need to be implemented at the city level for improved and secured housing for the growing urban poor populations in the cities. Insecurity of land rights for women and girls compromises sustainable development, peace and prosperity⁷. Women, who represent many farmers and small holdings, suffer disproportionately from insecure land tenure – strengthening women’s rights to land and other productive assets would bring a wide range of other benefits such as improved living conditions, better nutrition and access to food, better health, higher earnings and individual savings, helping avoid intergenerational poverty traps.

Call to Action:

- 6.1.1 Invest in collective / community housing process for secured tenure and sustainable development of the city.
- 6.1.2 Demonstrate community led housing projects in the selected areas later to be scaled up at city, provincial and national level.
- 6.1.3 Influence governments to make funds and schemes available for the community led housing projects.
- 6.1.4 Encourage private sector/ banks for investment in the collective housing schemes.

Policy Action 6.2: Protect slum communities against forced evictions

Forced evictions are still practiced uprooting the slum communities and pushing them to live in deep poverty. Appropriate policies need to be formulated to discourage practice of forced evictions by giving affected communities acceptable compensation and relocation alternatives.

Inequality and social wellbeing is closely linked to gender, equity and inclusiveness. With COVID-19, many of the burden women carry has increased especially those on low incomes. The UN stated that COVID-19 has pushed some 47 million women and girls into extreme poverty and the “shadow pandemic” of domestic violence against women and girls that emerged during COVID-19 has not yet subsided⁸. We ask policymakers, decision makers, investors and leaders practitioners to address violence against women (VAW), especially in low income vulnerable communities⁹. This could take the form of universal gender-responsive social protection, strengthen social protection systems to cover all workers in formal and informal employment and other policy initiatives.

Call to Action:

- 6.2.1 Make forced evictions illegal and punishable.
- 6.2.2 Influence governments to formulate plan and program for slum upgrading and securing lives of the people in the informal settlements against climate impact and human made disasters.
- 6.2.3 Ensure improvement of basic facilities and infrastructure to be the early step for slum development.

6.2.4 Organize people and build their alliances for the development of the communities and collective advocacy.

6.2.5 Help establish a collective housing process, that addresses the basic needs of the communities such as housing, water and sanitation, livelihood, environment, climate, secure tenure, culture need to be promoted and supported so the community can be developed and sustained with the efforts from the people.

Policy Action 6.3: Facilitate learning visits between cities and regions with similar challenges

Encourage the representatives from the governments, private sectors, civil society organizations and the communities visit the innovative program in team to maximize the impact of learning and replication.

Call to Action:

6.3.1 Organize exchanges among the government representatives accompanied by communities and other city stakeholders including media to learn from each other and scale up the initiations.

Policy Action 6.4: Regulate conditions and services provided for residents housed in new projects

In support of densely built tower complexes, all necessary public infrastructure must be provided, including access to sufficient open green areas and playgrounds, additional schools, kindergartens, clinics etc., in order to ensure that the old slums are not replaced with new ones.

Call to Action:

6.4.1 Ensure regular monitoring of the system.

6.4.2 Promote community housing cooperatives where community members collectively own and manage housing developments, enabling residents to have affordable housing while building equity over time.

6.4.3 Engage communities in housing design and development to ensure they meet local needs and preferences.

Recommendation 7: Support the development of the local economy

Focus on policies and initiatives that support entrepreneurship, innovation, and the development of a thriving business ecosystem that guarantees equal entrepreneurial freedom to residents regardless of their gender identity, ethnicity, age, race or sexual orientation.

Policy Action 7.1: Support entrepreneurial activities and innovation, secure entrepreneurial freedom

Collaborate with financial institutions and investors to create favorable funding mechanisms tailored to the needs of entrepreneurs. Facilitate access to capital for small businesses through initiatives such as bank loan guarantees, grants, peer-to-peer funding, venture capital funds, and other alternative financing options. Integrate entrepreneurship education and training into the school curriculum and vocational programs to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to start and manage businesses. Collaboration with educational institutions to foster partnerships between businesses and educational institutions and promote knowledge exchange, research collaborations, and the development of a skilled workforce. Encourage businesses to provide internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities for students and graduates.

Call to Action:

- 7.1.1** Promote partnerships between educational institutions, corporations, and startups to create mentorship opportunities and practical internships for aspiring entrepreneurs.
- 7.1.2** Establish inclusive spaces where entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds can access shared resources, workshops, and networking opportunities.

Policy Action 7.2: Promote a Business-Friendly Environment

Streamline business regulations and licensing procedures local policies and procedure to ease the administrative burden on SME's and remove opportunities for small-scale corruption. Implement transparent and efficient processes that encourage entrepreneurship and ensure compliance with necessary regulations.

Call to Action:

- 7.2.1** Advocate for simplified, transparent licensing processes that eliminate barriers for small businesses, particularly those in underserved communities.
- 7.2.2** Implementation of online platforms to manage business permits and licenses, reducing opportunities for corruption and increasing accessibility.
- 7.2.3** Work with local governments to revise regulations ensuring equitable opportunities for all.

Policy Action 7.3: Adopt green procurement practices

Support local SME's in their transition to a circular economy by adopting green procurement practices which would result in cost savings from reducing waste, energy consumption, and resource use, hence help SME's become more competitive and fuel long-term sustainable economic growth. Provide resources and guidance to businesses to adopt sustainable practices, including product lifecycle management, waste recycling, and eco-design principles. Set environmental criteria for public procurement, favoring products and services with a lower carbon footprint, sustainable sourcing, and eco-friendly practices and encourage businesses to do the same.

