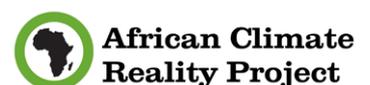
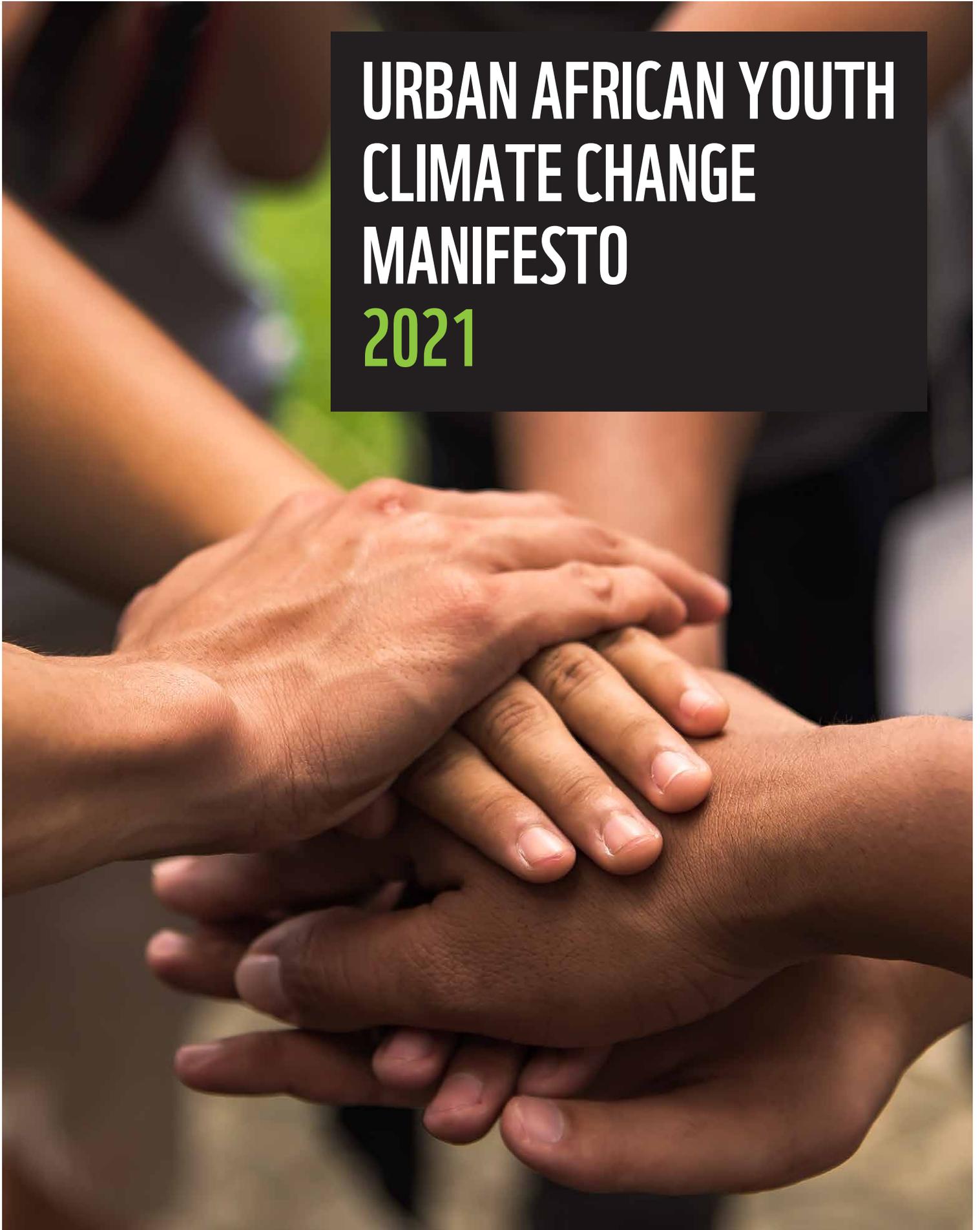


URBAN AFRICAN YOUTH CLIMATE CHANGE MANIFESTO 2021



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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the experts who delivered presentations on the various themes that form the body of this Manifesto, as well as those who attended a session in September 2021 to provide input and guidance: Amy Gilliam (African Climate Reality Project); Avuyile Kewana, Kevin Mutia, Lauren Arendse, Paul Currie, Stefania Romano (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability: Africa Secretariat); John Ssemulema (NDC partnership); Dr Leslie Petrik, Sam Chademana (personal capacity); Desiree Kosciulek (Youth@SAIIA); Lethabo Pholoto (WWF South Africa); Ashlin Naidoo, Shamiela Reid (YOUNGO) and various contributors from the Environmental Monitoring Group.

