

Urban Content in NDC 3.0

Cities at the centre

Prioritizing cities and housing
in national climate plans



Urban content in NDC 3.0. Cities at the centre

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This report expands on the data presented in two previous publications. An analysis of urban content in the NDC 3.0 was initially presented at COP30, which was updated with the 128 NDCs 3.0 submitted by 31 December 2025. This current report includes 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026. The previous versions built on the NDC research co-published by UN-Habitat, SDU, and UNDP, including “Seizing the urban opportunity: A 3-step guide for strengthening Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 3.0” (2025) and “Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses: 2024 Report” (2024). We further thank the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the Slovak Republic for their financial support. We also thank the UNESCO Chair of Urban Resilience at the University of Southern Denmark for providing access to the urban content database of NDCs 2.0 and the long-standing partnership.

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Foreword

Cities have long been underrepresented in national climate planning, even though climate impacts are experienced most directly in urban areas. It is in cities that people face rising temperatures, flooding, air pollution, housing insecurity, and pressure on infrastructure and services. Cities, which house nearly half of the world’s population, also offer the most immediate climate solutions: adequate and affordable housing, cleaner transport, efficient buildings, resilient infrastructure, and more inclusive urban growth.

Housing is especially important, as poorly planned expansion can drive urban sprawl, place pressure on biodiversity, food systems, and water resources, and deepen existing inequalities. In this context, strengthening the urban content of national climate plans is not only a policy opportunity. It is essential to achieving climate goals in ways that improve people’s lives.

The findings of this report represent an important step forward: cities are moving from the margins to the centre of climate planning. A record 80 per cent of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) now include well-developed urban measures, up from 49 per cent in the previous cycle. Across these plans, countries are increasingly prioritizing urban action in buildings, land use, infrastructure, water, and basic services. They also point to a broader recognition that housing, and the social and ecological function of land, are central to resilient and sustainable urban development.

Recognition and inclusion in climate plans will not be enough. Urban climate action depends on stronger data, clearer baselines, finance that reaches the local level, and effective coordination across national, regional, and local institutions. It requires the ability to translate commitments into investable and bankable programmes, practical reforms, and visible improvements in communities.

This report offers practical guidance for both finalization of NDC 3.0 and the next phase of implementation. It offers a comprehensive review of how cities are reflected in national climate plans, where progress is strongest, and where further support can accelerate delivery. It also helps identify emerging priorities, institutional trends, and opportunities for targeted partnership across sectors and levels of government.



Anacláudia Rossbach
United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director, UN-Habitat



For national governments, this report can help inform future climate planning cycles. For local and regional leaders, it reinforces the growing recognition of cities as implementation partners. For development banks, climate funds, and technical partners, it offers insights into where finance, capacity-building, and implementation support can have the greatest impact. For researchers, civil society, and all those working to connect climate goals with everyday realities, it provides evidence that stronger cities can help deliver stronger national outcomes.

Beyond this report, there is a clear opportunity to deepen the integration of urban priorities across Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, long-term strategies, and broader development pathways including through the review of the New Urban Agenda - an important moment to further embed climate ambition in the future of urban development.

UN-Habitat remains committed to working with governments, cities, and partners to help turn this momentum into results. By strengthening the urban content of national climate plans, we can advance climate action that is more practical, more inclusive, and more connected to the homes, communities, and opportunities people depend on.

Contents



What is urban content? This report builds on UN-Habitat's 2025 publication *Seizing the urban opportunity: A 3-Step guide for strengthening NDC 3.0 to help countries assess and strengthen the integration of cities into their NDCs*. NDCs 3.0 have been analysed whether they contain urban baselines, including calculated GHG emissions and climate risks; the mitigation and adaptation challenges cities face; the actions required to overcome them; and the means to implement measures.

A new report series. This report *Urban Content of the NDCs 3.0: Cities at the Centre* builds on previous iterations. Based on this report, UN-Habitat, in collaboration with partners will create regional and country reports to show policy coherence as well as thematic spin-offs to understand the urban pathways of NDC 3.0 implementation.

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Executive summary

Prioritizing cities and housing in NDC implementation

80%

of NDCs 3.0 have well-developed urban content

73%

make cities a priority

45%

of NDCs 3.0 include housing and informal settlements

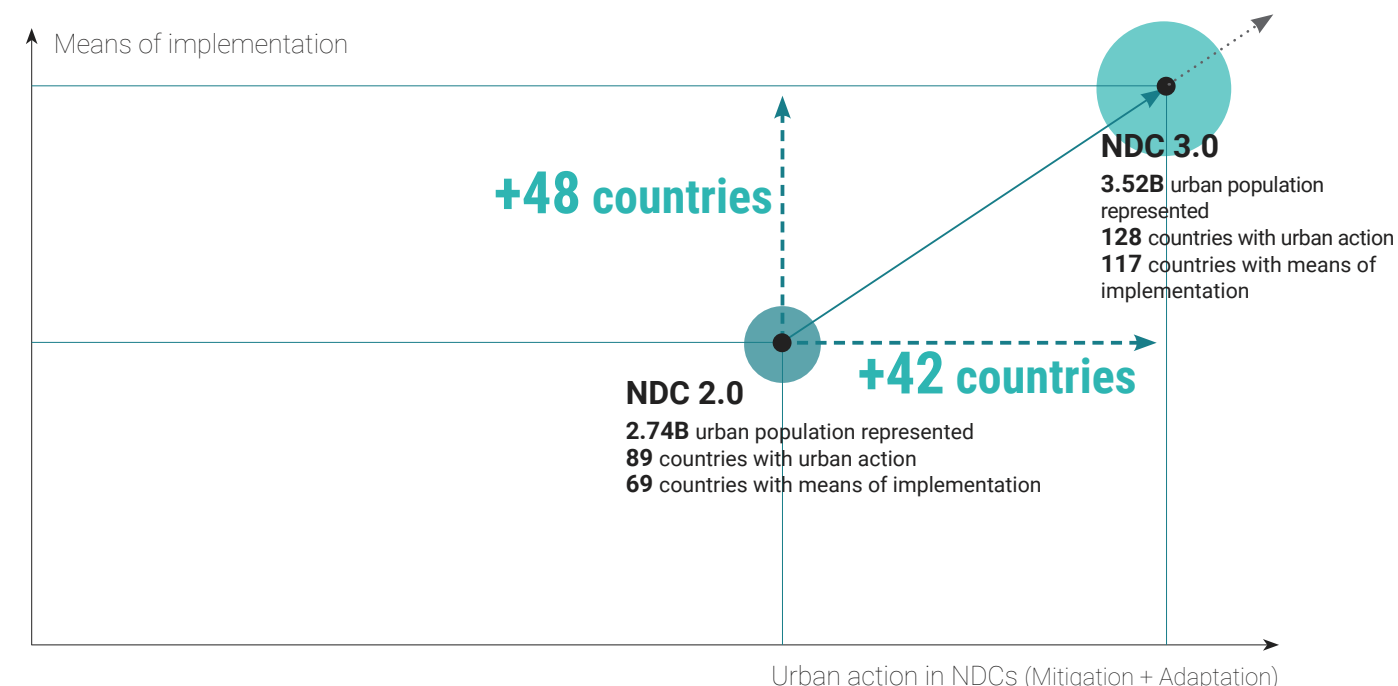


Figure 1. Analysis of NDCs 3.0 indicates that cities have moved to the centre of national climate planning

Cities have moved to the centre of national climate plans: 80 per cent of the 142 submitted NDCs 3.0 include well-developed urban content, up from just 49 per cent in NDC 2.0. This reflects a fundamental shift toward cities as leading implementation actors.

The NDC 3.0 cycle is focused on increasing ambition and accelerating implementation.

While decisions to respond to the global climate crisis are often made by national governments, delivery takes place in cities. Strong urban content in NDCs 3.0 provides a decisive opportunity to fast-track climate action.

National climate plans are increasingly prioritizing implementation in cities. Almost three-quarters of submitted NDCs 3.0 make cities a priority through outlining specific enabling mechanisms, including delivery-ready commitments through multilevel governance, capacity-building, and climate finance.

CHAMP endorsers are creating the enabling environment for multilevel climate action, focusing on multilevel governance and vertical coordination mechanisms between national and subnational governments. This directly reflects CHAMP's mandate to connect cities with national climate decision-making.

Housing and informal settlements are an emerging priority in NDCs 3.0, highlighting the interconnection between the housing and climate crises. Around half of NDCs 3.0 include housing and informal settlements, and where housing is a priority, the focus is on safe housing, slum upgrading, tenure security, and housing resilience.

Recognition of climate risks is translating into targeted adaptation responses.

123 of the 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted (87 per cent) outline the role of cities in adaptation, up from 54 per cent in NDC 2.0, with priority sectors including infrastructure, water management, and ecosystems and biodiversity. NDCs that name urban climate risks are significantly more likely to include a concrete response.

Urban mitigation establishes a strong foundation for programmatic engagement.

Urban mitigation appears in 118 out of the 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted (83 per cent), up from 55 per cent in NDCs 2.0. Urban transport and mobility, energy, and waste management are the sectors that national governments most often target to translate ambition into local action, especially through vehicle electrification, renewable energy uptake, and circular economy approaches.

Rapidly urbanizing, middle-income countries are leading the most ambitious mitigation responses in cities, while higher-income countries with ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets integrate cities less.

Urban planning and land use are growing as a cross-cutting priority. They sit at the intersection of climate planning and delivery, featuring in 60 NDCs 3.0 as a cross-cutting strategy bridging mitigation, adaptation, and spatial delivery.

Nature-based solutions, loss and damage, and energy equity are expanding the urban climate agenda. Nature-based solutions are the most widely cited cross-cutting adaptation measure. Urban loss and damage appears for the first time in any NDC cycle, addressing displacement, forced mobility, and risks to livelihoods. Urban energy access and equity commitments nearly tripled.

Concrete delivery mechanisms for climate action are being defined, as 117 NDCs 3.0 (82 per cent) cite at least one enabler of urban climate action, with vertical coordination and capacity-building more than doubling.

Urban climate finance remains underrepresented.

Only 27 NDCs (19 per cent) include urban climate finance mechanisms, predominantly from lower- and middle-income countries, indicating a critical global funding commitment gap.

Urban content is not even across regions: 94 per cent of African submissions achieved well-developed urban content, the strongest improvement of any region. 77 per cent of submissions from Asia and the Americas reflect urban-oriented implementation pathways. European NDCs show a structural division between the EU's collective submission and non-EU parties, while the increase in urban content in Oceania came mostly from Small Island Developing States, where climate risks are most acute.

Every remaining NDC 3.0 is an opportunity. More than 50 submissions are still being developed. There is a clear window for national governments to actively involve cities in multilevel climate action and deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The degree of urban content in NDC 3.0 is unprecedented – but the decisive shift is from commitment to on-the-ground delivery. The time for implementation is now.

Cities in national climate planning

Why urban content in NDC 3.0 matters

Record emissions show the need for urban climate action

Global greenhouse gas emissions have reached levels not seen in human history. Emissions reached 57.7 GtCO_{2e} in 2024, a 2.3 per cent increase on 2023 and more than four times the average annual growth rate of the previous decade (UNEP, 2025). The effects are no longer abstract projections. The past three years were the warmest in 176 years of recorded observation. The year 2024 was the first calendar year to breach 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and atmospheric CO₂ concentrations now stand at their highest point in at least two million years (WMO, 2026). Record-breaking heatwaves, catastrophic flooding, prolonged droughts, and intensifying storms are increasing in frequency and severity across every inhabited region of the world. The physical consequences of a warming planet are no longer a future scenario.

The response this situation demands is a fundamental shift in the scale and speed of climate action. Closing the gap to a 1.5°C-consistent pathway requires cutting global emissions by 26 per cent below 2019 levels by 2030 and by 46 per cent by 2035 (UNEP, 2025). On current trajectories, however, the world is on course for 2.8°C of warming by the end of the century. Achieving the necessary reductions requires not only stronger national ambitions but also mechanisms to translate them into coordinated, large-scale action on the ground. That challenge is, in large part, an **urban** one.

Cities at the centre of climate action

Cities and their urban systems will determine whether global climate targets are met or missed. Half of humanity already lives in urban areas. By 2050, that share will rise to nearly 70 per cent – close to six billion people (UN DESA, 2008; Urban Age Programme, n.d.). Around 90 per cent of this urban growth will occur in Africa and Asia, with over half of the projected increase concentrated in just seven countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia (UN DESA, 2025).

Cities already consume up to 75 per cent of global energy and account for approximately 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions (IEA, 2024), up from around 62 per cent in 2015 (IPCC, 2022). This is a remarkable increase over a short span, driven by factors that vary across development contexts, but broadly linked to urban population growth, unequal urbanization patterns, poor spatial planning and lower densification trends, and wider socioeconomic developments (Luqman, Rayner, and Gurney, 2023). These emissions are generated by the ways in which cities are built, powered, and governed: fossil fueled transport networks, carbon intensive construction and building stock, linear production and consumption models, and expanding urban footprints that displace natural carbon sinks (IEA, 2020; IEA, 2019; World Bank, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2020). The urban metabolism that sustains economic growth is the very system driving the climate crisis (Wolman, 1995).

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Nearly **70%**
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cities by 2050.”

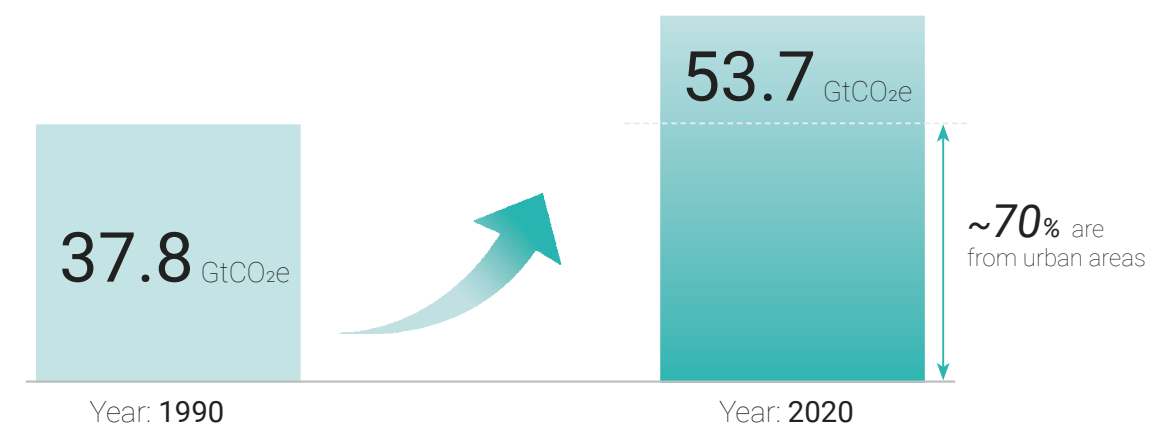


Figure 2. Cities account for approximately 70 per cent of GHG emissions (IPCC, 2022).

Climate change is exacerbating the housing crisis

Climate change is compounding the pre-existing housing crisis. An estimated 2.8 billion people already live in inadequate housing, including more than 300 million who are homeless, with demand rising as urbanization accelerates (UN-Habitat, 2024). Within urban areas, climate risks are most directly felt through homes and neighbourhoods: housing shapes exposure to heat, flooding, and disruption to basic services, as well as the capacity to recover from them.

Around 70 per cent of urban residents already face elevated risks from flooding, extreme heat, and water scarcity. The scale of climate-driven displacement illustrates how acute this exposure has become. In the past decade alone, weather-related disasters triggered an estimated 220 million internal displacements – around 60,000 people per day. This is contributing to unplanned urbanization and damage to housing, transport, and energy infrastructure, alongside health crises and the breakdown of social cohesion (IDMC, 2024; IPCC, 2022). Where adaptation capacity is overwhelmed, these impacts become irreversible.

Climate change risks are not borne equally. In Least Developed Countries, climate-related disasters generate economic impacts ten times greater than in wealthier countries (UNOHRLLS, 2022). The burden falls hardest on communities least responsible for cumulative emissions; those with the fewest resources to adapt. This is most acute in informal settlements, where over one billion people live in high-risk areas exposed to flooding, landslides, and heat stress (UN-Habitat, 2023). In these contexts, inadequate housing conditions, infrastructure deficits, insecure tenure, and limited access to services compound vulnerability further (UN-Habitat, 2024). Without stronger climate action, these pressures will deepen inequality and erode the housing conditions of those least able to withstand them.

Up to 90 per cent of urban greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by 2050 through solutions that are already proven and available (IPCC, 2023). Transitions to renewable energy, improvements to building energy efficiency, investment in sustainable mobility, and the adoption of circular construction approaches could collectively deliver these reductions while also generating substantial public health, employment, and equity benefits. Cities also concentrate the institutions, investment systems, infrastructure networks, and community knowledge needed to deliver them. On the adaptation side, nature-based solutions, community early-warning systems, and investment in resilient housing and infrastructure can meaningfully reduce exposure to climate risk, particularly for the urban communities most vulnerable to it (UN-Habitat, 2024).

Unlocking urban climate action at scale, however, is hindered by several interconnected challenges.

Cities require around 4.5 trillion US dollars in investment per year through 2030 to implement climate solutions, yet current flows remain far below that level (CDP, 2024). This financing shortfall is further compounded by governance constraints: cities often lack the formal authority, mandates, and institutional mechanisms to plan and deliver climate action at the required scale, leaving them dependent on national systems that may not be designed with urban delivery in mind. In 2021/2022, the large majority of urban climate finance went to developed economies (USD 339 billion) and China (USD 336 billion). Those Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs) received only 11 per cent of the total, and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) just 1 per cent (CCFLA, 2024).

Beyond finance and governance, cities face significant gaps in human and technical resources.

Most lack the expertise to prepare projects, develop bankable investment pipelines, or engage effectively with national and international finance systems (UN-Habitat, UNDP, SDU, 2024). Data limitations add another layer of difficulty: without reliable, up-to-date information on emissions and climate risks, cities struggle to design targeted interventions or make a compelling case for international finance.

There is an overarching challenge of policy coherence across levels of government and sectors.

National planning systems often proceed in isolation from urban climate action, with cities lacking clear mandates, aligned regulations, and dedicated resource flows that connect their locally led climate ambition to the frameworks and instruments where decisions about climate finance and implementation are ultimately made. Moving from project-level interventions towards multilevel and multisectoral coordination can help to connect cities to national decision-making on climate, with aligned mandates, regulations, and resource flows.

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NDCs 3.0 as an opportunity to unlock urban climate action

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the central mechanism for implementing the Paris Agreement.

Every five years, Parties are required to prepare, communicate, and maintain NDCs that reflect their highest possible ambition. In these commitments, countries set out how they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate impacts, and mobilize finance, capacity, and technology to achieve these goals. NDCs therefore function both as international commitments and as national policy frameworks that determine how ambition is translated into action. The current NDC cycle represents the third generation of NDCs (“NDC 3.0”), in which Parties have agreed to submit more ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets that cover all greenhouse gases, sectors, and categories, and are aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 °C, as informed by the latest science and in light of national circumstances. Parties were also encouraged to prepare their NDCs 3.0 with targets aiming at 2035, thereby extending the time horizon of their targets and providing a clearer pathway for medium-term implementation. 142 countries have submitted their updated NDCs 3.0 or updated NDC 2.0 from November 2024 to mid-April 2026, with over 50 additional submissions expected by the end of 2026.

NDC 3.0 is a turning point for climate action. The third generation of NDCs is the first to be prepared in light of the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake, which highlighted the urgency of closing the gap between current trajectories and the 1.5 °C global warming limit. Recent UNFCCC COPs have increasingly emphasized delivery and implementation, with COP30, by which NDC 3.0 submissions were due, widely framed as “the COP of implementation.” Initiatives such as Climate Promise: Forward and COP30’s Global Implementation Accelerator have placed the rollout of NDC 3.0 at a decisive moment for global climate action. Parties are increasingly shifting from finalizing targets to developing implementation plans, thus translating ambition into the policies, investments, and governance systems that will determine outcomes on the ground.

Urban content within NDCs reflects how well national frameworks foreground the role of cities and support local delivery.

Around 70 per cent of climate solutions depend on decisions made at the local and regional level, yet without explicit reference to cities, national strategies often remain disconnected from the realities of implementation (Local 2030, n.d.). At the multilateral level, momentum is building to embed cities within climate decision-making. Past COP decisions have underscored the importance of multilevel partnerships, and a succession of initiatives stemming from Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and Climate Change have consolidated this agenda, providing platforms to align national and subnational efforts across sectors. The Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action, the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative, and the Baku Continuity Coalition on Urban, Multilevel and Multisectoral Climate Action¹ have showcased how global climate goals can be achieved faster and more effectively when cities and urban actors are explicitly integrated into NDC 3.0.

Why include cities in NDC 3.0?

- **Cities are already delivering climate action on the ground:** Local governments are implementing mitigation and adaptation measures every day. If cities are not explicitly included in national climate frameworks, their contributions to national targets remain fragmented, under-recognized, and suboptimally supported.
- **Cities drive emissions and are on the frontline of impacts:** Cities account for more than 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and are directly exposed to climate risks such as heatwaves, flooding, and sea-level rise. Excluding them from NDCs leaves a major share of both the problem and the solution outside the core climate framework.
- **Cities hold many of the solutions – and can raise both ambition and delivery in NDC 3.0:** A large share of climate solutions lies in urban systems. Because NDCs guide national ambition and investment, stronger urban content and the active involvement of subnational governments in NDC 3.0 make commitments more ambitious, while improving the chances they are actually delivered through clearer, implementation-ready pathways for action on the ground.
- **Cities are inherently multisectoral:** In urban areas, challenges and opportunities cut across sectors. Integrating cities into NDC 3.0 processes helps ensure that urban planning and basic services are designed with climate sustainability and resilience as core objectives, not afterthoughts.
- **NDC 3.0 provide a multi-year platform for collaboration across levels of government:** NDCs are medium-term commitments. Explicitly including cities creates a structured, multi-year basis for coordination between national and subnational governments, helping align policies, investments, and implementation cycles.
- **Involving cities strengthens multilevel partnerships and the enabling environment for climate action:** When cities participate in the design and delivery of NDCs, they help build stronger multilevel governance, linking national governments, cities, and regions. This fosters an enabling environment for climate action, improves coherence across sectors and levels of government, and builds confidence that climate commitments can be delivered.

Widening the lens: from snapshot analysis to comprehensive review

The following report is the third publication in UN-Habitat’s NDC 3.0 flagship series. The first, a snapshot presented at COP30 in November 2025, analyzed 67 NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC registry by October 2025. The second, an updated snapshot published alongside UNDP’s NDC Insight Series in early 2026, expanded the dataset to 128 NDCs submitted by December 2025. This report analyzes 142 NDCs published to the UNFCCC registry by mid-April 2026 and provides a more comprehensive analysis of urban content in national climate plans.

How urban content is measured in NDCs 3.0

To determine whether NDCs 3.0 contain urban content, they are checked against four actions: urban baselines, including GHG emissions and climate risks; the mitigation and adaptation challenges cities face; the actions required to overcome them; and the means to implement measures (see table 2).

¹ SURGe is an initiative by the COP27 Presidency, CHAMP is a COP28 Presidency Pledge and the Baku Continuity Coalition was launched at COP29. For further information, see references.

Bringing cities into focus in NDCs 3.0

How this report evaluates urban content across NDC revision cycles

Supporting NDC finalization: Building on the 3-step guide

This Technical Report builds directly on UN-Habitat’s 2025 publication *Seizing the urban opportunity: A 3-Step guide for strengthening nationally determined contributions (NDC) 3.0*. The guide introduced a clear, replicable framework to help countries assess and strengthen the integration of cities into their NDCs. It emphasized that strong urban content requires clarity on evidence, challenges, responses, and the mechanisms that enable delivery. It also emphasized that content meaningfully aligned with local realities should be the product of multilevel, multistakeholder, and multisectoral collaboration. The process is as follows (see table 1):

Table 1. A summary of the 3-step guide for urban content in the NDCs 3.0

		Action	Description
Step 1	ASSESS	Stocktake and context mapping	Review existing urban content in second-generation NDCs and related national and subnational policies. Map the current state of multilevel partnerships and institutional frameworks.
Step 2	PREPARE	Strengthen coordination	Build and align relationships between national and local stakeholders through structured consultations to ensure institutional readiness for implementation.
Step 3	CO-DESIGN	Develop actionable NDCs	Combine evidence and partnerships to create an implementation-ready NDC by defining urban baselines (GHGs and climate risks), identifying challenges, outlining responses, and integrating means of implementation.

The three-step guide was implemented through a structured package of capacity-support mechanisms embedded in a UN-wide approach coordinated within UNDP’s Climate Promise. Recognizing that NDCs are country-led and follow different institutional pathways, support was provided at the request of national governments, with UN-Habitat working iteratively between national and global processes rather than applying a single, standardized model. Accessible guidance and capacity-building resources provided common reference points for national and subnational stakeholders across regions, while awareness raising sessions introduced the methodology, clarified entry points for stronger urban content, and linked the guide to ongoing NDC 3.0 and implementation processes. At the core of the approach, UN-Habitat facilitated multilevel, multistakeholder and multisectoral workshops that brought together different ministries, levels of government and institutions, helping to create an enabling environment to embed subnational governments in NDCs through co-designing processes and pave the way for stronger urban delivery.

Assessing the urban content in NDCs

An NDC co-designed through this multilevel process should therefore present four key elements: urban baselines, including calculated GHG emissions and climate risks; the mitigation and adaptation challenges cities face; the actions required to overcome them; and the means to implement measures. The structure of this framework (Baseline, Challenge, Response, Means of Implementation) maps directly onto the delivery chain that operationalizes urban climate action. A baseline establishes the evidence; a challenge frames the problem that evidence reveals; a response defines the intervention; and means of implementation specify how that intervention will be resourced, governed, and delivered. An NDC that includes all four components has, in principle, the architecture needed to translate ambition into action. One that includes recognition without definition (i.e., naming cities without baselines, or identifying responses without delivery mechanisms) remains aspirational rather than operational (see table 2).

Table 2. An outline of the scoring criteria to determine urban content of NDCs

Criterion	Definition	Examples of evidence in NDCs
BASELINE	Does the NDC identify an urban baseline, such as GHG emissions or climate risks?	Review existing urban content in second-generation NDCs and related national and subnational policies. Map the current state of multilevel partnerships and institutional frameworks.
CHALLENGE	Does it describe specific urban challenges linked to mitigation or adaptation?	Build and align relationships between national and local stakeholders through structured consultations to ensure institutional readiness for implementation.
RESPONSE	Does it outline urban responses, such as policies, measures, or interventions?	Combine evidence and partnerships to create an implementation-ready NDC by defining urban baselines (GHGs and climate risks), identifying challenges, outlining responses, and integrating means of implementation.
MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	Does it explain how these actions will be delivered?	Finance, capacity, data, technical assistance, governance

The scoring system that maps onto these criteria is designed to make the distinction between well-developed urban content and aspirational urban content visible and comparable across the full dataset, and across NDC revision cycles. It asks four key questions that together determine the quality of urban content within NDCs (see table 3).

Table 3. A summary of the scoring methodology of urban content of NDCs

Total urban content included	Rating of NDC	Bonus	Urban content in NDCs 3.0
3/3 actions (Baseline, Challenge, Response)	A – Strong	A+ if means of implementation included	64 of 142 NDCs 3.0
2/3 actions	B – Moderate	B+ if means of implementation included	49 of 142 NDCs 3.0
1/3 actions	C – Low	C+ if means of implementation included	15 of 142 NDCs 3.0
0/3 actions	No urban content	–	14 of 142 NDCs 3.0

Expanding the analysis and contextualizing the data

Previous Snapshot reports have presented clear trends in how cities are becoming embedded in national climate planning (UN-Habitat 2025; 2026). Expanding this, the current report adds several analytical layers that help assess how cities are being prioritized and which implementation pathways are emerging within critical urban sectors. Firstly, the analysis introduces a distinction between ‘substantive’ and ‘aspirational’ urban content. In this context, ‘substantive’ refers to urban content that is supported by a clear implementation pathway or measure, whether finance, governance mechanism, law, programme or project. Aspirational content includes mentions of cities that lack clear implementation pathways. This distinction serves as a proxy to assess how cities are prioritized within national climate planning, as it helps to identify where urban climate action is being strategically integrated to support NDC implementation (see table 4).

Table 4. Cities as a priority? Difference between aspirational and substantive urban content in NDCs 3.0

Addition	Action	Description
Aspirational	Urban content that is not supported by a clear implementation mechanism	"Cities and urban areas will play a key role in achieving national climate targets through improved planning and green infrastructure."
Substantive	Cities are made a priority: Urban content is supported by a clear implementation mechanism or pathway	"The government will mandate energy performance standards for all new urban residential buildings above 200m² by 2027, targeting a 35% reduction in building sector emissions relative to 2020 baseline, with implementation overseen by the Ministry of Housing and monitored through annual municipal reporting."

In addition, the report considerably expands the indicator framework used to identify and categorize urban content. In addition to the sectoral breakdown used in previous reports, it also including global indicator categories (e.g., regional differentiation, income group, urban population, etc.) and over 40 new subsectors (e.g. "transport" to "modal shift", "electrification", "public transport"). This expanded categorization not only allows the report to better contextualize urban content but also generates a more nuanced discussion about how urban climate action will be carried out. In total, 123 indicators were included in this analysis.² The analysis directly supports implementation outcomes by helping identify critical opportunities to scale and support urban climate action, and to better understand the pathways where urban climate action is being leveraged.

