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MAYORS, GOVERNORS AND SUBNATIONAL LEADERS CALL FOR GREATER ACTION ON FOSSIL FUELS FROM HEADS OF STATE AT UN SUMMIT

20 September 2024: With the United Nation's [Summit of the Future](#) opening in New York this Sunday (22 September), world leaders meeting there must take ambitious action on fossil fuel phaseout – according to a letter signed by leaders of states, regions and cities from across the globe.

There is expectation that world leaders will be clear in the summit's Pact for the Future – a blueprint for upgraded multilateral governance in an age of crisis – that a just transition away from fossil fuels is urgently needed. The letter's signatories now want global leaders to turn these words into urgent, real-world action. They demand that heads of state recognise the need to transition away from oil, gas and coal as urgent – by ending fossil fuel subsidies and funding a just energy transition.

The letter from a group of 14 mayors, governors and subnational leaders from five continents, representing more than 40m people, makes clear that heads of state must urgently take fossil fuels head on and without delay, stating: *'... we must banish fossil fuels to the past and curb their undue influence in the present. We cannot and will not be fooled by the smoke and mirror tricks played by those who want us to sleepwalk into our own extinction.*

At a time when we need faster, fairer action, G20 nations continue to pour billions into fossil fuel subsidies. It's time to stop propping up these polluting industries and use these funds to scale up local and equitable climate action instead. This is the most effective way to cut emissions and will create a third more jobs than if we continue with business as usual.'

Organised by NGOs [Climate Group](#) and [C40 Cities](#), the letter is being signed by the mayors Yvonne Aki-Sawyers (Freetown, Jamaica); Jaume Collboni (Barcelona, Spain); Michelle Wu (Boston, US); Dr Eckart Würzner, (Heidelberg, Germany); Giuseppe Sala (Milan, Italy); Valérie Plante (Montreal, Canada); LaToya Cantrell (New Orleans, US); and Anne Hidalgo (Paris, France) – and regional leaders Minister for the Environment, Climate and Energy Thekla Walker (Baden Württemberg, Germany); Governor Kim Tae-heum (Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea, and Co Chair of the Under2 Coalition); Prince Bassey Edet Otu (Cross River State, Nigeria); Member of the Executive Council for Environment Sheila Mary Peters (Gauteng, South Africa); Minister of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Benoit Charette (Québec, Canada); and Governor Mauricio Kuri González (Querétaro, Mexico).

"It's time. The voices of cities and states must be heard at this vital UN summit because they're at the forefront of climate action, making pivotal decisions about energy, transport, industry and buildings," says Climate Group's Director of the Under2 Coalition and Subnational Governments Nehmat Kaur.

"Those negotiating the final text of the UN's *Pact for the Future* will understandably be focused on the global security and peace crisis, but they must not forget the climate emergency. If it is not tackled with urgency, the impacts of its escalation will exacerbate conflicts and political tensions around the world. These crises are interlinked."

"For too long, the fossil fuel industry has been allowed to pull the wool over our eyes,



SECRETARIAT OF THE CLIMATE GROUP. We say to you that we have heard the commitments, and now we need to see action. It's time to end the billions in public subsidies that still flow to these polluting industries and work hand in hand with cities and states to accelerate fair and fast climate action to end their use". says Mark Watts, Executive Director at C40 Cities.

Ends

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LETTER TEXT IN FULL:

Dear UN Heads of State,

As you meet for the General Assembly and Summit of the Future, we as leaders of States and Cities, urge you to transition your countries away from fossil fuels.

Make no mistake, the climate crisis is a fossil fuel crisis.

Fossil fuel use endangers the only planet we call home and our collective dependence on them contaminates the air we breathe, pollutes the water we drink, and threatens the health and livelihoods of communities from Lagos to Los Angeles.

It is gravely unjust that the architects of climate chaos continue to grow rich at the expense of the poor, who are the least responsible yet suffer the brunt of climate impacts.

The climate crisis is already here. Left unchecked, it will lock us into evermore extreme weather, crumbling economies, and human suffering on a scale never seen before.

The stakes could not be greater to protect the communities we serve and represent. The ray of hope we must cling to is that we already have the solutions at our fingertips. And the window to act, though ever-shrinking, is still open.

We cannot wait for under-developed and untested technologies that promise the world but are not yet viable. There is no time.

Right now, cities and states can and are making a decisive difference in this make-or-break decade by delivering effective and just climate action. Cities and states are responsible for the majority of global energy consumption and are using their powers to both cut demand for fossil fuels and supercharge clean and renewable energy production.

Mayors and governors are making huge strides in improving building energy efficiency – from homes to offices and schools – electrifying bus fleets, scaling up renewable energy, setting up clean energy utilities, and creating good green jobs to build cleaner, safer communities.

Through our actions we are sending clear signals to markets that fossil fuels are not welcome. We are reskilling workers for the green jobs of the future while protecting consumers from rising energy costs. And we are using the law to hold fossil fuel companies accountable for the damage they have caused.

We are working towards a vision of states, regions, and cities where a just transition away from fossil fuels has brought us lower energy bills, secure, sustainable, and fulfilling jobs, where human and environmental health is prioritised and no one is left behind.



SECRETARIAT THE CLIMATE GROUP



This year, as elections around the globe threaten to scale back climate action, we stand together with the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, in his call to rapidly reduce fossil fuel consumption.

To unlock this future we must banish fossil fuels to the past and curb their undue influence in the present. We cannot and will not be fooled by the smoke and mirror tricks played by those who want us to sleepwalk into our own extinction.

At a time when we need faster, fairer action, G20 nations continue to pour billions into fossil fuel subsidies. It's time to stop propping up these polluting industries and use these funds to scale up local and equitable climate action instead. This is the most effective way to cut emissions and will create a third more jobs than if we continue with business as usual.

No single actor can deliver this transition at the scale and pace needed. It's time to work with us to harness the power of cities and states to propel economic development, create healthier communities and safeguard our common future.

Urgent climate action is both possible and desired: 80% of people around the world support it. It's time to listen to them. It's time to up the pace. It's time to leave fossil fuels behind.

Yours in unity,

Thekla Walker, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Energy, Baden

Württemberg Jaume Collboni, Mayor of Barcelona

Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston

Kim Tae-heum, Governor, Chungcheongnam-do and Asia-Pacific Co-Chair of the Under2 Coalition

Prince Bassey Edet Otu, Governor, Cross River State

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

Sheila Mary Peters, Member of the Executive Council for Environment, Gauteng

Dr Eckart Würzner, Lord Mayor of Heidelberg

Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan

Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montreal

LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans

Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris

Benoit Charette, Minister of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Québec

Mauricio Kuri González, Governor, Querétaro



NOTES TO EDITORS

[Climate Group](#) is the Secretariat to the [Under2 Coalition](#), which is a group of ambitious state and regional governments committed to keeping global temperature rises to well below 2°C. The coalition is made up of more than 270 governments who represent 1.75 billion people and 50% of the global economy. Follow us on Twitter [@ClimateGroup](#), [#Under2Coalition](#).

About C40 Cities

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere, can thrive. The current co-chairs of C40 are Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United Kingdom, and Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr of Freetown, Sierra Leone; three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation and Realdania.

Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a **science-based and people-focused approach** to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. We work alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to support mayors to halve emissions by 2030 and help phase out fossil use while increasing urban climate resilience and equity. With particular thanks to the KR Foundation for supporting this work as part of C40's mission to help phase out fossil fuel use.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#) or follow us on [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).