Citation

Urban African Youth Climate Change Manifesto. 2021. www.wwf.org.za/report/urban_african_youth_climate_change_manifesto

Photos: Shutterstock.com

Endorsements

This Manifesto is endorsed by:

SAIIA Youth, the South African Institute for International Affairs

saiia.org.za/youth



YOUNGO, the Children and Youth constituency to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

youngo.uno



Activate!, a network of over 4 000 dynamic young leaders around South Africa working towards positive social, environmental, economic and political change

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Funding

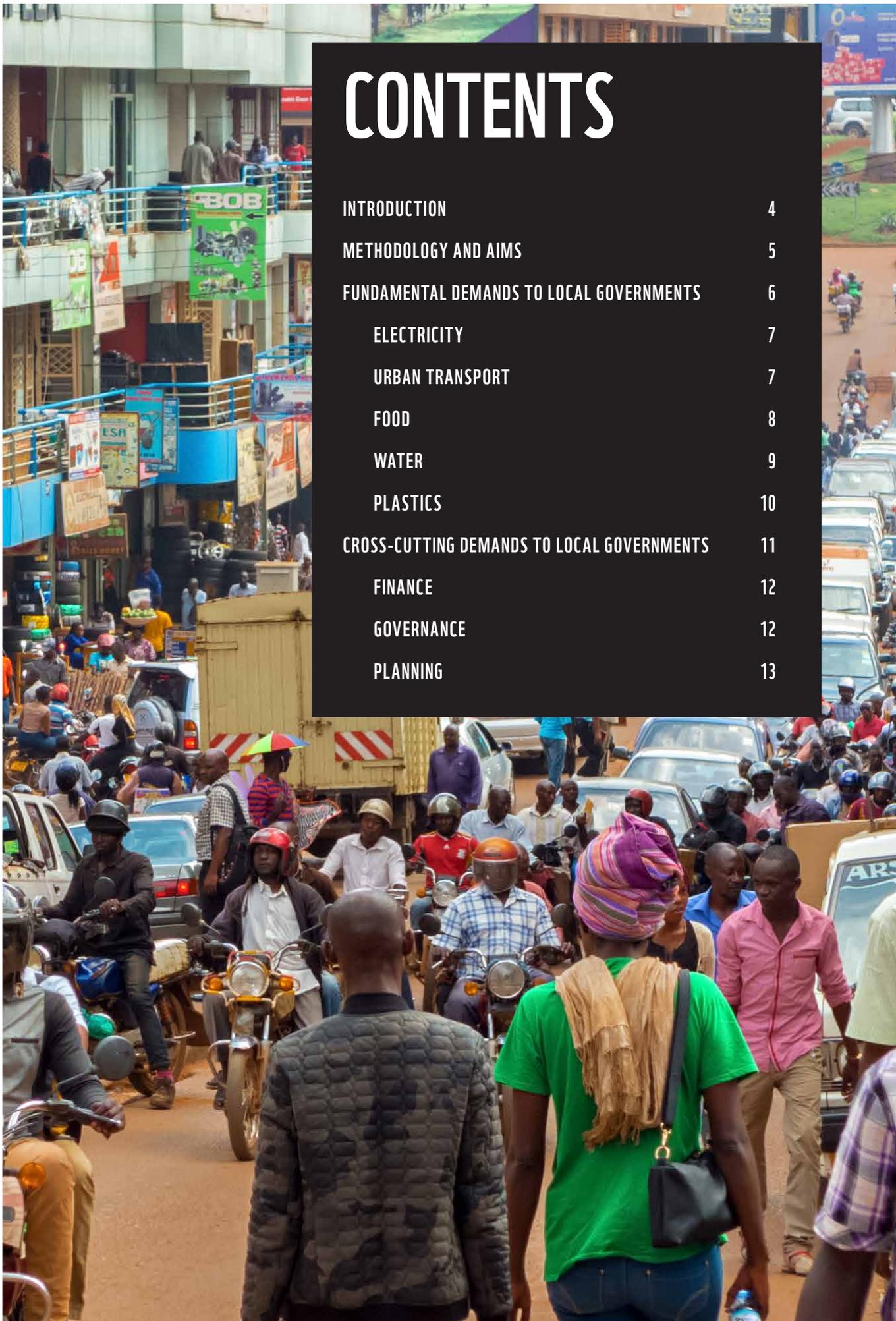
This Manifesto has been funded by WWF Sweden under the One Planet City Challenge (OPCC)