From manual assessment to using AI for a scalable analysis

To apply this scoring system consistently across a growing number of submissions, UN-Habitat developed an AI-enhanced methodology capable of analyzing hundreds of pages of policy text quickly and systematically. Using natural language processing (NLP), the tool identifies, classifies, and scores relevant text from each NDC against a structured indicator database. That database builds on a framework co-developed over time by UN-Habitat, the University of Southern Denmark (SDU.Resilience), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with support from the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM). Critically, this has enabled a shift away from slow, manual analysis of policy documents through keyword searches (see UN-Habitat, 2024) toward a rapid, scalable approach to data generation. The AI workflow follows five stages (see table 5):

Table 5. Five stages of the AI workflow

Stage	Process	Description
1	Parsing	NDC documents are ingested and restructured into processable text, preserving document structure.
2	Chunking	Text is divided into contextual chunks to preserve meaning across sentence and paragraph boundaries.
3	Extraction	Relevant passages are identified against the urban indicator database, covering climate risks, sectors, and means of implementation.
4	Classification	Extracted text is sorted into thematic sub-categories and labelled against classification criteria (urban/implied urban; substantive/aspirational; sector sub-classifications).
5	Aggregation	Scores are compiled at the national level to generate the dataset underpinning global, regional, and sectoral analysis.

2 The full list of indicators will be made available in the online version of this report.

As the third report in this flagship series on urban content in NDCs, this report analyses 142 NDCs published to the UNFCCC registry by mid-April 2026, including NDC 3.0 and updated versions of NDC 2.0. It also offers a retrospective analysis of the corresponding NDC 2.0 submissions, enabling a trend analysis of how urban content has changed across 5-year revision cycles.

Caveats and limitations

The analysis in this report applies UN-Habitat’s AI-enhanced methodology and should be interpreted alongside its limitations. The dataset covers 142 NDCs submitted by mid-April 2026, with 50+ additional submissions expected before the end of 2026. Findings should therefore be read as indicative of trends across the current NDC cycle rather than definitive conclusions about it.

Analytical performance may also vary across the six UN official languages in which NDCs are submitted. The scoring framework assesses urban content as expressed in NDC text; it does not capture implementation progress or the broader national context within which NDCs sit, including other policy documents.

All extracted information has been reviewed through a structured human verification process, and indicator definitions continue to be refined to improve consistency across the dataset. This report will be followed by a full methodology report published by UN-Habitat, raising the transparency of this methodology. The methodology report will further share the technical architecture, AI extraction workflow, the indicators database and the classification logic and coding schema underpinning it, the machine-learning regime and human verification approach, in addition to a comprehensive account of limitations, critical considerations, and the future direction of the tool.

This data includes only NDCs that were available to be retrieved on the UNFCCC portal by mid-April 2026. As such, NDCs that were submitted before this date, but only made available after (e.g., Comoros and Georgia) are not included in the analysis. This analysis also includes the NDC 3.0 of the USA which has since withdrawn from the Paris Agreement (effective January 2026), though its NDC remains officially listed with the UNFCCC.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



Cities at the centre

Cities moving to the centre of national climate planning

NDC 3.0 submissions confirm a decisive shift: cities are at the centre of national climate plans. Analysis of 142 NDCs 3.0 shows that 113 (80 per cent) now feature well-developed urban content with concrete measures across both mitigation and adaptation, a significant uplift from just 49 per cent of NDCs 2.0 (UN-Habitat 2025; 2026).

NDCs 3.0 are becoming implementation-ready through urban climate action. 103 NDCs (73 per cent) make cities a priority, meaning they substantively integrate urban climate action through a specific policy, project, legislation, or enabling mechanism that contains an explicit urban dimension in at least one sector, up from 67 (47 per cent) in NDC 2.0. More significantly, 71 NDCs (50 per cent) do so across three or more sectors.

Sharpening focus on sectoral priorities. Many NDCs outline multiple climate actions in cities.

- **Mitigation:** 118 NDCs 3.0 (83 per cent) mention the role of cities in mitigation sectors, up from 78 in NDC 2.0. Priority sectors include transport and mobility (86 NDCs), energy (82), and waste management (48), led by vehicle electrification and clean fuels (67 NDCs), renewable energy (31), and circular economy and resource recovery (36).
- **Adaptation:** 123 NDCs 3.0 (87 per cent) explicitly outline the role of cities in critical adaptation sectors, up from 76 in NDC 2.0. Priority sectors include infrastructure (60 NDCs), water management (52), and ecosystems and biodiversity (40). Across all, nature-based solutions emerge as a dominant cross-cutting implementation pathway (85 NDCs), alongside flood management and drainage infrastructure (35).

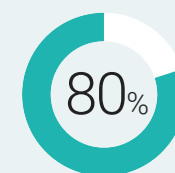
New priorities are emerging. Urban planning and land use feature as a cross-cutting strategy in 60 NDCs 3.0, while urban housing and informal settlements appear in 64. Dimensions of urban loss and damage are also beginning to appear in climate risk identification, with 18 NDCs (9 per cent) referencing water-related shocks, heat-related risks, and ecosystem degradation in cities.

Moving from planning to implementation. 117 NDCs 3.0 (82 per cent) now cite at least one means of implementing urban climate action, up 70 per cent.

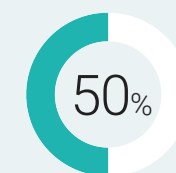
- **Multilevel governance and capacity-building:** Cited in 74 NDCs 3.0, these two enablers increasingly appear together, and include strategies such as vertical coordination between national and subnational levels (47 NDCs), legal and regulatory frameworks (12), and multi-stakeholder partnerships (10).
- **Finance:** Cited in just 27 NDCs 3.0, urban climate finance remains underrepresented, highlighting a significant gap. Those implementation mechanisms that are present include urban and subnational climate finance (13 NDCs), private sector and blended finance (11), and international climate finance (10).

An opportunity to strengthen urban baselines. Just 4 per cent of NDCs include city-level GHG emission baselines, even though urban areas produce a large share of national emissions. Adding urban baselines in future cycles would strengthen national targets, improve tracking in the Global Stocktake, and show how city action supports the Paris Agreement. (CDP, 2024).

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



now feature well-developed urban content



prioritize urban content across three or more sectors



+64%
increase in well-developed urban content in NDCs

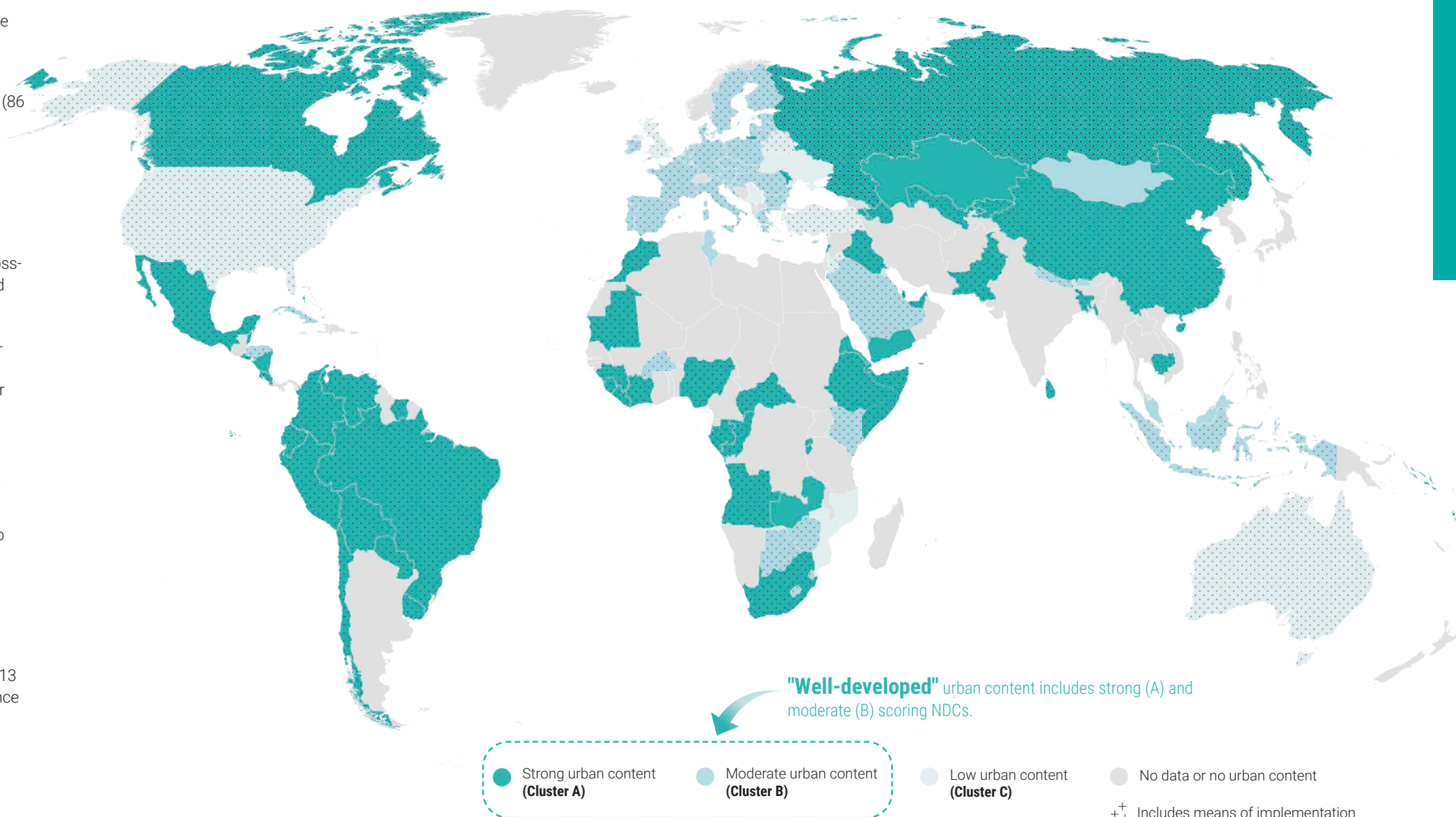


Figure 3. Geographical distribution of urban content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Tracking progress across NDC revision cycles

Implementation-ready NDCs 3.0 are increasingly prioritizing urban climate action

Under the Paris Agreement, successive rounds of NDCs are required to progress ambition and reflect each country's highest possible commitment. NDC 2.0 submissions, developed ahead of COP26, were primarily focused on target-setting, establishing national GHG reduction goals and identifying climate challenges. The NDC 3.0 revision cycle marks a shift in function. Responding to the first Global Stocktake, countries are expected to increase ambition and move beyond broad commitments towards implementation-ready plans, accelerating climate delivery with specific policies, finance mechanisms, and institutional arrangements.

The shift towards well-developed urban content in NDCs 3.0 is significant. Of the 142 NDC 3.0 submissions analysed, 113 (80 per cent) have well-developed urban content (B–A grade), up from 49 per cent of NDCs 2.0 (UN-Habitat 2025; 2026). Three in five countries improved their urban content score between NDC generations, indicating that urban climate action is now at the centre of implementation-ready NDCs. Positive trends are evident across all score categories:

- **Strong urban content (A and A+)** grew from 39 to 64 countries, a 64 per cent increase. A+ submissions more than doubled, rising from 26 to 57.
- **Moderate urban content (B and B+)** grew from 29 to 49 NDCs, the largest net gain of any band, representing a significant improvement in the global urban content baseline.
- **Low or no urban content (C and C+)** declined from 19 to 15 countries. These NDCs include urban content but without the implementation depth or sectoral specificity that characterise well-developed submissions. Countries with no urban content fell from 55 to 14.
- **From no urban content to well-developed:** Of the 53 countries with no urban content in NDC 2.0, 74 per cent achieved well-developed urban content by NDC 3.0 – among them Armenia, Brazil, Nigeria, Yemen, and Zambia.

This improvement in coverage is consistent with the shift to implementation-ready NDCs. Overall, the number of urban responses has grown substantially, driven in part by a growing recognition that cities are critical delivery mechanisms for national climate commitments.

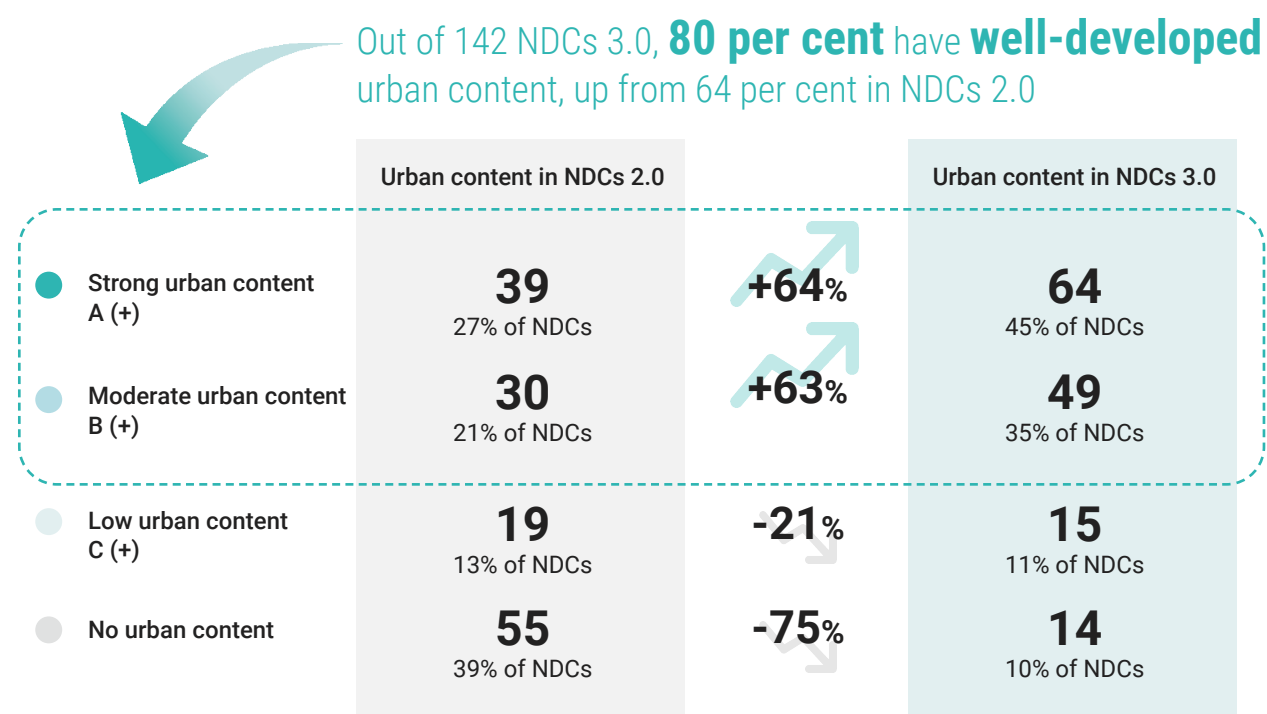


Figure 4. Change in urban content between 142 NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0

CHAMP and implementation-ready urban planning

The Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action, launched at COP28 in December 2023 and since grown to 77 signatories, in addition to the European Union, is a political commitment by national governments to formally recognize cities, regions, and local authorities as essential partners in national climate planning and implementation.

CHAMP is a direct lens into what implementation-ready, multilevel planning entails. Of the 77 signatories, 64 had published NDC 3.0 submissions at the time of analysis. These submissions span all major world regions and income groups, and collectively represent approximately 1.53 billion urban residents, or 48 per cent of the total urban population across all NDC 3.0 submissions.

Urban content is broadly present across CHAMP NDCs, and scores are consistent with global trend. Drawing on matched NDC 2.0 and NDC 3.0 data for the 64 signatory submissions, this analysis finds that 46 CHAMP endorsers (74 per cent) achieved well-developed urban content in NDC 3.0, up from 33 (53 per cent) in the previous cycle, with well-developed coverage across adaptation (40 endorsers, 65 per cent) and mitigation (39 endorsers, 63 per cent).

38 CHAMP endorsers (61 per cent) include urban means of implementation in their NDC 3.0 submissions and include the strongest examples of implementation-readiness:

- **Multilevel governance:** MLG mechanisms appear in nearly half of CHAMP submissions, compared to one in three non-CHAMP NDCs, the largest and most consistent gap between the two groups across all means of implementation.
- **Vertical coordination:** The single most cited mechanism among CHAMP endorsers is vertical coordination between national and subnational government, present in 27 out of the 64 submissions (43 per cent), directly reflecting the coalition's mandate to connect cities and regions with national climate decision-making.
- **Capacity-building:** Beyond governance architecture, CHAMP endorsers have also prioritized the conditions for informed and effective local action. Nearly half include capacity-building content, with a particular emphasis on climate knowledge and data and training and skills development.

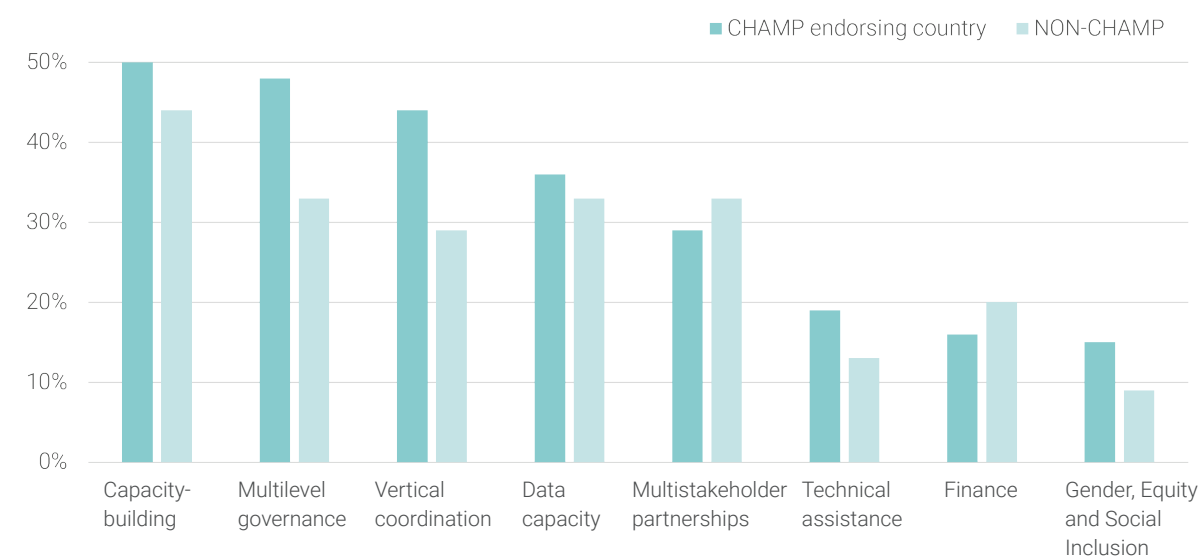
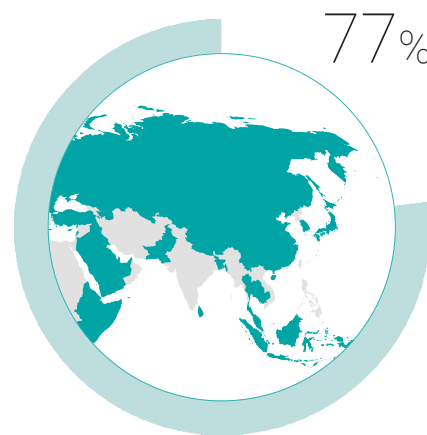


Figure 5. CHAMP signatories distinguish themselves through their means of implementing urban climate action

Regional breakdown



ASIA

Description

Asia's NDC 3.0 submissions represent the largest urban population of any region; 1.77 billion urban residents, accounting for 55 per cent of the total urban population covered by NDC 3.0 submissions globally. Of 46 Asian UNFCCC parties, 30 have submitted NDC 3.0s to date.

Well-developed urban content

23/30 (77%), up from 20 out of 30 (67 per cent); however, 11 out of 30 (37 per cent) declined between cycles; the highest decline rate of any region

Key climate risks

Flood risk leads (16 NDCs), but heat and cold waves (12 NDCs) define a distinctive risk profile not seen at this prevalence in any other region

Priority mitigation sectors

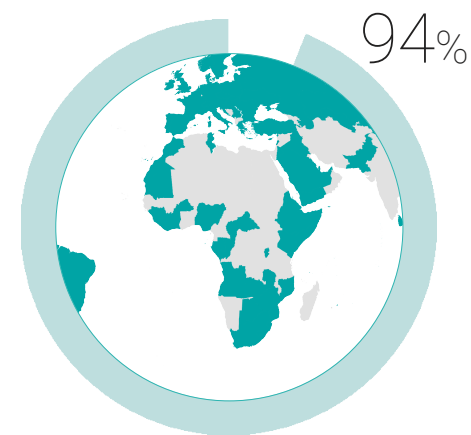
Transport & mobility; waste management

Priority adaptation sectors

Infrastructure; water management; ecosystems & biodiversity

Priority means of implementation

Strategy; technology; capacity-building



AFRICA

Africa is the world's fastest urbanizing region, with 80 per cent of the continent's total population growth expected to occur in cities (UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2022). Of the 53 African parties to the UNFCCC, 31 have submitted NDC 3.0s to date.

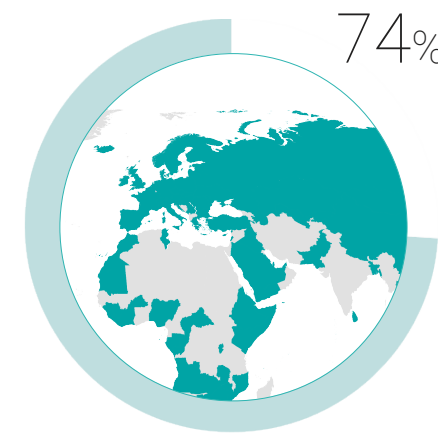
29/31 (94%), the highest share of any region, up 52 per cent from NDC 2.0

Flood risk dominates, present in 20 of 29 NDCs 3.0 submitted so far

Energy; waste management; transport & mobility

Infrastructure; water management; agriculture & food security

Strategy; technology; capacity-building



EUROPE

With a total urban population of 340 million, Europe's NDC 3.0 picture is defined by a structural division between the EU's collective 28 NDC submission, which positively improved, and the 14 non-EU European parties, which remained steady between NDC 2.0 and 3.0 cycles.

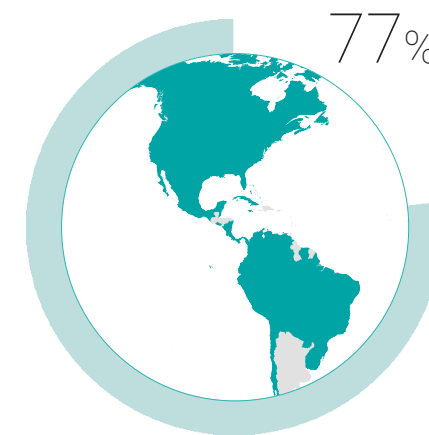
EU (28 NDCs): B+ collective shift; went from having no urban content to well-developed urban content
Non-EU: 5/14, the same share as NDC 2.0

Drought and flood risk lead; although urban risk content is present in only five of 15 NDCs, the thinnest coverage of any region

Transport & mobility; energy; built environment

Infrastructure; water management; ecosystems & biodiversity

Technology; multilevel governance; capacity-building



AMERICAS

The Americas region spans Northern America and Latin America and the Caribbean and is among the most urbanized regions globally. 26 of 35 have submitted NDC 3.0s to date; all nine outstanding submissions are from Latin America and the Caribbean, seven of them small island developing states.

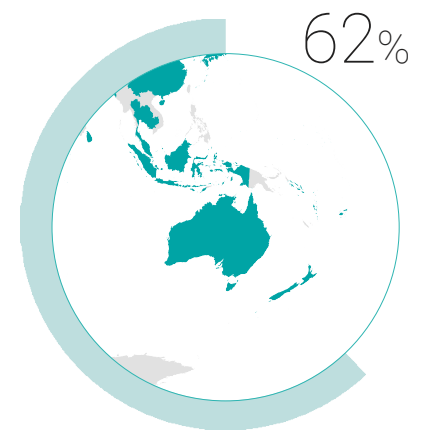
20/26 (77%), up from 18 out of 26 (69 per cent); 15 out of 26 (58 per cent) improved between cycles

Flood risk and drought jointly define the regional risk profile, with storm events prominent among SIDSs

Transport & mobility; waste management; energy

Infrastructure; ecosystems & biodiversity; water management

Strategy; multilevel governance; technology



OCEANIA

Oceanian countries have submitted 13 out of 16 NDCs 3.0. 11 come from small island developing states, a group facing some of the most acute climate exposure of any countries in the world. Despite the small country count, Oceania records the largest proportional improvement of any region.

8/13 (62%), up from two out of 13 (15 per cent); the largest single-cycle jump of any region; 9 out of 13 improved between cycles

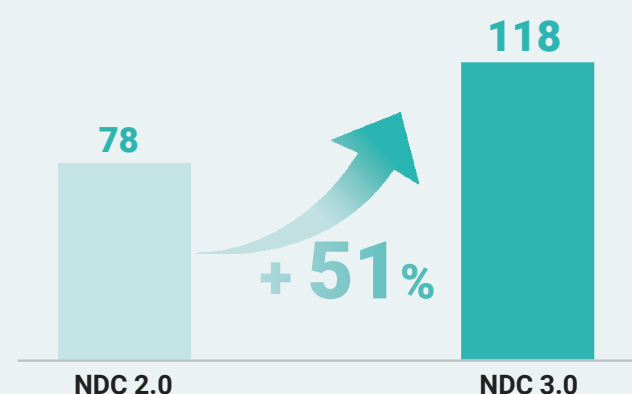
Floods and storm events lead; Oceania is the only region where coastal and sea-level rise ranks as a leading adaptation subsector

Waste management; transport & mobility; energy

Water management; infrastructure; coastal areas

Finance; technology; strategy

Scaling ambition in urban mitigation



118

NDCs 3.0 include at least one urban mitigation measure

Record number of mitigation responses in NDCs 3.0, with top performers including **transport and mobility**, **energy**, and the **waste management** in cities.

61%

of NDCs 3.0 mention mitigations in **transport and mobility**

58%

of NDCs 3.0 mention mitigations in **energy**

34%

of NDCs 3.0 mention mitigations in **waste management**

Urban mitigation responses have reached a record high in NDC 3.0.

Of 142 submitted NDCs 3.0, 118 NDCs (83 per cent) include at least one urban mitigation measure, up from 78 in NDC 2.0, an increase of 51 per cent. 96 NDCs (68 per cent) specifically prioritize urban mitigation, embedding it within concrete policy frameworks, investment plans, or implementation commitments – up from 56 in NDC 2.0, an increase of 71 per cent. Many NDCs include multiple measures, and three sectors are emerging as critical to urban mitigation:

61 per cent of NDCs 3.0 include urban transport and mobility. This is the leading sector, present in 86 NDCs (61 per cent) and prioritized in 68 (48 per cent). Vehicle electrification and clean fuels (67 mention) and public transport and mass transit (42 mention) are the dominant subsectors, reflecting both the scale of urban transport emissions and the visibility of transport as an urban investment priority. Active mobility and non-motorized transport (16 mention) remain a secondary theme.

58 per cent of NDCs 3.0 include urban energy. The sector is a close second after transport and mobility, present in 82 NDCs (58 per cent) and prioritized in 54 (38 per cent). Renewable energy (31 mention) and energy efficiency in buildings (25 mention) lead, while energy access and equity appear in 14 NDCs, a signal that energy justice is beginning to register in urban climate planning, though not yet at scale.

34 per cent of NDCs 3.0 include urban waste management. This sector is present in 48 NDCs (34 per cent) and prioritized in 35 (25 per cent). Circular economy and resource recovery leads (36 mention, 24 prioritize), followed by waste-to-energy and bioenergy (28 mention), a profile shaped heavily by low- and middle-income country priorities.

“

Urban mitigation is signalling operational readiness.”

“

96 NDCs 3.0 make urban mitigation a priority, up from 56 in NDCs 2.0.”

More ambitious? connecting urban climate action to national GHG reduction targets

Middle-income, rapidly urbanizing countries are leading the way in prioritizing urban mitigation responses - not the countries setting the most ambitious GHG reduction targets.

Urban mitigation is signalling operational readiness, not climate ambition, and there is no direct link between ambitious GHG emissions reduction targets and higher integration of urban mitigation.

Countries with moderate GHG targets integrate urban mitigation across an average of 1.7 mitigation sectors; those with highly ambitious targets average 1.0. Fifty-six per cent of the most ambitious NDCs include no substantive urban mitigation content across any sector.

The pattern is striking when set against specific country profiles. Countries integrating urban mitigation action most broadly tend to be those where rapid urbanization is a live policy challenge, where decisions about infrastructure, transport, and land use are being made now, and NDCs are a vehicle for articulating those operational needs:

For example, Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan, Cambodia, and Rwanda all fall into this group; middle-income, rapidly urbanizing countries whose NDCs embed urban action across multiple mitigation sectors

By contrast, some of the world's largest urban populations sit within NDCs that are highly ambitious on GHG targets but include no substantive urban mitigation content across any sector:

For example, Japan (113 million urban residents), and the Republic of Korea (42 million) do not include urban sectors in their mitigation portfolio, despite setting highly ambitious reduction targets

The underlying reason is likely structural. National GHG reduction targets are set without disaggregating urban contributions to national emissions. Because urban GHG emissions are not separately inventoried in most countries, the connection between urban climate action and national emissions reduction pathways cannot be formally expressed within NDC architecture. Urban mitigation sits alongside national commitments rather than within them.



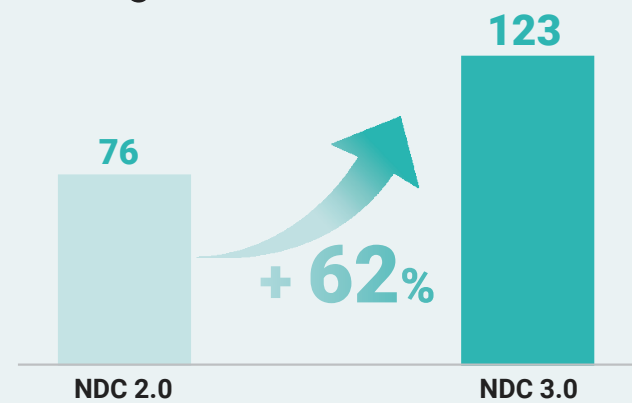
VANUATU

A+



Vanuatu's NDCs 3.0 includes quantified mitigation targets for waste collection, wastewater treatment in Port Vila, and a decentralization commitment embedding climate resilience in municipal and area council planning.

