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Ten major African cities sign onto C40 clean air declaration to improve public health and climate

- *Abidjan, Accra, Addis Ababa, Dakar, Ekurhuleni, Freetown, Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi and Tshwane sign the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration*
- *City leaders made the announcement at the 9th Africities Summit in Kisumu, Kenya*
- *C40 is launching the African Cities for Clean Air Programme to support cities in taking action*

KISUMU, KENYA (19 May, 2022) – Ahead of COP27 being held in Africa later this year, the mayors and governors of ten major African cities announced today an unprecedented, ambitious commitment to improve air quality with the signing of the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration.

Abidjan, Accra, Addis Ababa, Dakar, Ekurhuleni, Freetown, Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi and Tshwane will join a global cohort of 38 cities, including Durban, which became the first African city to sign the declaration in 2019. By signing the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration, the mayors of these cities recognise that breathing clean air is a human right and commit to work toward safer air quality that meets World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines.

The announcement was made at an event organised by C40 during the 9th Africities Summit in Kisumu, Kenya. At the event, C40 launched the African Cities for Clean Air Programme to support African cities as they work to improve air quality and public health.

Air pollution has become the second-largest cause of death on the African continent, due in part to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. Approximately 1.1 million deaths per year have been linked to air pollution across Africa, according to a Global Burden of Disease study.

Approximately 59 million people across the ten African cities stand to benefit from cleaner air and improved health through commitments that could prevent as many as 10,000 early deaths linked to air pollution exposure, as well as more than 300,000 hospitalisations, resulting in US\$ 9.4 billion in annual savings from averted deaths and hospitalisations.

Air pollution and climate change are closely connected and should be considered together; both need swift, unprecedented and collaborative action to address the sources of pollution that are harmful to our health and warming our planet.

The C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration sets a framework for cities around the world to improve air quality. Within two years, signatories to the declaration will establish baseline levels and set ambitious reduction targets for air pollutants that meet or exceed national commitments. These targets will put the cities on a path towards meeting WHO Air Quality Guidelines for particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, ozone and sulphur dioxide.

By signing this declaration, C40 cities continue to take bold climate action, despite the many challenges faced in recent times, with the global pandemic, economic disruption, climate-related natural disasters and in many cases strained financial resources.

C40's new African Cities for Clean Air Programme will help cities to achieve these commitments through capacity building, regionally focused peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, and collaboration centred on air quality best practices.

Sadiq Khan, Chair of C40 Cities and the Mayor of London, said: "With COP27 being held in Africa later this year, I am delighted to welcome ten new African signatories to the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration. As Chair, I am determined to do more to support cities in the global south, who are on the frontline facing the worst consequences of climate change. This is why I am focusing C40's resources on helping cities around the world accelerate their efforts to tackle the climate emergency, reduce toxic air pollution and address inequalities. The world is at a crossroads, we must all play our part in helping cities around the world become greener, fairer and more prosperous for all."

Michael R. Bloomberg, UN Special Envoy for Climate Ambition and Solutions, President of the C40 Board, and 108th Mayor of New York City, said: "Many of the world's fastest-growing cities are in Africa, and these ten mayors can help show cities everywhere how to protect public health, fight climate change and expand economic opportunity all at the same time. Cities play a vital role in the fight against

climate change. This new commitment is an important step to help build momentum and highlight Africa's leadership in the lead-up to COP27 in Egypt later this year."

The new signatories of the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration will take careful steps to improve air quality, from establishing baseline air pollution levels to setting new air quality targets, and implementing policies and programmes that address the leading causes of air pollution emissions. Specific commitments include:

- **Abidjan** will expand air quality monitoring capabilities and aims to achieve a 50% reduction in air pollutant emissions by 2035. The city will consider traffic restrictions for certain types of vehicles.

Governor Robert Mambe of Abidjan, said: "Breathe healthy and be healthy. To give our citizens this opportunity, we have committed to the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration and aim to initiate bold actions to fight air pollution by strengthening our efforts on air quality monitoring and contributing to the development of low-carbon urban transportation and promoting soft mobility modes."

- **Accra** will introduce policies to reduce air pollution from the waste sector by 2026 and collaborate with the transport department to implement an e-mobility strategic policy focusing on high-impact actions to reduce transport emissions.

Mayor Elizabeth Sackey of Accra, said: "We have committed to achieve clean air status and work towards meeting WHO guidelines and air quality standards. This commitment substantiates the principles within Accra's CAP and the potential co-benefits related to air quality management, as well as the reduction of health impacts on citizens."

- **Addis Ababa** will establish city-wide baseline air quality levels and aims to reduce major sources of air pollution by 2025 by implementing emissions standards for vehicles e.g. passenger vehicles, buses and trucks.

Mayor Adanech Ablebe, said: "Addis Ababa City has committed to improve air quality and build a clean and healthy city. We are working to increase the coverage of air quality monitor data for better intervention and to reduce air pollution-related health burdens on the city's residents. Our air quality management plan will help us to achieve our goal."

- **Dakar** plans to introduce an electric bus rapid transit (BRT) and Regional Express Trains (TER - Trains Express Regional) system, create 18 kilometres of new bike lanes and close dump sites by 2024.

Barthelemy Toye Dias, Mayor of Dakar, said: “The air we breathe today determines our health and the sustainability of our city. Together, let's act with ambitious and high impact measures to ensure the energy transition, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, which is a right for every citizen.”

