



**Inclusive climate action spotlight series**  
Loss and Damage and a Just Transition in Africa

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This series spotlights city-led action to address urban loss and damage and ensure a just transition for communities in Global South urban centres, delivered with support from the Scottish Government's Climate Justice Fund. C40's Inclusive Climate Action programme responds to what cities need – from needs assessments

and inclusive solution design, to knowledge sharing between cities for better outcomes for all, to advocacy on the national and global stage for solutions that are fit for cities.

This case study series features city action across these workstreams.



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**Building cities' skills on urban loss and damage**

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**What challenges do cities face?**

Amidst the global urgency to address the escalating impacts of extreme weather events, such as floods, extreme heat, wildfires, and storms, compounded by high levels of inequities, cities worldwide are already dealing with climate change-induced [loss and damage](#). They face the urgent task of addressing economic and non-economic impacts whilst ensuring inclusivity and equity in their adaptation and resilience efforts.

However, a core gap identified by C40 cities and highlighted in a [first-of-its kind report on the urban dimension of loss and damage](#) released at COP28, was capacity and knowledge within cities to speak to these issues publicly and engage in global dialogue on these issues to inform solutions that are fit for purpose in cities.

**How have cities faced this problem?**

**Knowledge development and sharing on key under-addressed issues in loss and damage action**

In 2023, as parties prepared for COP28, which would negotiate the scope of a new Loss and Damage Fund, the C40 ICA Programme hosted a six-part **webinar series**, *How resilient cities are protecting frontline communities from the impacts of climate change*, with 130 attendees from 30 cities worldwide, including 26 C40 cities. With the aim of sharing best practices between cities and bringing expert knowledge from external organisations, the series explored the social dimension of adaptation and city actions to address economic, cultural, and resource losses due to climate impacts. This built shared evidence of how silo-breaking governance structures can



Credit: Abinet Teshome

support action on loss and damage in cities, with a focus on particular challenges that are often over-looked.

The webinar series directly informed the publication of a first policy brief *'Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion through Disaster Risk Management in Cities'*, part of the comprehensive resource pack *'Delivering disability inclusive climate action in cities'*. These resources were presented at the COP28 Side Event organised by the Global Disability Innovation Hub, *'Inclusive Infrastructure, Disability and Climate Change: what's needed to leave no one behind?'*, raising decision makers' awareness of the importance of these issues and cities' vital role in addressing them.

Key takeaways from this publication and webinar series for policy makers are:

- Climate risks including to health are particularly acute in some communities who are also least served and/or most at risk from non-climate related risks. Funding and programmes can build on city and community knowledge of local needs.
- The inclusion of people with disabilities and ensuring they are not left behind is a significant knowledge gap that remains to be addressed. Especially as people with disabilities are disproportionately at risk from climate-induced losses and damages, a risk that cities are well equipped to act upon and address as the resources have shown.
- Integrating an inclusive perspective of people with disabilities does not only ensure they are not left behind but also benefits all residents through improved accessibility and affordability of services.

### Convening cities for knowledge exchange and capacity building

To support cities to build resilience and protect frontline communities from climate-induced losses and damages and to talk publicly about these issues, C40's Inclusive Climate Action (ICA) Programme and the City of Addis Ababa co-hosted a 5-day *ICA Communications Training and Masterclass* in March 2024.

Participating cities of Abidjan, Addis Ababa, Accra, Cape Town, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Freetown, and Ethekewini (Durban) were represented by officials from communication and environmental departments, helping build connections across sectors and city domains to break down silos.



*Where there are knowledge and capacity gaps for cities on issues like loss and damage, it is not because cities are not dealing with climate-induced loss and damage - in fact they deal with it virtually everyday. The issue is that global dialogue and advocacy have so far not addressed the urban dimension, and many of the actions cities are already taking are not labelled as loss and damage actions, they are simply the things that cities have to do everyday to protect residents and reach the most vulnerable communities. There are challenges and opportunities unique to cities, and city-to-city knowledge sharing is a particularly effective way to address them. National governments and global actors can also learn and benefit from this knowledge developed with local communities.*

— Jazmin Burgess, Director for Inclusive Climate Action, C40 Cities



Credit: Abinet Teshome

In response to needs raised by cities, the Communications Training supported cities to understand how they can apply the power of communications, media and storytelling to engage key stakeholders and communities to secure support for inclusive and equitable urban climate policies and programmes. During the capacity-building and knowledge-sharing sessions, city officials developed city-level communications plans and strategies to promote policies and programmes advancing informal sector engagement, green jobs, and the connection between urban informality, just transition, urban resilience and loss and damage.

The Masterclass equipped city representatives with technical and policy support and key

insights on cities' challenges, needs and opportunities in order to translate loss and damage awareness and knowledge into action. It concluded with participants formulating action plans to enhance climate communication and resilience efforts in their communities.

### As a direct result of the Communications Training and Masterclass, cities increased their capacity to communicate and act locally on urban loss and damage.

City officials strengthened their awareness and confidence to speak about, identify and showcase their loss and damage actions and better identify gaps in implementation. This enables them to gain public support, raise awareness and build partnerships more effectively

## Key messages on urban loss and damage from the Masterclass



**Cities require clarity on funding eligibility criteria and how to frame key issues to unlock resources effectively.** Cities across Africa are actively addressing loss and damage through preparedness, adaptation, risk reduction, and resilience-building measures, but they require support to access funding designated for loss and damage projects.



**Cities require additional funds and resources to execute their plans effectively and address the increasing severity of climate-related challenges.** Cities are progressing data gathering and research to understand the social and economic impacts of climate-induced loss and damage. Cities need support with analysing and communicating data to move from planning to implementation and scale up initiatives.



