



World Habitat Day theme on mitigation – Accelerating urban action for a carbon-free world

- The fight against climate change will be won or lost in cities and towns. The future of the planet depends on the actions of our urban residents. The concentration of economic growth and population in cities makes them key contributors to climate change.
- Cities account for more than 50 per cent of the global population, two-thirds of global energy consumption and more than 70 per cent of annual global carbon emissions.
- We must cut global emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 compared with 2010 levels reaching net zero around 2050 to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 C above pre-industrial temperatures. Most severe climate impacts are expected when global temperatures rise above this.
- Ambitious net-zero climate action must leave no one and no place behind, taking a holistic approach to action that reduces emissions.
- This is a critical moment to plan, build, manage and power cities differently. Every country, city, financial institution and company should adopt plans for transitioning to net-zero emissions by 2050. Low- and zero-carbon ambitions provide domestic economic opportunities, increase the resilience of the energy grid, and trade and export competitiveness.
- Most of the carbon emissions in cities come from buildings. Towns and cities need to build energy-efficient infrastructure and housing designed for local conditions, At the same time existing buildings must be retrofitted by implementing measures or technologies to make them more efficient such as improved insulation or ventilation so they use far less energy.
- The energy used to operate buildings – including heating, lighting and air conditioning accounts for 28 per cent of all carbon emissions. Countries need to generate clean, resource-efficient energy and move away from fossil fuels. Since 2009, the cost of renewable electricity has dropped both for solar and wind power and will keep going down. Energy consumption and related costs now and in the future will be reduced and health-related benefits, for example by reducing air pollution, will secure a more sustainable future.
- The move from polluting to renewable energy must be a just transition, involving local governments, unions and the private sector to support affected communities and generate green jobs.

- Much of the infrastructure that will exist in 2050 has yet to be built. Building materials and construction sector account for 11 per cent of annual carbon dioxide emissions. Using materials that do not produce carbon dioxide while being extracted or manufactured will slash emissions.
- Transport via road, rail, air and water generates approximately a fifth of carbon dioxide emissions – the majority coming from road transport including car trips within cities. There is an urgent need for a focus on safe, accessible, affordable and low-carbon public transport as well as integrated models including facilities for walking and cycling. Planning compact cities with good transit infrastructure is key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Stepping up climate action for an inclusive green recovery from COVID-19 to support the transition to resource-efficient economies will slow climate change. Integrated, connected and greener cities driven by renewable energy will ensure the health of urban communities as well as the planet.