

MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# **ICLEI World Congress 2024 in São Paulo to Advance Local Climate and Resilience Action, Strengthen Multilevel Governance, and Highlight Amazon's Global Sustainability Role**

*Over 1,000 Leaders to Address Critical Issues in Climate Action and Urban Resilience, Setting the Stage for COP30 in Belém, Brazil*

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São Paulo, Brazil / Bonn, Germany (1 June 2024) – The ICLEI World Congress 2024 is set to bring together more than 1,000 global urban leaders in São Paulo, Brazil, to address critical issues in local climate and resilience action, multilevel governance, and the unique role of regions like the Amazon in global biodiversity and sustainability.

Organized by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and hosted by the City of São Paulo, this four-day event will gather local and regional government representatives, urban practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders to focus on advancing sustainable urban development and equitable adaptation to local and regional challenges.

São Paulo, Brazil has been an ICLEI Member since 1991. The largest city in Brazil and all of South America, it also serves as Brazil's main economic and financial center, and plays a leading role among Brazilian cities in sustainability commitment, action and innovation. The City is committed to creating solidarity and opportunities for international collaboration among cities and regions as an essential part of addressing the global environmental, humanitarian, economic and health crises of our time.

The ICLEI World Congress is the main event of the São Paulo Urban Summit, a week full of activities that highlight the fundamental role of cities. As Brazil officially assumes the presidency of the G20, replacing India, Brazilian cities will lead the U20, elevating the voices of urban centers at the heart of the G20 economies. The week will also include the Metropolis Board of Directors Meeting, further reinforcing the importance of cities on the global stage.

Climate emergencies in Brazil and its surrounding regions bring into sharp focus the need for urgent action to protect communities. Across South America and the Caribbean, the impact of climate change has been severe, with the region facing 175 disasters between 2020 and 2022, 88 percent of which were weather-related.

In Brazil, unprecedented rainfall in Rio Grande do Sul last month resulted in devastating flooding, displacing over 1.5 million people, causing numerous fatalities, and inflicting billions of dollars in damages.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for comprehensive climate action and resilient urban planning across the globe, making the discussions at the ICLEI World Congress more critical than ever.

The Congress will address these pressing global issues, offering solutions that can be implemented worldwide. Featuring international experts, policymakers, and urban leaders, the event will present actionable insights and strategies. Attendees will showcase transformative projects and initiatives poised to reshape urban resilience and development. Additionally, the event will highlight the critical role of the Amazon in global biodiversity and sustainability, exploring the impact of climate policies at all levels of government.

## **KEY FOCUS AREAS**

### **Multi-Level Action**

The Congress will emphasize the importance of coordinated action across different levels of government to effectively address sustainability challenges. Multi-level governance integrates local, regional, and national efforts, fostering a unified approach to urban development. This collaboration ensures that policies and initiatives are harmonized, leveraging the strengths and capabilities at each governance level to create robust, scalable solutions.

## **Local Action**

Local and regional governments are on the front lines of implementing sustainability practices. The Congress will highlight successful local initiatives and strategies that have made significant impacts. By showcasing best practices from cities, towns and regions worldwide, the event aims to inspire participants to adopt and adapt proven methods for their unique contexts.

## **Spotlight on Amazon and Similar Regions**

The Amazon, spanning nine countries, is home to the world's largest rainforest and is a global hotspot for biocultural diversity. It includes countless cities with an estimated population of 50 million people, with 72% of the Brazilian Amazon's population residing in urban centers. The Congress will explore the impact of climate and sustainability measures at all government levels on this vital region. Sessions will highlight how local actions drive global outcomes, emphasizing the importance of preserving the Amazon's ecological integrity for global environmental health and addressing significant challenges like social vulnerability and public service pressures.

## **São Paulo: A Leader in Urban Innovation**

São Paulo, Brazil - and South America's - largest city and an economic powerhouse, is at the forefront of sustainability innovation. The Congress will feature site visits showcasing São Paulo's efforts in food security, clean energy, mobility transition, and climate cooperation. Participants will gain firsthand insights into how São Paulo addresses these challenges through innovative, scalable solutions.