Scaling ambition in urban adaptation



123

NDCs 3.0 include at least one urban adaptation measure

Urban adaptation is the fastest-growing area of urban climate content in NDC 3.0, outpacing mitigation on every measure.

Of 142 submitted NDCs 3.0, 123 (87 per cent) include an urban adaptation sector at least once, up from 76 in NDC 2.0, an increase of 62 per cent. More significantly, 91 NDCs (64 per cent) now specifically prioritize urban adaptation, up from 45 in NDC 2.0, more than doubling in a single cycle. Both the breadth and depth of urban adaptation content have expanded faster than any other dimension of urban climate planning. Three sectors account for the majority of urban adaptation content.

42 per cent of NDCs 3.0 include urban infrastructure.

This is the leading adaptation sector, present in 60 NDCs (42 per cent) and prioritized in 34 (24 per cent). Flood management and drainage infrastructure (35 mention), urban planning and land use (34 mention), and nature-based solutions (34 mention) all feature prominently, the latter signaling a shift toward greener approaches within traditional resilience frameworks.

37 per cent of NDCs 3.0 include urban water management.

This sector is present in 52 NDCs (37 per cent) and prioritized in 28 (20 per cent). Nature-based solutions lead (25 mention), followed by urban drainage and stormwater management (19 mention) and drought and water scarcity (15 mention), a profile shaped by both coastal flood risk and inland water stress.

28 per cent of NDCs 3.0 include urban ecosystems and biodiversity.

This sector is present in 40 NDCs (28 per cent) and prioritized in 24 (17 per cent). Nature-based solutions is the dominant subsector (34 mention, 18 prioritize). Its prominence across all three leading adaptation sectors makes it the most cross-cutting adaptation subsector in NDC 3.0, and the clearest marker of how integrated green approaches have come to define the fastest-growing dimension of urban climate content.

“

91

NDCs 3.0

make urban adaptation a priority, up from 45 in NDCs 2.0.”

“

Where countries identify urban climate risks, urban adaptation responses follow.”

Record number of adaptation responses in NDC 3.0, with top performers including **infrastructure**, **water management**, and **ecosystems and biodiversity** in cities.

42%

of NDCs 3.0 mention adaptations in **infrastructure**

37%

of NDCs 3.0 mention adaptations in **water management**

28%

of NDCs 3.0 mention adaptations in **ecosystems and biodiversity**

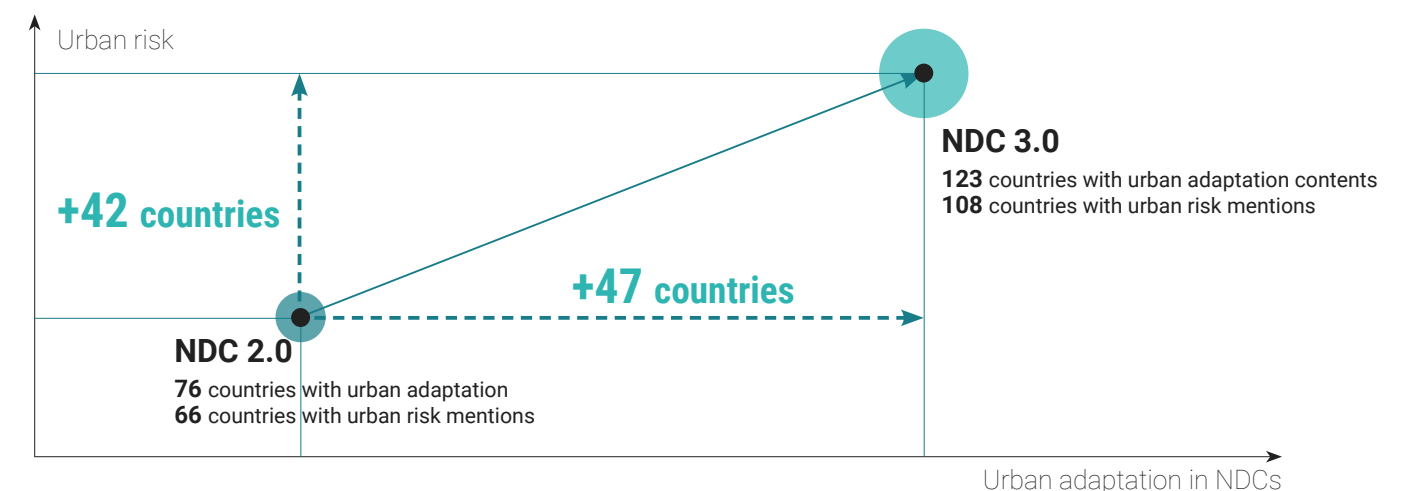


Figure 6. Recognition of urban climate risks is increasingly translating into urban adaptation responses in NDCs 3.0.

More ambitious? Connecting urban climate action and climate risks

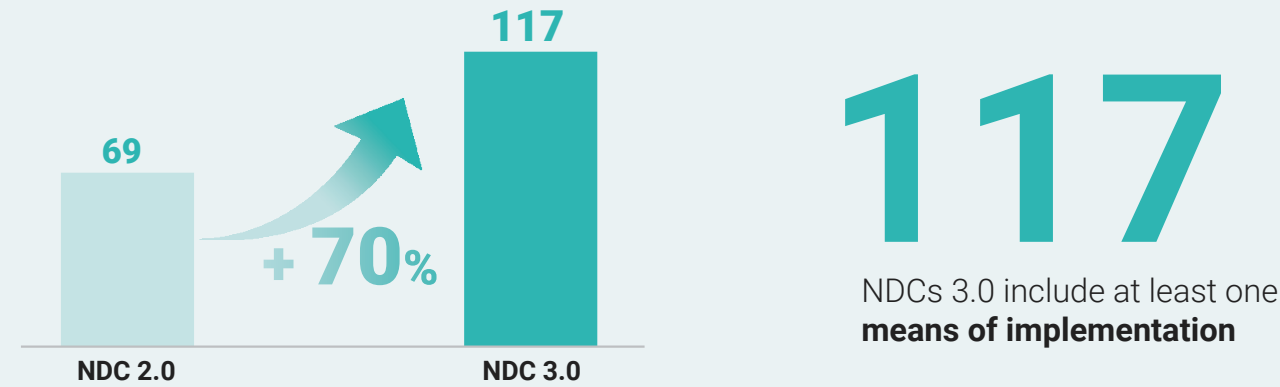
In NDC 3.0, the single strongest predictor of rich urban adaptation content is whether a country has named the climate risks that affect cities. Where countries have done this, urban adaptation responses follow. Where they have not, they almost never do. Risk identification is a clear mechanism to support strong urban climate action.

Some of the strongest performers illustrate what this looks like in practice. Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Mauritania – all lower-income, high-exposure countries – have developed detailed urban risk profiles and lined out specific urban responses across six or seven adaptation sectors. Chile and Uruguay – both high-income countries – do the same. Countries that identify urban climate risks broadly and specifically tend to respond across multiple adaptation sectors, covering infrastructure, coastal resilience, ecosystems, human health, and housing in the same document.

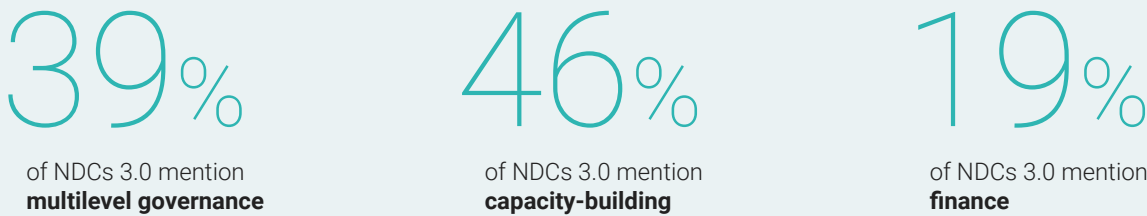
By contrast, of 34 countries that include no urban climate risk content in their NDC, 97 per cent also include no urban adaptation content across any sector. Several of the world's largest urban populations sit within NDCs that include no urban risk content and no urban adaptation response. For example, Japan (113 million urban residents), the United Kingdom (58 million), and the Republic of Korea (42 million) all record zero urban climate risk content and zero urban adaptation sectors.

This mirrors, in a different domain, the structural problem identified in urban mitigation and highlights the fact that a bottleneck for ambition is in fact reporting. National GHG targets are set without disaggregating urban emissions, so urban mitigation content has no formal pathway into headline climate commitments. Similarly, where urban climate risks go unnamed, urban adaptation has no foundation to build on.

Scaling implementation and delivery



Means of implementation are also being strengthened, with increased reference to enablers such as **multilevel governance**, **capacity-building**, and **finance** in cities.



Governance, capacity, and finance are at record levels of urban integration in NDC 3.0

Means of implementation content targeted at the urban level is present in 117 of 142 NDCs 3.0 (82 per cent), up from 69 in NDC 2.0, an increase of 70 per cent. Of these, 103 NDCs 3.0 (73 per cent) prioritize at least one mechanism that enables climate action in an urban context, up from 61 in NDCs 2.0. Three of these enablers (multilevel governance, capacity-building, and finance) are examined below. Even some NDCs 3.0 that have low urban content, include cities as means of implementation.

Multilevel Governance

Multilevel governance is the most embedded enabler of urban climate action in NDCs 3.0. 56 NDCs (39 per cent) include content related to it, and among those, 52 NDCs 3.0 (37 per cent) not only mention it but also prioritize it, including clear examples of policies, laws and mechanisms aimed at moving from commitment to the implementation of multilevel governance structures and processes. Vertical coordination between national and subnational governments is the dominant mechanism, cited by 47 NDCs 3.0. The growing number of commitments on multilevel climate governance in NDCs 3.0 reflects the influence of initiatives such as the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP), endorsed by 62 of the 142 entities in this dataset.

- **Vertical coordination, national to subnational:** 47 NDCs mention; 44 prioritize
- **Legal and regulatory frameworks:** 12 mention; 10 prioritize
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships:** 9 mention; 9 prioritize

Capacity-building

Capacity-building is the most widely cited urban means of implementation pillar in NDC 3.0, referenced in 66 of 142 NDCs (46 per cent) and prioritized in 51 (36 per cent), a 164 per cent increase from 25 NDCs in the previous cycle. 51 NDCs 3.0 that make capacity-building a priority, outlining clear frameworks, goals, and implementation mechanisms to support capacity-building in cities and regions.

- **Training and skills development:** 24 mention; 17 prioritize
- **Institutional strengthening and technical assistance:** 17 mention; 9 prioritize
- **Gender equity and social inclusion:** 7 mention; 3 prioritize

Finance

Urban climate finance remains the least cited means of implementation in NDC 3.0, present in 27 NDCs (19 per cent), despite the scale of investment cities require. Global urban climate finance flows reached USD 831 billion in 2022, yet this falls far short of the USD 4.5 trillion estimated as necessary annually through 2030. Where urban finance does appear, it is increasingly specific.

- **Urban and subnational climate finance:** 13 mention; 7 prioritize
- **Private sector and blended finance:** 11 mention; 8 prioritize
- **International climate finance:** 10 mention; 9 prioritize
- **Public finance and budget allocation:** 9 mention; 7 prioritize

A spotlight on urban planning

Urban planning sits at the convergence point of climate action. Where governance frameworks define who is responsible, capacity programmes build the skills to act, and climate finance provides the resources to invest, it is spatial and urban planning that determines where these commitments land: which land is developed, how it is zoned, what standards buildings must meet, and who benefits from infrastructure investments. Urban planning is, in this sense, the conduit through which high-level national climate commitments in NDCs become implementable, actionable, and measurable on the ground.

Urban planning does not replace sectoral policies; it binds them together in space. Urban planning has a distinctive integrating function. It is the layer of governance that cuts across all sectors covered in NDCs, such as energy, transport, buildings, water, waste, and disaster risk reduction, and gives them a territorial expression. A national commitment to reduce transport emissions means

little without land use patterns that enable compact, low-carbon mobility. Flood resilience depends on where development is permitted relative to risk zones. Urban heat mitigation requires green infrastructure integrated into city master plans. Embedding urban planning as an explicit and prioritized measure within NDC development and implementation is one of the most direct ways to ensure coherence between climate ambition and spatial reality.

The data from NDC 3.0 reflects both the progress made and the distance still to travel. Sixty of 142 countries (42 per cent) now include urban planning in their climate commitments, up from 43 countries (31 per cent) in NDC 2.0. Of those 60, only 34 NDCs treat it as an implementation priority, committing to specific land use measures with named targets and accompanying governance or finance mechanisms. That is under one in four of all NDC 3.0 countries.



PARAGUAY

CHAMP I A+

Paraguay commits to ensuring at least 50 municipalities have Urban and Territorial Planning Plans approved by municipal ordinance, incorporating specific adaptation criteria by 2035.



CABO VERDE

CHAMP I A+

Cabo Verde committed to an horizontal policy coherence between national ministries to integrate climate change into urban planning, promoting a governance structure that fosters sectoral policies in mitigation, adaptation, and loss & damage.

Country scores

How 142 NDC 3.0 submissions compare with NDC 2.0

Legend NDC 3.0: A / A+ B / B+ C / C+ no * CHAMP endorsing country

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
Andorra *	B+	A
Angola	B	A+
Armenia *	no	A+
Australia *	C	C+
Austria	no	B+
Azerbaijan *	B+	A+
Bahamas *	B+	A+
Bahrain	C	A+
Bangladesh *	C+	A+
Barbados	B+	B+
Belarus	no	C+
Belgium *	no	B+
Belize	A	A+
Bhutan *	B+	B
Bolivia (Plurinational State of) *	A+	A+
Botswana	no	B+
Brazil *	no	A+
Brunei Darussalam *	B	C
Bulgaria *	no	B+
Burkina Faso *	C	B+
Burundi	B	A+
Cabo Verde *	A+	A+

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
Cambodia	A+	A+
Canada *	A+	A+
Central African Republic	A+	A+
Chile *	B+	A+
China	A+	A+
Colombia *	B+	A+
Congo	A+	A+
Costa Rica *	B+	A+
Côte d'Ivoire *	B	A+
Croatia	no	B+
Cuba	A	B+
Cyprus	no	B+
Czechia	no	B+
Denmark	no	B+
Djibouti	A	A+
Ecuador	B+	A+
El Salvador *	A+	A+
Eritrea	A	A
Estonia *	no	B+
Eswatini *	B+	B+
Ethiopia *	A+	A+
European Union (EU)	no	B+

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
Fiji	no	A+
Finland *	no	B+
France *	no	B+
Gabon	A+	A+
Germany *	no	B+
Greece	no	B+
Guinea	B+	A+
Holy See	A+	A+
Honduras	no	B+
Hungary *	no	B+
Iceland *	no	no
Indonesia	B+	B+
Iraq	A	A+
Ireland	no	B+
Italy *	no	B+
Jamaica *	no	C
Japan *	B+	no
Jordan *	B+	C+
Kazakhstan	C+	A
Kenya *	A	B+
Kyrgyzstan *	B	A+
Latvia	no	B+

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
Lebanon *	B+	A+
Lesotho *	no	B+
Liberia	C+	A+
Liechtenstein	no	no
Lithuania	no	B+
Luxembourg	no	B+
Malaysia	A	B
Maldives	B+	C+
Malta	no	B+
Marshall Islands	no	B+
Mauritania	A	A+
Mauritius	A+	A+
Mexico *	A	A+
Micronesia (Federated States of)	C	A+
Monaco	A	A
Mongolia *	C	B
Montenegro	B+	C
Morocco *	B+	A+
Mozambique	A	C
Nauru	A	B+
Nepal	C+	B+
Netherlands *	no	B+

Country scores

How 142 NDC 3.0 submissions compare with NDC 2.0

Legend NDC 3.0: A / A+ B / B+ C / C+ no * CHAMP endorsing country

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
New Zealand	no	no
Nicaragua *	A+	A
Nigeria *	no	A+
Niue	C	no
Norway *	no	no
Pakistan *	A+	A+
Palau *	no	C
Panama	A+	no
Paraguay *	A+	A+
Peru	C	A+
Poland *	no	B+
Portugal *	no	B+
Qatar	C	A+
Republic of Korea *	A+	no
Republic of Moldova *	A+	A+
Romania	no	B+
Russian Federation	no	A+
Rwanda *	A+	A+
Saint Lucia	no	no
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	no	C+
Samoa	no	no
Sao Tome and Principe	no	A+

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
Saudi Arabia	A	B+
Serbia *	no	C
Seychelles *	B+	no
Sierra Leone *	B	A+
Singapore	A+	B+
Slovakia	no	B+
Slovenia	no	B+
Solomon Islands	C+	A+
Somalia	C+	A+
South Africa	A+	A+
Spain	no	B+
Sri Lanka *	A+	A+
Suriname	A+	A+
Sweden *	no	B+
Switzerland	no	no
Turkiye *	A+	C+
Thailand	C+	no
Tonga	C	B+
Trinidad and Tobago	no	no
Tunisia *	B+	B
Tuvalu	C+	B+
Ukraine *	C	C
United Arab Emirates *	A+	A+

COUNTRY	NDC 2.0	NDC 3.0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland *	no	C+
United States of America *	no	C+
Uruguay	A+	A+
Uzbekistan	C	A+
Vanuatu	B+	A+
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	B+	A+
Yemen *	no	A
Zambia	no	A
Zimbabwe	B+	B+

142

NDCs 3.0 that were available on the UNFCCC portal by mid-April 2026

Of the 142 NDC 3.0 submissions, 80 per cent have well-developed urban content, up from 49 per cent of NDCs 2.0





Housing & informal settlements

Housing and climate change are intertwined

More than 1.6 billion people are affected by different forms of housing inadequacy, of which close to 1.1 billion reside in slums and informal settlements (UN-Habitat, 2023). Climate change is not an abstract threat. Climate disasters have nearly doubled in frequency over the past two decades, and housing, particularly in informal settlements, is on the frontline of that exposure (CRED & UNDRR, 2020). At the same time, global demand requires nearly 96,000 new homes per day, while buildings and construction account for 37 per cent of global CO₂ emissions (UN-Habitat, 2024 & UNEP, 2023).

Without proper planning and implementation, housing and climate change reinforce one another.

Communities most exposed to climate risk are typically those with the least secure tenure and the lowest capacity to recover from shocks. Design choices in construction and retrofits also lock in energy demand and emissions for decades. Housing is therefore not only a sector at risk but a key platform for climate action, linking land, infrastructure, energy, and governance systems.

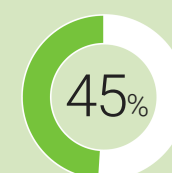
Housing and informal settlements have undergone one of the most significant expansions in representation between NDC 2.0 and 3.0, moving from a peripheral concern to a more established feature of national climate planning.

- 64 NDCs 3.0 (45 per cent) include urban housing and informal settlement content, up from 49 in NDC 2.0, a 31 per cent increase.
- Of these, 39 NDCs (27 per cent) make housing and informal settlements a priority by including specific commitments on upgrading, tenure, or housing provision, up from 31 NDCs (22 per cent) in NDC 2.0.
- Affordable and safe housing emerges as the most prominent pathway, appearing in 34 NDCs, often linked with infrastructure, services, and broader urban systems rather than standalone housing provision.

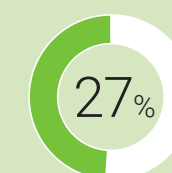


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **45% include urban housing and informal settlements** content."

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Include housing and informal settlements



Include substantive mentions of housing and informal settlements



+31%

Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0

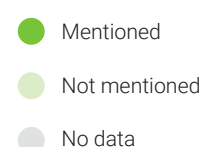
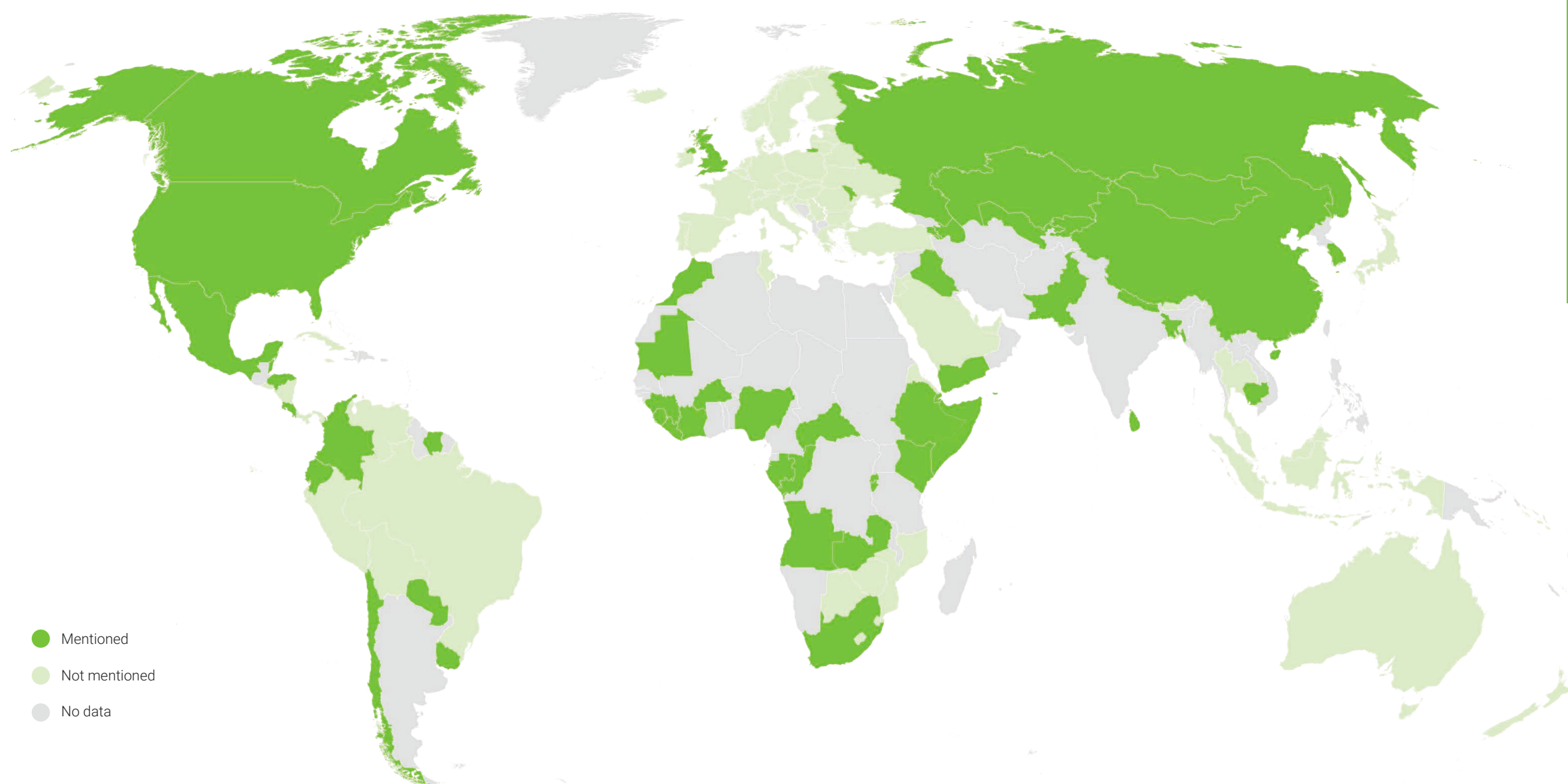


Figure 7. Geographical distribution of urban housing and informal settlements content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

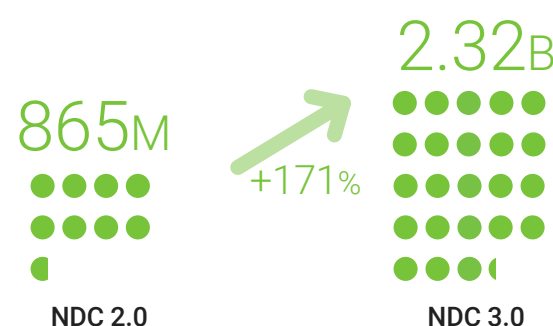


Housing & informal settlements

64 of 142 NDC 3.0 submissions (45 per cent) include urban housing or informal settlement content, up from 49 in NDC 2.0, a signal that housing is finally entering the national climate conversation in earnest. But only 27 per cent of governments go beyond acknowledgement to specific targets and measures. For the billion people living in informal settlements today, who face the full force of flooding, heat and insecure tenure, that gap between recognition and real commitment remains the defining challenge.

POPULATION

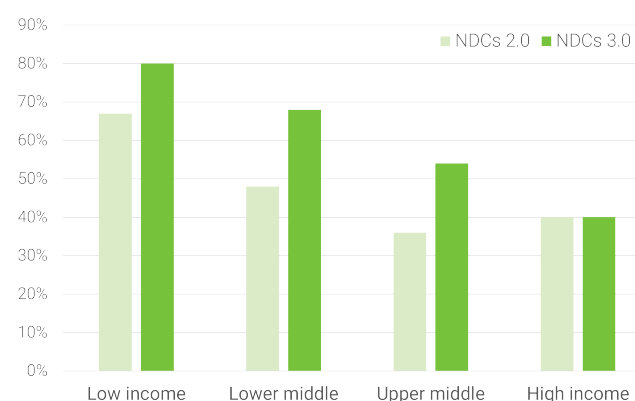
NDCs 3.0 address housing covering one quarter of the global population



More than two billion people live in countries with housing commitments in their NDCs 3.0, nearly three times the number covered in NDC 2.0.

INCOME

Lower income countries are the most concerned about housing and informal settlements

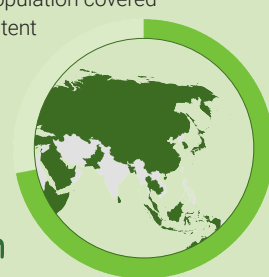


Low-income countries lead in housing mentions 80 per cent, while high-income countries show no change in either cycle, remaining flat at 40 per cent.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

72% of regional urban population covered
17 countries include content
9 of 17 substantive
1.27B urban population



AFRICA

85% of regional urban population covered
23 countries include content
14 of 23 substantive
0.35B urban population



EUROPE

30% of regional urban population covered
3 countries include content
2 of 3 substantive
0.17B urban population



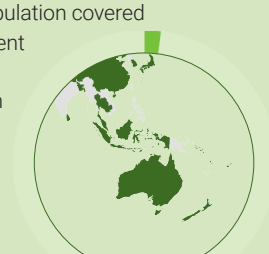
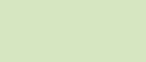
AMERICAS

68% of regional urban population covered
15 countries include content
9 of 15 substantive
0.53B urban population



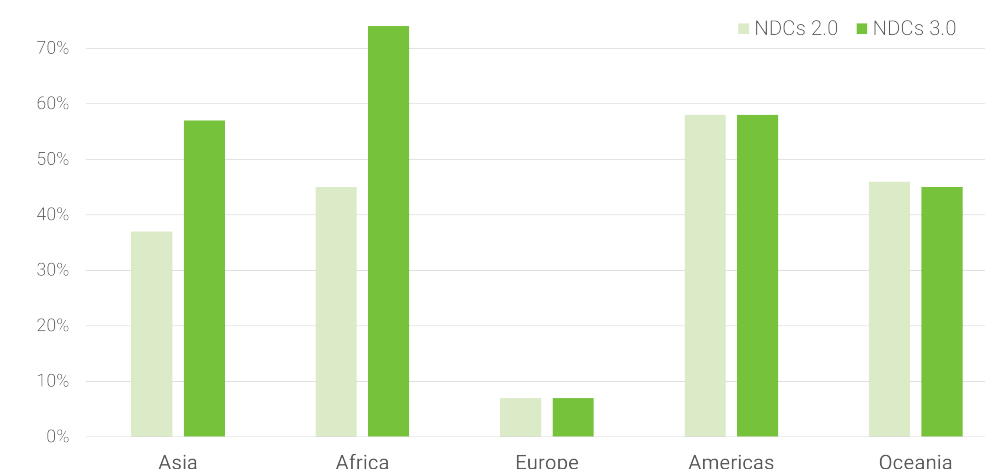
OCEANIA

2% of regional urban population covered
6 countries include content
5 of 6 substantive
<0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

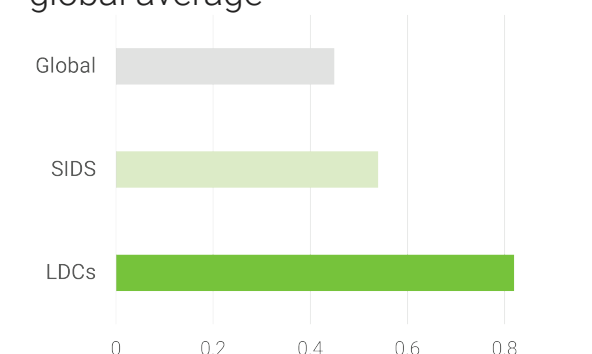
Africa's commitment to Housing is setting a global example



Africa leads all regions with 23 of 31 NDCs 3.0 mentioning housing and informal settlements, recording the largest gain since NDC 2.0. In contrast, only 3 of 42 European countries cite housing and informal settlements. The Americas and Oceania each recorded no increase from NDC 2.0.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Prioritization by LDCs is double the global average



Climate-vulnerable groups lead on housing and informal settlements, with 18 of 22 LDCs and 14 of 26 SIDS including it in mitigation and adaptation measures.