**Cities need urgent acknowledgement, understanding, and appropriate support to strengthen city and community preparedness.** Cities are already grappling with relocation and

displacement due to climate impacts, and are exploring inclusive and just approaches to protect and build the resilience of communities in the face of climate-related shocks and stresses.



**Cities recognise how crucial it is to engage frontline communities for the success of loss and damage initiatives, and are applying diverse strategies to reach communities.**

Cities are facilitating informed decision-making, building trust, and empowering frontline communities to participate in solution identification and implementation.



**Cities know they cannot address loss and damage alone, and are strengthening city-community collective ownership and long-term partnerships.** They are fostering transparent dialogue with frontline communities, partners, city departments and agencies to co-create tailored solutions for resilience. Cities have recognised the potential for long-term support from organisations such as C40 to further advance efforts to address loss and damage.



Credit: Abinet Teshome

## City challenges and actions: evidence from the Masterclass

The Masterclass also helped cities identify the challenges they face in addressing more frequent and intensifying climate impacts and the barriers that hinder city action on the resulting losses and damages. This included looking into actions cities can take in:

- Measuring, assessing and communicating the social and economic impact of climate induced loss and damage
- Strengthening city and community preparedness and capacity to sustain and recover back (better) after shocks and stresses (e.g. risk prevention, preparedness and livelihood support)
- Engaging frontline communities in early action, response and longer term resilience building

Cities brought their best practices, lessons and knowledge as well as their own current challenges and came away from the Masterclass with clear ideas of the most critical actions they must take in the short, medium and long term to safeguard communities.

**Addis Ababa:** Addis Ababa faces challenges in flood mapping, landslides and fire-related disasters, compounded by technical capacity and resource gaps. To mitigate these risks, the city plans to enhance institutional capacity and multi-sectoral coordination.

**Abidjan:** Abidjan would like to establish a technical assistance program to aid relocated populations from high-risk zones. This involves forming a multi-sectoral coordination committee, gathering collective socio-economic and demographic data and conducting development studies for vacated areas. Therefore, design and architectural offices were hired to support the relocation project in order to propose layout plans.

**Accra:** Accra faces inadequate infrastructure and disaster management challenges, prompting a focus on improving green infrastructure and early warning systems for informal settlements. In the long run, the city is hoping to set up a task force for climate resilience and scale up advocacy programmes to bolster preparedness. See **the case study on informal workers** in this series for more details.



Credit: Abinet Teshome

**Cape Town:** Cape Town identified silos and funding constraints as barriers to effective loss and damage action. To address these challenges, the city hopes to develop an advocacy toolkit and enhance interdepartmental collaboration. Short-term actions include legal framework development and training, while in the long term they will build an early warning system and strengthen preparedness.

**Dakar:** Governance gaps and financing limitations present challenges in Dakar, necessitating capacity building and early warning system operationalisation. Short-term objectives include stakeholder identification and resource planning, while mid-term goals focus on community mobilisation.

**Dar es Salaam:** Dar es Salaam's challenge lies in managing flooding better, prompting a focus on capacity building. The city aims to enhance its ability to respond effectively to climate-related incidents, a core component of which will be strengthened engagement with community members and other key stakeholders.

**eThekweni (Durban):** eThekweni Municipality grapples with urban river waste management challenges, compounded by transient communities and riparian invasive alien plant infestations. The city will build officials' capacity, map key stakeholders and review their communication framework for climate change induced action responses. This will enable them to quantify loss and damage, establish a climate change community forum, and enhance monitoring and evaluation efforts.

**Freetown:** Freetown faces rural-to-urban migration, data scarcity, and extreme heat and flooding challenges. The city is prioritising communication consistency in awareness raising and mobilising resources to support their heat resilience work and flood mitigation. Long-term

actions include participatory development of communications campaigns and monitoring and evaluation.

### What happens next?

C40 will provide cities with an [ICA Communications Toolkit](#) to stimulate cross-departmental collaboration, increase visibility and understanding of inclusive climate action, and gain public and political support. Cities will be guided through the toolkit to facilitate practical actions as an ongoing development opportunity.

C40 and member cities have actively contributed to the collective understanding of the challenges posed by climate-induced loss and damage within diverse urban contexts through extensive knowledge sharing and peer learning. This collective wealth of knowledge in cities now needs to be reflected in local, national and global policy to effectively build resilience and protect frontline communities. Cities will continue to share knowledge and learn from each other's challenges and best practices through the ICA Forum.

### Call for support

C40 African cities who participated in the Masterclass have benefited from [C40's Inclusive Climate Action \(ICA\) Forum](#), a peer learning platform of over 36 member cities. The Forum aims to meet city demand for continued tailored support to deliver on action plans; with tailored peer learning. To expand our support to cities and meet city demand, C40 welcomes new strategic partners for the Inclusive Climate Action programme.



## Cities engaging informal workers and communities for strong climate action, resilience and to address loss and damage

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Inclusive climate action serves a dual purpose of helping to reduce GHG emissions while working to eradicate socio-economic inequalities which exacerbate climate impacts. This combination of efforts helps to improve communities' resilience against climate impacts.

### What challenges do cities face?

In many African cities, informality is inextricably linked to socio-economic and climate vulnerability. According to the [UNDP](#), "nearly 83% of employment in Africa and 85% in Sub-Saharan Africa is informal, absorbing many of the continent's young employment seekers". Informal workers typically [face more challenges accessing decent work](#) and labour standards related to the four pillars of decent work: economic opportunities, rights, social protection, and voice. Concurrently, informal settlement

dwellers face limited access to housing and basic social infrastructure, healthcare, and so on. This constitutes a **double bind of inequality for informal workers**, many of who live in informal settlements.

