C40 Cities launches Mayors Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery post-Covid-19

C40 Cities has released its [C40 Mayors Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery](link). The plan seeks to create a 'new normal', which will identify, contain and proactively prepare cities for future pandemics, while addressing systemic injustices and keeping global warming below the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement.

Image source: www.pixabay.com

The agenda includes specific measures that are already being delivered and endorsed in many cities around the continent including Freetown, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Lagos and Accra.

Measures on the agenda

The measures championed by mayors include providing immediate access to water to vulnerable communities and institutions, issuing permits for citizens to work and generate income, green job creation programmes; increased rights and support for all workers whose efforts proved essential during the Covid-19 pandemic; investments in green industries such as guaranteed access to resilient public services, particularly for the most vulnerable; building retrofit programmes; investing in safe and reliable mass transit, and new protected spaces for pedestrians and cyclists.

Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone said: "Freetown's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic will be an uphill climb. But as a city, we will ensure that our response and recovery is focused on bringing some of the city's most vulnerable along. Freetown's commitment to improving public services post-Covid, particularly sanitation, will make our city more livable for all whilst creating much needed jobs in the circular economy."

In Freetown, Aki-Sawyerr rapidly provided sustainable access to water to vulnerable and important public spaces in the city such as informal settlements, markets and peripheral health units as a major component of the city's Covid-19 response plan. Further, in South Africa's major cities Cape Town and Johannesburg, mayors have also developed an informal trader policy through regional consultative workshops with leaders and trader associations. In response to the Covid-19 lockdown, the cities recognised informal traders as providers of essential goods and services under the Disaster Management Act and issued permits allowing informal traders to work and generate income.

Call for shift away from fossil fuels

Recognising that delivering an equitable, low carbon recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic will require a global effort, C40 Cities and its allies have also called on national governments to support their efforts. C40 mayors call for commitments to "ensure that all economic recovery funds and stimulus packages support a fair and sustainable transition". C40 mayors are calling for an end to all public investments in fossil fuels: "Nations must seize this moment to decisively move away from investments in high carbon and fossil fuel intensive industries and increase investments in a low carbon future."

Deep inequalities exposed

The mayors' agenda makes clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has starkly exposed deep inequalities in cities and across cities in different regions of the world, including by disproportionately impacting Black people, indigenous communities and people of colour, low-income communities, isolated elderly, and those living in informal settlements. The mayors have committed to addressing these injustices, and call on national governments to ensure stimulus investment and recovery funds create more just and inclusive societies and communities, and directly address long-standing inequalities and ongoing discrimination based on race, gender and income.

The mayor's agenda was released by the C40 Global Mayors Covid-19 Recovery Task Force, established at the direction of C40 chair and mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, and chaired by mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala. The task force was guided by a Statement of Principles, already endorsed by more than 40 city leaders from around the world.