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Higher uptake in LDCs and SIDS

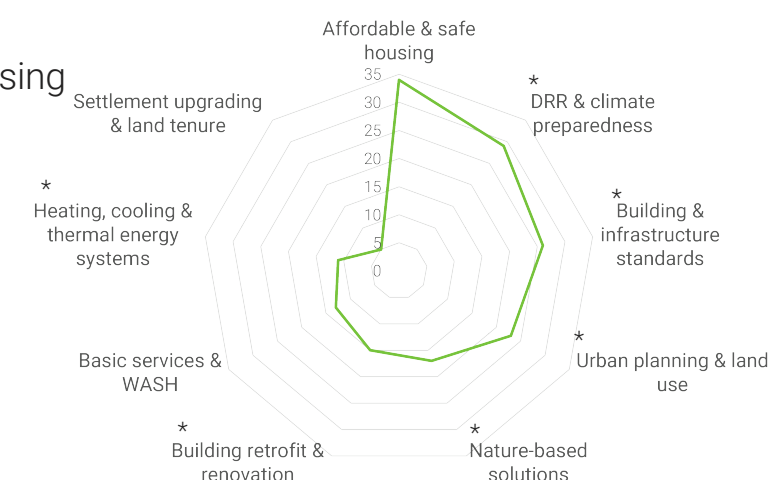
COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Barbados	5, including affordable & safe housing
Cambodia	4, including building retrofit
Djibouti	4, including heating & cooling
Ethiopia	4, including affordable & safe housing
South Africa	4, including basic services & WASH

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Implementation pathways for Housing are emerging

Housing commitments concentrate on safety, with affordable housing and disaster risk reduction accounting for the majority of what is being committed to. Settlement upgrading and tenure security, the most transformative interventions for informal residents, barely feature, leaving a noticeable gap between recognizing risk and addressing it.

* Cross-cutting themes





Housing commitments in NDC 3.0 concentrate overwhelmingly around one pathway: affordable and safe housing. Settlement upgrading, the intervention most directly tied to where climate vulnerability is greatest, appears in only a fraction of NDCs 3.0; basic services commitments remain similarly limited. The pattern points to national climate plans engaging with housing as a formal provision challenge rather than one rooted in informal settlement realities.

Affordable and safe housing is the dominant housing pathway in NDC 3.0, with 34 NDCs (24 per cent) referencing it and 19 making it a priority. Commitments are rarely framed around housing in isolation. The strongest approaches tie affordability and safety to climate-resilient design, upgraded infrastructure and expanded urban systems, linking housing outcomes to drainage, transport and waste management as the mechanisms through which climate exposure is reduced. Cross-sectoral coordination and structured public investment underpin the most substantive commitments.

Settlement upgrading and land tenure appears in just four NDCs, a striking gap given the scale of informal urbanization across NDC 3.0 submitting countries. Where commitments exist, they combine risk-informed upgrading with relocation from flood-prone areas and strengthened land-use planning, with tenure security embedded in broader upgrading frameworks rather than treated as a standalone goal. The most developed approaches integrate community-led processes and participatory planning into national institutional frameworks with structured financing pipelines attached.

Basic services and WASH appears in 8 NDCs, with four making it a priority. These commitments function as adaptation measures, extending water supply, sanitation, drainage and energy access to informal communities directly exposed to flood and health risks. The gap between mention and prioritization is narrower here than in other pathways, suggesting that where countries engage with services at all, they tend to take it seriously. The strongest commitments name specific interventions supported by governance mechanisms and climate finance.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA	6	of NDCs 3.0 mention building & infrastructure standards
	1	of NDCs 3.0 mention settlement upgrading & land tenure
AFRICA	14	of NDCs 3.0 mention affordable & safe housing
	3	of NDCs 3.0 mention settlement upgrading & land tenure
EUROPE	3	of NDCs 3.0 mention building retrofit & renovation
	0	of NDCs 3.0 mention affordable & safe housing
AMERICAS	11	of NDCs 3.0 mention affordable & safe housing
	0	of NDCs 3.0 mention basic services & WASH
OCEANIA	3	of NDCs 3.0 mention affordable & safe housing
	0	of NDCs 3.0 mention settlement upgrading & land tenure



Ethiopia is driving efforts to reduce the number of people living in slums by building affordable and safe housing in its main urban areas. © Charlie Rosser/The Guardian

ETHIOPIA AFFORDABLE AND SAFE HOUSING | CHAMP | A+



Ethiopia reports a significant reduction in slum populations (74 to 54 per cent between 2018 and 2024) driven by integrated urban programmes, including the Urban Corridor Development initiative, which combines housing upgrades with drainage, water supply, and sanitation, highlighting a clear housing–infrastructure nexus for climate adaptation. This is reinforced by investments in climate-adaptive systems such as all-weather roads, bridges, and expanded waste management, reducing exposure to floods and health risks in vulnerable communities. Importantly, the approach reflects clear means of implementation through coordinated public investment, alignment with national development plans, and cross-sectoral integration, supported by programmes such as the Green Legacy Initiative.



South Africa is expanding sanitation infrastructure in informal settlements, like in the Khayelitsha township (photo) © David Harrison/M&G

SOUTH AFRICA BASIC SERVICES AND WASH | A+



South Africa's NDC 3.0 presents a context-driven and actionable approach to climate resilience, shaped by high inequality and vulnerability in informal settlements, where limited access to water, sanitation, and safe housing increases exposure to floods, heat stress, and health risks. In response, the NDC prioritizes upgrading basic services through targeted interventions such as expanding sanitation infrastructure, strengthening healthcare systems for climate-sensitive diseases, and providing emergency accommodation for flood-displaced communities. These actions are embedded within a strong governance framework, including the Climate Change Act (2024) and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2020), which mandate adaptation planning and implementation across national, provincial, and municipal levels.



Built environment & infrastructure

Cities are defined by their built environment:

the buildings that house people and economic activity, and the infrastructure that keeps cities functioning. Road networks, water and sewerage systems, energy grids, and drainage together both drive climate change and determine how well cities can withstand it. Buildings and construction alone account for 37 per cent of global energy-related CO₂ emissions, a record ten gigatonnes in 2022 (IEA, 2023). Half of the buildings that will exist in 2050 are yet to be built, and global built floor area is set to double by 2060 (UNEP & IEA, 2017). The decisions being made now, on design standards, materials, and infrastructure investment, will lock in both mitigation potential and adaptation exposure for decades.

Many solutions exist. Low-carbon materials, energy performance standards, passive design, and renewable integration can substantially cut operational and embodied emissions (IPCC, 2023). On adaptation, climate-proofing buildings and infrastructure from the outset is more effective and more affordable than retrofitting after damage occurs (PEEB, 2025). The challenge is not primarily technical: one of the challenges is between what standards and frameworks permit and what national climate plans commit to.

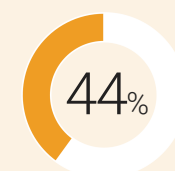
Urban infrastructure and the built environment is among the more widely represented sectors in NDCs 3.0, though engagement is heavily skewed toward adaptation.

- 63 NDCs 3.0 (44 per cent of 142) include urban infrastructure and built environment content, up from 43 in NDC 2.0, a 47 per cent increase.
- 37 NDCs 3.0 (26 per cent) make infrastructure and built environment a priority, including implementation-oriented commitments with named standards, actors, or finance mechanisms.
- The sector is predominantly adaptation-driven: 43 of 63 countries address only adaptation commitments, reflecting the priority of flood risk, climate-proofing, and critical services resilience over decarbonisation of the building stock.

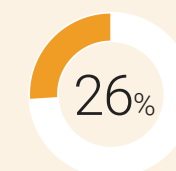


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **44% include urban built environment & infrastructure content.**

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Include urban infrastructure and the built environment



Prioritize the infrastructure and built environment sector



+47%

Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0

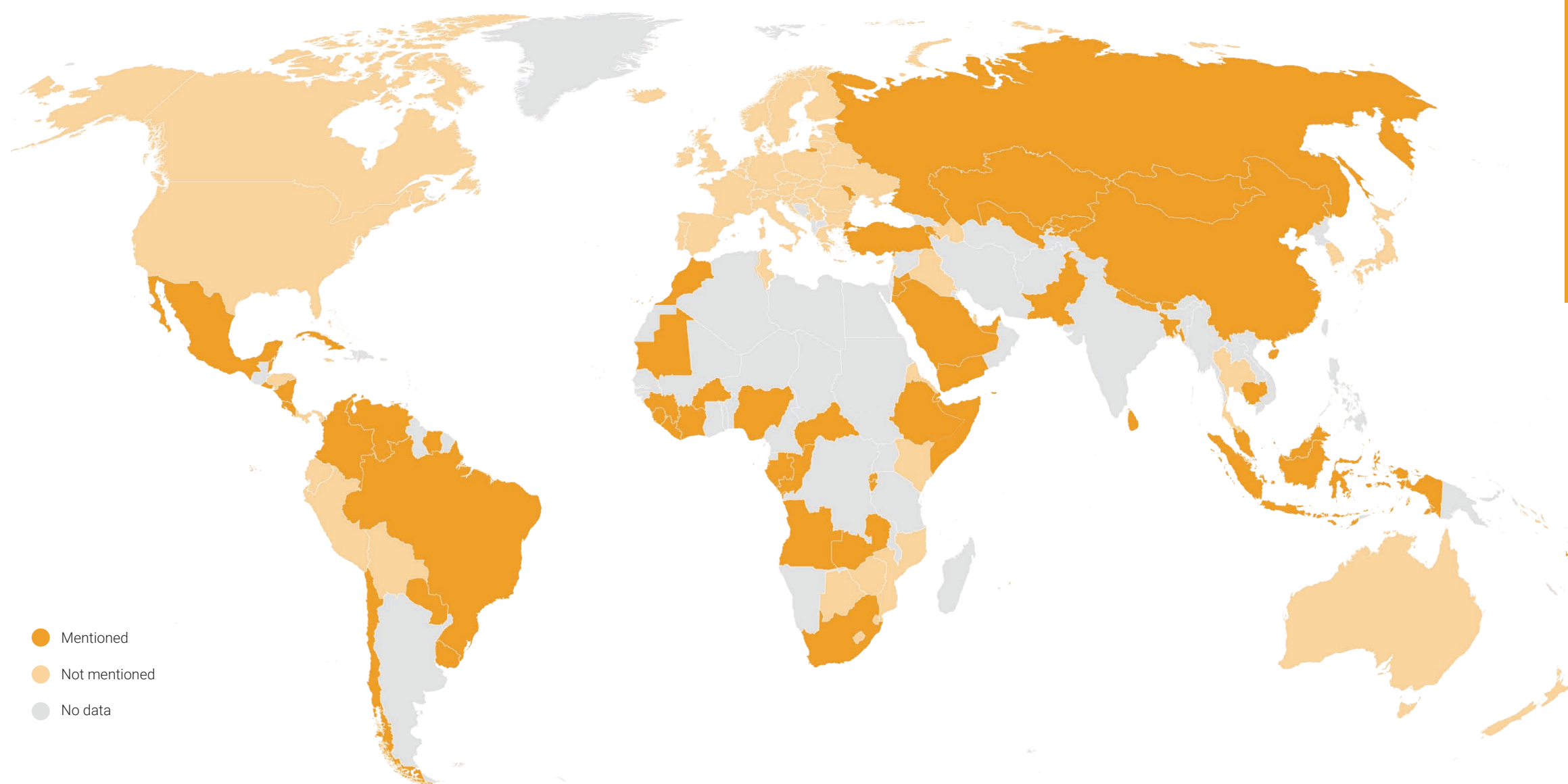


Figure 8. Geographical distribution of built environment & infrastructure content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

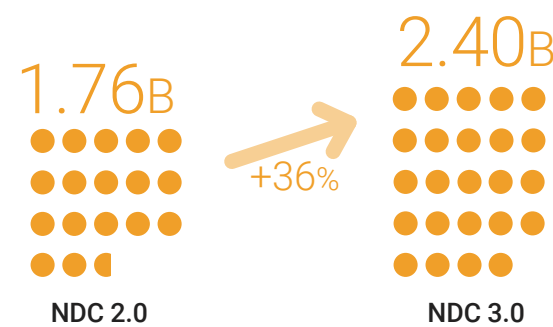


Built environment & infrastructure

63 NDCs 3.0 now include urban infrastructure and built environment content, up from 43 in NDC 2.0, a 47 per cent increase. Of those, 37 make this sector a priority, with implementation-oriented commitments naming specific standards, actors, or finance mechanisms. The sector is overwhelmingly adaptation-driven: 43 of 63 countries address only adaptation, and just 17 combine this with built environment mitigation. Africa and Asia account for the majority of content while high-income engagement remains minimal. The gap between adaptation and decarbonization ambition is this sector's defining characteristic.

POPULATION

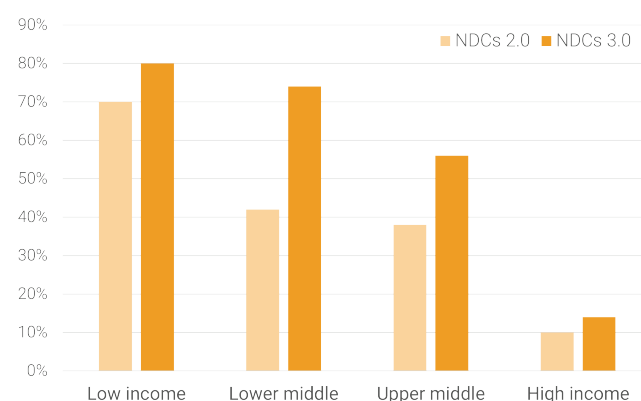
Coverage of built environment commitments increase by a third



NDC 3.0 covers 2.4 billion urban residents in this sector, up from 1.76 billion; 1.82 billion are in countries with prioritized commitments.

INCOME

Middle-income countries are driving the most sectoral growth

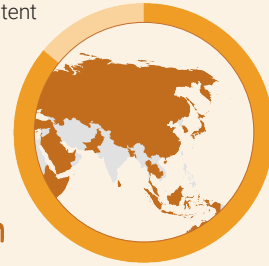


Lower-middle-income countries nearly double to 74 per cent while high-income countries, including the EU bloc, remain at just 14 per cent.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

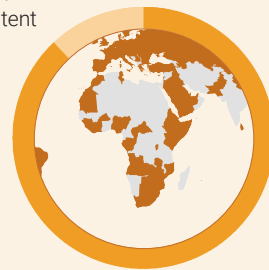
ASIA

86% of regional urban population covered
21 countries include content
11 of 21 substantive
1.52B urban population



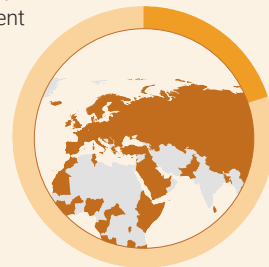
AFRICA

88% of regional urban population covered
23 countries include content
13 of 23 substantive
0.36B urban population



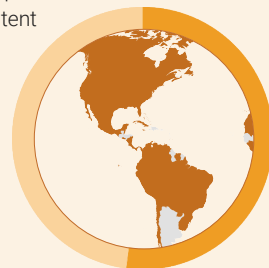
EUROPE

20% of regional urban population covered
3 countries include content
2 of 3 substantive
0.11B urban population



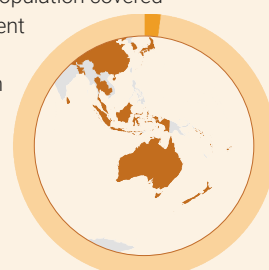
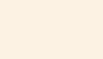
AMERICAS

52% of regional urban population covered
14 countries include content
9 of 14 substantive
0.41B urban population



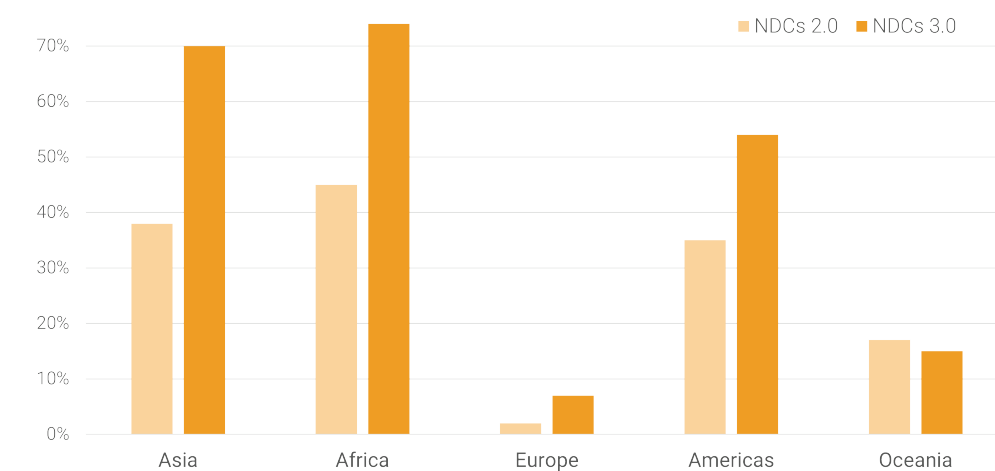
OCEANIA

2.2% of regional urban population covered
2 countries include content
2 of 2 substantive
<0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

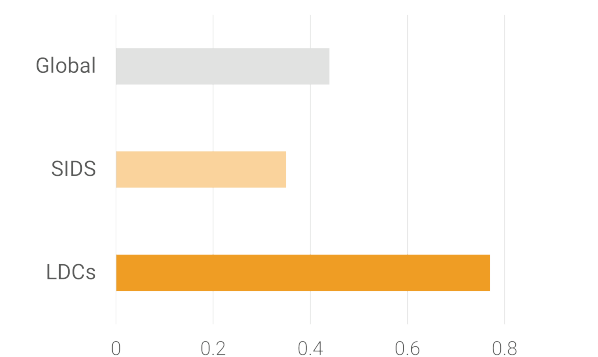
Africa and Asia show the largest regional gains



Coverage of infrastructure and built environment content in NDCs 3.0 rises to 74 per cent in Africa and 70 per cent in Asia. Europe remains at 7 per cent, where, unlike in transport and energy, the EU has no infrastructure content and does not raise the regional average.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

LDCs cover nearly twice the global average



LDCs address urban infrastructure in 77 per cent of plans, well above the global average, while SIDS trail at 35 per cent.

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

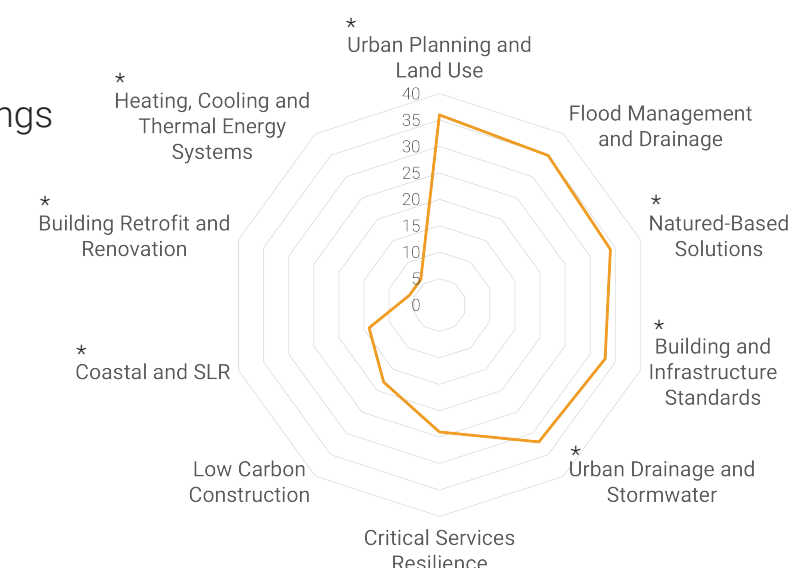
COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Guinea	8, including flood management and drainage infrastructure
Rwanda	7, including building and infrastructure standards
Djibouti	6, including low carbon construction
UAE	5, including building retrofit and renovation
China	4, including DRR and climate preparedness

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

NDCs are prioritizing multiple implementation pathways for buildings

Urban planning, flood management, and nature-based solutions each appear in over 30 NDCs 3.0, with strongly prioritized implementation pathways, including flood management and drainage, nature-based solutions and building standards. There are clear implementation gaps, including in heat regulation and building retrofiting.

* Cross-cutting themes





Built environment and infrastructure commitments in NDCs 3.0 have a varied portfolio of implementation measures, spanning flood management and drainage infrastructure, nature-based solutions, building and infrastructure standards, urban drainage and stormwater, critical services resilience, low-carbon construction, coastal and sea-level rise defence, urban planning and land use, building retrofit and renovation, and thermal energy systems. Together they address the full range from acute flood and heat risk response to the longer-term task of decarbonizing the urban built stock. Three patterns define the landscape.

Flood management and drainage infrastructure appears in 35 NDCs 3.0, the most widely documented response in this sector, with 16 (46 per cent) prioritized. Commitments centre on flood control systems, drainage networks, and retention basins, concentrated in Africa (16 NDCs) and Asia (10), reflecting acute flood exposure in both regions. Where commitments are strongest, they integrate drainage master plans with defined investment timelines; where weakest, flood management is stated as a priority without the mechanisms needed for delivery.

Building and infrastructure standards carries the strongest prioritization rate of any implementation pathway: 17 of 33 NDCs 3.0 that include this content make it a priority, and growth from NDC 2.0 is sharp, up from 11 NDCs, a 200 per cent increase. Commitments focus on building codes, resilience standards, and energy performance requirements. Where most developed, they link standards to enforcement mechanisms and national legislation. This growth spans income groups, with lower- and upper-middle-income countries each contributing 11 to 12 NDCs.

The most significant implementation gap in infrastructure and built environment content is building-level decarbonization. Low-carbon construction appears in 18 NDCs 3.0 (8 prioritized); building retrofit in 6 (four prioritized); heating and cooling systems in 6 (3 prioritized). Together, these three mitigation-specific measures account for 30 mentions across the 63 countries in this sector, compared to 35 for flood management and 32 for urban drainage. National climate plans are substantially more willing to commit to protecting buildings from climate hazards than to reducing their emissions.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA	
12	of NDCs 3.0 mention urban planning and land use
12	of NDCs 3.0 mention nature-based solutions
AFRICA	
16	of NDCs 3.0 mention flood management and draining infrastructure
15	of NDCs 3.0 mention urban drainage and stormwater
EUROPE	
3	of NDCs 3.0 mention building and infrastructure standards
2	of NDCs 3.0 mention urban planning and land use
AMERICAS	
10	of NDCs 3.0 mention nature-based solutions
8	of NDCs 3.0 mention urban planning and land use
OCEANIA	
2	of NDCs 3.0 mention critical services resilience
1	of NDCs 3.0 mention urban drainage and stormwater



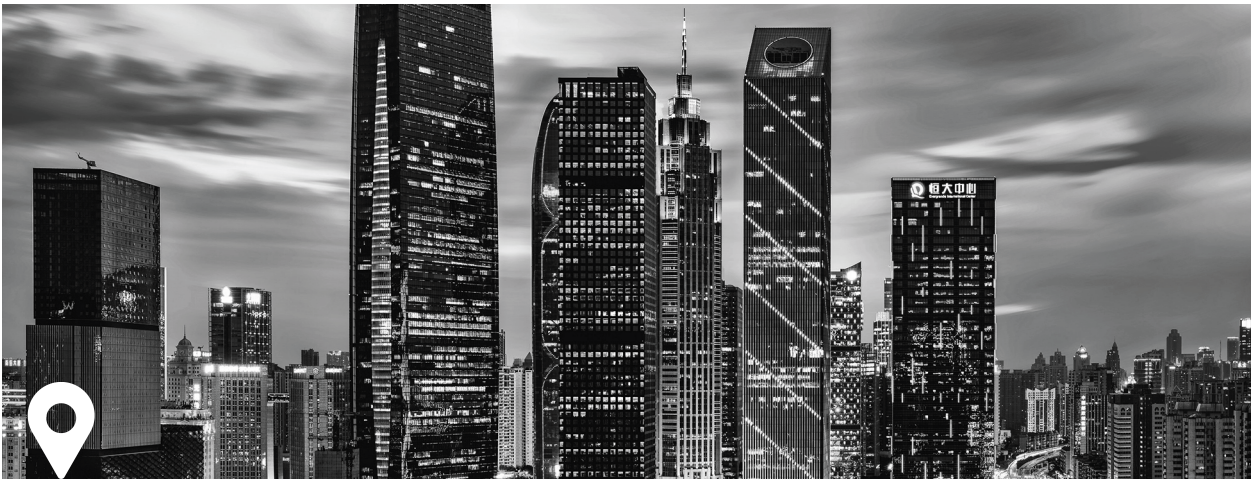
Rwanda's cities are adapting their infrastructure for climate change © Jean Claude Akarikumutima/Unsplash

RWANDA



ADAPTATION-FIRST INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING | CHAMP | A+

Rwanda's NDC 3.0 frames infrastructure and the built environment through an adaptation-first lens, reflecting high exposure to floods, landslides, and climate-induced disruptions. Risk-informed planning centres on flood management, urban drainage, and disaster risk reduction, integrating stormwater management into urban master plans and embedding hazard data into land-use decisions to steer development away from high-risk zones. At the infrastructure level, climate-proofing extends to transport corridors, water and sanitation systems, and real-time early warning platforms. Mitigation is embedded through the National Green Building Code, linking solar thermal installations in urban buildings with regulatory and financial mechanisms.



Urban buildings are becoming green certified in China © Derch/Unsplash

CHINA



SYSTEM-WIDE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TRANSFORMATION | A+

China's NDC 3.0 presents a system-wide transformation of the built environment and infrastructure sector, driven by both mitigation and adaptation anchored in national targets for 2035. On mitigation, 97.9 per cent of new urban buildings now meet green certification standards, complemented by large-scale retrofit programmes and renewable energy integration through solar photovoltaics and heat pump technologies. On adaptation, the NDC strengthens infrastructure resilience across transport networks, flood control, and disaster risk management. National legislation, carbon market mechanisms, and sectoral standards provide the governance framework, positioning the built environment as a central system through which climate action is implemented at scale.



Urban water & waste management

Solid waste and untreated wastewater are among the most polluting but least-addressed sources of greenhouse gas emissions in cities. Decomposing organic waste in landfills and sewage in unmanaged systems produces methane, a gas with significant short-term warming effects. Urban areas generate the majority of municipal solid waste and wastewater globally, yet in many lower- and lower-middle-income countries the infrastructure to collect, treat, and safely dispose of both is either incomplete or absent (UNEP, 2021; WHO/UN-Habitat, 2021).

The scale of the gap varies by income level.

In higher-income cities, the climate challenge is upgrading existing systems; capturing landfill gas, improving treatment technology, and recovering resources. In lower-income cities, the primary task is extending basic coverage to populations still relying on open dumping and inadequate sanitation. Both challenges have climate consequences, but the required responses differ substantially.

Where waste accumulates without treatment and wastewater reaches waterways unprocessed, greenhouse gas emissions grow alongside public health costs. The two outcomes are linked at the infrastructure level: the same facilities that reduce urban emissions also deliver basic service access. Municipal governments typically carry direct delivery responsibility for both sectors, making solid waste and wastewater among the clearest points of alignment between urban service delivery and national climate planning.

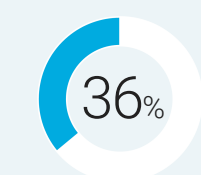
Urban water and waste management has seen strong growth as a mitigation pathway in NDCs 3.0.

- 51 of 142 NDCs 3.0 (36 per cent) now include urban mitigation commitments in water or waste management, up from 34 (24 per cent) in NDC 2.0.
- Of those, 37 NDCs 3.0 (26 per cent) make urban water and waste management a priority, meaning they include specific, actionable measures rather than a general reference to the sector.
- Implementation measures cluster around circular economy approaches, waste-to-energy and bioenergy, waste disposal, and wastewater treatment.

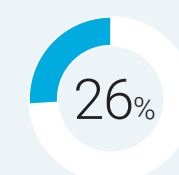


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **36% include urban water and waste management** content."

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Include water and waste management



Prioritize mitigation intervention in water and waste management



Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0

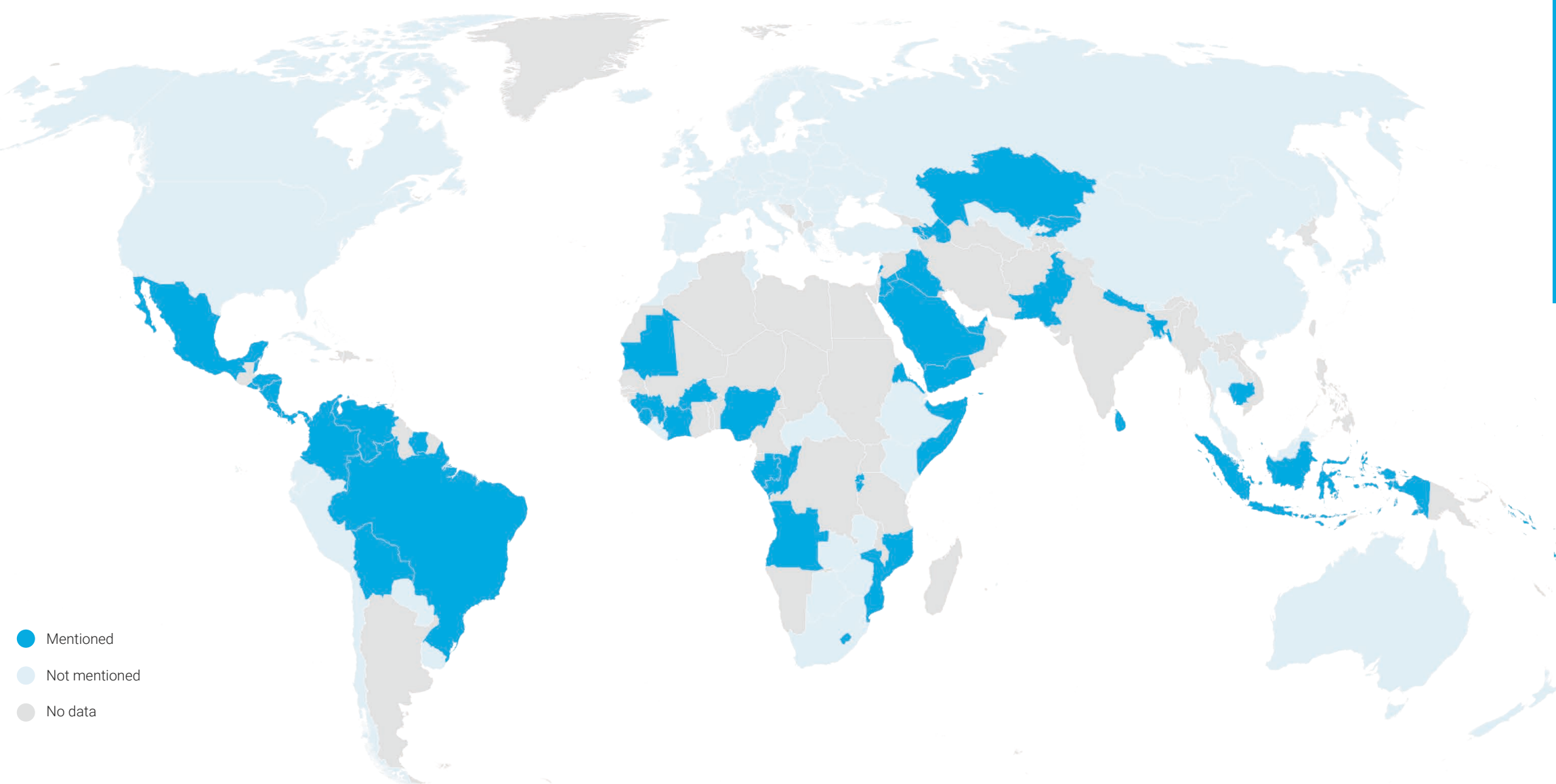


Figure 9. Geographical distribution of urban water & waste management content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

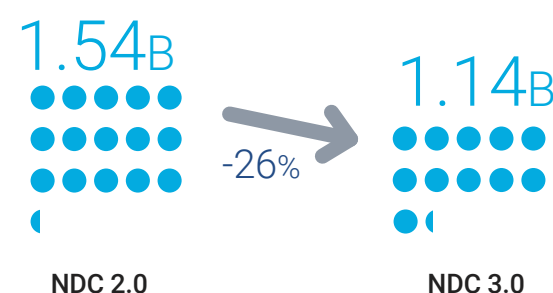


Urban water & waste management

51 of 142 NDCs (36 per cent) include urban water and waste mitigation content in NDC 3.0, with 37 (26 per cent) going beyond a general reference to commit to specific measures – a 50 per cent increase on NDC 2.0. Lower-income countries are driving that growth, with engagement above 75 per cent in both low- and lower-middle-income groups, while high-income NDCs register at nine per cent. More countries are engaged than ever, yet total urban population coverage has fallen, because the large-population economies that would move that figure are largely absent from this pathway. The spread examines where commitments are strongest and where ambition is not yet matched by specificity.

