



RELEASE:

Industrial legacy cities to advance equity in their sustainable urban transitions

Five global cities selected to explore transition challenges with an equity lens

Bonn, Germany 09.11.2020. Five global cities have been selected to explore social equity in their sustainability planning as part of the [Urban Transitions Alliance](#), a city network and knowledge-exchange hub that supports former industrial hubs from across the globe to identify common challenges, share knowledge and develop solutions tailored to their individual transitions to a sustainable future.

Dortmund (Germany), Buffalo (USA), Pittsburgh (USA), E-Town district in Beijing, (China) and Turku (Finland) are the selected “challenge” cities. Leveraging the Alliance's expertise, network and collaborative space, these former and current industrial cities - along with eight others from the US, Europe and China - are jointly exploring innovative social equity solutions to pressing transition challenges.

"As Mayor of Dortmund, my focus is to raise the quality of life for all our communities, with a special focus on strengthening inclusion in our northern districts. Dortmund has become a livable and climate friendly city recognized by the German sustainability award. Peer exchange with other industrial legacy cities such as our sister city Buffalo, USA, helps us to recognize our strengths and receive new perspectives and policy recommendations," said Ullrich Sierau, Mayor of Dortmund, Germany.

Indeed, Buffalo's Mayor Byron Brown agrees and considers equity central to sustainability: "As our city continues to build resilience to the climate emergency with nature-based solutions, we focus on doing so in ways that put people first through workforce development and thoughtful attention to vulnerable populations. We are proud to be a leader in the global Urban Transitions Alliance community where we can share our experiences on advancing sustainability through just transitions and to learn from the collective knowledge and diverse perspectives of our peer cities."

Current cities and urban districts represented in the Alliance are: E-Town district in Beijing, (China); Huairou District in Beijing (China); Yuhua District in Shijiazhuang (China); Turku, (Finland); Dortmund (Germany); Essen (Germany);



Gelsenkirchen (Germany); Katowice (Poland); Baltimore (USA); Buffalo (USA); Cincinnati (USA); and Pittsburgh (USA).

The Alliance not only focuses on urban transitions of cities long affected by industrial slowdown and all its consequences, but it also supports those who are implementing green policies at an earlier industrialization stage.

Such is the reality in many Asian countries, especially in China: during an Alliance workshop in Beijing, Dengli Ming, Chief of the Science, Technology and International Cooperation Division of the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau, said: "Many European cities have gone through industrialization a long time ago, and have entered the stage of transition toward a sustainable future. On the other hand, Chinese cities only started to industrialize three decades ago, and the process is still on-going in many places. Through participating in networks like ICLEI and exchange programs like the Urban Transition Alliance, Chinese local governments are provided with opportunities to learn from experiences of cities in Germany and many other countries in the world."

The Urban Transitions Alliance is an initiative led by [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability](#), a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development, and supported by the [Stiftung Mercator](#), a German foundation committed to solidarity and equal opportunities.

"Industrial legacy cities have been significantly impacted by the decline of industrial manufacturing, which left them with soaring unemployment, rapid population loss and a legacy of environmental pollution. It took these cities years, sometimes decades to advance their economic and environmental transitions while embracing their industrial heritage, spearheading ambitious sustainability efforts," said Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability.

"In doing so, they have accumulated outstanding knowledge and are receiving growing recognition for their decade-long efforts. Recognizing the specific challenges for low-income communities, they are moving even further by aiming to include all their citizens in this transition journey," he continued.

In this regard, William Peduto, Mayor of Pittsburgh, USA said: "As a Mayor of a former industrial hub, one of the main challenges I encounter is how to make sure all citizens, especially the vulnerable and low-income, can benefit from our city's urban transition. By exploring issues like gentrification and social inequality at the



Alliance level, Mayors like myself can share our challenges and confront our pathways to address them, making sure we are as equipped as possible to understand and deal with what's happening in our own communities. It's a global exercise that directly impacts our people.”

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About ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, ICLEI influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. ICLEI's Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

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