For many in the informal sector, climate change is a harsh reality. Informal workers and informal settlement dwellers face an increasing risk of climate change effects and make decisions influenced by climate impacts, such as migrating to cities and urban centres where they face gruelling competition for non-existent resources (jobs, housing) and socio-economic life (health, education), which exposes them further to the effects of climate change.

While **many informal workers work in key climate sectors delivering core green jobs** (such as waste management, transport and construction), the important climate



Credit: Accra Metropolitan Assembly

contributions they make are often un(der) recognised, and they face substantial obstacles to safety and livelihood protection due to often being marginalised from decision making processes and governance and facing discrimination or misinformed perceptions of their work. Ensuring climate action maximises positive outcomes for informal workers and communities while minimising unintended negative consequences is essential for gaining social acceptance and public support across all levels, upholding justice and fundamental rights at the local level. Therefore, **engaging and integrating the informal sector is crucial** for the success of city climate action plans, building local resilience against climate impacts, and improving the livelihoods and quality of work for informal workers.

In cities with substantial informal employment like Accra, Addis Ababa, and Freetown, **social**

**insurance programmes serve as vital safety nets for informal workers**, shielding them from the economic and non-economic impacts of climate change and related loss and damage in their line of work.

### How have cities faced this problem?

Facilitated by C40's Inclusive Climate Action (ICA) Programme, the City of Accra, Ghana, has worked to enhance cooperation with its informal waste sector to accelerate the achievement of critical climate goals while building the resilience of informal workers.

The programme in Accra has tested approaches to working with the informal sector, prioritising the voice, participation, and inclusion of informal actors – ensuring that actions drive inclusive outcomes for informal workers. These efforts in Accra not only confirm the inherent connections between climate action, informality, and the creation of

#### Leading the way for informal sector access to social protection

In **Accra's** waste sector, stakeholders, including city officials, informal workers, and ecosystem experts, identified social insurance as crucial for enhancing resilience within the informal sector during the Accra needs assessment. In March 2024, the city of Accra initiated the registration of 209 informal waste sector workers into a social insurance scheme, serving as a pilot initiative to demonstrate the effectiveness of social insurance in bolstering workers' resilience when they cannot work due to socio-economic shocks or climate impacts such as heat and flooding. The pilot will also showcase to development partners the potential for supporting informal workers in mitigating the impacts of climate action.

Similarly in **Addis Ababa**, a waste sector gender needs assessment conducted by the city with support from C40, has showcased the significance of social security and social insurance policies and programmes to build socio-economic resilience for women informal waste sector workers who face additional gender-based layers of exclusion within the waste sector. In **Freetown**, informal workers, predominantly women, face a significant challenge with climate stresses, especially extreme heat which increases their vulnerability to heat-related illnesses and impacts their economic stability. Through the ICA Africa programme, C40 is working with the city and informal workers to assess the trends and impacts faced by informal female market workers in the context of urban loss and damage approaches to inform future policy and planning.

good green jobs but also emphasise the need for a just transition to ensure fair benefits for informal workers.

### How have cities scaled these city-led solutions?

The work in Accra is inspiring other cities who face similar challenges. Building on the success and learnings from the ICA programme in Accra, the ICA Africa Programme is supporting four African cities to spearhead initiatives focused on equity and inclusion in climate action implementation, with a specific emphasis on informality.

Often this involves starting with comprehensive needs and gap assessments and then identifying solutions for stronger partnerships with informal workers that are suitable and sustainable in a city. This process, using Inclusive Climate Action tools, is critical and is carried out with a range of local-stakeholders, led by the city.

**Accra (transport sector):** With nearly 95% of the transport sector in Accra managed informally, the city will only be able to deliver effective climate action by working with this vital community. Through a consultative process with persons living with disability, youth, women groups, informal transport unions and workers, and community residents, the city has produced a **roadmap for inclusive green transport transformation** which serves as a blueprint for the city to implement measures such as a low-emission bus rapid transit system that improve air quality and prioritise just, inclusive, and equitable outcomes for frontline groups, including a healthier working environment for informal workers. Among others, a major concern highlighted through consultations in the development of the roadmap is the potential exclusion of the informal transport sector and potential loss of jobs and livelihoods from the transition. The roadmap provides the city with strategies for the professionalisation of the informal transport



sector, including the [ILO's Recommendation No. R204](#), whose implementation will ensure that mobility transitions do not negatively impact informal worker livelihoods. The roadmap recommends the promotion of a just transition through training and reskilling of existing informal transport workers to take up jobs to be created in the green transport transition. These strategies are aimed at **improving existing jobs, creating new ones in the climate transition, and safeguarding livelihoods in Accra's informal transport economy** – a necessity for an inclusive green transport transition. This foundational work in Accra is helping to build the city's capacity to deliver on their climate goals and mainstream climate equity into urban transport action programmes now and into the future.