POPULATION

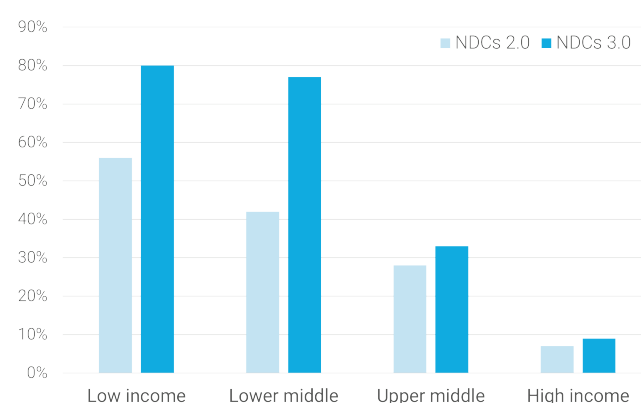
Urban population covered by water and waste management declines



Seventeen new countries included water and waste management in NDC 3.0. China's NDC 3.0 does not include urban water anymore, which is the sole reason population coverage fell, removing 940M people.

INCOME

Fluctuating commitment from income groups highlights a steep regional divide



More than three-quarters of low- and lower-middle-income countries include this sector in NDCs 3.0, while barely one in ten high-income countries does.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

28% of regional urban population covered
16 countries include content
11 of 16 substantive
0.49B urban population



AFRICA

63% of regional urban population covered
18 countries include content
11 of 18 substantive
0.26B urban population



EUROPE

0% of regional urban population covered
1 countries include content
1 of 1 substantive
<0.01B urban population



AMERICAS

50% of regional urban population covered
12 countries include content
11 of 12 substantive
0.39B urban population

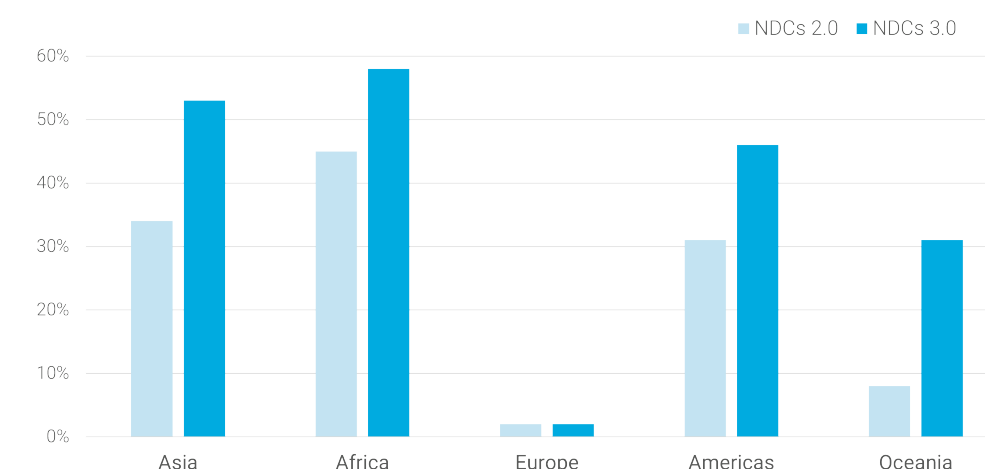


OCEANIA

3% of regional urban population covered
4 countries include content
3 of 4 substantive
<0.01B urban population

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

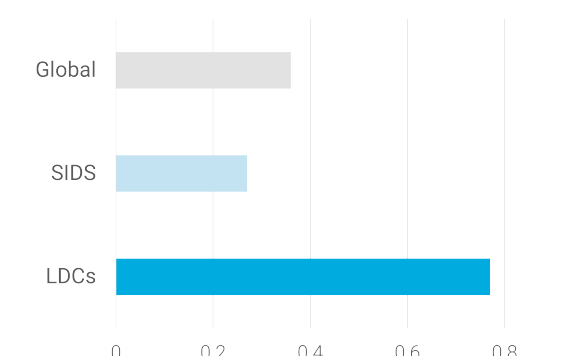
Over half of Africa and Asia covered in submissions



More than 50 per cent of African and Asian NDCs 3.0 include water and waste management, with Asian NDCs showing the largest overall gain. The Americas grow steadily, while Oceania rises from one to four countries. Europe is unchanged as the EU has no content in this sector.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

LDCs include the sector twice as much



Three quarters of LDCs include this sector, against a 36 per cent global average; fewer than one in three SIDS do.

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

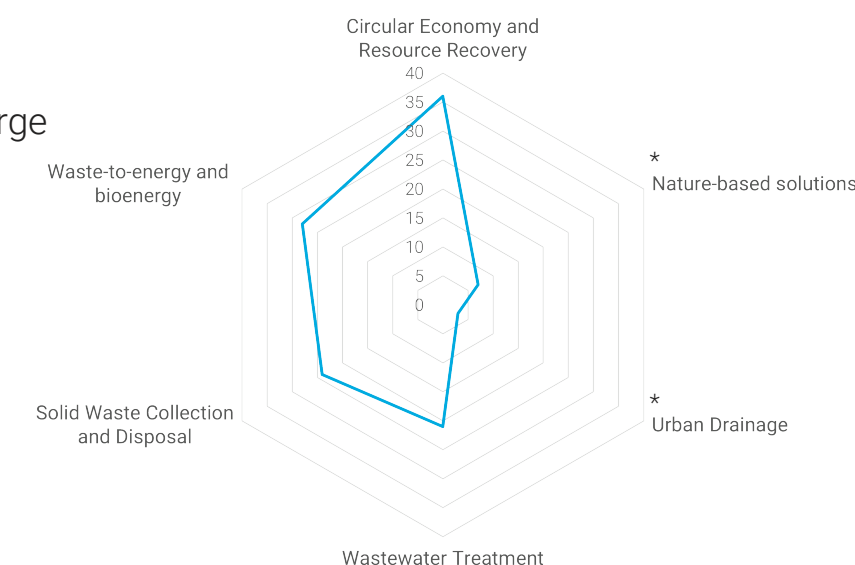
COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Kyrgyzstan	5, including waste-to-energy and bioenergy
Armenia	5, including solid waste collection and disposal
Côte d'Ivoire	4, including wastewater treatment
Vanuatu	4, including circular economy and resource recovery
Burkina Faso	3, including solid waste collection and disposal

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Clear sectoral implementation pathways are beginning to emerge

Circular economy leads on mentions, while waste-to-energy is most often prioritized and backed by concrete actions. Wastewater treatment, however, represents the biggest gap. Despite its direct link to methane emissions, fewer than three in five countries that include it commit to specific measures.

* Cross-cutting themes





Urban water and waste mitigation in NDCs 3.0 clusters around six implementation pathways:

circular economy and resource recovery, waste-to-energy and bioenergy, solid waste collection and disposal, wastewater treatment and sanitation, nature-based solutions, and urban drainage and stormwater management. The first three account for the large majority of content in this sector; nature-based solutions and urban drainage are cross-cutting. Together they map the approaches governments are taking to reduce emissions from urban water and waste services.

Circular economy and resource recovery is the most widespread approach in this sector,

appearing in 36 NDC 3.0 submissions, ahead of solid waste (24) or wastewater treatment (21). Its reach reflects its breadth: circular economy language encompasses everything from composting to material reuse targets, making it easier to reference than more specific pathways. Of the 36 NDCs that include it, 24 commit to specific measures, with the most detailed commitments from upper-middle-income countries with existing regulatory frameworks.

Solid waste collection and disposal appears in 24 NDC 3.0 submissions, with 15 prioritized, and serves as the entry point for many lower-income countries:

it is often the first and sometimes the only specific mitigation commitment in this sector. Commitments range from landfill gas capture targets to formal waste reduction strategies with measurable metrics. The pathway concentrates on Africa and Asia, where expanding and formalizing waste collection is simultaneously a service delivery priority and a climate action lever.

Wastewater treatment and sanitation is where the gap between exposure and commitment is most apparent.

Despite being the pathway most directly linked to methane emissions, it is the least mentioned of the three sector-specific approaches (21 NDCs 3.0) and only about half of these make it a priority. Infrastructure costs and institutional complexity are the likely explanations: upgrading treatment facilities or extending sewage networks requires capital and regulatory capacity that many governments have not yet secured. Countries that do prioritize it tend to do so with specificity: treatment coverage targets, technology upgrades, and sludge management, often tied to multilateral financing requirements.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

11
7

of NDCs 3.0 mention **circular economy and resource recovery**
of NDCs 3.0 mention **wastewater treatment and sanitation**

AFRICA

14
11

of NDCs 3.0 mention **circular economy and resource recovery**
of NDCs 3.0 mention **solid waste disposal and collection**

EUROPE

0

NDCs 3.0 mention of **any themes relating to water and waste management**

AMERICAS

9
7

of NDCs 3.0 mention **circular economy and resource recovery**
of NDCs 3.0 mention **waste-to-energy and bioenergy**

OCEANIA

3
3

of NDCs 3.0 mention **wastewater treatment and sanitation**
of NDCs 3.0 mention **solid waste collection and disposal**



People receive compensation for recycling plastic in Batken © UNDP/Kyrgyzstan

KYRGYZSTAN CITIES – A MITIGATION DELIVERY PLATFORM | CHAMP | A+



Kyrgyzstan's NDC 3.0 frames waste management as part of a cross-sectoral mitigation agenda spanning energy, transport, industry, agriculture, and waste. Urban systems anchor the delivery framework: in Bishkek, a modern landfill with a gas collection system has been established to capture and utilize methane from waste disposal. In Osh, the country's second-largest city, a sorting station with a capacity of 120 tonnes per day has been commissioned, enabling recycling and material separation at scale. These investments, funded through targeted public budget programmes, mark a transition from informal and unregulated dumping towards regulated, climate-ready waste infrastructure at city level.



A child places waste into a recycling bin in Armenia. © UNICEF Armenia/Gevorgyan

ARMENIA



WASTE MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEM MODERNIZATION | CHAMP | A+

Armenia's NDC 3.0 frames urban waste management as a vehicle for improving both climate outcomes and infrastructure quality. The municipality of Yerevan is named as the key delivery actor, with plans for 400 separate waste collection containers across the city to enable more efficient recycling and collection systems. Yerevan's disposal sites are to be upgraded, beginning with a landfill gas capture and flaring project and the closure of landfills that do not meet environmental or sanitation standards. Urban waste disposal and processing programmes are planned through international cooperation, positioning capacity-building as the long-term foundation for sustainable waste management at city scale.



Urban energy

Energy production and consumption are the largest single driver of global greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for approximately 70 per cent of total emissions, with urban areas responsible for roughly 75 per cent of that consumption (IEA, 2024). Urban areas concentrate energy use across buildings, transport, industry, and infrastructure, making them both the epicenter of the challenge and the primary arena for rapid decarbonization.

The transition is underway but uneven.

Renewables now account for one-third of global electricity generation, a record high, yet the energy transition remains to meet the COP28 pledge to triple renewable capacity by 2030 (IEA, 2025). At the same time, approximately 730 million people lack reliable access to electricity, and nearly 2 billion lack access to clean cooking, with serious consequences for health and economic opportunity (IEA, 2025). The urban dimension of the access deficit is most acute in rapidly growing cities in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where demand growth outpaces grid expansion and informal settlements remain underserved.

Local governments are well placed to act where energy demand is most concentrated. They can integrate building efficiency standards, district-level renewable deployment, electrification of public services, and decentralized energy systems into urban planning and land-use decisions. Where cities align energy investment with spatial planning, outcomes can simultaneously span access, affordability, and national emissions targets.

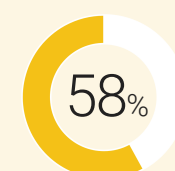
Urban energy is among the most prominent mitigation sectors in NDCs 3.0.

- 82 NDCs 3.0 include urban-specific energy content (58 per cent), up from 43 in NDC 2.0, a 91 per cent increase.
- 54 NDCs 3.0 (38 per cent) make urban energy a priority, and commit to specific, delivery-oriented measures naming targets, actors, or implementation timelines.
- The leading implementation pathways are renewable energy, energy efficiency in buildings, and energy planning and systems.

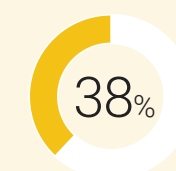


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **58% include urban energy** content."

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Include urban energy

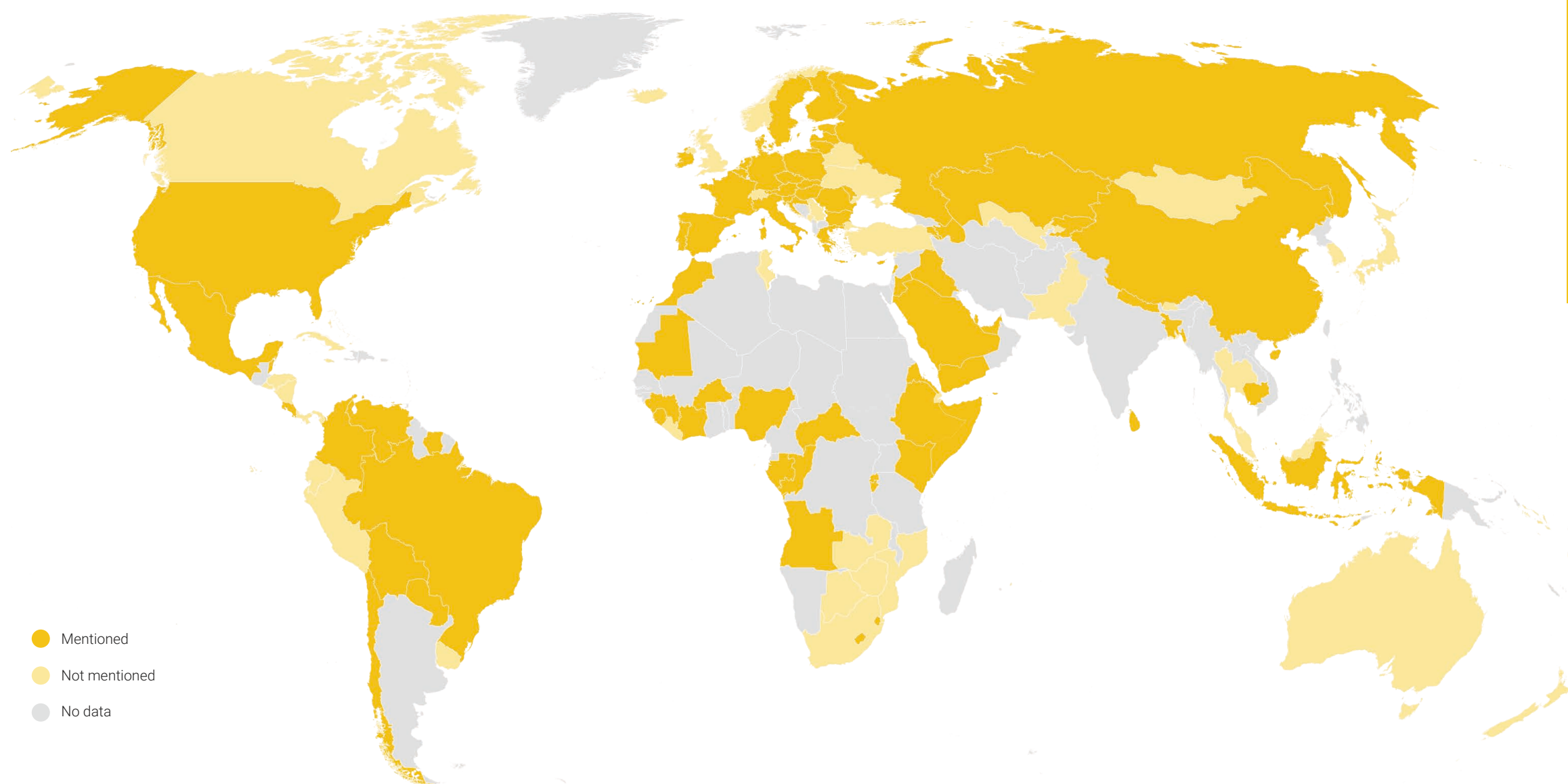


Prioritize the urban energy sector



+91%

Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0



- Mentioned
- Not mentioned
- No data

Figure 10. Geographical distribution of urban energy content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

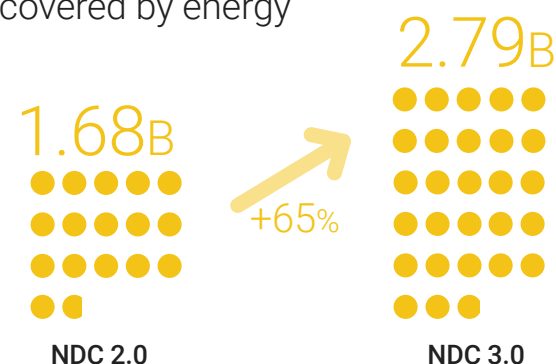


Urban energy

82 NDCs 3.0 include urban energy content, up from 43 in NDC 2.0, a near-doubling between NDC revision cycles. Of those, 54 NDCs 3.0 (66 per cent) make urban energy a priority, committing to delivery-oriented climate measures. Growth is broad but unevenly distributed. Asia records the sharpest uptake, while Europe's increase is driven entirely by the EU submission. Lower-middle-income countries show relatively high mention rates of urban energy, while energy access commitments are concentrated in many low-income countries – particular in Africa – reflecting where the energy access deficit is most acute.

POPULATION

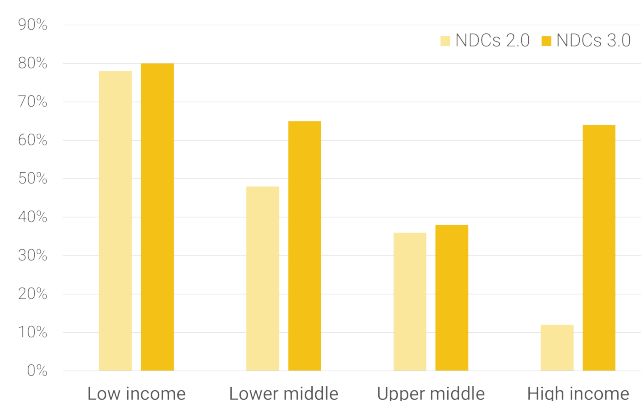
Two thirds of the urban population covered by energy



Urban populations in countries with urban energy commitments grew from 1.68 to 2.79 billion, up 65 per cent between NDC revision cycles.

INCOME

Low-income countries show the highest urban energy engagement

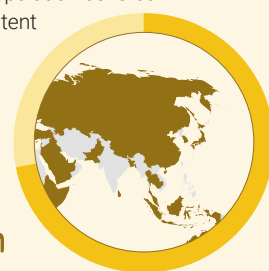


80 per cent of low-income countries include urban energy in their climate plans, while fewer than 40 per cent of upper-middle-income countries do.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

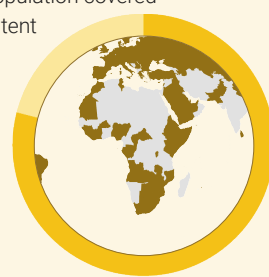
ASIA

76% of regional urban population covered
18 countries include content
7 of 18 substantive
1.34B urban population



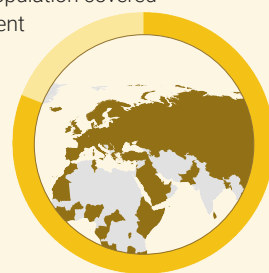
AFRICA

79% of regional urban population covered
21 countries include content
9 of 21 substantive
0.32B urban population



EUROPE

81% of regional urban population covered
3 countries include content
2 of 3 substantive
0.45B urban population



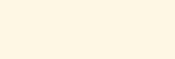
AMERICAS

86% of regional urban population covered
11 countries include content
6 of 11 substantive
0.68B urban population



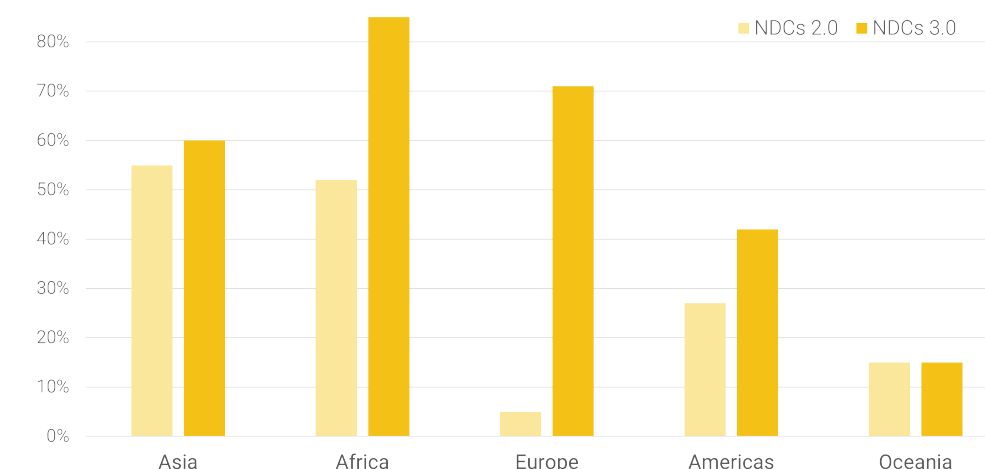
OCEANIA

0.1% of regional urban population covered
2 countries include content
2 of 2 substantive
0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

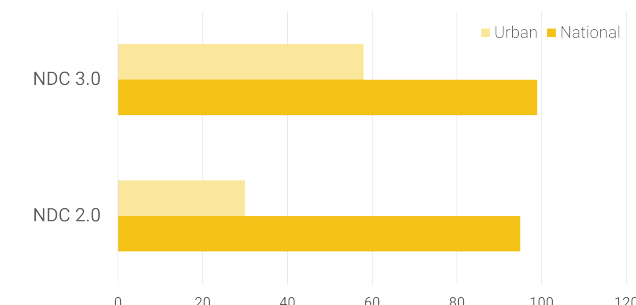
Africa has the strongest gains in urban energy content



More than two thirds of African countries now include urban energy in their plans. Europe appears to jump the furthest, but nearly all of it comes from a single EU submission. Outside the EU, coverage remains low. Oceania alone falls back.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

National energy decisions are implemented in cities



Energy is at the top of national climate agendas, but the 91 per cent increase in urban mentions shows implementation is happening in cities.

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Renewable energy is the dominant implementation pathway

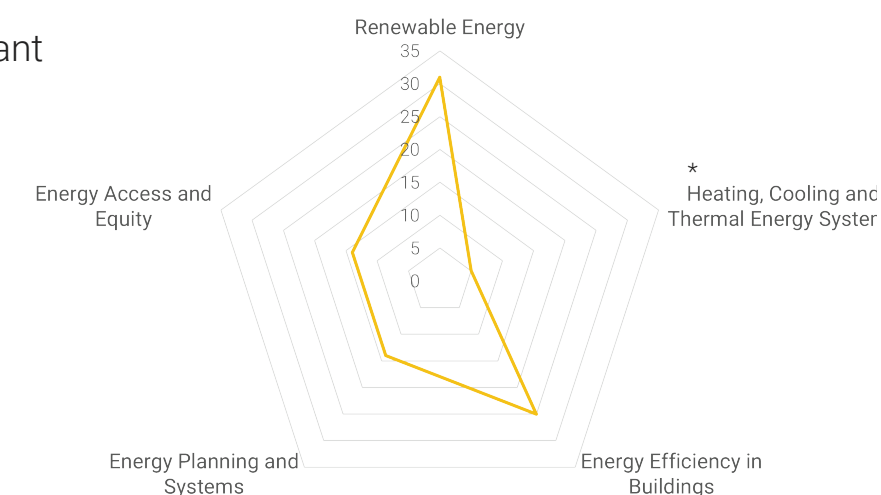
Renewable energy is the dominant theme, followed closely by building efficiency. The biggest shift is in energy access and equity, which nearly tripled from five to 14 NDCs – a sign that energy poverty is increasingly recognized as a climate issue. Heating and cooling feature minimally in comparison.

* Cross-cutting themes

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
UAE	5, including renewable energy
Rwanda	4, including energy access and equity
Marshall Islands	4, including energy planning and systems
Kyrgyzstan	3, including energy efficiency in buildings
Congo	6, including energy planning and systems





Urban energy commitments in NDCs 3.0 concentrate across four delivery modes: supply-side renewable generation, demand-side efficiency in buildings, systems infrastructure and grid modernization, and the equity dimension of energy access. The balance between these modes – how NDCs distribute their energy commitments across the mitigation and access dimensions – is the defining characteristic of this sector.

Renewable energy appears in 31 NDCs (22 per cent), the most widely documented urban energy response in NDCs 3.0. Solar, wind, and clean generation are the dominant content. Despite international ambitions to triple renewable capacity by 2030, only 13 of those NDCs (42 per cent) prioritize specific means of implementation. Urban-specific renewable deployment is most distinguished through city-level projects rather than general national targets.

25 NDCs 3.0 (18 per cent) include energy efficiency measures focused on building interventions: energy performance improvements, retrofit programmes, and efficiency standards and labelling. The increase from 17 NDCs in NDC 2.0 is sharp, demonstrating buildings as one of the most implementation-ready levers for cities. Only 12 of 25 (48 per cent) commit to specific priority actions. Delivery will remain slow without clearly defined enablers.

14 NDCs 3.0 (10 per cent) include energy planning and systems: grid upgrades, smart grids, energy storage, decentralized systems, microgrids, and off-grid solutions. Supply-side pathways have risen only slightly, from 12 NDCs in NDC 2.0 to 14 in NDC 3.0, pointing to a gap in city-level energy planning. Mentions are concentrated in Asian and African countries, where urban energy infrastructure is still being established and expanded.

14 NDCs 3.0 (10 per cent) mention energy access and equity, particularly in reference to informal settlements, clean cooking, and energy poverty. This figure has nearly tripled from five NDCs in NDC 2.0 to 14 in NDC 3.0. However, delivery mechanisms remain notably lacking: only eight of those 14 (57 per cent) include specific implementation pathways, a significant gap in the contexts where energy access deficits are most acute.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA	11	of NDCs 3.0 mention renewable energy
	8	of NDCs 3.0 mention energy efficiency in buildings
AFRICA	10	of NDCs 3.0 mention renewable energy
	11	of NDCs 3.0 mention energy access and equity
EUROPE	1	of NDCs 3.0 mention energy efficiency in buildings
	0	of NDCs 3.0 mention energy planning and systems
AMERICAS	7	of NDCs 3.0 mention renewable energy
	6	of NDCs 3.0 mention energy efficiency in buildings
OCEANIA	2	of NDCs 3.0 mention renewable energy
	0	of NDCs 3.0 mention energy planning and systems



Coastal energy infrastructure in Marshall Islands, © Facebook / Marshalls Energy Company

MARSHALL ISLANDS



PHASE OUT OF FOSSIL FUELS | B+

Two urban centres in the Marshall Islands, Majuro and Ebeye, are upgrading their energy infrastructure to reduce fossil fuel dependence, with almost all electricity generated by diesel as recently as 2018. Working with the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and other partners, the Republic has begun replacing diesel generators with renewable energy technologies, enhancing urban grids, and installing solar homes and mini-grids for outer atolls. Lighting upgrades funded by EU budget support are being implemented in major urban centres, and Majuro has developed a hybrid solar system providing benefits for businesses and households throughout the day.



Rows of solar panels at the Noor Solar Power Plant in the Al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi. © WAM

UAE



RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CRITICAL SERVICES RESILIENCE | CHAMP | A+

The UAE's NDC 3.0 demonstrates the value of private-public partnerships in urban energy decarbonization, with local authorities across Dubai, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi leading efforts to reduce carbon emissions in the healthcare sector. A 25-year lease agreement between PureHealth and Yellow Door Energy will see solar power plants installed across Emirati healthcare facilities, delivering clean electricity to hospitals and clinics nationally. In Dubai, a partnership between Dubai Health and Positive Zero is deploying on-site solar rooftop and carport systems across 26 facilities, with a Cooling-As-A-Service project already operational at Al Jalila Children's Hospital.