## **ICLEI's Strategic Pathways for Sustainable Development**

The Congress will delve into ICLEI's comprehensive framework for sustainable urban development, including its strategic pathways, ongoing projects, and future goals. The five interconnected pathways — Equitable Development, Zero Emission Development, Nature-based Development, Circular Development, and Resilient Development — will be highlighted as essential for creating systemic urban change.

The program will showcase how ICLEI Members, partners, and local and regional governments can engage and contribute.

## **Science, Innovation and Research**

The [ICLEI Global Research & Innovation Symposium 2024](#), to be held on 18 June, strives to align the insights of researchers and the ingenuity of innovators with the pragmatism of practitioners and investors to ensure that initiatives are informed, disruptive, and actionable. Participants will discuss the future of research with special consideration to the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities, agenda-setting innovation, and exploring emerging technologies, concepts, and perspectives essential for driving systemic transformation.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The ICLEI World Congress 2024 will feature a diverse program, including high-level plenaries led by international experts, interactive deep-dive sessions, site visits throughout São Paulo, and a Research & Innovation Symposium. Key themes will focus on leveraging ICLEI's strategic pathways, understanding the Amazon region's global significance, and exploring the impacts of climate and sustainability across all levels of government.

### **Theme: Equity and Resilience**

Continuing to build on [The Malmö Commitment](#) - which was established at the last ICLEI World Congress in Malmö, Sweden - the 2024 Congress will place equity at the center of sustainable development. The program aims to build community resilience through inclusive and equitable approaches, showcasing how ICLEI members can adapt and respond to present and future challenges, and how the Malmö Commitment can advance these goals.

### **Engaging Diverse Voices**

The Congress will highlight stories from communities prioritizing inclusive policy making and implementation. This transition from service providers to community enablers will be illustrated through various case studies and interactive sessions, emphasizing the involvement of youth, vulnerable groups, startups, and community-based organizations.

## KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. ICLEI New President Announcement:** The Congress will introduce the newly elected president of ICLEI, who will outline the vision and direction for the organization's future, as well as the full governance leadership, including the First Vice President and two Vice Presidents.
- 2. ICLEI's Strategic Vision 2024-2030 Release:** ICLEI will present its strategic vision for the next six years, outlining goals and pathways to enhance urban sustainability globally.
- 3. Urban Infrastructure Insurance Facility Project (UIIF):** The official launch of the UIIF will focus on climate risk management for cities in Latin America. The UIIF project is funded by KfW Development Bank on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project aims to provide insurance against natural hazards, safeguard infrastructure, and support vulnerable populations.
- 4. Cities Forward Initiative:** Funded by the U.S. State Department, this initiative will foster connections between cities in North and South America, promoting collaborative urban development.
- 5. IPCC Special Report on Cities:** Insights from the special report by IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) on urban sustainability will be shared, emphasizing scientific foundations for climate-resilient cities.
- 6. AI and Digital Transformation Sessions:** Exploring the role of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in sustainable urban development, these sessions will provide forward-looking insights and innovations.
- 7. Plenary on the Amazon:** A dedicated plenary session will discuss the Amazon region's critical environmental role, in collaboration with stakeholders representing COP30 in Belém.
- 8. 100% Renewables Roadmap Project:** ICLEI will unveil its ambitious project to develop a roadmap for achieving 100% renewable energy across member cities, showcasing innovative approaches and strategic planning.

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## FURTHER DETAILS

### Full Program

The full program is available at <https://worldcongress.iclei.org/full-program/>

### Registration Information

Attendance at the ICLEI World Congress 2024 is free of charge, thanks to the generosity of the City of São Paulo. Spaces are limited, and advance registration is mandatory. For more information and to register, please visit [this page](#).

### Media Information

A media page with the most recent press announcements, media contact, media assets, and further updates is available at <https://worldcongress.iclei.org/media/>.

## NOTE TO EDITORS

### About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (known as "ICLEI") is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

For more information, please visit: <https://iclei.org/>

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