**Addis Ababa (waste sector):** The City of Addis Ababa has outlined as a priority the gender equity gap in its waste management sector, identified through the city's ongoing Urban Climate Action Project (UCAP). While women are actively engaged in various aspects of the waste value chain, from collection to sorting, processing, and recycling, therefore playing a key role in climate action, they often face unique barriers and constraints that limit their ability to participate and benefit fully from the opportunities available. In response, C40's ICA Programme is collaborating with the city to examine the gender-based inequalities within the

waste value chain and help to identify key areas for intervention and advocacy to promote gender equality and social inclusion and improved waste outcomes. The programme in Addis is focusing on providing policy support to address the gendered equity and inclusion dimensions of climate change policies within the waste sector, through a gender needs assessment of the waste value chain. Through consultations with city departments, waste sector workers and specifically women in the waste value chain in Addis Ababa, and sector experts, the programme helped to identify specific needs of frontline communities through a gender assessment. The needs assessment has shown the importance of opportunities for women to access job opportunities in the waste value chain through city policies and programmes including through **integrating and mainstreaming gender inclusion into city climate action waste activities** during and beyond the project. This in turn can contribute to protection for women from economic losses and damages.

Additionally, the programme has supported the city in procuring personal protective equipment and tools to support workers in the organic waste value chain. Together, these offer health and safety benefits for the SMEs workers in the city's waste value chain, contributing to building urban resilience. Protecting waste in times of climate impacts also reduces economic and



Credit: Reuters

non-economic losses that would occur through resultant lost earnings and livelihoods.

**Freetown (outdoor workers):** Freetown faces significant challenges due to climate stresses, particularly extreme heat, which disproportionately affect its outdoor and informal workers, who are predominantly women. These workers, comprising over half of the city's population, endure long hours of manual labour in open-air markets, exposing them to direct sun exposure. This not only increases their vulnerability to heat-related illnesses but also impacts their economic stability, as extreme temperatures can lead to spoilage of goods and deter customers, and health complications thereby reducing working days and causing economic and non-economic loss and damage.

Through consultations with informal female market workers and leaders, and city technical leaders,



Credit: Accra Metropolitan Assembly

C40 is supporting the city of Freetown to explore the issues relating to **loss and damage in the city affecting female informal market workers**, with a particular focus on non-economic and economic losses and damages and the gender dimensions of this situation – including an understanding of what is supported by existing policy and programmes and providing key evidence and recommendations to inform policy and planning.

**Dar es Salaam (waste sector):** Urbanisation and economic growth in Dar es Salaam has resulted in significant waste generation, about 60% of which is organic material, which poses a challenge for the city. Much of the waste generated is not recovered, as the city reports increasing incidences of waste burning and illicit waste disposal, resulting in air pollution and health challenges, especially for the children and the elderly who may be susceptible to respiratory challenges. This is especially notable in unplanned settlements which account for 75% of waste generation in the city but have limited waste management infrastructure. The programme in Dar es Salaam focuses on building the technical capacity of city technical teams and informal waste workers and community-based waste organisations in one selected informal settlement to increase collection and recycling rates and reduce GHG emissions while prioritising **resilience building for informal workers**. It has also supported informal waste workers and waste pickers with access to waste management equipment and personal protective equipment to **improve the health and safety of workers**.

To identify and respond to knowledge gaps, the city conducted consultations with community-based organisations, waste pickers, community leaders and local experts, and provided training to city staff and informal waste workers in the project area. This has strengthened the city's understanding of the role of community engagement in shaping decision making,

inclusive delivery and the equitable distribution of the impacts of climate action. In the long term, this will help the city to empower informal workers and enhance collaboration with them for improved waste collection and treatment in the city.

### The link to loss and damage

While informal workers and those living in informal settlements are disproportionately vulnerable to climate impacts, data on the risks to their livelihoods and community needs for resilience are often scarce, limiting cities' ability to help them prepare for and recover from climate shocks. To address this, eThekweni and other South African cities, with C40's support, have conducted assessments on the impact of recent climate events on informal workers to shape city policies that are better able to support local loss and damage approaches with a particular focus on informal communities' resilience. See **case studies in this series** for more details.

### What happens next?

Each city has shown that it is possible to make climate action work for and include informal sector workers, leading to better climate and socio-economic outcomes. With rapidly growing urban populations in Africa, this is absolutely critical for success.

This support is aiding cities to enhance engagement and integration of underrepresented and vulnerable groups, such as informal workers, women, youth, and migrant workers, into city policies and programmes aimed at building climate resilience and enhancing livelihoods. By taking an inclusive approach to integrating informal workers in climate action and public service delivery, cities can ensure that workers

will have better quality green jobs and increased recognition of their roles in the climate transition. Expanding this work is contributing to bolstering resilience and improving the livelihoods of informal workers in vital climate sectors. It also supports cities to develop structures for inclusive engagement while aiding them in implementing climate action that prioritises inclusivity and social justice.

These cities have featured their initiatives in peer learning and are now showcasing their actions and calling for support on the global stage. For more information see more **case studies in this series!**



*The pilot social insurance demonstration served as a testament to the city's commitment to building a more just and equitable society for all, including workers in the informal economy.*

— Elizabeth Sackey, Mayor of Accra

### Call for support

The ICA Africa pilot has expanded in recent years to meet growing city needs, as urban centres grow, and there is growing recognition of the importance of inclusion and equity for all climate action. To expand our support to cities and meet city demand, C40 welcomes new strategic partners for the Inclusive Climate Action programme.



## Local partnerships for a just transition: Focus on South African Cities

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The South African government has made a strong commitment to a low-carbon and inclusive future, with a just transition to achieve it. C40 has been working with Cape Town, eThekweni, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Tshwane, the country's major urban and industrial hubs, to ensure that cities are recognised in this process and play a vital role in implementing local just transition actions.

### What challenges do cities face?

These cities, which contribute approximately 60% of the country's GDP and are projected to accommodate 80% of the population by 2050, function as economic hubs and a source of green employment opportunities. They are also among the most unequal cities, historically designed to segregate and increase marginalisation. This legacy now exposes those populations to

greater climate-related risks. As the country faces alarmingly high unemployment levels, with over **30% of South Africans** and **45% of youth out of work**, municipalities have emerged as central places for just transition implementation. Together, cities are collaborating with national and local actors to align perspectives on the roles of local governments and stakeholders, to deliver a just transition and enhance community resilience.