Urban transport & mobility

Transport is the second largest source of global energy-related CO₂ emissions, accounting for approximately 23 per cent of the total, with road transport responsible for roughly three-quarters of that output (SuM4ALL, 2022). Urban mobility emissions continue to rise with growing demand, while road-oriented infrastructure locks in high-carbon pathways for decades to come (IEA, 2023). Cities are the decisive arena: urban vehicle trips, congested road networks, and inadequate public transport collectively determine the sector's national emissions trajectory.

Local authorities often have the capacity to direct the levers that matter most:

land use and transit-oriented development, public transport investment, road network management, and the planning frameworks that enable walking and cycling. The co-benefits of a well-managed transition are substantial: improved air quality, reduced congestion, lower household transport costs, and better mobility for those without private vehicles (IPCC, 2022). Bus electrification is among the most cost-effective interventions available to cities, with rapidly falling costs and well-documented air quality benefits (IRENA, 2025). Electrification alone, however, is only part of the picture: reducing vehicle kilometres through modal shift to public transport, walking, and cycling matters equally, for both emissions and the spatial equity of urban mobility.

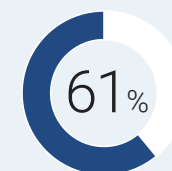
Urban transport and mobility is among the most consistently represented urban sector in NDCs 3.0.

- 86 of 142 NDCs 3.0 (61 per cent) include urban transport content, a 115 per cent increase since NDC 2.0 and the largest absolute growth of any sector tracked in this report.
- Of those, 68 NDCs 3.0 (48 per cent) commit to specific, delivery-oriented measures with named infrastructure, governance, or finance components.
- Implementation commitments cluster around four pathways: vehicle electrification, clean fuels, public transport expansion, and active mobility.

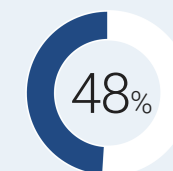


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **61% include urban transport and mobility** content."

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



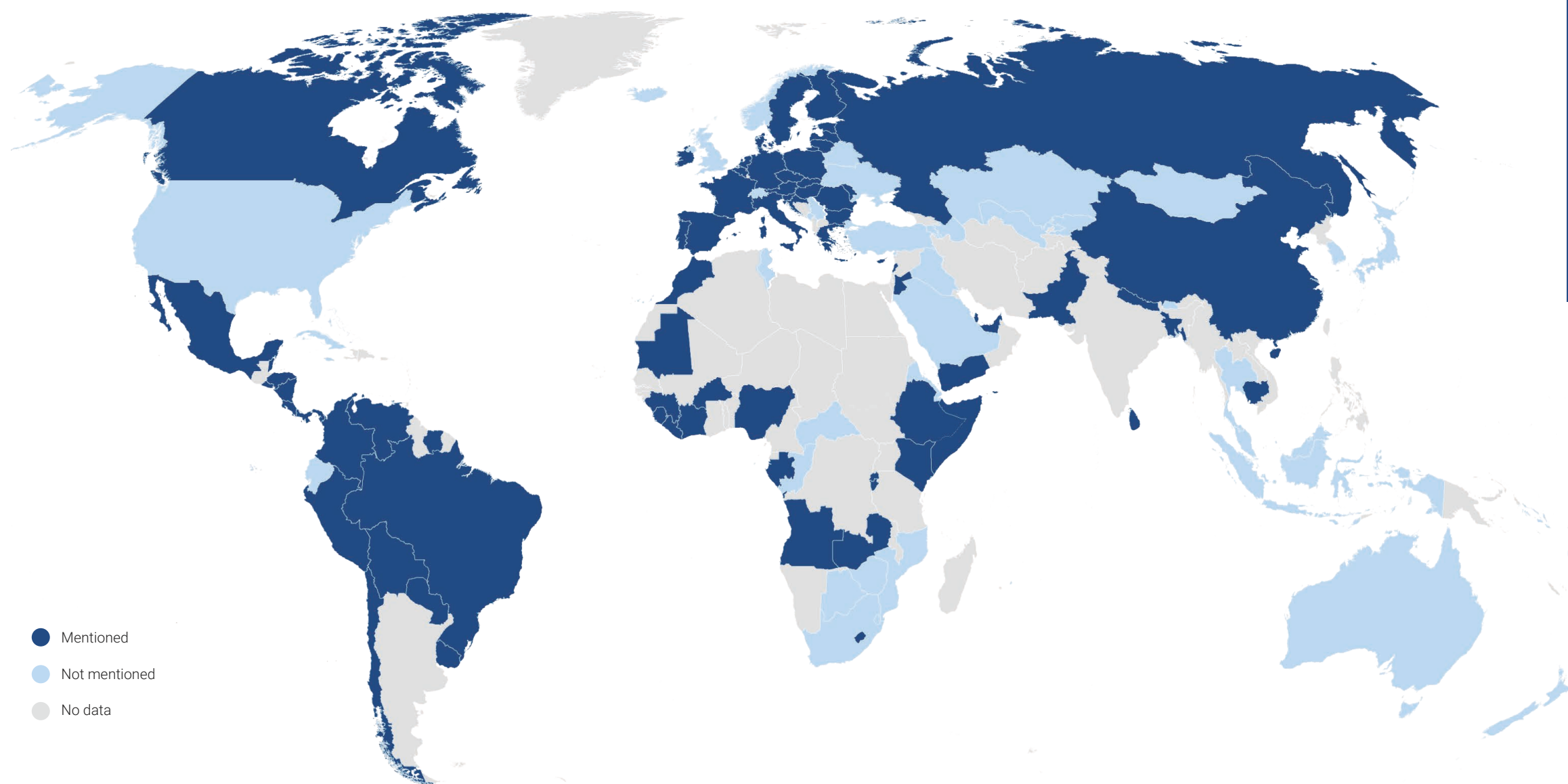
Include urban transport and mobility



Prioritize urban transport and mobility



+115%
Increase between
NDCs 2.0
and NDCs 3.0



● Mentioned
● Not mentioned
● No data

Figure 11. Geographical distribution of urban transport and mobility content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

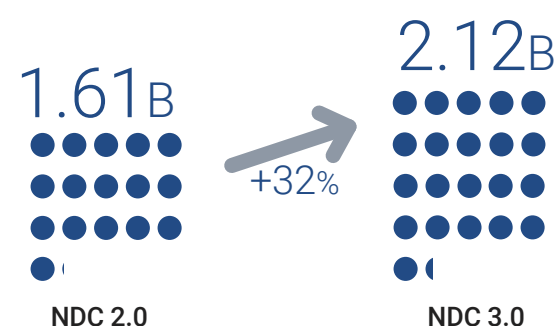


Urban transport & mobility

Urban transport now appears in 86 NDCs 3.0, up from 40 in NDC 2.0 – more than doubling since NDCs 2.0. Of these, 68 commit to specific, prioritized measures. The growth is distributed but uneven. Low and lower-middle income countries have driven much of the expansion, both now covering urban transport in around 70 per cent of NDCs – well above the global average of 61 per cent. High-income engagement is similarly high but largely EU-driven. Upper-middle-income countries show the weakest growth, barely moving from 33 to 38 per cent.

POPULATION

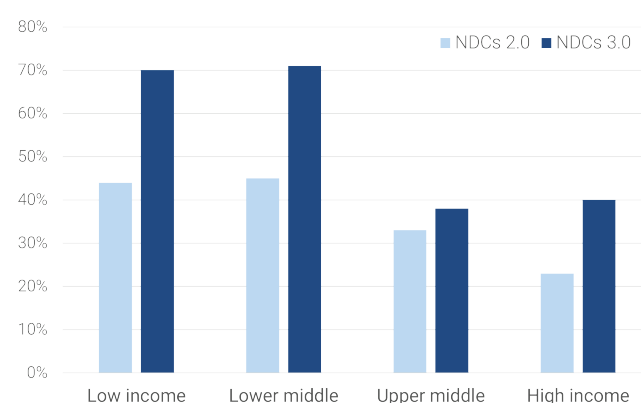
53 per cent increase in urban population covered



Urban populations in countries with transport commitments grew from 1.61 to 2.46 billion, adding over 850 million people in a single revision cycle.

INCOME

Transport and mobility are most concentrated in lower income countries



70 per cent of low and lower-middle income countries include urban transport and mobility, compared to 40 per cent of upper-middle income countries.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

68% of regional urban population covered
15 countries include content
10 of 15 substantive
1.20B urban population



AFRICA

80% of regional urban population covered
18 countries include content
11 of 18 substantive
0.33B urban population



EUROPE

81% of regional urban population covered
4 countries include content
4 of 4 substantive
0.45B urban population



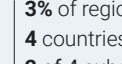
AMERICAS

62% of regional urban population covered
18 countries include content
14 of 18 substantive
0.48B urban population



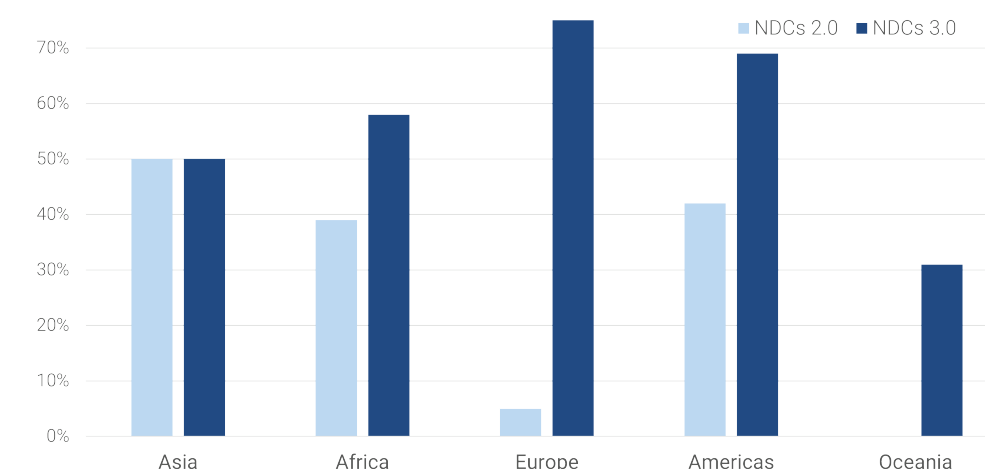
OCEANIA

3% of regional urban population covered
4 countries include content
2 of 4 substantive
<0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

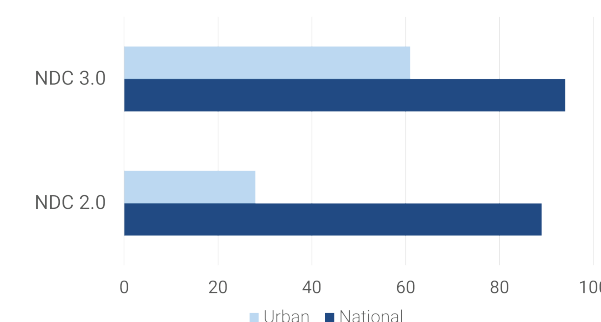
The Americas show the strongest genuine growth globally



The Americas show the strongest genuine growth of any region, rising from 42 to 69 per cent. Africa grows steadily. Europe's jump to 74 per cent is almost entirely EU-driven; without it, European coverage remains low. Oceania moves from zero to four countries – all small island states.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Prioritization is both national and urban focused



The transport sector is a near-universal priority for mitigation. In NDCs 3.0, cities are increasingly central to the response.

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Vehicle electrification is the most dominant implementation pathway

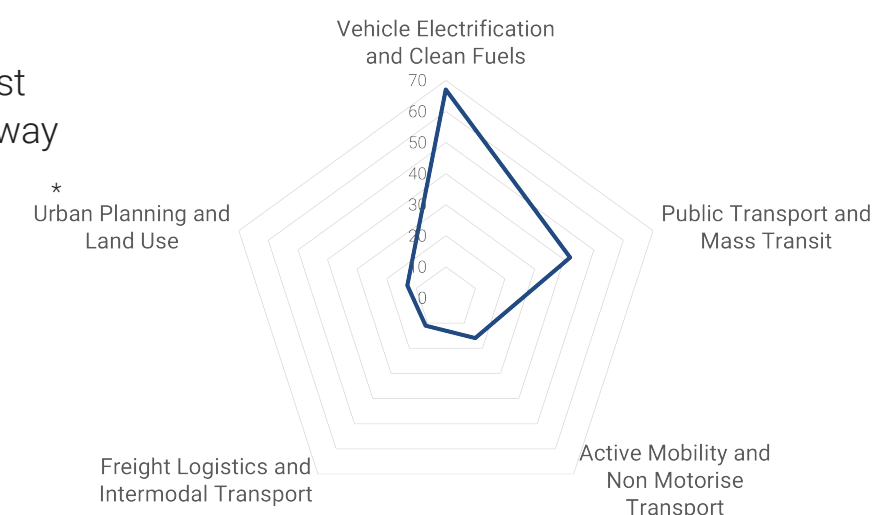
Sixty-seven NDCs 3.0 include vehicle electrification and clean fuels and almost always make them a priority. Public transport follows at 42. Walking and cycling appear in just 16 NDCs, with only 3 countries prioritising them. Freight logistics is less common but is highly prioritized.

* Cross-cutting themes

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Colombia	4, including public transport and mass transit
Costa Rica	4, including public transport and mass transit
Tonga	4, including active mobility
Republic of Moldova	3, including vehicle electrification and clean fuels
Cambodia	3, including freight logistics





Urban transport commitments in NDCs 3.0 address the full spectrum of implementation pathways, from vehicle electrification and clean fuels to public transport investment, active and non-motorized mobility, freight logistics reform, and land use integration. Together, they reflect a shift from sectoral targets to systemic thinking on urban mobility, positioning cities as central sites of transport decarbonization in national climate planning.

Vehicle electrification and clean fuels is the dominant in NDC 3.0 urban transport, by scale, growth, and specificity. Sixty-seven NDCs (47 per cent) include plans to electrify the transport and mobility sector, with 59 (42 per cent) prioritizing it – a 219 per cent increase from NDC 2.0 when only 21 countries referenced this pathway. Electric vehicle targets, charging infrastructure rollout, and bus fleet electrification are the most common commitments. Bus electrification stands out for its consistency across income levels, reflecting its established cost-effectiveness profile and relevance in contexts where private EV adoption remains limited.

Public transport and mass transit is the second most represented pathway, with 42 NDCs (30 per cent) including content and 25 (18 per cent) prioritizing it. Bus rapid transit, metro and rail expansion, and transit-oriented development are the primary commitments. Many NDCs name public transport as a priority without the finance mechanisms, governance arrangements, or delivery timelines needed to make commitments operational. This means that there is a significant body of content that lacks the conditions for delivery.

Active mobility and non-motorized transport is the sector's most significant implementation gap. Only 3 of 16 NDCs 3.0 that include walking and cycling content prioritize it. Substantive commitment has declined from five NDCs in NDC 2.0 to three. Cycling infrastructure, pedestrianization, and active travel planning feature in the content but rarely with delivery mechanisms, despite well-documented co-benefits for air quality, public health, and equitable access.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

12 of NDCs 3.0 mention **public transport and mass transit**

4 of NDCs 3.0 mention **freight logistics and intermodal transport**

AFRICA

12 of NDCs 3.0 mention **public transport and mass transit**

12 of NDCs 3.0 mention **vehicle electrification**

EUROPE

31 of NDCs 3.0 mention **vehicle electrification and clean fuels**

0 of NDCs 3.0 mention **active mobility and non-motorized transport**

AMERICAS

13 of NDCs 3.0 mention **public transport and mass transit**

12 of NDCs 3.0 mention **vehicle electrification and clean fuels**

OCEANIA

3 of NDCs 3.0 mention **public transport and mass transit**

3 of NDCs 3.0 mention **active mobility and non-motorized transport**



Cable cars are integral to Bogotá's intermodal, public transport system © Unsplash/Alvaro Palacios

COLOMBIA



MULTI-MODAL DECARBONIZATION | CHAMP | A+

Colombia's NDC 3.0 demonstrates integrated urban transport decarbonization at city scale. The National Active Mobility Strategy targets a 5.5 percentage point increase in modal share for walking and cycling across at least 17 cities, supported by 26 km of dedicated cycle paths in Bogotá. At the mass transit level, plans for Bogotá's first metro line are paired with 483 zero-emission buses in the city's transit system and TransmiCable connections serving the hillside communities of Ciudad Bolívar and San Cristóbal, operational by 2027. Freight logistics decarbonization through route optimization and low-emission technologies completes a strategy spanning active, public, and commercial mobility.



Ocnita City Council adopted the Local Action Plan for Climate Change © UNDP Moldova

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY | CHAMP | A+

Moldova's Energy Strategy 2050 establishes clear timelines for transport decarbonization at both national and urban scales. Import restrictions on non-hybrid vehicles take effect from 2030 (or 2035, as stated in the NDC), and pure-diesel vehicle purchases are prohibited from 2040. Urban public transport fleets are to transition to hybrid by 2030 and be fully electrified by 2050. Thirty per cent of the railway network is to be electrified by 2040, enabling a modal shift from road freight to rail. Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans are planned for Moldova's largest cities, embedding national targets within city-level planning frameworks.



Urban climate risks (water & heat)

Water and heat hazards represent the two most consequential and fastest-intensifying categories of urban climate risk. Water-based risks, spanning floods, drought, sea-level rise, storm events, and saltwater intrusion, threaten the infrastructure, water systems, and coastal communities on which cities depend. Extreme heat, compounded by urban heat island effects that elevate city temperatures two to eight degrees above surrounding areas, drives health crises, stress on energy systems, and accelerating water demand.

Urban water and heat risk is among the fastest-growing areas of urban content in NDC 3.0.

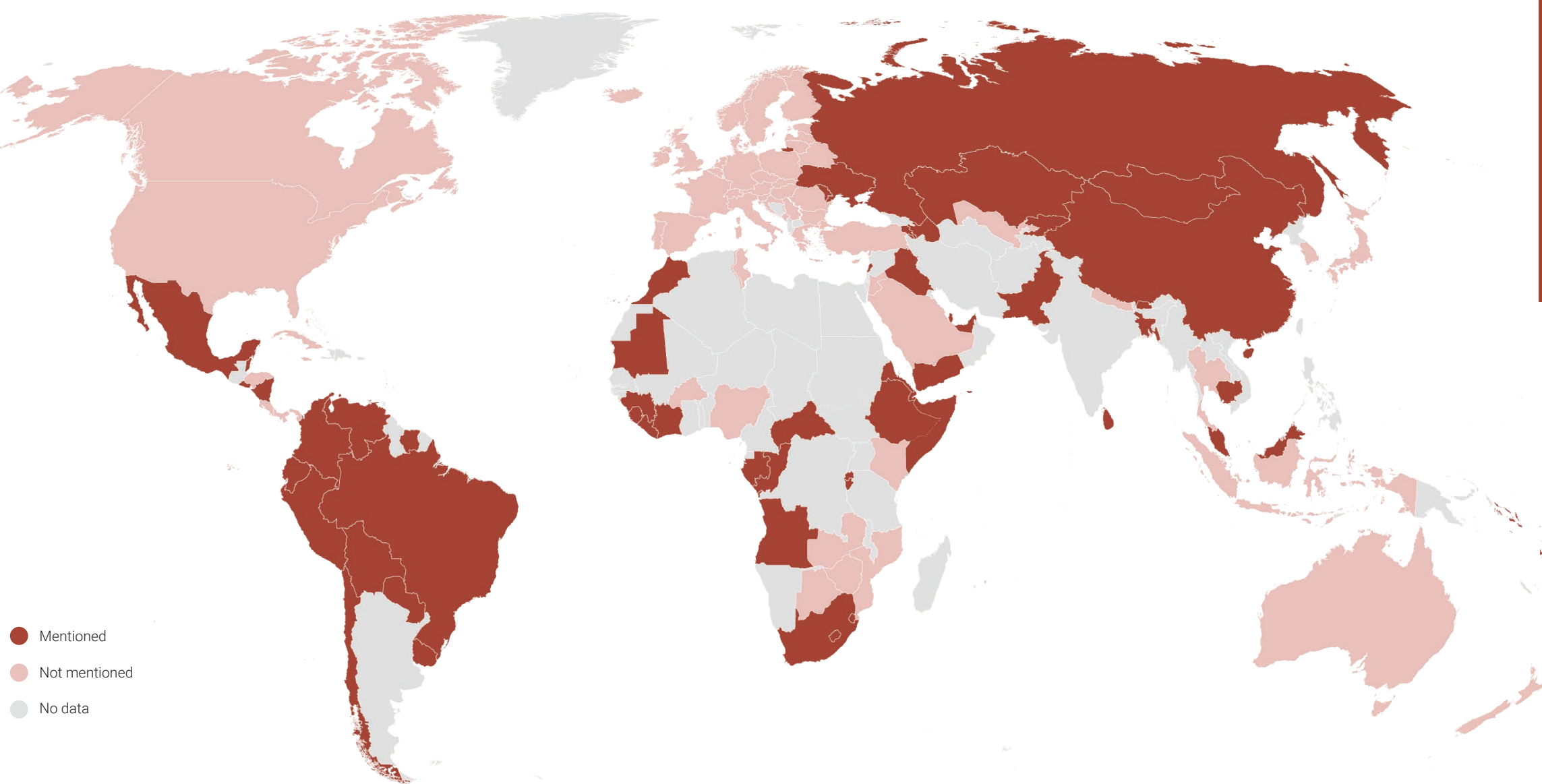
- 65 NDCs 3.0 (46 per cent) formally document urban water and heat risks, up from 45 in NDC 2.0, a 44 per cent increase.
- The hazard profile is broadening rapidly: floods remain the most documented hazard by far (54 NDCs), but storm events more than tripled from seven to 22 NDCs, heat and cold waves doubled from 14 to 28, and saltwater intrusion more than doubled from three to eight.

The communities bearing the greatest risks are those least responsible for creating them.

An estimated 70 per cent of urban residents globally already face elevated risk from flooding, extreme heat, or water scarcity (CPI, 2021). Low-lying coastal cities, informal settlements, and rapidly urbanizing areas in low- and lower-middle-income countries face the highest exposure with the lowest adaptive capacity. Without targeted adaptation, these pressures will intensify.

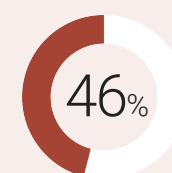
Among NDCs 3.0 that formally identify urban water and heat risk, commitment to respond is growing and increasingly specific.

- 56 of the 65 NDCs 3.0 that identify urban water and heat risks include at least one targeted water- and heat-specific adaptation response.
- 36 NDCs 3.0 prioritize their response through specific interventions linked to governance frameworks, finance commitments, or implementation plans, up from 19 in NDC 2.0.
- Nine NDCs document urban water and heat risk without committing to any corresponding adaptation response.

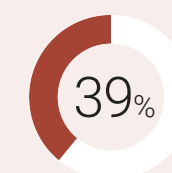


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **46% include urban climate risks (water & heat) content.**

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Identify urban water and heat risks



Include an adaptation response to water and heat risks



+44%

Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0

Figure 12. Geographical distribution of urban climate risks (water & heat) content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

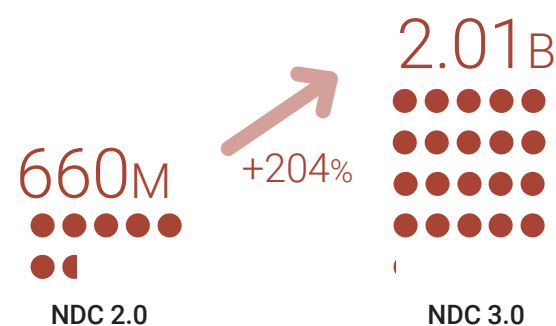


Urban climate risks (water & heat)

More countries are identifying water and heat risk in their national climate plans than ever before – 65 in NDCs 3.0, up from 45. Nearly all go further, committing to at least one specific adaptation response. Nature-based solutions are the most common approach, appearing in 47 NDCs. Growth has been broad but uneven: Asia records the largest gains of any region. Among lower-income countries, engagement is high – LDCs document climate risk at a higher rate than any other group. Action on heat, however, lags well behind water-related commitments across every region.

POPULATION

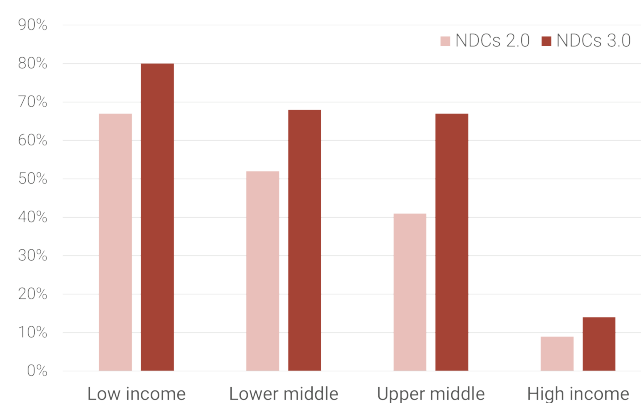
204 per cent increase in urban population coverage



Urban populations covered by water- and heat-related risk identification grew from 658 million to 2.01 billion, driven primarily by NDCs in Asia.

INCOME

Low-income countries document the highest rate of urban risk

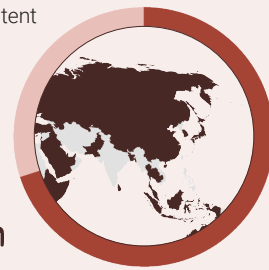


80 per cent of Low-income countries include risk identification in their NDCs 3.0, while upper-middle income countries show the sharpest regional increase.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

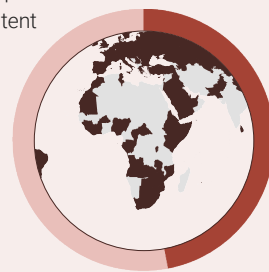
ASIA

70% of regional urban population covered
19 countries include content
4 of 19 substantive
1.23B urban population



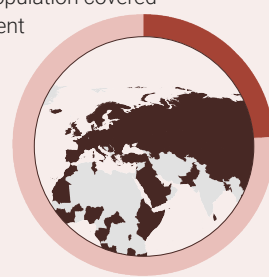
AFRICA

47% of regional urban population covered
22 countries include content
8 of 22 substantive
0.19B urban population



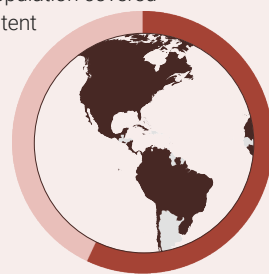
EUROPE

24% of regional urban population covered
4 countries include content
1 of 4 substantive
0.14B urban population



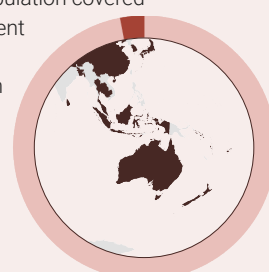
AMERICAS

57% of regional urban population covered
16 countries include content
7 of 16 substantive
0.53B urban population



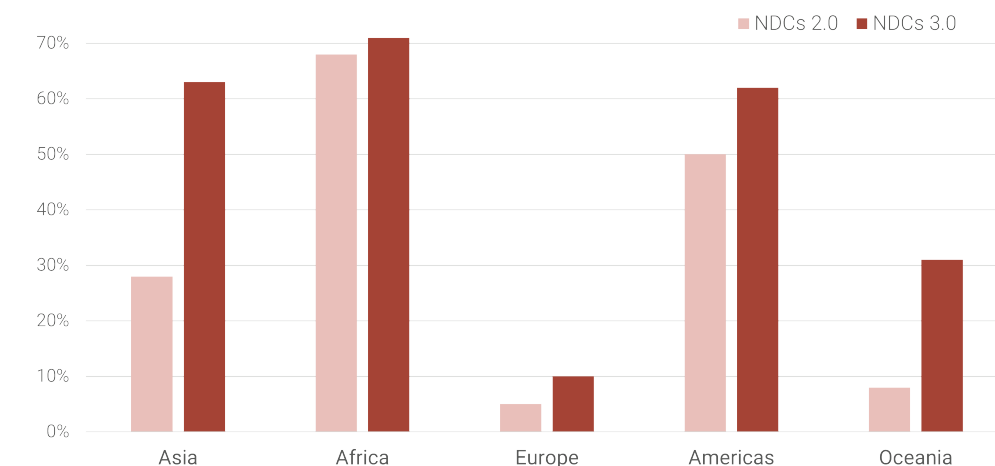
OCEANIA

3% of regional urban population covered
4 countries include content
0 of 4 substantive
<0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

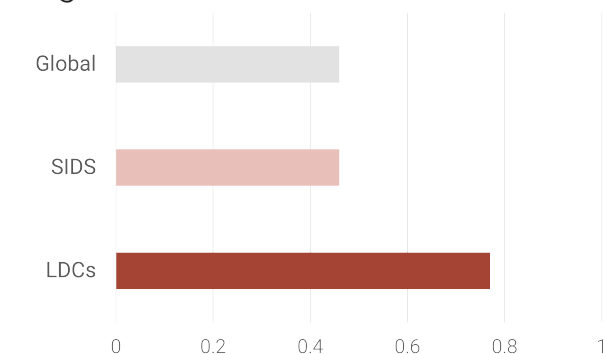
Asia shows the largest increase in urban risk mentions



Asia nearly doubles its rate of risk identification, from 28 to 63 per cent, the largest gain of any region. Africa grows only modestly, while Europe remains the least engaged region despite a small increase. Oceania more than triples from a very low base.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Recognition of climate risks is highest in the LDCs



17 of 22 LDCs identify heat- and water-related urban risk, with 88 per cent pairing risk identification with a specific adaptation response.

