



ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability e. V.

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**Written statement ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability
at 2023 UN Water Conference**

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network working with more than 2500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development.

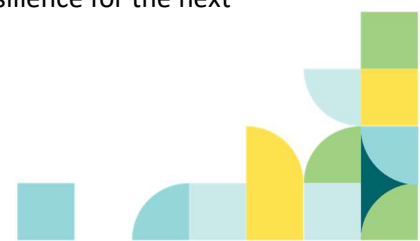
ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability congratulates the co-hosts of the UN 2023 Water Conference, the Governments of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, convened under the auspices of the United Nations from 22 to 24 March 2023.

Since 1995, ICLEI has acted as the Focal Point of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention for Biological Diversity (UN CBD), as the voice of local and subnational governments in the global negotiations on climate and on nature. ICLEI continues to fulfil an increasingly recognized role in advocating within the United Nations and multiple conventions for the importance of sub-national governments for climate, biodiversity and related SDG action.

ICLEI will support the mainstreaming of water into the Rio Conventions and related processes, together with our partners and within our collective work in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments in support of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 and the SDGs.

Critical decisions emerging from relevant COPs in 2022, providing an opportunity to strengthen the link to the Water Action Agenda include:

- The UNFCCC COP27 marked a renewed emphasis on adaptation as a critical focus of climate action, particularly in the Global South - this is a vital consideration for water as much of the climate shocks relates to changes in reliability of water sources, consistency of rainy seasons for preparing or predicting crop cycles, and the intensity of storm, flooding and drought events.
- COP27 saw the first Urban Ministerial Meeting on Climate and Urbanisation, a practice which global compacts should mirror, as local governance has become ever more important in solving global crises.
- The launch of the [SURGe initiative](#) which aims to build sustainable urban resilience for the next generation.





- Mirroring the processes undertaken in both the COP 27 & CBD COP 15 meetings and negotiations, the Convention on Wetlands initiated a Wetland City Accreditation Scheme in 2015. Twenty five (25) new cities were accredited at COP14 in Geneva on 10 November 2022, bringing the total number of accredited cities to 43. The Wetland Cities Accreditation accredited cities are examples of collaboration and success stories of connecting water, climate and biodiversity.
- The CBD COP 15 adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which includes 23 action-oriented global targets for urgent action by 2030; and adopted a renewed Plan of Action on engagement with subnational governments, cities and other local authorities to enhance implementation of the GBF. The GBF includes several targets that will benefit from the actions of cities and subnational governments. For example, the '30 by 30' targets call for the effective conservation and management of least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, and restoration of 30 percent of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystem areas in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity by 2030 (targets 2 and 3).
- Target 12 is specifically directed at cities and calls for significant increases in the area, quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas. The Plan of Action on subnational governments and cities is intended to support national governments, subnational governments, cities and other local authorities and their partners in implementing the GBF. It includes seven interrelated and complementary action areas, which provide a framework on which Parties, their subnational governments, cities and other local authorities.

At these COPs there was a tangible shift of focus and visibility for local and sub-national governments as vital role players for implementation and action to support reaching the targets of such multi-level environmental agreements. ICLEI will continue to amplify and mainstream water into these critical conventions and processes to accelerate #WaterAction at the local level.

ICLEI as active member of the Global Taskforce (GTF) of Local and Regional Governments further supports and endorses the GTF [Statement at the 2023 UN Water Conference](#).