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
METHODOLOGY AND AIMS	5
FUNDAMENTAL DEMANDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	6
ELECTRICITY	7
URBAN TRANSPORT	7
FOOD	8
WATER	9
PLASTICS	10
CROSS-CUTTING DEMANDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	11
FINANCE	12
GOVERNANCE	12
PLANNING	13



INTRODUCTION

Cities are home to over 55% of the world's population and continue to expand. Cities are responsible for 70% of global CO₂ emissions and 75% of natural resource consumption. Urban lifestyles place pressure on ecosystems and will continue to do so increasingly as urban populations rise, contributing to the climate crisis and biodiversity loss.¹

In Africa, this is all the more pressing for a myriad reasons, including the following:

- As stated by Oxfam, Africa sits at the confluence of two related and mutually reinforcing developmental challenges – poverty and inequality – that can only be solved through policy.
- Africa is one of the regions most at risk to the impacts of climate change due to seasonal variations and exposure to extreme weather hazards.
- In Africa, the multitude of deprivations already caused by climate change – across governance, health, transport, energy, food systems, water, natural resources and biodiversity sectors – have the greatest impact on urban centres.
- The population of African cities is expected to double by 2050, which will only exacerbate climate-related challenges.²

Because Africa is recognised as the youngest continent – with 60% of the population under the age of 25³ – we, the youth, believe it is important that our united voice is prioritised in the planning and development of African cities. We are, at the same time, those who stand to lose our future and those with the potential to elicit fundamental transformation, through our demographic dividend, through the unprecedented recognition of our collective voice, and through global *ubuntu*. As such, we present this Manifesto on climate change in cities.

We recognise the challenge of climate change and the impacts climate change can have on the African continent, our cities and our people. We therefore call on local government leaders *to acknowledge the scale of the climate challenge faced in Africa by the youth and mobilise local-level climate action*.

COP26 will be the platform where the challenge of climate change for the next generation of African youth will be heard by those with decision-making power.

1 World Economic Forum. 2020. *Climate emergency: How our cities can inspire change*. [weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/smart-and-the-city-working-title](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/smart-and-the-city-working-title).

2 FAO. 2021. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021*. [fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4474en](https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4474en).

3 Kariba, F. 2020. *The burgeoning Africa youth population: Potential or challenge?* Cities Alliance. [citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/cities-alliance-news/%C2%A0burgeoning-africa-youth-population-potential-or-challenge%C2%A0](https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/cities-alliance-news/%C2%A0burgeoning-africa-youth-population-potential-or-challenge%C2%A0).

METHODOLOGY AND AIMS

This Manifesto was developed through a consultative process with youth from a number of African cities (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; Kumasi, Ghana; Pemba, Mozambique; Windhoek, Namibia; Jos, Nigeria; Kigali, Rwanda; Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, South Africa; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Kampala, Uganda; Lusaka, Zambia) and WWF South Africa, in partnership with WWF Uganda, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability: Africa Secretariat, the African Climate Reality Project and Resilient40. The Manifesto is also supported by other youth-focused organisations, namely Youth@SAIIA and YOUNGO.

We developed the Manifesto for the following reasons:

- To prioritise our voice so that our needs and demands can be recognised, heard and supported by our local municipalities.
- To encourage the participation of youth in the development of their cities' climate action plans.
- To encourage African cities to implement climate commitments and actions that are aligned with the 1.5 °C Paris Agreement goal.
- To encourage cities to reduce carbon emissions and strengthen their city climate adaptation and resilience strategies.