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Nature-based solutions are the most prevalent pathway

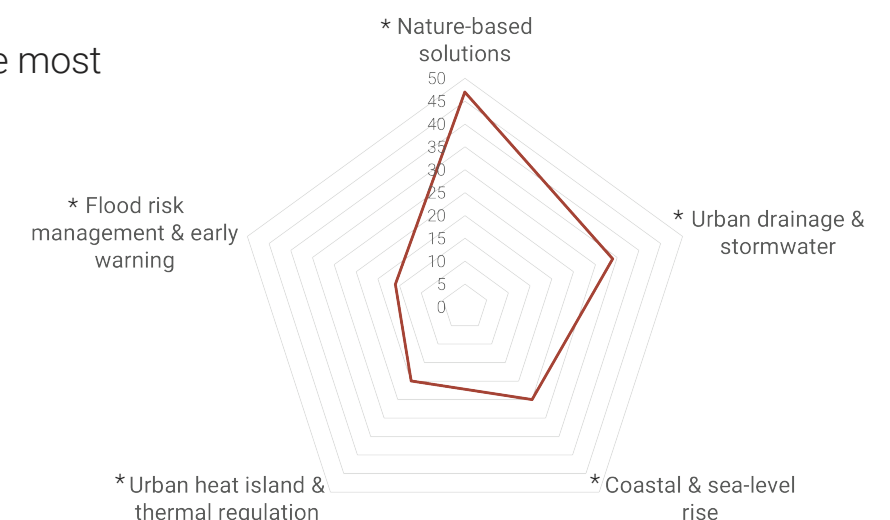
Nature-based solutions are the most common adaptation response to water- and heat-related risk, while drainage and flood management are the most prioritized. The starkest gap is urban heat: 20 countries mention heat island measures and 13 heat health actions, but only two prioritize each.

* Cross-cutting themes

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Uruguay	Risk: floods Response: flood risk management
Cambodia	Risk: floods Response: flood risk management
Guinea	Risk: sea-level rise Response: urban drainage & stormwater





Water- and heat-specific adaptation in NDCs 3.0 includes seven prominent implementation pathways, reflecting the diversity of urban risk exposure and the range of policy instruments available to address it. Across the 56 risk-documenting NDCs that include adaptation commitments, responses encompass nature-based solutions, urban drainage and stormwater management, defence against sea-level rise, flood risk management and early warning, drought and water scarcity management, urban heat island regulation, and heat health action planning. Three patterns define the landscape.

Nature-based solutions (NbS) appear in 47 of the 65 NDCs and are prioritized in 20. NbS functions as an integrating response: green infrastructure, wetland restoration, and urban tree canopy address flood retention, surface cooling, and water cycle regulation simultaneously. Stronger commitments specify scale, location, and delivery mechanism; weaker ones cite NbS in principle without the operational detail needed for implementation or accountability.

Urban drainage and stormwater management is the highest-performing subclassification. 21 of 34 mentions prioritize urban drainage and stormwater (62 per cent), the highest conversion rate of any prioritized sectoral approach. Drainage commitments tend to be specific by nature: infrastructure investment, design standards, and catchment-level planning lend themselves to measurable targets and timelines. Where commitments are strongest, they include integrated drainage master plans, defined service levels, and explicit links to flood risk mapping.

Urban heat adaptation reveals the most significant implementation gap. Urban heat island and thermal regulation measures appear in 20 NDCs but are prioritized in only two; heat health action plans appear in 13 NDCs with the same result. Together, these heat-specific subclassifications carry 33 mentions and four prioritizations, a combined conversion rate of 12 per cent. Where commitments are specific, they involve cool surface materials and albedo management for thermal regulation, and cooling centres and early warning systems for heat health. Broad acknowledgement of heat risk has not yet translated into governance-backed action at scale.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

16

of NDCs 3.0 mention
floods

12

of NDCs 3.0 mention
heat & cold waves

AFRICA

20

of NDCs 3.0 mention
floods

13

of NDCs 3.0 mention
sea-level rise

EUROPE

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
floods

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
drought

AMERICAS

14

of NDCs 3.0 mention
floods

10

of NDCs 3.0 mention
drought

OCEANIA

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
storms

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
floods



City officials train on climate resilience for local risk reduction plans © UNDRR

URUGUAY



NATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEMS FOR URBAN RESILIENCE | A+

Uruguay addresses its two primary urban hazards – flooding and extreme heat – through national planning instruments with binding timelines and measurable urban targets. The National Urban Rainwater Plan establishes a countrywide strategy for rainwater management, targeting implementation of short-term measures across all cities by 2035. By that year, at least seven flood-prone cities are to have integrated early warning systems, and 100 per cent of high-risk cities are to have riverside flood risk and drainage maps. A bilateral coastal adaptation project with Argentina addresses sea-level rise in vulnerable urban areas. City-level proposals for Durazno and Rivera integrate flood and heatwave responses within a single resilience framework.



Urban dwellers affected by floods across Cambodia © UN News

CAMBODIA



MULTI-HAZARD RESPONSE IN CITIES | A+

Cambodia's NDC confronts overlapping urban hazards (heat stress, flooding, drought, and storms) through a structured multi-hazard planning framework with specific city-level targets. A green space development toolkit, to be introduced by 2028 with pilot projects in two cities, directly addresses urban heat island reduction. Multi-sectoral contingency plans covering floods, droughts, and storms are paired with a dedicated heatwave action plan for Phnom Penh. Vulnerability assessments across five urban cities are planned for completion by 2030, feeding into a national Urban Adaptation Plan that integrates land use and climate risk.



Urban climate finance

Urban climate finance would need to increase more than fivefold to meet the investment levels required by the Paris Agreement, rising from USD 831 billion in 2022 to an estimated USD 4.5 trillion annually by 2030 (CCFLA, 2024). Cities sit at the centre of that gap: they are responsible for the infrastructure, services, and systems through which national commitments are delivered, yet subnational governments capture only a small fraction of international climate finance. In 2022, 11 per cent of urban climate finance reached emerging and developing economies; just one per cent reached Least Developed Countries (CCFLA, 2024).

The setup of the climate finance architecture compounds the problem for urban investments.

National governments and development finance institutions remain the primary providers of public urban climate finance (CCFLA, 2024). The mechanisms to channel those flows to subnational governments, among them intergovernmental fiscal transfers, municipal credit instruments, and direct-access modalities for local authorities, remain underdeveloped in most countries, leaving cities reliant on national budget allocations rather than direct access to international finance.

The challenge is particularly acute for adaptation, where revenue streams are less predictable and private capital harder to mobilize. Cities in lower-income countries face a compound constraint: high climate risk exposure, limited fiscal capacity, and restricted access to the international finance systems that could bridge the gap.

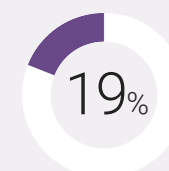
Urban climate finance in NDCs 3.0

- 27 of the 142 NDCs 3.0 include urban climate finance content (19 per cent), up from 18 in NDC 2.0, a 50 per cent increase.
- 21 of the 142 NDCs 3.0 (15 per cent) commit to specific, delivery-oriented mechanisms, up from 13 in NDC 2.0, a 62 per cent increase suggesting that where urban climate finance appears, it is treated with growing seriousness.
- The countries engaging most explicitly with urban finance tend to be those with the greatest financing needs and the least domestic fiscal capacity. The four most prominent mechanisms found in NDC 3.0 are urban and subnational climate finance instruments, private sector and blended finance, international climate finance, and public finance and budget allocation.

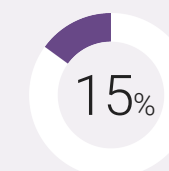


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **19% include urban climate finance** commitments."

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Include urban climate finance

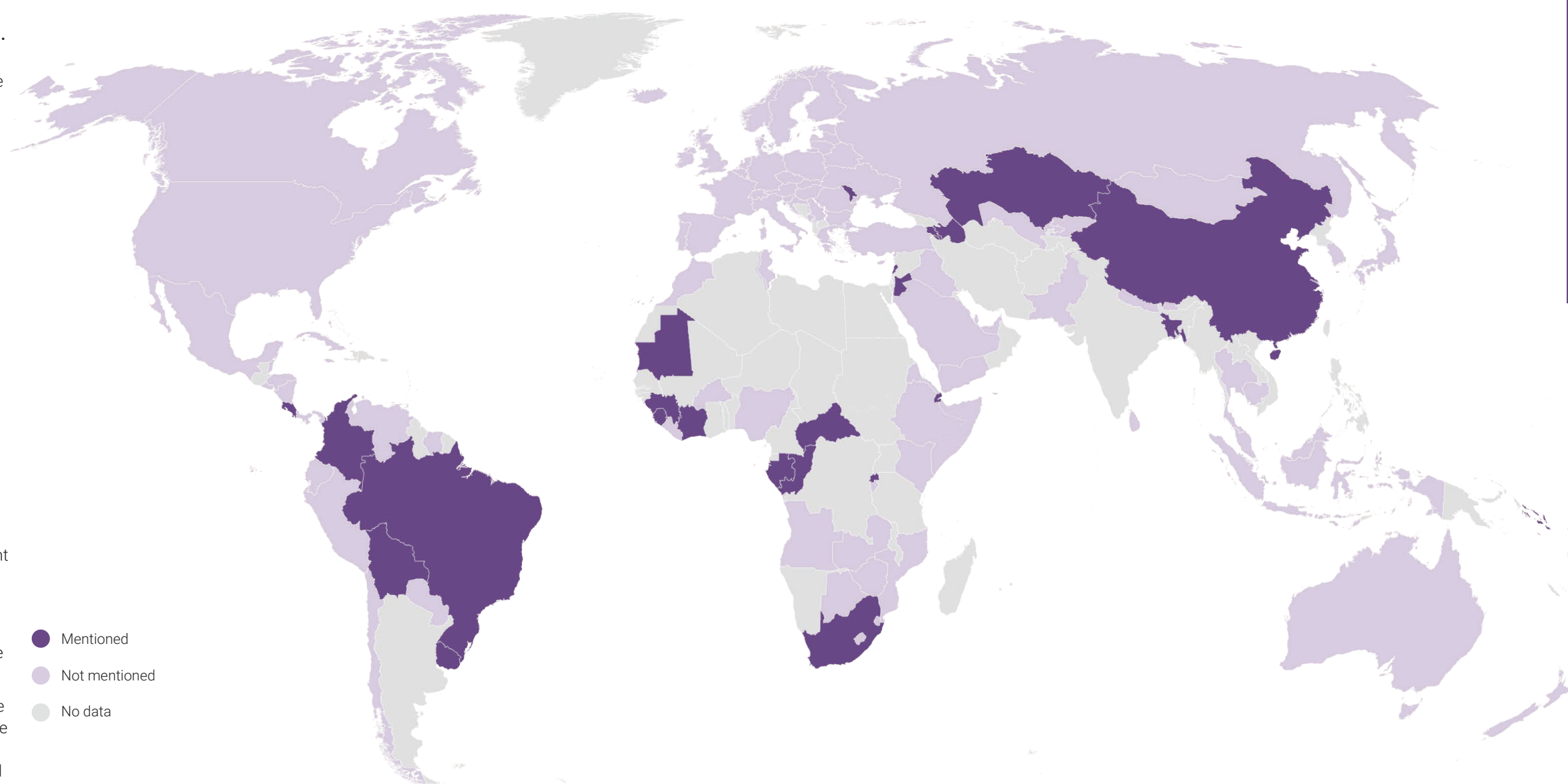


Include substantive mentions of urban climate finance



+50%

Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0



● Mentioned
● Not mentioned
● No data

Figure 13. Geographical distribution of urban climate finance content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

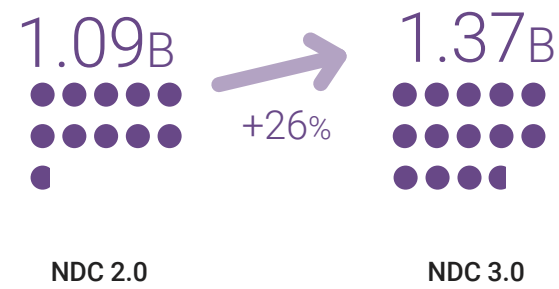


Urban climate finance

Urban climate finance is the least represented urban means of implementation in NDCs 3.0, included by just 27 of 142 NDCs (19 per cent), up from 18 in NDC 2.0. Twenty-one of those 27 commit to specific, delivery-oriented measures, a 62 per cent increase on NDC 2.0 that signals growing seriousness where finance appears at all. The pattern is the reverse of most sectors: it is lower- and upper-middle-income countries, not high-income ones, that are driving uptake.

POPULATION

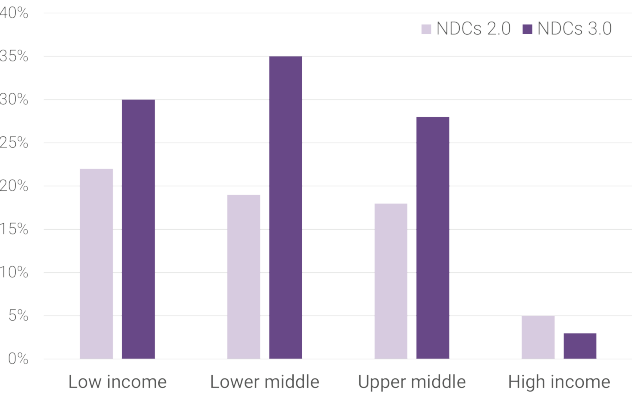
Limited urban population coverage under climate finance



NDCs 3.0 that include urban climate finance content cover 1.37 billion urban residents, an increase of around 280 million people from NDC 2.0.

INCOME

Those with the greatest financing needs are driving the strongest commitments

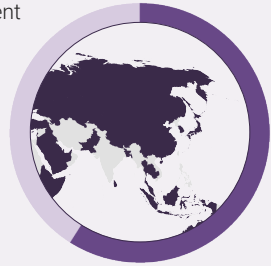


NDCs 3.0 from middle-income countries show the strongest gains in urban climate finance, while high-income countries slip to 3 per cent coverage.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

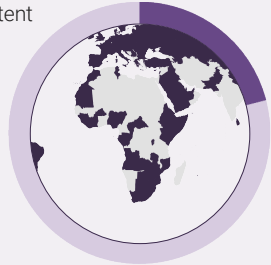
ASIA

59% of regional urban population covered
7 countries include content
3 of 7 substantive
1.04B urban population



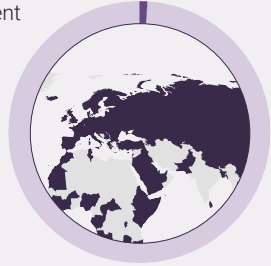
AFRICA

21% of regional urban population covered
10 countries include content
9 of 10 substantive
0.09B urban population



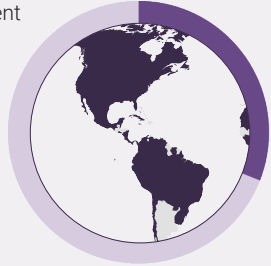
EUROPE

<1% of regional urban population covered
1 countries include content
1 of 1 substantive
<0.01B urban population



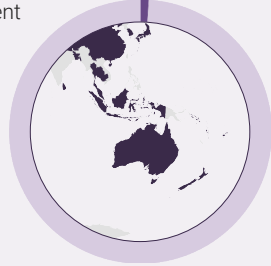
AMERICAS

31% of regional urban population covered
5 countries include content
4 of 5 substantive
0.25B urban population



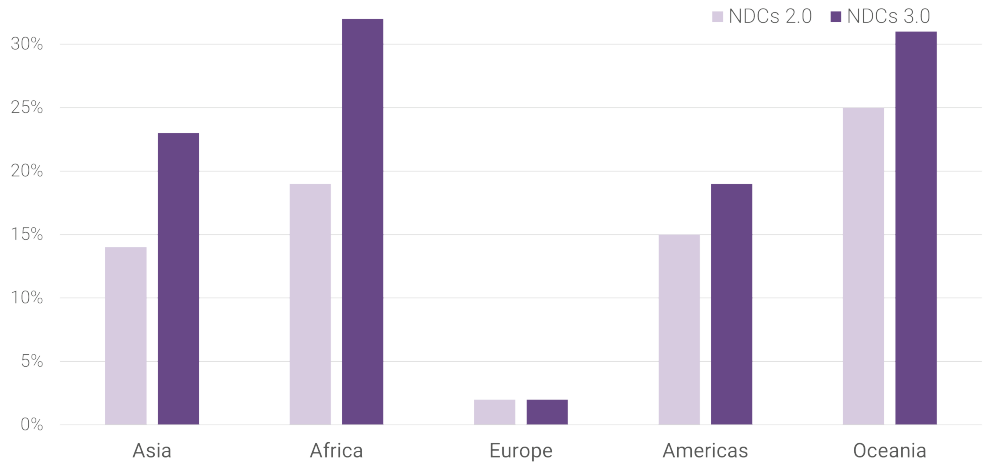
OCEANIA

<1% of regional urban population covered
4 countries include content
4 of 4 substantive
<0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

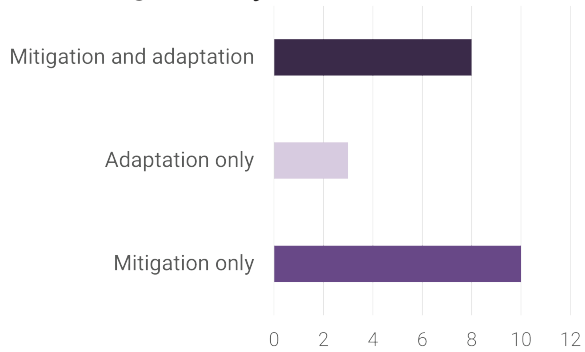
Africa and Asia are leading regional growth



Africa and Asia lead regional growth in urban climate finance commitments in NDC 3.0, reflecting the financing realities and needs on the ground. African NDCs 3.0 often pair subnational finance instruments with governance-linked mechanisms, while Asian NDCs 3.0 show growing private finance mobilisation through green bond markets.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Mitigation prioritized, but adaptation following closely



Mitigation leads urban climate finance commitments in NDC 3.0, but adaptation follows closely, with eight countries referencing both as cross-cutting priorities for finance instruments.

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

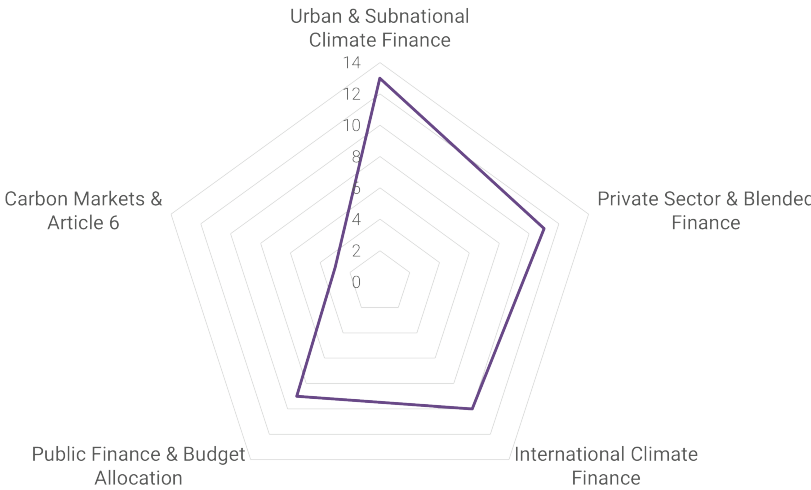
When mentioned, finance is often prioritized

Countries that cite international climate finance almost always prioritize it, treating multilateral funds as a named precondition for urban climate action, not a supplementary resource. Urban and subnational finance instruments are the most cited overall but show lower prioritisation rates, indicating a still growing subsector.

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Sierra Leone	5, including Private Sector & Blended Finance
Brazil	4, including Public Finance & Budget Allocation
China	3, including Private Sector & Blended Finance
Colombia	3, including International and Climate Finance
Mauritania	1, including Urban & Subnational Climate Finance





Urban climate finance commitments in NDCs 3.0 take five distinct forms: urban and subnational climate finance instruments, public finance and budget allocation, international climate finance, private sector and blended finance, and carbon markets and Article 6. Which mechanisms appear, and how specifically, reflects each country's fiscal context, institutional capacity, and access to international capital. Three patterns define the landscape.

Urban and subnational climate finance instruments are the most frequently cited mechanism in NDCs 3.0, appearing in 13 submissions and prioritized in seven, a 160 per cent increase on NDC 2.0. These commitments reflect a recognition that channelling finance to cities requires institutional architecture as well as resources: dedicated urban climate funds, fiscal decentralisation mechanisms, and intergovernmental transfer systems through which finance can be absorbed at the local level. Where these mechanisms are named, countries are building delivery infrastructure, not merely identifying a funding source.

International climate finance is the mechanism countries most consistently back with specific commitments: nine of the ten NDCs that name it prioritize it, signalling that access to multilateral and bilateral funds is being treated as a named delivery condition, not a supplementary resource. Public finance and budget allocation follows at nine mentions and seven prioritisations, reflecting a growing recognition that national budgets must explicitly earmark resources for urban investment. Both mechanisms are most prominent among lower-middle-income countries, where domestic fiscal space cannot meet urban climate investment needs at scale.

Private sector and blended finance is the fastest-growing urban finance mechanism, rising from three mentions in NDC 2.0 to 11 in NDC 3.0, with eight NDCs committing to delivery-oriented instruments. Countries are increasingly committing to de-risking urban climate investments through guarantee mechanisms, concessional finance, and results-based financing designed to attract private capital. Carbon markets and Article 6 remain nascent at three mentions, though all three are prioritized, suggesting a small but committed group of countries is beginning to explore carbon crediting as a revenue stream for urban climate projects at city scale.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

4
4

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Urban & Subnational Climate Finance

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Private Sector & Blended Finance

AFRICA

5
4

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Urban & Subnational Climate Finance

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Public Finance & Budget Allocation

EUROPE

1
0

of NDCs 3.0 mention
International Climate Finance

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Urban & Subnational Climate Finance

AMERICAS

4
4

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Urban & Subnational Climate Finance

of NDCs 3.0 mention
International Climate Finance

OCEANIA

1
0

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Urban & Subnational Climate Finance

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Public Finance & Budget Allocation



Sierra Leone is developing multi-instrument approaches to climate finance to support urban development © Adobe Stock

SIERRA LEONE DIVERSIFIED URBAN CLIMATE FINANCE | CHAMP | A+



Sierra Leone's NDC 3.0 presents one of the most comprehensive urban climate finance strategies in the dataset, combining blended finance instruments, urban resilience bonds, results-based financing mechanisms, and a detailed project pipeline embedded within a country platform. Rather than relying on a single financing channel, Sierra Leone commits to a multi-instrument approach that maps financing sources to specific urban investment priorities, creating a framework that is both investable and transparent. The strategy draws on all five finance mechanisms identified in this chapter, making Sierra Leone the only NDC 3.0 to prioritize each one.



Mauritania is linking climate finance with a multilevel governance architecture, giving cities like Nouakchott (photo) better capacity to deliver climate action. © Adobe Stock

MAURITANIA FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION AND GOVERNANCE | A+



Mauritania's NDC 3.0 stands out for its explicit integration of urban climate finance within a fiscal decentralization framework, introducing municipal ecological taxes and territorial resilience funds as named mechanisms for directing climate resources to the subnational level. Rather than treating urban climate finance as solely a financial commitment, Mauritania embeds it within a multilevel governance architecture, making the flow of climate resources contingent on and reinforcing of subnational institutional capacity. This approach illustrates how fiscal decentralisation can serve simultaneously as a governance reform and a climate finance instrument, with municipal revenue mechanisms creating both the incentive and the institutional foundation for sustained urban climate investment.



Multilevel governance & capacity-building

The national climate governance architecture and the capacity of subnational governments to act varies significantly across the world. Many cities and regions lack the formal mandates, inter-governmental coordination mechanisms, and institutional resources to translate national policy into local delivery. Multilevel governance is the architecture that closes this gap: the institutional arrangements and decision-making processes through which national, regional, and municipal actors align priorities, assign responsibilities, and act together (Biermann et al., 2009; IPCC, 2022).

Governance architecture alone is not sufficient. Subnational governments need the institutional capacity to act on the roles they are given: the technical skills and human resources to develop local climate action plans, prepare bankable projects, and manage climate finance; the organizational resources to carry mandates through; and the data systems to make planning credible and progress trackable. Together, governance and capacity-building are the conditions through which national commitments reach the communities where climate risks concentrate (World Bank, 2022).

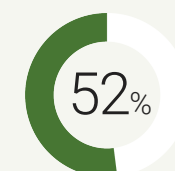
Growth in multilevel governance and capacity-building as means to implement is among the most significant shifts in NDCs 3.0.

- 74 of the 142 NDCs 3.0 include multilevel governance and capacity-building content (52 per cent), up from 33 in NDC 2.0, more than doubling across cycles
- 62 of the 142 NDCs 3.0 (44 per cent) prioritize governance and capacity commitments in specific and actionable terms, up from 24 in NDC 2.0, a 158 per cent increase.
- Vertical coordination between national and subnational governments is the dominant pathway (47 NDCs), followed by training and skills development (24 NDCs), institutional strengthening (18 NDCs), and legal and regulatory frameworks (12 NDCs).

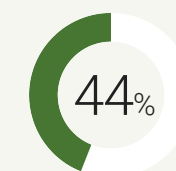


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **52% include multilevel governance and capacity-building** content."

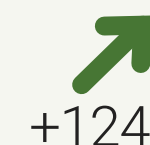
Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



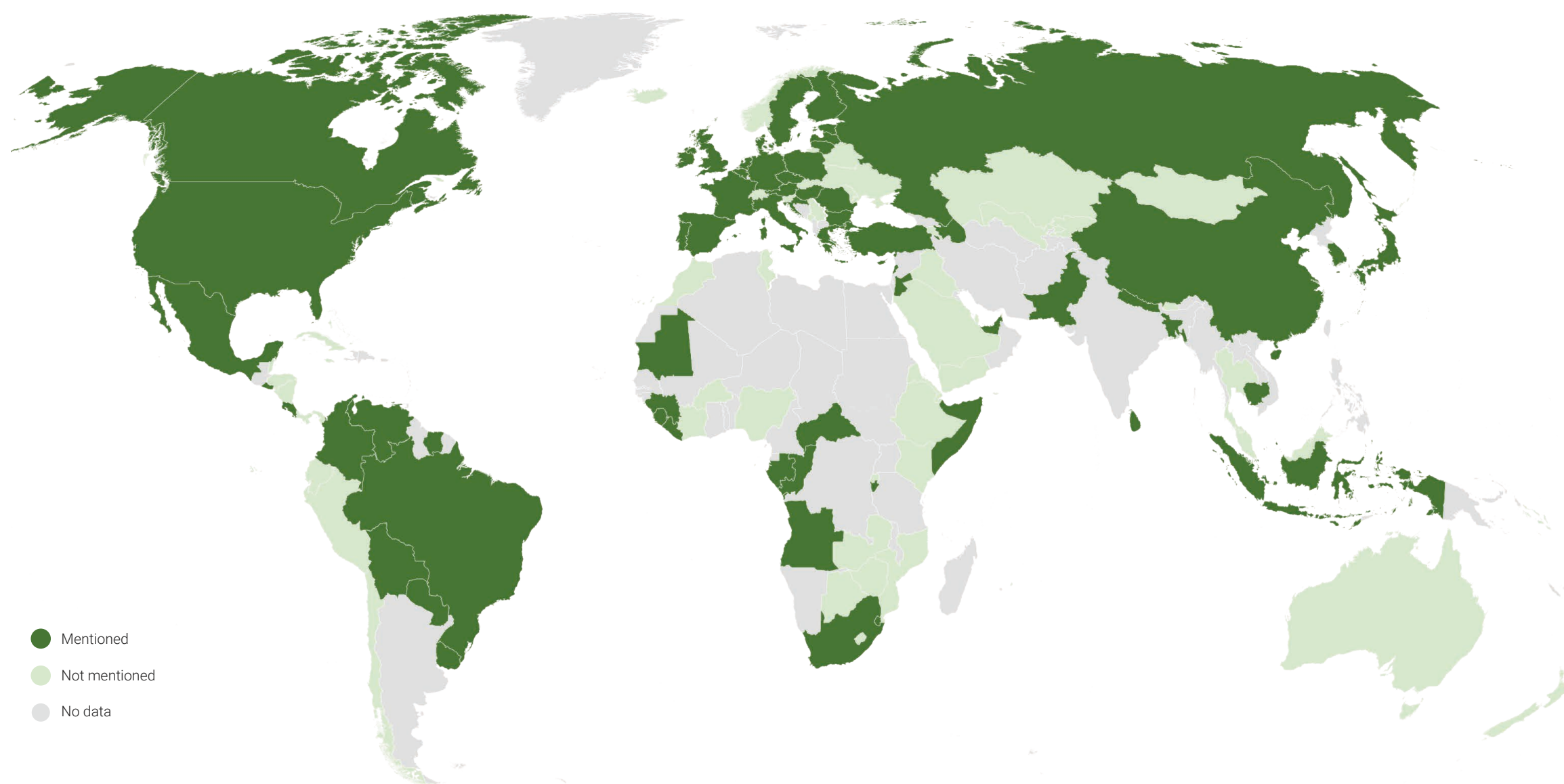
Include MLG and capacity-building



Include substantive mentions of MLG and capacity-building



Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0



● Mentioned
● Not mentioned
● No data

Figure 14. Geographical distribution of multilevel governance and capacity-building content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

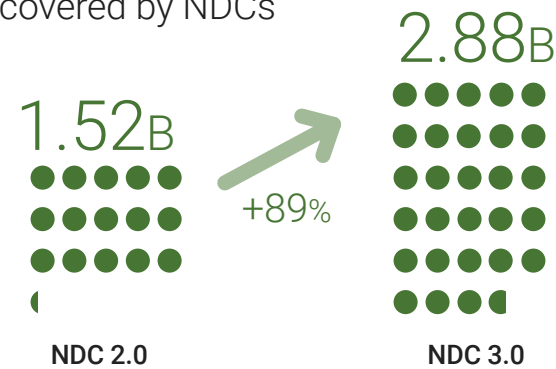


Multilevel governance & capacity-building

Multilevel governance and capacity-building are among the most cited measures in NDCs 3.0: 74 of 142 NDCs (52 per cent) includes provisions on governance and capacity; more than double the 33 in NDC 2.0, and 62 go on to prioritize it in actionable terms. Vertical coordination between national and subnational governments is the defining pathway, present in 47 NDCs. Coverage is growing in all regions, showing an increasing engagement across all parts of the world.

