

45 mayors & city leaders from 30 countries share knowledge and advice on tackling COVID-19 crisis

C40 Cities hosts virtual meeting of mayors, representing 360 million people, to share experience on how to save lives and protect livelihoods during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Presentations from Mayors of Milan, Seoul, London and Freetown aim to support city leaders as they tackle the crisis locally and provide support across borders.

London (27 March 2020) - Today, more than 45 mayors and senior city leaders from major cities across 31 countries met, via video-link, to share knowledge and advice on responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Cities, with a total population of more than 300 million people, were represented on the call including, Los Angeles, Milan, Seoul, Freetown, London, Paris, Accra, Athens, Austin, Barcelona, Bogotá, Boston, Buenos Aires, Curitiba, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Delhi NCT, Dubai, Guadalajara, Guangzhou, Heidelberg, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Kolkata, Lima, Lisbon, Madrid, Montréal, Melbourne, Nanjing, New Orleans, Oslo, Phoenix, Portland, Quezon City, Rome, San Francisco, Santiago, Seattle, Singapore, Tokyo, Vancouver and Warsaw.

Mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, in his role as chair of C40 Cities, hosted the meeting, providing a forum for mayors to share what they have learnt from responding to the crisis in their cities. Mayor of Milan and C40 Vice-Chair, Giuseppe Sala, reported key messages and recommendations from the one-month long experience of containment measures in Milan. Mayor of Seoul and C40 Vice-Chair Won-soon Park the city's proactive and innovative containment efforts of COVID-19. Mayor of Freetown, Yvonne Aki-Sawyer commented on the contextual challenges of preparing for a pandemic in a low resource, densely populated urban setting.

C40 Cities has committed to use the connections between the world's major cities built over 15 years of collaboration against the climate crisis, to help cities respond to the COVID-19 crisis. C40 is working closely with its member cities to provide whatever support and resources it can to help them save lives and protect livelihoods.

"We are focused on containing the spread of Covid-19 and protecting the citizens of Milan as much and for as long as necessary," said **Mayor of Milan and C40 Vice-Chair, Giuseppe Sala**. "We know nonetheless that steps must be taken now to support the rebirth of our city after this crisis. For all those who have lost their job or income and to sustain vulnerable families and citizens we have launched a Mutual Aid Fund. I believe it will be instrumental to respond to the needs of the citizens of Milan in terms of social justice, environmental transition and health."

“Coronavirus knows no borders,” said **Mayor of Seoul and C40 Vice-Chair Won-soon Park**. Our solidarity among cities and countries is critical in resolving this global crisis. The city of Seoul is willing to share our practices in the coronavirus containment with the international community and promises to stay committed to overcoming this pandemic together with the global citizens.”

“There are to date no confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sierra Leone, but Freetown is on high alert as all stakeholders work to prevent, and prepare to respond in the event of an outbreak,” said **Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown**. “The main preventative measures, hand washing and social distancing, are extremely challenging to effectively implement in a densely populated city of 1.2m when 47% of the population do not have access to running water and 35% live in severely overcrowded informal settlements. Our city’s experiences from the Ebola outbreak have informed our local plans but we are also learning from ongoing COVID-19 responses of other cities from around the world as we try to prevent and prepare to respond to the crisis.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: “Cities are at the epicentre of this crisis and stopping the spread of Coronavirus will require unprecedented action from across the globe. It is critical we learn from the experiences of other countries, which is why I joined an urgent call with mayors from around the world to share our very latest knowledge and advice on how to respond to this global pandemic. These are testing times for all of us, and I want to reaffirm London’s commitment to working with our friends and partners overseas to limit the impact of this pandemic on people across the world. We stand ready to support and cooperate with our fellow cities during this difficult time.”

“Leadership and collaboration from the C40 Cities may help to discover more effective ways to combat COVID-19,” said **Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sally Capp**. “We need to cooperate globally but act locally to respond effectively to this pandemic. Cities have been the driving force for other major global issues such as climate change so we have a track record of delivering results. In Melbourne we are working to increase city cleaning measures and still provide essential services to our most vulnerable communities during the crisis. We are also providing grants and financial assistance to local businesses and the arts community that have been economically devastated by COVID-19.”

