

**Submission in response to the letter from the High-Level Champions received on 4 June 2024**

**Title:** Enhancing the work of the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action to accelerate climate action and drive implementation

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As a network of nearly 100 of the world's biggest and leading cities working to avert climate breakdown using science-based and people-centred approaches, C40 Cities is proud to work in partnership with the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions and support them in delivering the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA) that enables collaboration between national governments and cities to deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement. C40 cities are putting together and delivering 1.5°C-aligned evidence-based climate action plans that clearly outline how the city is cutting its fair share of emissions and strengthening its resilience in order to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

In 2015, in Paris at COP21, national governments for the first time explicitly recognised “the importance of engagement at all levels of government” including cities. Since then, significant progress has been made within the UN COP process to recognise cities and subnational governments as critical actors driving more ambitious and equitable climate action. The Glasgow Pact at COP26 in 2021 further highlighted the need for multilevel and cooperative action and saw over 1000 cities sign up to the Cities Race to Zero of which C40 is a founding member as the official track for the Race to Zero campaign that was launched in December 2020. Today, more than 1400 cities have joined the Cities Race to Zero, committing to set science-based targets required to achieve a net-zero future and to implement inclusive and resilient climate actions that create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.

At COP28 in 2023, eight years after the historic initial gathering of mayors on the sidelines of COP21 in Paris, the Local Climate Action Summit convened mayors alongside national leaders at the heart of the multilateral negotiation space in the Blue Zone. At the same time, over 70 national governments recognised the transformative potential of working with cities through multilevel partnerships across all levels of government to deliver climate action by joining the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) and committing to work with cities in the planning, financing, and delivery of their enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due ahead of COP30. We were pleased to see the COP28 and COP29 High-Level Champions include CHAMP as one of their central priorities in their work programme for 2024.

As the world remains dangerously off track to deliver the emissions reductions needed to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, the next 18 months must see an extraordinary acceleration of action to implement the Paris Agreement, with the upcoming round of NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) as the cornerstone of these efforts. With 75% of C40 cities with sufficient data available reducing emissions faster than their national

government counterparts, and ensuring their climate plans are inclusive and equitable, including city action in national plans and working with cities to set and deliver climate targets is an opportunity to raise the ambition of national plans and ensure action is implemented with communities at the heart.

We are encouraged by the progress of the High-Level Champions in strengthening collaboration between national governments and Non-Party Stakeholders (NPS), as a key function of the 'Improved Marrakesh Partnership' mandate for 2021-2025.

The greatest barrier to driving enhanced climate ambition at the subnational level, and hence facilitating the “ambition loop” to accelerate national and global progress by harnessing the contribution of NPS, is the lack of financial support available to implement ambitious subnational climate projects, in particular the significant urban finance gap: from 2017 to 2018, cities globally received only around 7-8% of the \$4.5 - \$5.4 trillion they need, with this gap significantly more pronounced in the Global South. **We believe that the High-Level Champions have an important opportunity to use their significant convening power to facilitate more frequent and productive engagements between national governments, subnational governments and potential sources of finance for subnational project pipelines (including MDBs, multilateral funds and the private sector).** This would build on the success of existing stakeholder dialogues led by the MPGCA, accelerating implementation by introducing a specific focus on facilitating access to finance.

In light of the above, C40 would like to extend its appreciation for the opportunity to provide feedback on how the work of the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership can be enhanced to further our joint priorities within the UNFCCC process. Please find specific answers to the guiding questions, as provided in the call for inputs, below:

1. **How can the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership add the most value and complement existing efforts to accelerate climate action and drive implementation?**
  - Scale up finance/investment events; improving the model of the pipeline investment events used in the Mitigation Work Programme - **HLCs can use their convening power to promote more frequent opportunities for NPS to connect with potential sources of finance** as a means to radically accelerate implementation.
  - Work with the COP Presidency to institutionalise a space for subnationals at the heart of the multilateral negotiation space at every COP and institutionalise a standing high-profile event at each COP that brings Parties and non-Party stakeholders together (like the Ministerial Meeting for Climate Change and Urbanisation).

## **2. How can the High-Level Champions enhance collaboration between Parties and NPS to advance the outcomes of the first GST?**

- Throw weight behind CHAMP and the CHAMP pledge and use their voice to publicly highlight to Parties the benefits of working together with NPS to set and deliver on national targets and plans that can raise ambition - for instance supporting the strong integration of urban content in NDCs due ahead of COP30 in consultation with cities and subnationals in 2025 because it is these NDCs that will be key to implementing the GST outcome.
- Use their convening power and voice to ensure that Parties hold the line on key issues and that there is no backsliding on the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels and that this is recognised as a central priority to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, with fossil fuels responsible for 90% of carbon emissions.
- Facilitate informal meetings that allow Parties and non-Party stakeholders to gather and discuss how to collaborate on shared agendas for the upcoming COP.
- Bring the voice and leadership of non-Party stakeholders close to/within the formal UNFCCC/COP process, where appropriate and relevant.
- Work with NPS to come up with key enabling policies that Parties can take in key sectors to catalyse action and unlock ambition and means of implementation, such as finance, utilising the experience of city practitioners and city networks.
- Provide NPS an opportunity to informally consult with the High-Level Champions to help inform the priorities/work programme for the year of the HLCs.

## **3. How can the Marrakech Partnership be enhanced to support Parties in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, including through new and existing tools?**

- New tool: Formalise urban climate action **sectoral and cross sectoral (e.g just transition) dialogues** into a recurring initiative (beyond just an inclusion of cities/urban systems in one iteration of the MWP) that connects **sectoral experts, city staff, national government staff from all relevant ministries (e.g. transport, energy as well as housing and urban development), finance implementing entities/private sector actors,** and **relevant civil society experts** to understand what enabling policy is required, drawing on sectoral expertise from networks such as C40 and offering high-level speaking opportunities for mayors where appropriate.