Over the course of multiple workshops, it became clear that the youth's top priorities are for cities to do the following:

- Provide basic services such as access to food, water, energy, transport and proper waste management to address the ever-growing plastic waste issue.
- Set up financial support or financial mechanisms and good governance structures to address these priorities.
- Plan cities to provide these services, keeping in mind the climate issue and growing populations.

FUNDAMENTAL DEMANDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

To advance the outcomes of COP26 that relate specifically to the demands of African youth, it must be ensured that, at a minimum, cities develop in the sectors of electricity, urban transport, food, water, plastics, finance, governance and planning. These developments must be aligned with the 1.5 °C Paris Agreement goal and must make cities resilient to future climate change impacts.

ELECTRICITY

Most African countries are dealing with energy poverty, with parts of the population having either no access or inadequate or unreliable access to formal energy services.⁴ While most African governments have enacted national energy policies, cities present unique energy challenges because of their nature as centres of business and commercial activity, and because they require an uninterrupted supply of electricity to run these activities. Moreover, because of the ever-increasing rate of urbanisation in Africa, the need for deliberate and intentional planning by cities for adequate and reliable electricity supply has never been more pressing. African cities are faced with uniquely African challenges in the realm of energy consumption because many households, businesses and industries rely on old and inefficient fuels such as biomass and kerosene, which ultimately leads to increased carbon emissions.

CALL TO ACTION: ELECTRICITY

Our call to local governments and leadership on electricity is to:

- Encourage cities to raise the ante and demand from national governments to increase the percentage of renewable energy in the electricity mix.
- Ensure a just transition towards more renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency, so that city dwellers, including the youth, can enjoy the benefits of cleaner air, cheaper electricity and improved living spaces. Such initiatives may include:
 - Promoting the use of rooftop solar systems for city buildings
 - Using municipal waste to generate electricity
 - Encouraging electric transport in cities
 - Promoting energy-efficient materials and practices in city buildings and electricity systems.
- Ensure that electricity provision in cities takes into account the diverse needs and income levels of a city's residents, through flexible and dynamic tariffs, subsidies for urban youth businesses and off-grid solar systems for small households.

URBAN TRANSPORT

Africa's large cities have some of the busiest and most congested roads in the world. Given the projections for population increase, congestion (and carbon emissions) is only set to worsen. Issues that need to be addressed (and reversed) include the tendency to develop large and expensive infrastructure to prioritise motor vehicle use; the dependence on and preference for fossil fuel-based transportation in both private and public transport; persistent roadway congestion; and a lack of public awareness and preference for low-emission transport alternatives. In addition, there is a chronic lack of investment in public transport in African cities.

CALL TO ACTION: URBAN TRANSPORT

Our call to local governments and leadership related to the transport sector is to:

- Develop and invest in public transport infrastructure and services that are accessible, interlinked, safe and affordable (through government subsidies) for city dwellers. This includes having an accessible environment for people with physical, mental and other challenges.
- Ensure that commuters have the choice of using different forms of non-motorised transit systems and routes, for both private and public transport.
- Move away from car-centric and fossil-reliant urban mobility solutions towards smart and sustainable solutions that reduce carbon emissions.
- Focus on reducing transport poverty and traffic congestion, developing innovative public transport systems, managing traffic and prioritising other modes of transport (e.g. non-motorised transport, public transport infrastructure).
- Destigmatise the public transport sector through public awareness campaigns to encourage the large-scale use of public transport systems.

⁴ World Economic Forum. 2019. *Ending global energy poverty: How can we do better?* [weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/energy-poverty-africa-sdg7](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/energy-poverty-africa-sdg7).

FOOD

Food security is a key concern in African cities. To exacerbate the problem, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a loss of income for many households. Hunger has always been a risk for many African households due to factors such as climate shocks (droughts, floods, heat waves), pests and natural disasters that have a negative impact on crops and cause food waste and ever-increasing food prices. According to the United Nations report on the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021*, it is estimated that between 720 and 811 million people faced hunger in 2020.⁵ The report further states that more than a third of the total number of undernourished people in 2020 (768 million) live in Africa. Engagement on food priorities in African governments has been historically siloed into different departments such as agriculture, forestry or health and safety, meaning that urban food-security priorities often fall through the cracks.

