

Urban 20 Overview 2021

1. What is the U20?

We know from experience that effective climate change solutions can be implemented at municipal level. A dialogue forum for local governments to contribute to the global agenda shaped by the G20 is therefore necessary. As diplomacy is no longer executed at a single level of government, the [Urban20](#) (U20) responds to the opportunity to link diverse efforts under a common framework.

Created in 2017 under the leadership of Mayor Larreta of Buenos Aires and Mayor Hidalgo of Paris, the U20 is a city diplomacy initiative that provides a space for cities to engage in the Group of 20 (G20) and enhances the role of cities as global economic and political leaders.

The U20 works to coordinate a joint position between the mayors of major G20 cities and other global urban centres to inform and enrich the discussions of national leaders. It focuses on responding to climate change by championing and accelerating the transition to carbon neutral, more inclusive and resilient societies. By doing so, the U20 aims to facilitate lasting engagement between the G20 and cities, raise the profile of urban issues in the G20 agenda, and establish a forum for cities to develop a collective message and perspective to inform G20 negotiations.

The initiative is permanently convened by C40 Cities and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) under the leadership of a chair city that rotates annually, following the G20 cycles. The U20 has been chaired by:

- 2018: Buenos Aires (and Paris)
- 2019: Tokyo
- 2020: Riyadh
- 2021: Rome and Milan



Urban 20 in the G20 ecosystem

The G20 works with a broad range of organisations to provide diverse perspectives on financial and socio-economic challenges. Some of these organisations are gathered in thematic groups referred to as '[G20 Engagement Groups](#)'. These independent collectives are led by organizations from the host country. Together with organizations from other G20 countries, these groups develop policy recommendations that are formally submitted to G20 leaders for consideration.

Where most engagement groups are independent collectives that are led by organisations from the host country, the U20 acts in the same spirit, but is an independent initiative that is permanently convened by the conveners UCLG and C40.



2. The U20 Stakeholders: Cities, Executive Team and Partners

Cities

The Urban20 engages two groups of cities:

- **Participating cities:** These cities shape the U20 process by contributing to the development of the U20 Communique and recommendations. Participating cities are important economic or population hubs, made up of major C40 and UCLG member cities from G20 countries. During each U20 cycle, each participating city is represented in the process by its Mayor and a 'City Sherpa', ideally the Head of International Affairs or top city diplomat. The participating cities are permanent members and invited to participate in all elements of the Urban20 process. *See Appendix 1 for list.*
- **Observer cities:** These are additional cities, such as cities located in the G20 Host country or neighbouring regions, may be invited to attend select U20 events in an observer capacity. Their participation is voluntary, non-binding and revised on a yearly basis.

Executive Team

Composed of a U20 Chair that rotates on a yearly basis (usually located in a city of the country presiding the G20 that year) and the Conveners.

The Conveners (C40 and UCLG) provide in-kind support to the Urban20 and form as such the 'U20 secretariat'. They support the Chair city in their role and ensure continuity and transition

of institutional knowledge, as well as topical knowledge whenever needed. *See Appendix 2 for more information on the conveners.*

Partners

Partners support the U20 process with knowledge-based contributions and evidence based research to support cities in taking an informed position on the various U20 topics that are discussed during a cycle. Each cycle the Executive Team decides on the partners and their involvement in the specific cycle.



3. Objectives of the U20

The U20 objectives can be summarized in four points:

1. **Build a platform on behalf of urban centres** and in close collaboration with global networks of local governments, to raise the profile of cities, and mayor's leadership, in the G20 context.
2. **Enrich the G20 agenda** by exploring synergies and contributing the unique perspectives and good practices from cities.
3. **City leaders propose joint solutions to enhance climate action and sustainable economic development** by presenting a communique which leverages existing G20 policy recommendations and international frameworks as well as recommendations from cities.
4. **Invite G20 members to include in each annual discussion strategic or urgent urban subjects** that require synergistic solutions with national governments from the short to the long term

The U20 has two main focus areas:

- **Climate change and sustainable development**, including socio-economic issues at the nexus of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Cities' cross-cutting challenge of **access to finance**.

Every year, the U20 considers the relationship between these two areas and the G20 priorities and contributes to the process and policy priorities identified by the U20 chair.

4. The U20 Communiqué: The main output of the U20

The main outcome document of the U20 initiative is the U20 Communiqué, a written action-oriented document that includes U20 participating cities' asks and recommendations to national governments. This communiqué and any other recommendations from the Mayors and Sherpas are shared with the G20 Presidency and Heads of State during the annual U20 Summit, held before the annual G20 Leaders' Summit.

The communiqué is endorsed by participating and observer cities of that year's U20 edition.

Previous U20 editions Communiqués:

- [2018: Buenos Aires](#)
- [2019: Tokyo](#)
- [2020: Riyadh](#)

Find more resources on the U20 website: <https://www.urban20.org/>



APPENDIX 1 - Urban20 Participating cities

1	Amsterdam	Netherlands
2	Barcelona	Spain
3	Beijing	China
4	Berlin	Germany
5	Buenos Aires	Argentina
6	Chicago	United States
7	Durban (eThekweni)	South Africa
8	Helsinki	Finland
9	Houston	United States
10	Istanbul	Turkey
11	Izmir	Turkey
12	Jakarta	Indonesia
13	Johannesburg	South Africa
14	Lisbon	Portugal
15	London	United Kingdom
16	Los Angeles	United States
17	Madrid	Spain

18	Mexico City	Mexico
19	Milan	Italy
20	Montreal	Canada
21	Moscow	Russia
22	New York City	United States
23	Osaka	Japan
24	Paris	France
25	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia
26	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil
27	Rome	Italy
28	Rotterdam	The Netherlands
29	Sao Paulo	Brazil
30	Seoul	South Korea
31	Strasbourg	France
32	Sydney	Australia
33	Tokyo	Japan
34	Tshwane	South Africa

APPENDIX 2 - Urban20 Conveners

C40 Cities

C40 connects 97 of the world's largest and most influential cities, representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy. Member cities use a science-based approach and exchange of best practices to take the urgent and effective action needed to confront the climate crisis and keep global heating below 1.5°C, aiming to collectively halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. C40 mayors are committed to increasing resilience, cleaning the air we breathe and taking inclusive climate action to create a healthier and more sustainable future.

UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments)

UCLG is the world organization of local and regional governments and their associations, representing and defending their interests on the world stage. UCLG's network represents 70% of the world's total population and is present in all world regions. UCLG's key areas of political interest are: local democracy, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, local finance, urban development and city diplomacy in peace building.