Cities also face disproportionate vulnerability to climate-related crises due to population density and economic concentration. Marginalised and vulnerable groups, such as women, children, older people, informal workers, and migrants, bear the brunt of climate change within urban settings. To meet cities' ambitious mitigation and resilience targets as part of their climate action plans in an inclusive and equitable way, cities have recognised the need for strengthened capacity on what a



Credit: One Way Up Productions

just transition means at the local level. They have been advocating for increased recognition of the role of local governments in implementing a just transition at the national level and by civil society, business, union and other actors engaged in the just transition process.

## How have cities faced this problem?

### The South African Just Transition pilot

Since its launch in September 2020, the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) has played a pivotal role in steering South Africa towards an equitable and just transition. Following the appointment of commissioners in December 2020, the PCC embarked on a comprehensive journey to formulate a framework for an equitable transition that takes into account the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

This initiative not only significantly influenced the nation’s approach to a just transition but has also created practical pathways for climate-resilient development, through co-developed processes, reports, and recommendations. Notably, collaboration between C40, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA),

and the PCC since 2021, has led to confirming the importance of local governments in the [national Just Transition Framework](#) and the appointment of mayors of Cape Town and Tswelopele as commissioners, showcasing the importance of municipal engagement and open dialogue.

From 2021 to 2023, as part of the Global Green New Deal pilot [initiative](#), C40 worked with the five South African cities to strengthen their knowledge and capacity on local just transition through research and technical analyses, enhance social dialogue with key stakeholders such as unions, youth and civil society, and engage in collective advocacy and engagement with the national government. This led to city representation on the Presidential Climate Commission and having cities reflected in the national Just Transition policy. In 2022, the cities also contributed towards the development of South Africa’s Just Energy Transition Partnership Investment Plan. Building on these outcomes of this first phase, C40, in collaboration with the Scottish Government, has been supporting cities in deepening partnerships with a broad set of stakeholders and establishing and scaling local initiatives.

<b>September 2020</b>	Presidential Climate Commission formed
<b>December 2020</b>	Commissioners appointed
<b>Throughout 2021</b>	First of its kind study of urban just transition in South African cities and Green jobs and just transition assessments conducted for the 5 pilot cities, and extensive collaboration and dialogue delivered with civil society, youth, unions and business
<b>2021</b>	Collaboration between C40, SALGA, and PCC begins
<b>2022</b>	C40 supports cities to pilot local just transition actions, including <a href="#">Johannesburg’s Green Buildings Training</a> and Cape Town’s energy poverty action in informal settlements
<b>Early 2023</b>	C40 supports City of Ekurhuleni in establishing local Just Transition Forum
<b>November 2023</b>	Scottish Government partnership focuses on deepening support to five South African cities

### South African Cities Dialogue

From March 25th-26th 2024, C40, the PCC, SALGA, and the City of Johannesburg jointly hosted the [South African Dialogue on Building City Resilience Through a Just and Equitable Transition](#).

This event brought together diverse stakeholders, including five C40 cities in South Africa—Cape Town, eThekweni, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Tshwane—as well as non-C40 municipalities committed to action on a just transition, including Nelson Mandela Bay, Tswelopele, eMalahleni and Govan Mbeki.

The primary aim was to **enhance partnerships between the national and local governments** and provide a platform for sharing best practices, lessons learned, and identifying challenges. Together with civil society, the participants endeavoured to identify solutions to advance the national just transition agenda at all levels. The event renewed collaboration between representative cities, the PCC, SALGA and C40 cities, setting the stage for future work to implement local just transitions.

#### Ekurhuleni’s just transition process

In 2023-24, the City of Ekurhuleni, with the support of C40 as part of its existing Resilience Forum, launched a collaborative process to establish the **first local Just Transition Forum in South Africa**, tailored to the specific needs of its residents, workers, and business sectors. The project facilitated dialogue to build multi-stakeholder consensus on a just transition and its implications for service delivery, employment, governance, and finances. This initiative also involved initial landscape assessments and listening exercises with human resources departments on the impact on workers.

Key discussion outcomes included:

- Participants agreed on the need to **integrate governance systems and cross-sectoral collaboration** within local administrations and between levels of government to promote cohesion and maximise urban strategies.
- Discussions stressed the importance of strengthening **active community involvement** in co-creating climate programmes and policies, ensuring meaningful engagement from workers, the private sector, and other key stakeholders.
- From promoting social dialogue and ensuring equitable benefits to catalysing green job creation, securing finance for just transitions to bolstering climate resilience, the dialogue was a platform for engaging conversations and sharing best practice between city representatives, organising partners and key stakeholders. Participants identified solutions to just transition finance gaps, including the need for **common principles and metrics to guide investors and accelerate investments**, and tailored strategies for cities that **utilise a mix of funding sources** to address diverse municipal needs.

The event shifted the focus of just transition from its traditional emphasis on climate mitigation to the importance of **integrating the just transition lens into climate resilience** to support vulnerable communities bounce back better from climate disasters.

The event sparked a lively debate in the national media on the themes of urban just transition, green jobs for youth, and safeguarding low-

income and marginalised groups from the escalating impacts of the climate crisis. This showed that these topics resonate with South Africans and underscored the importance of fostering a more robust public discourse on these critical issues.