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“In Paris, as in one-third of the planet, the lockdown measure has become the rule in order to contain the epidemic outbreak and protect the people and health systems,” said **Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris**. “It is imperative that this measure is respected by all. In view of this, I have emblematically decided to post every night, on the Eiffel tower, a message to thank all Parisians and professionals who are fighting the COVID-19 and reminding people to STAY AT HOME. Some of my C40 fellow mayors are already doing the same, or are considering it.”

“Faced with the COVID-19 crisis, in Bogotá we have placed people at the center of our response, with intelligence and collective action,” said **Claudia Lopez, Mayor of Bogota**, “To make decisions and act, we have gathered information and generated knowledge, we have learnt. This crisis brought us the opportunity to put into practice our new social contract to understand better the particular situations of many groups and respond accordingly, in particular to the most vulnerable communities. What we are learning will not only allow us to act today, it will also make us a better city in the future, stronger, more conscious, more sustainable, and more caring. This challenge came to change our lives for the better, to teach us to live with a better lifestyle, better production and consumption habits, more empathy and solidarity. To teach us to learn, change and move forward. Everything is going to turn out all right!”

“India is fortunate that Corona arrived late here,” said **Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal**. “Learning from experiences of other countries, we have aggressively pursued the policy of identifying contacts and isolating them. As a result, today, Delhi has less than 40 confirmed cases, 25 days after the first case was detected. Out of the 39 cases that we have, 29 cases contracted it from abroad and just 10 are due to local transmission. Therefore, local transmission is also pretty limited. However, we are not complacent. We wish to limit any further local transmission and would like to avoid entering stage 3 of community transmission. Therefore, we have implemented a complete lockdown from 23rd March. The economic fallout of the lockdown has disproportionately impacted the city's poor, especially migrant workers from across the country who live in Delhi. To mitigate their miseries, we have started providing free cooked meals to 400,000 people every day from 550+ distribution points. We have already released a two months advance social security pensions for widows, senior citizens and the specially-abled to help families tide over the lack of economic activity. Construction workers are being provided with sustenance allowances of ₹5000. Our approach has been that we cannot afford to lose a single life to COVID-19 or to starvation. This is a crisis of unprecedented scale and we are committed to learn and collaborate with leaders across the world. Together, we will win.”

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"The battle against COVID-19 requires the participation of all levels of government, but it is cities that are at the forefront of the fight," said **Mayor of Montréal, Valérie Plante**. "In these times of crisis, it is important to work together, to share the information we have and to identify best practices so that our actions are as effective as possible and allow us to save lives. I welcome the initiative of the Mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, to bring together representatives of major cities so that we can share our experiences as we enter a critical phase in our fight against COVID-19. Together, I am convinced that we will be stronger."

"In addition to WHO guidelines, Curitiba is using innovation to fight the spread of the disease, said **Rafael Greca, Mayor of Curitiba, Brazil**. "The city's fab lab is producing face shields with 3D printers. We are also using videocalls to make early diagnosis on patients with coronavirus symptoms. Sharing this sort of experiences with other C40 mayors is paramount to find common solutions that will help us win the battle against coronavirus."

"This emergency has greatly emphasized the importance of international collaboration and solidarity," said **Secretary General of Dubai Executive Council and C40 Vice-Chair, His Excellency Abdulla Mohammed Al Basti**. "We see countries exchanging knowledge, talent and medical supplies with others in need, with China leading the effort in sharing its lessons learnt and support. This is a clear proof of how global action can be mobilized within a short period of time when everyone is focused on a clear objective. God willing, it will help us get out of this crisis stronger, wiser and more resilient."

- ENDS -

Images

Still images from the meeting are available to download [here](#) and are free to publish, accredited to C40 Cities.

About C40

Around the world, C40 Cities connects 96 of the world's greatest cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe. The current chair of C40 is Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti; and three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Realdania.

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