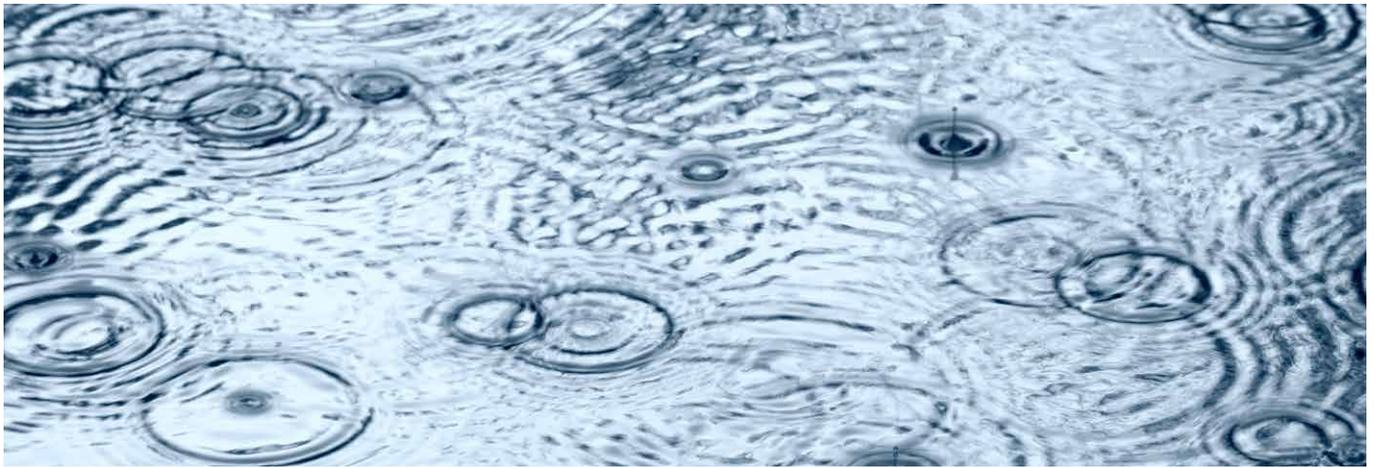


CALL TO ACTION: FOOD

Our call to local governments and leadership related to the food sector is to:

- Develop urban food-security strategies and policies to ensure that all people have access to a sustainable supply of healthy and affordable food, and to reduce food waste to, in turn, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food landing up in landfill sites. These policies and strategies must:
 - Be integrated across relevant departments that have a mandate to ensure the availability of food: transport, environment, water, land and agriculture, health and safety, fisheries and trade
 - Ensure that the biodegradable waste that ends up in landfill sites is diverted.
- Develop localised food systems that minimise transport costs.
- Promote climate-smart agriculture by providing training, support and subsidies for local farmers, specifically youth, and educating them on the importance of indigenous crops that are climate resilient, easy to grow and provide the required nutrients for a healthy diet.
- Make farming attractive to youth by marketing it as a career path they can follow, and train more young females in the agricultural sector.
- Improve land-tenure policies in urban areas to promote access to land for intersectional groups, including the youth and women, to ensure their integration into the food production sector.

5 FAO. 2021. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021*. [fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4474en](https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4474en).



WATER

A lack of access to clean water remains one of the greatest challenges to urban development in Africa. The centralised nature of sanitation systems in cities, alongside degrading or poorly maintained water infrastructure and weak protection of water-based ecosystems (such as wetlands and catchment areas), has serious consequences for water quality and quantity across sectors. Often informal areas and the vulnerable people who inhabit them are most affected by

this. Climate impacts over the short term (e.g. shock events such as floods) and the medium to long term (e.g. an increase in overall temperatures and/or a decrease in rainfall) result in additional challenges such as the contamination of water resources, decreased run-off or lowered water recharge levels in major water bodies.