The event garnered significant media attention, showcasing [Johannesburg's](#) efforts and highlighting the urban dimension of a just transition through leading media platforms like [IOL](#) and [eNCA](#). You can watch the opening event [here](#).

### Climate impact on informal workers

South African cities are increasingly prioritising adaptation and resilience alongside mitigation efforts in response to climate impacts. In April 2022, the eThekweni region faced severe rainfall from a La Niña weather cycle, resulting in devastating floods—the deadliest natural disaster in the country this century.

Studies revealed climate change doubles the likelihood of such events, emphasising the urgency to understand their impacts.



Those living in informal settlements or employed in the informal sector were most impacted due to limited access to healthcare, housing and basic social infrastructure, as well as decent work and labour standards and social protection to cushion the impact of climate shocks.

Despite these challenges, informal workers make an indispensable contribution to the delivery of essential public services and climate action across various sectors, including waste management, transport, construction, and food distribution. However, research often lacks data on how they are affected by climate impacts.

To address this, eThekweni and other South African cities, with C40's support, launched a project in 2024 to conduct assessments, based on a gap and needs analysis on the impact of recent climate events on informal workers.

### eThekweni case study

In December 2023 during COP28, C40 submitted [a case study](#), in collaboration with eThekweni city officials, to the UNFCCC Transitional Committee (TC) on the development of the Loss and Damage Fund ahead of the TC's development of final recommendations at COP28. The case study aimed to influence the TC to develop recommendations to ensure any funding arrangements included direct access for cities. As the only city-led case study submitted to the TC, it showcased the uniquely urban dimension of loss and damage, highlighting the crucial role of local government response to sudden-onset climate impacts and the losses and damages suffered by eThekweni as a result of flooding in 2022.



The project informs city policy making and global urban just transition strategies, and includes scoping the loss and damage impact of climate events on informal workers in cities, benchmarking existing methodologies and tools that forecast and measure the risk and impact of climate events on informal livelihoods.

The findings will inform the development of a scalable model that will be tested and validated using information and data of completed assessments conducted by eThekweni and Tshwane to investigate the suitability of the model for other cities globally as a standardised approach. The objective is to use the model to inform strategies for city action on community-based resilience, with focus on informality, that support loss and damage approaches.

## What happens next?

### The role of partnerships and future action

This case study is relevant beyond South Africa as countries prepare to revise their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and develop national just transition programmes and plans. For South Africa and beyond, city leadership plays a critical role in facilitating a just transition, but mayors cannot achieve effective implementation alone.

They rely on targeted national support, inclusion in policy dialogues with different levels of government, unions, civil society and business, delegated mandates, up-to-date analysis and specific funds to drive workforce development, diversify urban economies, and promote emerging green sectors.

South African cities continue to deepen existing and new partnerships. This includes

collaborating with SALGA and secondary cities to replicate the Ekurhuleni project, and strengthen engagement with youth and vulnerable communities to build resilience to climate and economic shocks through equitable access to good, green jobs, skills training and social protection.

Engaging national governments remains a high priority to align city-level policies and strategies with South Africa's national just transition perspective. Cities will continue engagement with the UNFCCC Loss and Damage Fund, leveraging Global South city experiences to ensure that the fund's design and modalities respond to city needs.

## Call for support

To achieve a just transition we need to be local by design. A just transition is about centering people, and cities are best placed to do that as the closest level of government to communities.

With governments set to revise their NDCs and a substantial increase globally in funding and investment for just energy transitions, now is the time to make sure these mechanisms are fit for purpose for cities and local residents, and are truly just.

C40 welcomes additional strategic partners for the Inclusive Climate Action Programme to achieve this in South Africa and beyond.



## Increasing the role of local governments in global climate justice through advocacy and thought leadership

C40  
CITIES

**Loss and damage** is fundamentally an issue of climate justice. It disproportionately impacts countries and communities that have contributed the least to climate breakdown, including cities in Africa and other areas of the Global South. Cities are also key to delivering a **just transition** towards a net zero economy: cities face the challenge of climate impacts that affect local workers and industries and the need for good policy and investment for local jobs and support to workers affected in other ways by the transition, making sure the transition benefits all.

Cities are identifying **'win-win' policies that are fit for cities** and, in many cases, can help to address both loss and damage and ensure a just transition. C40 Cities and mayors are taking these policies to national, regional and global platforms to inform debate on loss and damage,

climate migration and just transition and ultimately deliver climate action that is good for people and planet.

## Loss and damage

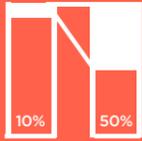
### What challenges do cities face?

Climate-induced loss and damage is increasingly affecting urban areas, particularly in the rapidly urbanising Global South. Urban areas face a unique combination of impacts, including direct consequences of climate events and cascading effects stemming from the failure of, and lack of funding to, critical infrastructure.

Despite budget constraints and limited mandates, local governments are leading efforts to address loss and damage, through essential urban infrastructure and providing critical services like inclusive healthcare and disaster response.



Credit: Richard King, C40



The **wealthiest 10%** of the population is responsible for **half** of global carbon emissions



The Global South is **10x more likely** to be affected by flooding and drought than the Global North



**90% of urban expansion** is expected in Africa and Asia in the next 30 years



Global South cities host **80% of the world's internally displaced people** including those forcibly displaced by climate change (**32.6M in 2022**)

But these uniquely urban issues - and city-led responses - had not been well recognised in the lead up to or indeed at COP26 when loss and damage financing gained momentum.

Without hearing from cities, solutions being put forward would fail to learn lessons from adaptation and mitigation funding (which is often extremely challenging for cities to access) and fail to meet the needs of cities and their most vulnerable residents.

