

Declaration of the Hamburg City Climate Conference 2009

7 Facts, 7 Commitments and 7 Calls for a low-carbon future

The signatory cities declare that combating climate change is above all a matter for cities. They commit to do everything in their power to mitigate climate change and to master the consequences of climate change. They support the commitments by the cities of the Covenant of Mayors. They call upon COP15, national governments and international bodies, to adopt regulations which will make it possible to achieve the 2-degree target.

7 Facts about cities in the face of climate change

1. Cities are key players and key parties affected by climate change.

Cities and towns account for 75% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. That is why they have a key role to play in achieving the global reduction goal of 50% by 2050.

2. Mitigation is mainly an urban issue

Per capita emissions can be particularly low in cities. Urban life can be organised with shorter travelling distances, denser housing and synergies in energy supply, in such a way that the reduction targets are met.

3. Cities of the world start from different conditions.

That is why they have to support one another. Fighting poverty and fighting for a low-carbon future belong together. Cities in the developing countries have to be empowered by the international regulatory system to contribute to climate action and to deal with the consequences of climate change.

4. Cities in the industrial countries have to cut carbon emissions by 80%.

Populations and economies in the developing countries are growing. They can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions only in the longer term. So cities in the industrialised countries have to reduce their GHG emissions by at least 80% by 2050, to permit achievement of the global goal of 50%.

5. Cities need national and international support.

The cities want to mitigate climate change by efficient use of renewable resources, by using energy-efficient motors and equipment, and by drastically reducing their energy consumption. They need effective international agreements and national legislation to do that.

6. Cities are particularly exposed to risk.

Almost all cities are located on rivers or seas, or in valleys, and are therefore specifically vulnerable to flooding and rising sea levels. They are also threatened by storms, heat waves and scarcity of drinking water. Due to concentration of people, infrastructure and values cities have particularly high loss potentials. International and national regulations are needed to manage the consequences of climate change.

7. Cities need a stronger voice.

Despite their key role in mitigating climate change, the cities of the world are currently not sufficiently involved in the political decision making process. Their experience should be used to set up regulations which are effective in practice.

7 Commitments of the signatories

The signatory cities, towns and regions commit to the following principles:

1. A new dimension of global cooperation

Cities will work together actively, in international city networks, in their twinning arrangements knowledge and to specifically support cities in the developing countries. They will develop new models for bilateral and multilateral climate partnerships. They encourage the Climate Alliance CO2 emissions reduction targets, the declaration by EUROCITIES on climate change, the Local Government Climate Roadmap Process initiated by ICLEI and the Energie-Cités initiatives.

2. Cooperation with surrounding areas

Cities will cooperate increasingly with the surrounding areas in the use of renewable energies and in measures to adapt to climate change.

3. Municipal climate action programme

Cities will develop climate programmes oriented towards the 2-degree target, and will implement them and continuously monitor their effectiveness.

4. Cities as models

City administrations will become a role model in public procurement and in their own buildings, for private sector business and for the citizens.

5. Energy saving policy

Cities will implement policies to encourage energy-efficiency action in private households and in industry and commerce, to support public transport and to prevent unnecessary traffic volumes, and to encourage the use of electric cars, bicycles and walking.

6. Pro-climate urban planning

Cities will encourage and implement mitigatory and adaptive measures by means of regulations and incentives in their urban planning.

7. Citizen participation

Cities will actively involve their citizens in planning and implementation of climate action programmes and motivate them to make a contribution by their action to combating climate change.

7 Calls for support by COP15, governments and international organisations

1. Binding commitment of the global community to the "2-degree target" of the IPCC

Global warming of more than 2°C would destabilise the global ecosystems and economies. It is therefore essential for emissions to be limited in such a way that this level is not exceeded. The international reduction agreements must specify concrete goals for industrialised and developing countries, achieving at least a 50% reduction by 2050.

2. Fair solutions, because only fairness will help in the long term

To keep within the 2-degree target, a maximum of 750 gigatonnes CO2 emission is permissible up to 2050. An allocation mechanism based on the principle of equal per capita emissions is needed. Financial compensation must be created for those countries and populations which generate fewer emissions. The historic emissions by the industrialised countries have to be taken into consideration in this calculation.

3. Boost of renewables

A tremendous joint international effort is needed in order to obtain about 80% of energy from renewables by 2050. It requires exchange of technologies, funding of technology transfer, and development of renewable infrastructures. That includes the establishment of intercontinental powergrids for renewable energies.

4. Energy efficiency and energy savings

The industrialised countries are required to legislate for high-efficiency thermal insulation of new buildings right now, and for subsequent insulation of existing buildings by 2025 at the latest. The construction of transport infrastructure and subsidies to/taxation of means of transport must be based on their CO2 emissions.

5. Protection of primeval forests

The cities call for international agreements on protection of primeval forest areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America, including financial compensation for the countries affected. Trade in wood obtained nonsustainably from these forests must be banned, and the ban must be effectively monitored.

6. Flood defences and protection of drinking water reserves

We need international agreements to support cities in protection from the rise in sea level. It is also necessary to set up international cooperation for protection of freshwater reserves.

7. Appropriate involvement of cities

Cities must be involved in the decision making processes at national and international level to combat climate change.