CALL TO ACTION: WATER

Our call to local governments and leadership related to the water sector is to:

- Prioritise reliable, potable and affordable access to water and sanitation services for all, including those in informal settlements. This underpins other sectors.
- Quantify the long-term benefits and value of the conservation and protection of natural water catchment areas (“water towers”), wetlands, aquifers, water bodies and surrounding biospheres, with clear entry points for private sector engagement to improve water resource management.
- Implement inclusive planning processes for service delivery that prioritise community participation processes and engage adequately with local stakeholder groups and youth leaders. Examples include the implementation of awareness campaigns and community engagement to train citizens and improve the monitoring and reporting of water-related concerns of urban residents.
- Develop a clear, locally contextualised water legislation framework that ensures water access to all income groups at local level. An example would be a framework that accounts for the safety and protection of youth and women, who are often responsible for collecting water for households.
- Conduct regular, comprehensive maintenance of infrastructure and perform upgrades according to updated standards and population projections to ensure long-term resilience of infrastructure for future urban generations. This should include accessible and affordable nature-based disaster risk reduction solutions for flood protection services, especially for low-lying areas.
- Increase capacity to monitor and strengthen the enforcement of legislation relating to water sales or theft affecting water supply and distribution, such as fines for cartels involved in water theft and smuggling.

PLASTICS

There is a clear need for sustainable plastics management in Africa, particularly in large cities where population concentrations mean that the volumes of waste are extreme and waste collection is unreliable. Less than 20% of plastic waste in Africa is recycled. Many plastic products are designed for a short lifespan and single-use plastics are the main problem. In 2016, 76% of plastic waste was mismanaged in low-income countries⁶ due to challenges with planning, regulation and finance. Total mismanaged plastic waste in Africa was estimated at 4.4 million tonnes in 2010.⁷ This is a particularly pressing problem for coastal cities and those adjacent to freshwater environments because the plastic waste ends up in the ocean, rivers and dams. The pollution avalanche also translates into a significant financial burden due to damage to key economic industries such as fishing and tourism.



CALL TO ACTION: PLASTICS

Our call to local governments and leadership related to plastic management is to:

- Ensure regular waste collection and full coverage of all areas, including informal settlements that are usually unplanned and overpopulated.
- Raise awareness in communities to develop a culture of proper waste management and encourage behaviour change in consumers.
- Implement separation-at-source initiatives, where plastics are separated at home for recycling.
- Encourage reuse models and recycling by providing incentives and subsidies to youth groups and community-based organisations involved in plastic innovation.
- Support the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility programmes to lessen the strain on municipal waste management infrastructure.
- Provide incentives that encourage businesses to move away from single-use plastics.
- Have large-scale projects to reuse, repurpose and upcycle plastic to keep this resource in the economy and create jobs in the recycling sector.
- Introduce taxes for businesses that are still heavily reliant on plastics as the easy option, to encourage them to use more sustainable materials.
- Encourage manufacturers to reduce the use of virgin raw materials (made from fossil fuels) to produce plastic products.
- Reduce or ban problem plastics (plastic straws, stirrers, non-recycled plastics).

6 Dalberg. 2019. *Solving plastic pollution through accountability*. WWF International, Gland, Switzerland. wwf.fi/mediabank/12129.pdf.

7 Jambeck, J., Hardesty, B.D., Brooks, A.L., Friend, T., Teleki, K., Fabres, J., Beaudoin, Y. et al. 2018. Challenges and emerging solutions to the land-based plastic waste issue in Africa. *Marine Policy*, 96(October 2018): 256–263. doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.10.041.

CROSS-CUTTING DEMANDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Cities must allocate financial support or financial mechanisms and implement good governance structures to meet the demands mentioned above, and also ensure proper city planning that considers sustainability and growing populations. As such, we call on local governments to address challenges related to the following cross-cutting topics: finances, governance and planning.

FINANCE

A lack of knowledge of existing funding opportunities and financial instruments has been a key barrier in the ability of cities to engage in climate and energy planning. They have therefore been limited by systemic constraints in formulating and preparing projects for financing and in accessing climate finance (technical, financial and legal). Furthermore, existing bilateral institutions capable of providing technical resources that help make organisations fundable still offer limited choices. Cities in sub-Saharan Africa are some of the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, mainly due to the rapid rate of urbanisation. Although diverse efforts have been put in place for low-carbon, sustainable and resilient development that ensures access to basic services, this requires tailored dedicated financing and investments, particularly at the local level.