**How have cities faced this problem?**

C40 and partners have brought the immense challenges for urban residents to policy-makers and created spaces for open dialogue, paving the way for greater recognition and policy solutions that are fit for purpose.

In 2022, the Scottish Government hosted a **dedicated conference** on best practice and opportunities to address loss and damage, with C40 participation and city-led case studies. Sub-national access to funds and finance was established early as an issue to be addressed, due to the scale and complexity of loss and damage in urban settings, and historical

difficulties for cities and subnational actors to access existing climate funds.

With diplomatic negotiations focused primarily on the national level, C40 and subnational actors brought the unique urban dimension of loss and damage to global diplomatic forums, supporting calls from Global South actors for Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) reform and funding models that meet the scale of the problem now and for future generations.

As governments prepared to negotiate the terms of a loss and damage fund at COP28 in late 2023, C40 hosted the first-ever event on urban loss and damage, **Loss and Damage: An Urban Perspective at COP 28**, putting lived experience of cities and their residents on the agenda, and published its **ground-breaking loss and damage report, *Loss and Damage: Challenges and Opportunities for City Leadership***. The event showcased mayoral

leadership in action including C40 Co-Chair Mayor Aki-Sawyers of Freetown, Mayor Hidalgo of Paris, and Mayor Islam of Dhaka North presenting their common vision for accessible loss and damage funding alongside Humza Yousaf, the former First Minister of Scotland and Nicki Becker, Co-founder of Jóvenes por el Clima, representing the voice of young people living in global megacities. The report provides **10 key recommendations for national and international actors** to successfully address urban loss and damage in national and global policy responses, bringing the loss and damage debate to the global climate diplomacy arena.

C40 mayors also committed to protect the most vulnerable communities at high risk of flooding or drought by establishing early warning systems and emergency responses via the **Water Safe Cities Accelerator**.

At COP28, the UN Transitional Committee - established to recommend an approach for a Loss and Damage Fund - **recognised the uniquely urban dimension and climate migration**, highlighting the need to strengthen local capacity by enhancing coordination and engagement.

**Connection between loss and damage and a just transition**

Safeguarding impacted communities, particularly those marginalised and vulnerable to climate change and economic shocks through social protection, is critical in city responses to both our changing climate and the transition towards zero carbon economies. Social protection is indispensable to ensure impacted groups are shielded from job loss and adverse impacts, and through social protection loss and damage can be prevented, minimised, and addressed. For more information about Accra's pilot to extend social protection to informal workers in waste sectors who are delivering climate action and face climate risks, see the other case studies in this series!



*It's fantastic to start having a loss and damage fund, but, let's be real, US\$500 million is not going to go very far when you're talking about hundreds of millions of people... If cities are built into the formula and at the table, we can be assured that solutions and the operational framework will be developed to really have people at the heart of it.*

— Yvonne Aki-Sawyers OBE, C40 Co-Chair and Mayor of Freetown



**What have cities achieved? Loss and Damage as a test case for MDB reform**

At COP28, national governments endorsed the [final recommendations from the Transitional Committee](#), which called for the establishment of a Loss and Damage fund, stating that all developing countries shall be able to directly access resources, including subnational entities. This aligns with [calls from the SDSN Global Commission for Urban SDG Finance](#) and C40 mayors' own advocacy efforts. Now, the newly established Loss and Damage fund needs to provide clear, accessible ways for local governments and communities to seek the funding. **The new fund stands as a test case for broader MDB reform.**

With fund operationalisation expected in 2024 and a range of other funding and financing mechanisms needed, C40 held **an expert briefing on urban loss**

**eThekwini flooding by Storm Issa in 2022**

The proactive response of eThekwini Municipality to address loss and damage after Storm Issa shows the uniquely urban dimension of climate change impacts on informal settlements and populations. Without adequate climate finance, cities struggle to effectively address such challenges. C40 submitted a **case study** on eThekwini's response to the UN Transitional Committee following the 2022 flooding caused by the storm in eThekwini. This submission marked a significant step in C40's ongoing work to draw attention to the lived experience and challenges of cities facing repeated and increasingly extreme climate impacts and efforts to address challenges within their local context.

**Timeline of loss and damage milestones**

1990-2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<p>In the early 1990s, as the UN prepared to create what is now the UNFCCC, a group of small island nations initiated the concept of loss and damage.</p> <p>Their continued efforts paved the way for the Paris Agreement, signed in 2016, to incorporate the concept of loss and damage in Article 8.</p>	<p>Cities work to address loss and damage through actions and initiatives like C40's Global Green New Deal pilot that enhance climate and community resilience.</p> <p>Building on the advocacy of leading Global South climate activists in the decades prior, COP26 marks a significant turning point as loss and damage becomes mainstream on the global climate diplomacy stage.</p> <p>Launch of the C40-MMC Global Mayors Task Force on Climate and Migration's Action Agenda at COP26.</p>	<p>COP Des Villes: First public call to action by cities on loss and damage.</p> <p>COP27: <u>Loss and damage becomes a key issue in negotiations</u>, solidifying the concept as a core issue of climate action and justice, culminating in the decision to create the Loss and Damage Fund.</p>	<p><u>C40's Inclusive Climate Action Fund</u> and the <u>Mayors Migration Council's Global Cities Fund</u> directly fund Global South cities to take inclusive climate action to address the climate crisis.</p> <p>UN Transitional Committee engagement: C40 advocates for city interests in the Loss and Damage Fund, leading <u>dedicated submissions</u> and <u>case studies</u>.</p> <p>COP28 marks a crucial turning point in the L&amp;D debate, with the UNFCCC agreeing to operationalize the L&amp;D Fund on Day 1 of COP29. C40 launched the first publication highlighting cities' role in addressing loss and damage, and hosted the first COP event on the urban dimension.</p>	<p>COP29: <u>Full operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund</u> is expected.</p>

**and damage** in March 2024, presenting C40's loss and damage report to leading experts and gathering feedback on key issues for policy-makers for 2024.