Call to Action:

- 7.3.1** Promote Circular Economy Adoption.
- 7.3.2** Provide accessible training programs and resources to help businesses understand and adopt green procurement standards.

Recommendation 8: Promote innovative governance practices

Smart governance needs a fortified state architecture, alliances between public, private and citizen actors, a democratic government, transparency and equity in access and use of resources. The city also needs to innovate based on harmonization with the global agenda, and its platforms and instruments, especially the New Urban Agenda.

Promote capacity building to explore and exchange proposals of innovative and smart governance that positively contributes to manage climate change, improves resilience and inclusion and reduces risks and digital gaps.

Policy Action 8.1: Develop Human Capacity

Organize trainings for women leaders, local actors and allies focusing on areas such as:

- **Climate Governance**, including law, planning, and climate financing
Call to Action:
8.1.1 Organization and launch of Global Climate Workshop on building Climate Governance and Financing for cities.
- **Risk Reduction Disaster Management**, including the steps of prevention, emergency, humanitarian aid and reconstruction with mechanisms for citizen participation, monitoring the transparency of private sector intervention.
Call to Action:
8.1.2 Preparation of a training program on the governance of disaster by local administrations and the building of inclusion mechanisms of civil society and private sector stakeholders, supported by a virtual platform to share knowledge, tools and practices.
8.1.3 Analysis and statement on Cop28/Cop27 results on Loss and Damage Mechanisms, based in gender women perspective to follow the decision making process and global steps.
- **Public budgeting**, including gender perspectives and approaches to include women, youth and children into budgeting process
Call to Action:
8.1.4 Webinar to exchange of tools on Public Budgeting based gender/children perspective, convoking international entities and networks to share experiences and publications.
- **Care System and Protection System for Children**, in the horizon to modeling a Care-Cities.
Call to Action:
8.1.5 Present Care-Cities statement to UN global summit and conferences focusing on care issues thereby encouraging policy makers to incorporate a "Care" perspective into local government and local laws, policies, programs and services that are implemented to care for people in vulnerable circumstances such as the elderly, disabled, children, patients and others.
8.1.6 Develop a robust emergency response system with Gender specific emergency response teams and mechanisms.
- **Women and Economy**, including municipal policies and services to help and promote women in business sector, commerce, entrepreneurship.

- **Digital divide**, by organizing digital lab to deliver services and training on artificial intelligence, digital tools, virtual platforms, etc. to increase technology usage among the target group
- **The role of accessible sustainable transport systems** in delivering access to education, health care, jobs and leisure opportunities for all leading to inclusive and empowered societies and a reduction of poverty.

Policy Action 8.2: Establish local urban forums within the framework of National Urban Forums

This is in accordance with the recommendations of UN Habitat and aims to commit governments to helping cities achieve their goals of climate resilience and urban sustainability. Local Urban Forums create an optimal framework for cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary interactions.

Call to Action:

8.2.1 Organization and launching the First Regional Urban Forums : Practices on Women, urban resilience and climate governance (Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe), with participation of UN, government, private, academy experts and delegates.

Policy Action 8.3: Foster innovative city governance

Foster innovative city governance through Living Labs, collaborative platforms that bring together public, private, and citizen actors. These Labs enable co-design and implementation of solutions for mobility, resilience, inclusivity, and digital equity, empowering cities to pioneer transformative governance models aligned with the global agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

Call to Action:

8.3.1 Effective development of safe and smart cities begins with developing city specific Smart City strategy or Blueprint which lays out the city specific challenges across different dimensions; technological, socio-economic, demographic, etc. to allow for targeted and impact based urban services. Therefore, it is recommended to develop city strategies with clearly defined challenges & solutions, operating procedures, financing and sustainability mechanisms.

Additionally, implement citizen engagement portals/systems to strengthen governance and citizen participation.

Annex - References

DOCUMENT	LINK
UNESCO (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report	Gender Report: A new generation: 25 years of efforts for gender equality in education. Paris, UNESCO https://www.g100.in/ellegosse/
² Universal Principles and Practices for gender equality and empowerment toward Peace, Parity and Prosperity for ALL	https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/
³ New Urban Agenda (2016)	https://www.fiafoundation.org/media/zc5mh1uc/sum4all-gender-imbalance-transport.pdf
⁴ Gender Imbalance in the Transport Sector	https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Governing_Smart_Cities_2021.pdf
⁵ Governing Smart Cities: Policy Benchmarks for Ethical and Responsible Smart City Development (2021)	https://www.irena.org/publications/2015/Jun/Renewable-Energy-Target-Setting
⁶ Renewable Energy Target Setting (2015)	https://www.irena.org/publications/2015/Jun/Renewable-Energy-Target-Setting
⁷ Insecure land rights for women threaten progress on gender equality and sustainable development (2017)	Microsoft Word - Womenslandright.docx (ohchr.org)
⁸ As COVID-19 Pushes 47 Million Women, Girls into Extreme Poverty, Secretary-General Calls for Upholding Reproductive Health Rights, in World Population Day Message	https://press.un.org/en/2021/sgsm20822.doc.htm
⁹ Addressing violence against women through social protection: A review of the evidence	Addressing violence against women through social protection: A review of the evidence Publications UN Women – Headquarters