POPULATION

Large increase in urban population covered by NDCs



The urban population covered by governance commitments grows from 1.52 billion to 2.88 billion. This is largely driven by China's NDC 3.0.

INCOME

Uptake is concentrated in high-income countries

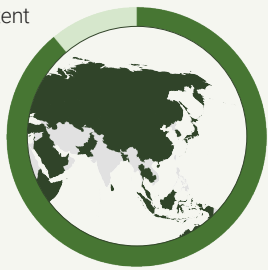


In NDCs 3.0, multilevel governance and capacity-building are most mentioned by high-income countries, followed by lower middle income and low-income countries.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

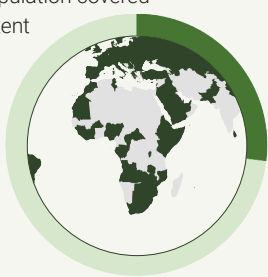
ASIA

89% of regional urban population covered
15 countries include content
10 of 15 substantive
0.70B urban population



AFRICA

27% of regional urban population covered
15 countries include content
10 of 15 substantive
0.11B urban population



EUROPE

91% of regional urban population covered
30 countries include content
29 of 30 substantive
0.51B urban population



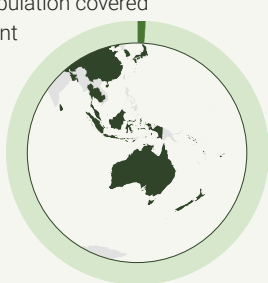
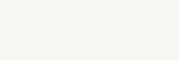
AMERICAS

89% of regional urban population covered
13 countries include content
12 of 13 substantive
0.70B urban population



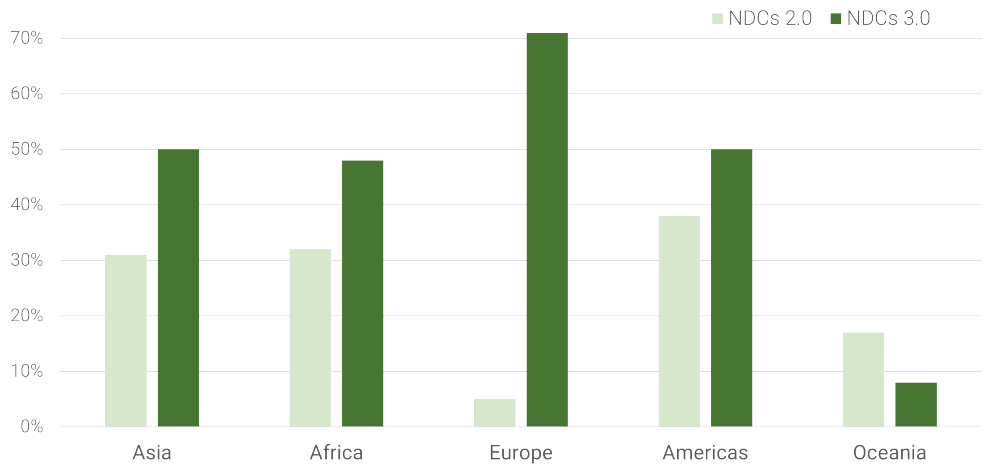
OCEANIA

<1% of regional urban population covered
1 countries include content
1 of 1 substantive
<0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Europe is strengthening multilevel governance mechanisms



Multilevel governance and capacity-building are most prominent in Europe (driven by the EU's submission), followed by Americas, Asia and Africa.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Regional approaches to multilevel governance

When commitments are disaggregated by region, Europe's engagement is concentrated primarily in vertical coordination mechanisms, linked to the region multilevel governance architecture and CHAMP endorsements. European NDCs show more limited engagement with other enabling mechanisms. Countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas more frequently combine vertical coordination with complementary enabling mechanisms, such as capacity-building. The three regions pair governance commitments with institutional strengthening and skills development, recognizing that coordination structures require corresponding investment in local institutional capacity.

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

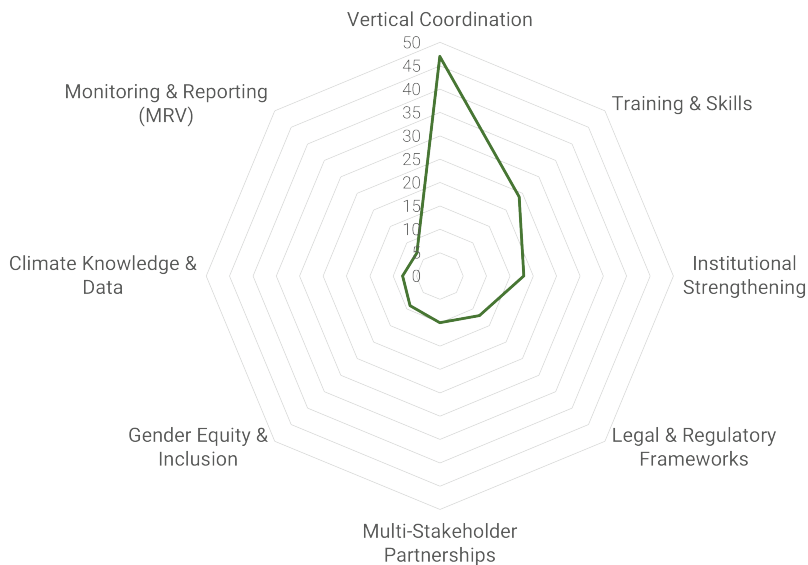
Priorities vary considerably between countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Colombia	5, including Training & Skills Development
Lebanon	4, including Institutional Strengthening
Guinea	4, including Gender Equity & Inclusion
Brazil	3, including Vertical Coordination
Jordan	1, including Vertical Coordination

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Vertical coordination emerges as a core enabler

Vertical coordination is the most prominent implementation pathway, present in 47 of 142 NDCs 3.0. This is followed by training and skills development. Mentions of multi-stakeholder partnerships and monitoring are fewer, but often prioritized, suggesting that countries engaging with these mechanisms are doing so with depth and intentionality.





Multilevel governance and institutional capacity commitments in NDCs 3.0 take eight distinct forms:

vertical coordination between national and subnational governments; training and skills development; institutional strengthening and technical assistance; legal and regulatory frameworks; multi-stakeholder partnerships; gender equity and social inclusion; monitoring and reporting; and climate knowledge and data capacity. Together these pathways span the chain from political mandate to local implementation.

Vertical coordination between national and subnational governments is the dominant and fastest-growing pathway,

rising from 14 mentions and 11 prioritized commitments in NDC 2.0 to 47 mentions and 44 prioritized in NDC 3.0, a 236 per cent increase. NDCs 3.0 reflect growing recognition that commitments in housing, energy, transport, and water cannot be delivered in isolation from the spatial realities of cities and regions. Well-developed NDCs assign clear mandates to ministries and subnational authorities and use inter-governmental committees and formal consultation processes to ensure coherence across government levels.

Training and skills development is the second most prominent pathway:

appearing in 24 NDCs and prioritized in 17, an 85 per cent increase from NDC 2.0. Commitments focus on equipping municipal officials to prepare bankable projects, develop local climate action plans, and manage climate finance. Training is typically sector-specific, reflecting the technical complexity of local implementation across energy, transport, water, and housing. Multi-stakeholder partnerships, though less common at ten NDCs, are fully prioritized in every case. This suggests countries include them only where formal governance structures are intended to deliver.

Institutional strengthening and technical assistance show the largest gap between mention and prioritization in this cluster,

18 NDCs include content, but only nine ground it in specific, actionable commitments. This matters because institutional strengthening is the precondition for all other governance commitments to function. Without clear mandates, adequate resources, and organizational capacity within subnational agencies, coordination frameworks and training investments are unlikely to translate into projects and services on the ground. Governance architecture is being built faster, in some contexts, than the institutions expected to use it.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

9

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Training & Skill Development

5

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Vertical Coordination

AFRICA

6

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Training & Skill Development

6

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Legal & Regulatory Frameworks

EUROPE

29

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Vertical Coordination

1

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Climate Knowledge & Data

AMERICAS

8

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Vertical Coordination

0

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Training & Skill Development

OCEANIA

1

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Training & Skill Development

0

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Vertical Coordination



Brazil's Council of Federation convenes Mayors, Governors, and Ministers in its climate federalism approach. © Antonio Cruz/Agencia Brasil

BRAZIL



CLIMATE FEDERALISM AND MULTILEVEL COORDINATION | CHAMP | A+

Brazil's NDC 3.0 grounds multilevel governance in its climate federalism architecture, establishing that federal, state, and municipal governments will make coordinated, integrated efforts to address climate action. The NDC update process was driven by broad intersectoral dialogue across government bodies at multiple levels, the private sector, civil society, and the scientific community, formalized through national climate governance mechanisms. Climate policy is to be aligned with short-, medium-, and long-term planning instruments across government levels, ensuring coherence across planning cycles.



Jordan's NDC 3.0 is informed by local climate action plans from municipalities such as Greater Amman Municipality (photo). © Petra

JORDAN



BOTTOM-UP VERTICAL COORDINATION | CHAMP | C+

Jordan's NDC 3.0 presents one of the most explicit examples of bottom-up vertical coordination in the dataset. Rather than treating subnational climate plans as derivative of national policy, Jordan's NDC integrates the climate strategies and action plans of its major cities and municipalities as core components of the national implementation framework. Named urban authorities include the Greater Amman Municipality, Greater Irbid Municipality, Greater Mafraq Municipality, the municipalities of Madaba, Karak, and Tafila, and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. This approach positions urban climate strategies as foundational inputs to national delivery rather than outputs from it.



Urban loss & damage

Loss and damage refers to the harms caused by climate change that cannot be avoided through mitigation or addressed through adaptation. It encompasses both economic losses – the destruction of infrastructure, housing, and productive assets that can be valued in markets – and non-economic losses, including displacement, loss of life, cultural heritage, and ecosystem integrity. For cities, both categories are concentrated and acute. Urban areas amplify physical damage through densely settled assets and critical systems, while concentrating the populations most exposed to non-economic harm: informal settlement residents, migrants, and displaced persons. In 2023 alone, 23.7 million people were internally displaced by weather-related events, many in urban and peri-urban settings (IDMC, 2024).

The international architecture for loss and damage response has taken shape in the last decade. The Warsaw International Mechanism, the Santiago Network, and the Loss and Damage Fund establish a formal multilateral response system. Critically for cities, the Loss and Damage Fund, operationalized at COP28 in 2023, includes a direct access modality allowing subnational and local governments to access international climate finance without routing through national budget systems, making it one of the few multilateral climate finance mechanisms in history to formally recognize urban governments as eligible recipients.

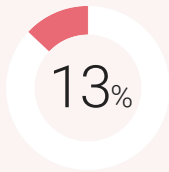
Urban loss and damage did not appear in any NDC 2.0 submission. NDC 3.0 marks the first cycle of engagement.

- 18 NDCs (13 per cent) include urban loss and damage content in NDC 3.0
- 8 NDCs (6 per cent) include prioritized commitments through specific measures.
- Commitments take four broad forms: displacement and human mobility governance (embedding planned relocation and social protection within urban planning); policy coherence, data and risk governance infrastructure (integrated databases, municipal reporting portals, real-time monitoring); emergency response and resilient infrastructure (financial instruments, accommodation for displaced populations, and climate-resilient urban systems); and agriculture and food security (impact of drought, floods, and other climate risks in rural-urban areas).

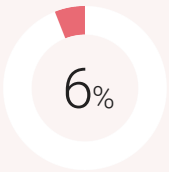


Across the 142 NDCs analyzed, **13% include urban loss and damage** content."

Out of 142 NDCs 3.0 submitted by mid-April 2026



Include urban loss & damage content

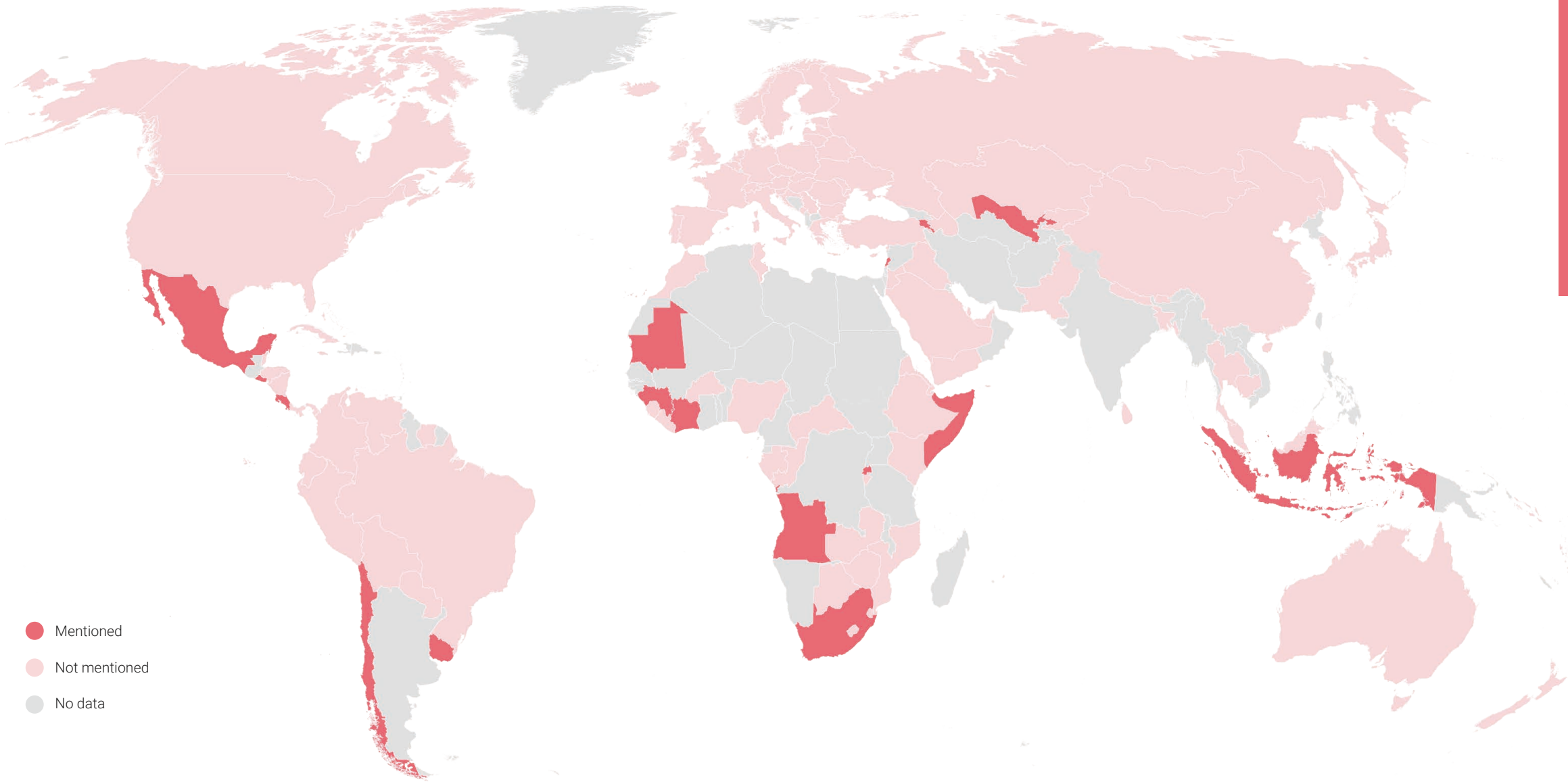


Include substantive mentions of urban loss & damage content



+∞% (0 →13)

Increase between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0



- Mentioned
- Not mentioned
- No data

Figure 15. Geographical distribution of urban loss & damage content in NDCs 3.0

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



Urban loss & damage

Urban loss and damage is the most recently emerged area of urban climate content in NDCs 3.0, appearing for the first time as a named commitment after being entirely absent from previous NDC cycles. Eighteen NDCs 3.0 include urban loss and damage content, and eight prioritize their commitments through specific measures, governance frameworks, or financing provisions. Engagement is uneven across regions, concentrated in countries in Africa, the Americas, and Asia. Most urban loss and damage addresses non-economic losses, with human climate displacement as the most prominent feature.

POPULATION

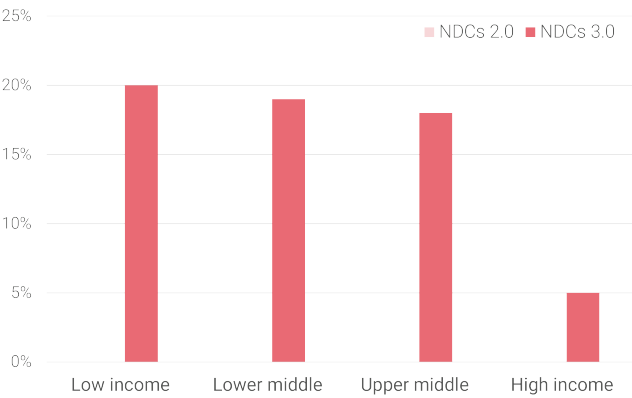
Coverage of loss and damage is minimal across NDCs



The 18 NDCs that explicitly include urban loss and damage content collectively represent 444 million urban residents, all new entrants in NDC 3.0.

INCOME

Concentration, while marginal, is visible in lower income countries

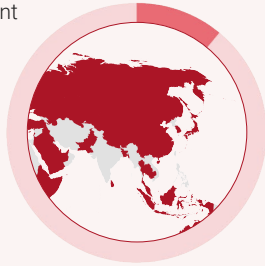


Urban loss and damage commitments were absent in NDC 2.0. In NDCs 3.0, urban loss and damage commitments are concentrated among lower and upper middle-income countries, where climate risks and implementation needs intersect most visibly. In contrast, only 5 per cent of high-income countries incorporate urban loss and damage.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

- 11% of regional urban population covered
- 4 countries include content
- 1 of 4 substantive
- 0.20B urban population



AFRICA

- 26% of regional urban population covered
- 8 countries include content
- 5 of 8 substantive
- 0.11B urban population



EUROPE

- 0% of regional urban population covered
- 0 countries include content
- 0 of 0 substantive
- 0 urban population



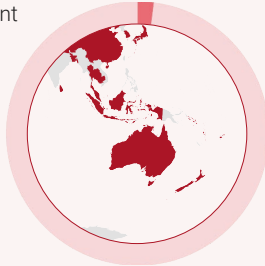
AMERICAS

- 17% of regional urban population covered
- 5 countries include content
- 1 of 5 substantive
- 0.13B urban population



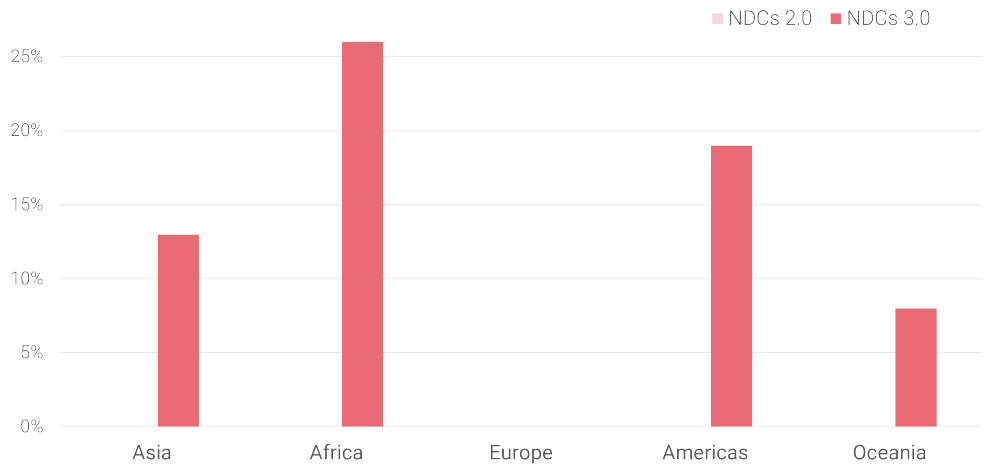
OCEANIA

- 2% of regional urban population covered
- 1 countries include content
- 0 of 1 substantive
- <0.01B urban population



REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Africa leads regional recognition of loss and damage



Urban loss and damage are most prominently present in Africa, included in 8 out of the 31 NDCs 3.0 submissions, in line with the region's exposure to climate disasters. This is followed by the Americas (5 NDCs) and Asia (4 NDCs), while Europe and Oceania lack any significant urban loss and damage reporting.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Non-economic losses lead urban content

Among the 18 NDCs 3.0 with urban loss and damage content, the dominant mode of engagement is non-economic. Countries are addressing displacement, forced mobility, loss of cultural and heritage, and threats to human life and livelihoods rather than quantifying asset destruction or infrastructure replacement costs. This finding is analytically significant as it follows IPCC (2022) and UNFCCC (2013, 2024) findings that most immediate losses and damages in the Global South are non-economic in nature.

THEMATIC INSIGHTS

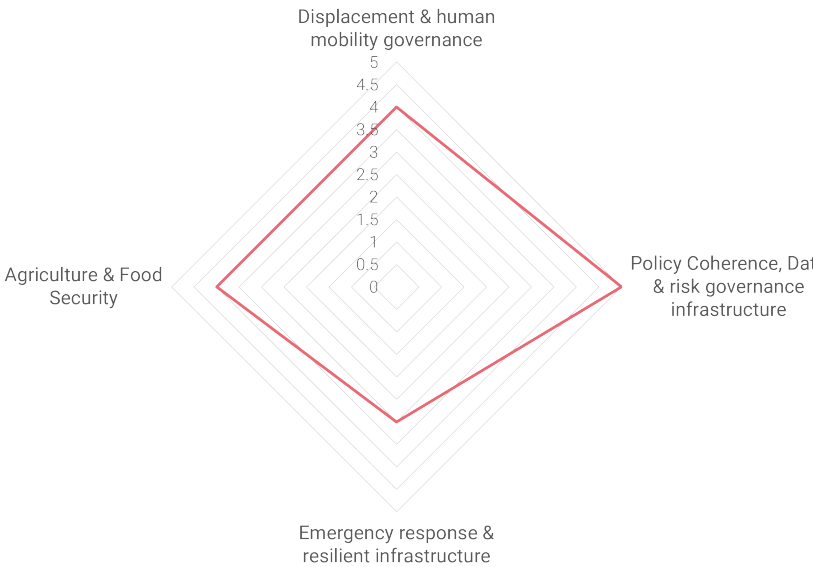
Displacement emerges as a key concern

Urban loss and damage commitments cluster into four response logics: displacement and human mobility governance; policy coherence, data and risk governance infrastructure; emergency response and resilient infrastructure; and agriculture and food security. Some NDCs 3.0 document urban exposure without response commitments, reflecting this policy space's nascent state.

COUNTRY INSIGHTS

Priorities vary considerably between countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS
Guinea	2, including displacement & human mobility governance
Costa Rica	2, including policy coherence, risk and data governance
Fiji	1, including agriculture and food security
Indonesia	1, including emergency response and resilient infrastructure





Where urban loss and damage appears in NDC 3.0, it reflects different institutional entry points and responses: displacement and human mobility governance; policy coherence, data and risk governance; emergency response and resilient infrastructure; and agriculture and food security.

The most prominent response is in displacement and human mobility governance. Six NDCs embed provisions for climate-induced displacement, planned relocation, and social protection within urban planning frameworks. Guinea quantifies the scale: 85 per cent of urban migrants link their departure to climatic hazards and 41 per cent of rural households cite migration as adaptation, underpinning responses that span prevention, green jobs, social protection, and coastal evacuation planning. Mauritania specifies planned relocation for flood-displaced populations in Nouakchott, paired with joint ministerial planning on climate, mobility, and conflict.

NDCs are developing core systems for loss and damage response by integrating risk databases, municipal reporting portals, and cross-institutional governance architectures. Rwanda commits USD 18 million to an Integrated Loss and Damage Data Platform, standardizing data across five national agencies with real-time feeds by 2035, explicitly linked to SDG 11 on resilient cities. Costa Rica establishes guidelines enabling municipalities to report extreme weather events to a national Loss and Damage Portal. Uzbekistan and Cabo Verde invest in institutional capacity and cross-ministerial coordination.

NDCs 3.0 also address urban loss and damage through emergency response and resilient infrastructure, focusing on the immediate consequences of extreme climate events. South Africa, Armenia, and Indonesia include provisions for emergency accommodation for displaced populations, sanitation upgrades in high-risk informal settlements, capacity-building for loss and damage management, and financial and insurance instruments to absorb climate shocks.

NDCs address urban loss and damage through its agricultural and food system impacts, recognizing that climate-driven rural losses generate urban consequences. Mexico identifies how changes in water availability and temperature will displace cultivation areas, affecting rural and urban populations in zones of accelerated urbanization. Fiji warns agricultural losses may drive urban migration, shrink productivity, increase food import dependence, and erode traditional practices due to climate impacts

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

ASIA

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Emergency response & resilient infrastructure

1

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Displacement and human mobility governance

AFRICA

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Displacement and human mobility governance

3

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Policy coherence, data & risk governance

EUROPE

0

of NDCs 3.0 mention

AMERICAS

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Policy coherence, data & risk governance

2

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Displacement and human mobility governance

OCEANIA

1

of NDCs 3.0 mention
Agriculture & food security



Floods and other extreme climate events are generating losses and damages in cities in Costa Rica. © Teletica

COSTA RICA



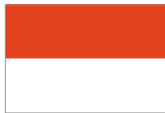
POLICY COHERENCE, DATA AND RISK GOVERNANCE | CHAMP | A+

Costa Rica's CNE Loss and Damage Portal creates a structured municipal reporting pathway for extreme weather events, enabling local governments to generate the subnational evidence base needed to access international climate finance. Guidelines and procedures empower municipalities to report periodically to the national portal, embedding loss and damage data collection within existing emergency management infrastructure rather than creating parallel systems. The model is replicable: by routing loss and damage reporting through established urban governance channels, Costa Rica lowers the institutional cost of compliance for municipalities while building a national evidence base for local government climate finance claims.



Indonesia is investing in the training of local staff to increase institutional resilience for climate disasters. © Iqro Rinaldi/Unsplash

INDONESIA



EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE | B+

Indonesia's NDC 3.0 links capacity-building explicitly to sustainable urban management, positioning loss and damage not as a residual emergency response but as a competency to be developed across urban institutions. The integration of training and skills development with loss and damage management reflects a systemic approach to building urban institutional readiness for climate impacts.

Looking ahead

The scale of progress across NDC revision cycles is clear; cities have now moved from the margins of national climate planning to its centre. The challenge ahead is no longer recognising the role that cities can play but converting the breadth and depth of existing commitments into funded, governed, and delivered outcomes.

Finalizing NDCs 3.0.

How can countries use this report to finalize NDC submissions?

More than 50 NDCs remain to be updated at the time of publication, and the findings here offer a practical guide for strengthening them.

- **Understanding regional trends:** The regional and income-group breakdowns allow any country to understand regional priorities and assess how its urban content compares with others.
- **Understanding priority sectors:** The nine deep dives identify which sectors are most widely addressed and which means for implementation exist to achieve them in and with cities.
- **Understanding existing gaps in NDCs:** Missing baseline figures, the absence of measurable targets linking national goals to city-level delivery, and unspecified funding sources are the most common gaps, and all have clear technical remedies.
- **Resources available for support:** UN-Habitat's *Seizing the Urban Opportunity: A 3-Step Guide for Strengthening NDCs 3.0* provides the practical framework for how to integrate cities into national climate plans. It emphasised that strong urban content requires clarity on evidence, challenges, responses, and the mechanisms that enable delivery and should be the product of multilevel, multistakeholder, and multisectoral collaboration.
- **Partners available for support:** Partners, including CHAMP, UN-Habitat through SURGe, the UNDP Climate Promise, the NDC Partnership, and the Baku Continuity Coalition, offer direct support, from NDC 3.0 finalization, technical advice to peer learning to finance preparation.

Case study: NDC 3.0 finalization workshop in Madagascar



In late 2025, UN-Habitat supported Madagascar's NDC 3.0 process through a country training focused on urban climate mitigation and adaptation. Participants worked to identify urban mitigation and adaptation challenges, defining and shortlisting priority urban actions and defining targets and financing modalities. The process brought together national institutions, disaster risk entities, and academic representatives to strengthen alignment across urban planning, energy, risk management, and climate policy.

Implementing NDCs 3.0.

How can NDC commitments be turned into urban climate action?

Nearly three-quarters of NDCs 3.0 now include multilevel governance commitments; a clear signal that national governments recognise cities as essential delivery partners. This is one of the most significant changes between NDCs 2.0 and NDCs 3.0 and offers an opportunity for accelerated action.

Multiple partners are offering support for NDC 3.0 implementation. Through the SURGe programme, UN-Habitat is working with member states who are requesting support to turn NDCs into project delivery on the ground.

Case study: Caribbean workshop on NDCs 3.0 and housing



In May 2026, UN-Habitat convened multiple Caribbean countries for a workshop on how to transform national climate commitments into concrete and replicable urban action plans, in a moment when Caribbean countries are preparing or finalizing their NDC 3.0. The workshop focused on the housing challenges and priorities and built pathways for climate-resilient housing.

What comes next?

This report is the third in a cumulative analytical series. Each NDC revision cycle adds a new layer of data on how national climate plans address cities, allowing trends to be tracked and progress assessed with greater precision. Future work will extend the same analytical approach to a broader range of policy frameworks, building a more comprehensive picture of how climate commitments translate across national and subnational levels – and identify coherence between policy documents.

UN-Habitat's AI for Knowledge Initiative, which made this analysis possible at scale, continues to develop in capability and scope on policy document analysis. Future phases will process a wider range of documents, improve accuracy and transparency, and build tools to support implementation planning and policy monitoring.

To make this work practical and support implementation of NDCs 3.0, UN-Habitat plans to:

- **Regional NDC reports**, showcasing opportunities at a regional level
- **Country overview sheets**, to help understand the opportunity that NDCs 3.0, in line with the local context
- **Thematic spin-offs**, allowing to explore a thematic sector in more detail.



A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world



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