There was consensus among experts that direct access to dedicated loss and damage funding is an essential pillar for communities and local governments, alongside capacity building for driving innovative responses through early warning systems, the inclusion of youth and climate migrants, and social protection systems.

C40 will continue to work with the new Loss and Damage Fund Board, cities, youth and other stakeholders toward global funds that are fit for purpose. And with partners including Mayors

Migration Council (MMC), we will maintain emphasis on solutions tailored to climate migration and conduct further research on the urban climate migration, a key type of loss and damage.

**Cities for a just transition**

**What challenges do cities face?**

With 55% of the world's population living in urban areas, increasing to 68% by 2050, cities are pivotal for delivering a green transition that puts people and justice at the heart of economic transformation. As urban populations grow, cities hold immense potential for creating **50 million green jobs** through climate action led by cities



Credit: Natrass, Getty

### Young people in cities: Allies, advocates and stakeholders

C40 recognises the role of youth as critical voices for climate justice. Working directly with youth advocates and creatives, C40 has produced new, innovative resources directly targeting the youth community highlighting key concepts of loss and damage.

The publication, [Loss & Damage: A Youth Perspective](#), brings loss and damage to life from a youth perspective, elevating city-led actions and opportunities for youth advocate engagement.

with national governments, workers and business. A just transition is essential to minimise and address the impacts of moving away from fossil fuels to ensure that no one is left behind and all benefit from climate action.

Like loss and damage, to achieve a just transition toward a zero carbon economy **we need the right kind of finance**. Despite increasing recognition of the importance of a just transition in national and international policy arenas, funding is still an afterthought, and cities encounter major obstacles accessing policy making platforms and financial resources.

Forthcoming C40 analysis on just transition finance for cities shows that out of the 13 global and regional funds explicitly targeting just transition policies and programmes, only one (developed by C40) is specifically designated for cities and three others can be directly accessed by cities. Findings also suggest that key policy areas such as **workforce development and social protection are under-represented in available funding mechanisms**, and integrating financial

investment in social protection presents a crucial way to fund just transition at the city level while also addressing loss and damage.

### How have cities faced this challenge?

Despite these obstacles, cities are implementing just and inclusive solutions in collaboration with key stakeholders at all levels of government. The City of Ekurhuleni, for example, is establishing the first Local Just Transition Forum in South Africa, designing just transition activities based on robust economic assessments and community engagement and working with the national Presidential Climate Commission to address local needs in national transition plans. Read more about this in [this case study series](#).

C40 mayors are advocating for the right kind of funding and financing, acknowledging cities as vital partners as the closest level of government to residents, and integrating their perspectives into global and national policies.

For example, in September 2023 at the Africa Climate Summit, African mayors and governors reaffirmed their commitment to creating green jobs and urged national and international leaders for support. The event, championed by Kenyan President William Ruto, emphasised driving green growth and climate finance solutions for Africa and the world. Signatories, including leaders from cities like Abidjan, Addis Ababa, and Johannesburg, highlighted the need for transformative climate action and the creation of inclusive, prosperous nations and cities.

The [C40 Africa Mayors' Roundtable](#) on 'Financing Climate Action For Green Jobs' on 6 September 2023 brought together 12 C40 and non-C40 mayors and deputy mayors. Informality, gender, youth, and support for workers with disabilities emerged as top priorities for all African mayors to

achieve good, green jobs. African mayors committed to using their powers for a green and just transition and [called on](#) national and international governments and partners to accelerate climate finance for green job programmes on the continent. This united effort equips mayors with an advocacy tool and language to confidently address financing for green jobs in Africa on local and international platforms.

This is the message C40 Cities Co-Chairs, Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown and Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, shared with national leaders in the lead up to COP 28, in an [open letter](#) urging the redirection of funds from fossil fuels to clean and just energy transitions. At COP 28, C40 held a [joint event, 'Unlocking the Just Transition through Local Action'](#), with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), highlighting the role of cities in a just transition.

Urgent action is needed to make sure that 2030 targets stay within reach and can be achieved thanks to the right funding and investment,

in the right way. To achieve this, in early 2024 C40 held a **dialogue with the South African government and stakeholders** on best practice for a local just transition in national planning processes. C40 has shared this and other best practices from cities with the newly established [UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme](#) and continues to engage with national and global policy-makers to support a just transition for the region.

### What happens next?

C40 will continue to engage with global actors and processes designed to support a just transition, from the new UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme to multilateral partnerships, to elevate local action in cities, and enhance recognition of urban leadership and the critical need for local initiatives.

The Coalition of High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) established at COP28 is an unprecedented opportunity for national governments to integrate local needs, including just transition pathways, within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which will be revised for 2025 and have previously been under-funded.



*We, the undersigned African mayors, [...], call upon governments to prioritise people and their livelihoods through the creation of good quality green jobs, targeted investments, skills development programmes, supportive policies, education and awareness.*

— [C40 African Mayors' Call to Action](#), September 2023

### Call for support

It takes local and global action to deliver on our climate ambition. Champion mayors value partnerships and cannot do this work alone. To expand our support to cities to take their message to national, regional and global forums, C40 welcomes strategic partners for the Inclusive Climate Action programme.