- **Ekurhuleni** is in the process of introducing the Harambee Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System, which includes 286 km of dedicated roads within the city. This programme will be rolled out until the end of 2025. In addition, the city will rehabilitate 112 (1 per ward) illegal waste dumping sites and any abandoned waste by 2023.

Tania Campbell, Mayor of Ekurhuleni, said: “I am deeply concerned about the health of citizens of Ekurhuleni, as the detrimental effects of poor air quality are experienced on a daily basis. With the support of C40 Cities, the city has made a pledge, with focused measures, that will ensure that the air in our city is improved. One of the key measures relates to the enforcement and monitoring of the conditions of air quality licensing by our dedicated team of environmental management inspectors.”

- **Freetown** will develop a mass transit cable car network which will reduce peak traffic volumes and congestion by up to 30%, support residents to transition to gas- and electricity-powered clean and affordable cooking solutions, and create low emission zones.

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, Mayor of Freetown, said: “We are definitely dedicated to improving and sustaining the management of critical air quality data. This commitment towards city-wide clean air will form a vital component in achieving our vision of making our municipality the most liveable and sustainable city.”

- **Johannesburg** will expand household electrification by providing 3,000 sites with electricity connections, establishing a diesel vehicle emissions testing programme and ensuring mines implement a dust management programme by 2025.

Mpho Phalatse, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, said: “Breathing clean air is a human right. As mayors of the African cities, we must not wait for others to act to protect our citizens from the devastating consequences of air pollution. We know that air pollution and the climate crisis go hand in hand. Both need immediate, unprecedented and collective action to remove the pollution that is harming our health and warming our planet.”

- **Lagos** will reduce traffic congestion by expanding the bus rapid transit network, pilot a low-emission bus system, improve walking and cycling

infrastructure, rehabilitate three illegal waste dumping sites and promote the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on buildings.

Babajide Olusola Sanwu-Olu, Governor of Lagos State, said: “The need to breathe clean air is more important than the licence to pollute it. Lagos has committed to improve air quality and I appeal to the responsibility of every citizen, because together we can.”

- **Nairobi** will introduce air quality regulations and an air quality act to set up ambitious reduction targets, increase installation of air quality sensors, develop an emissions inventory to establish baseline levels of air pollutants, report publicly on the status of air pollution, and increase pedestrian and cycling lanes by 100 km to encourage non-motorised transport.

Anna Kananu Mwenda, Governor of Nairobi, said: “Nairobi City Administration's commitment toward city-wide clean air will form a vital component in achieving our vision as the most liveable, clean and sustainable city. We are strengthening the air quality management system by developing an air quality action plan, policy and bill.”

- **Tshwane** will work collaboratively to improve waste collection and waste recycling from informal settlements, expand electrification to ensure access for all homes (including 80% of existing informal settlements) by 2030, and establish a vehicle emissions testing programme.

Randal Williams, Executive Mayor of Tshwane, said: “The [city's] commitment [to signing C40's Clean Air Cities Declaration] also substantiates the principles set out in the city's Air Quality Management Plan and Climate Action Plan, and seeks to use potential co-benefits related to air quality management to help address the associated health impacts on citizens.”

- **Durban** has already made progress on its commitments over the past three years. The city has procured new reference monitors, reviewed and aligned its air quality by-laws, and begun the development of a city-wide emissions inventory of air pollutants, aligned with a greenhouse gas inventory. Durban has also carried out an equity assessment to inform the design of their low emission zone and plans to further develop the concept in the coming year.

Mxolisi Kaunda, Mayor of eThekweni, said: “eThekweni Municipality's commitment towards clean air will form a vital component in achieving our vision as the most liveable and sustainable city.”

Other C40 cities working to improve air quality in Africa include the following:

- **Cape Town** plans to conduct a feasibility assessment to take over the management of the city's passenger rail network. Having a rail network that is

functional, reliable and affordable for commuters will ease road traffic congestion.

Geordin Hill-Lewis, Mayor of Cape Town, said: “The City has increasingly been stepping up our efforts to improve air quality as part of our response to ensure that all Cape Town residents have clean air to breathe.”

- **Dar es Salaam** plans to develop bylaws to encourage renewable energy uptake in residential buildings, promote lower-emission electric cars, motorcycles and freight vehicles, and develop proper waste management systems. In addition, the city has recently deployed 14 air quality monitoring sensors to track the city’s air quality.

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Notes to Editors:

For more information, please visit www.c40.org or contact media@c40.org.

About C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world’s leading cities who are working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a science-based and people-focused approach to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. Through a [Global Green New Deal](#), mayors are working alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to go further and faster than ever before.

The current Chair of C40 is Mayor of London Sadiq Khan; 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.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#) and [C40 Knowledge Hub](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration

Cities are taking bold action to tackle air pollution and clean the air we breathe. Through the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration, 48 cities (including those announced today) have committed to establish baseline air pollution levels, set ambitious targets which meet or exceed national commitments and implement new substantive policies and programmes to address the top causes of air pollution emissions.

Through the declaration, mayors commit to use their power and influence to reduce air pollution and work towards meeting the World Health Organisation's Air Quality Guidelines. This means cities will continually reduce their local emissions, and advocate for reductions in regional emissions, resulting in continuous declines in air pollution levels that move towards the WHO guidelines.