Given the expected population growth rate in African cities and the enormous strain this will put on already scarce resources, urban financing is more important than ever before. Climate change will increase the demand for financial capital for urban infrastructure and services. However, a sizeable funding gap currently exists to meet this challenge.

CALL TO ACTION: FINANCE

Our call to local governments and leadership related to finance is to:

- Put in place transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure that spending decisions are aligned with local government objectives.
- Advocate to decentralise funding from national governments to local municipal governments to enable climate readiness at local level.
- Ensure proper management of local funding and eliminate corruption by introducing proper accountability and value-for-money systems.
- Leverage national government for funding to support youth initiatives related to climate change.
- Encourage collaboration between urban councils and local governments to pool resources for joint efforts.

GOVERNANCE

Local governments are typically responsible for actual project execution. Projects are often derailed by weak institutional arrangements, siloed thinking, a lack of communication between departments, confused mandates and poor collaboration between national ministries and departments. This results in conflicting agendas and a lack of understanding of the cross-cutting nature of many of the policies and Acts related to climate-resilient development. In addition, national governments often limit the decision-making power and access to resources of local governments, despite the latter being the responsible for implementing on-the-ground activities.

CALL TO ACTION: GOVERNANCE

Our call to local governments and leadership for improved governance is to:

- Localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by integrating sector targets at the local level to address the interrelated challenges affecting our cities. Importantly, community concerns flowing from public participation processes, specifically including youth groups, must be fully integrated into local planning processes.
- Ensure that indigenous knowledge, the youth, women and other marginalised groups are included in coherent local planning processes and collaborative engagement. This is critical for the design, development and implementation of local service delivery mandates related to climate actions, as well as national policies such as the Nationally Determined Contributions, to achieve the global climate-related targets set out in the Paris Agreement at local level.
- Integrate good governance practices into municipal performance measurements in order to incentivise local authorities to incorporate best practice across sectoral programmes, ensure baseline practices for tracking and reporting on ground-level activities and preventing corruption, and catalyse results-based funding or budget flows.
- Improve multi-level governance collaboration, both vertically (between national and local levels of government) and horizontally (between departments, ministries and civil society actors, such as the youth, academia and the private sector). Social equity quotas could be included in governance and planning processes by establishing mechanisms (e.g. a task force) for community members and youth groups to participate in these processes.

PLANNING

Many African cities have been built on outdated colonial master plans, originally designed for cities with low populations, lower motorised traffic and limited municipal waste- and sewage-handling plants.⁸ This has led to countless urban challenges, many of which have climate change implications. This type of planning has also led to social inequality, as those with the least are pushed out to the fringes of the city and forced to live in highly informal ways, rendering them most vulnerable to climate impacts such as floods or drought.⁹ A lack of inclusive public engagement when it comes to developing plans that are responsive to the needs of all city dwellers, high levels of corruption and giving priority to infrastructure development above climate resilience for cities, mean that cities will continue to expand by claiming green spaces, wetlands and catchment areas without considering the imminent threats of climate change.

CALL TO ACTION: PLANNING

Our call to local governments and leadership related to the planning is to:

- Conduct proper planning for informal areas to provide basic services such as waste management, water and sanitation, electricity, education and health, and to integrate this planning with all other urban planning and development in cities.
- Ensure consultation of stakeholders, including youth, city residents, government leaders and commercial players in order to incorporate their input. Climate change plans should not be about city leaders or city authorities. These plans should be owned and understood by all stakeholders who have interests in the city, especially the youth.
- Ensure that basic services, such as areas of employment, housing, shopping, health care and education, are accessible to all without them needing to travel long distances locally.



8 Watson, V. and Agbola, B. 2013. *Who will plan Africa's cities?* Africa Research Institute. africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/publications/who-will-plan-africas-cities/#S1.

9 Jus't Spatial Design ZA. 2021. *Spatial inequality*. justspatialdesignza.com/spatial-inequality.

**TO ENCOURAGE
AFRICAN CITIES TO
IMPLEMENT CLIMATE
COMMITMENTS AND
ACTIONS THAT ARE
ALIGNED WITH THE
1.5 °C PARIS
AGREEMENT GOAL.**



To champion the Earth's capacity to provide a source of inspiration, sustainable food, water and clean energy for all.

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