LOCAL 2030
LOCALIZING THE SDGS

Policy Brief Series

Recommendations for COP30: Local Solutions for Climate Action

October 2025

Introduction and Context

This brief presents key recommendations by the United Nations Local2030 Coalition on the role of SDG localization in the COP30 process, conference, and implementation. The Coalition is the United Nations (UN) system-wide platform advancing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level, driven by 14 UN entities and five stakeholder constituencies: national governments, local governments, civil society, academia, youth, and the private sector. It strengthens coherence and impact across the UN system by aligning global goals and national policies with local realities. Through capacity-building, inclusive engagement, innovative financing, and data-driven dialogue, the Coalition fosters systemic transformation and territorial impact for the 2030 Agenda implementation, with particular attention to those furthest behind.

Drawing on this mandate and technical expertise, the brief supports the strengthened engagement of cities and subnational governments in the UNFCCC process – one that fully integrates local stakeholders, reflects multilevel governance, and delivers meaningful results in communities. It also builds on the Sevilla Platform for Action (SPA) initiative, Localizing Finance to Drive Systemic Impact for the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda, a joint effort of Spain, the UN Local2030 Coalition, and the OECD, supported by a wide network of Member States, international financial institutions (IFIs), and partners – to underscore practical implementation pathways and financing solutions that place local priorities at the centre of climate action.

Why Localization Matters

Cities are at the epicenter of the climate emergency, generating over 70 per cent of global emissions.[1] Local and regional governments (LRGs) are on the frontlines of responding to climate impacts and pioneering solutions, holding up to 40 per cent of the potential for emissions reduction.[2] Achieving national climate goals therefore requires coordinated action across all levels of governance; however, only 27 per cent of current NDCs include strong urban content.[3] With 70 per cent of climate solutions dependent on local action [4] – and less than 10% of climate finance reaching local governments [5] – localization is not just a delivery mechanism but a political and practical imperative for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Embedding local finance and integrating local actors, beginning with the design phase, into global climate dialogues is essential to ensure commitments have local ownership and viable implementation strategies.

[1] UN-Habitat, Seizing the Urban Opportunity: A 3-step framework for strengthening NDC 3.0 (2025) p.7.
[2] Ibid, figure 3, pp14-15.
[3] Ibid, p.19.

COP30 : A Launchpad for Localization

COP30 must become the turning point where local priorities shape global outcomes, as it offers a pivotal opportunity to close gaps and elevate localization as central to climate action. Positioned as a "launchpad for the next decade of action," COP30 emphasizes implementation, inclusion, innovation, and Brazil's spirit of *mutirão* (collective mobilization rooted in Indigenous values). Brazil's tradition of climate federalism and the CHAMP initiative illustrate the power of multilevel and community-led action, while Indigenous leadership demonstrates the importance of grounding responses in local knowledge.

The Global Stocktake's estimated USD 5.9 trillion gap [6] and the development of NDCs 3.0 highlight that national ambition must be rooted in multilevel contributions, while underscoring the need for investment in critical sectors -- such as housing, agriculture, land management, transportation and basic services -- where climate risks converge with resilience opportunities. Embedding local actors, urban sectors, and financing mechanisms into the heart of COP30 outcomes will ensure ambition translates into tangible results. Local2030 Coalition members stand ready to support this effort through tools to link local needs with international commitments (e.g. on buildings, infrastructure, agriculture, land management, waste management, territorial climate planning, etc.)

Structural and Framing Solutions

- **Embed localization as a design principle:** Ensure that all COP30 outcomes (finance, mitigation, adaptation, stocktake) integrate a holistic approach grounded in the SDGs, considering their synergies and trade-offs, as a structuring logic, not only in implementation.
- **Institutionalize ministerial and multilevel dialogues:** Strengthening the role of cities and subnational governments in the COP process, including through institutionalizing the Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and Climate Change as a standing feature of COPs and ensure that subnational and local governments can engage in multilevel dialogue in order to promote and accelerate multilevel climate action.
- **Strengthen linkages with other global processes:** Considering the integrated and complementary nature of global fora, support linkages and continued local stakeholder engagement in other processes, such as the World Urban Forum, Innovate4Cities, UNEA, and FfD4 processes and Sevilla Platform for Action follow-up, to strengthen capacity-building for local climate action and the localization of climate finance, and supporting enabling environments for systemic green transitions at the local level.
- **Further promote dedicated spaces for localization**, such as the Cities and Regions Hub, jointly organized by UN-Habitat and the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency to UNFCCC in the Blue Zone for local solutions, dialogues with negotiators, and real-time feedback loops connecting local realities with global commitments.

4] Green Climate Fund. Global Subnational Climate Fund (SnCF Global). Available: https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp152

[5] International Institute for Environment and Development. The G20 climate finance review must help finance reach the local level (17 June 2024) Available: https://www.iied.org/g20-climate-funds-review-must-help-finance-reach-local-level

[6] UNEP Cities Unit: Showcasing Climate Action at COP3- (2025) p.1.

Specific Recommendations for COP30

1) Strengthen multilevel governance: Formally recognize the role of LRGs in COP30 declarations, implementation frameworks, and dialogues. Support initiatives such as CHAMP, SURGe, and the Baku Continuity Coalition, and build on examples like Brazil's NDC embracing climate federalism coordinated across national, state and municipal levels. Support local- and regional-sensitive climate solutions through appropriate Activation Groups (1; 11; 12; 13; 15; 22; 25).

2) Integrate local priorities in NDCs 3.0: Support countries to apply structured approaches (Assess, Prepare, Co-Design) to ensure local baselines, challenges and actions are reflected in NDCs with clear financing, technology, and capacity-building pathways, while involving local stakeholders from the design phase to ensure priorities are realistic and remove bottlenecks in the implementation phase. Include benchmarks for local and urban content and ensure means of implementation (e.g. finance, technology, capacity-building) are included for local actors.

3) Integrate urban dimensions into global frameworks: Ensure that the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and the Global Stocktake (GST) explicitly capture urban resilience and multilevel contributions. To institutionalize this, a Global Urban Stocktake can serve as an annual monitoring mechanism, linked to the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, to track progress on urban climate actions and feed into GGA monitoring and GST cycles. This approach is essential to institutionalize a feedback loop between global ambition and local implementation, and can be reinforced through guidance such as the CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems and initiatives such as the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH), which integrates climate and health action and the Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture (SCALA).

4) Reform climate finance systems: Unlock direct access to finance for local governments and communities by operationalizing facilities such as EPIC and the Cities Investment Facility, scaling Integrated Local Financing Frameworks (ILFFs) to align subnational financial planning with climate goals, and establishing subnational finance windows within climate funds. Expand the use of the SDG Localization Marker and other traceable metrics to ensure a higher portion of climate finance reaches local implementers and promote pooled financial mechanisms for community and local enterprises.

5) Mobilize innovative financing: Scale up mechanisms such as green bonds, catastrophe bonds, carbon credits, climate risk insurance, renewable energy funds and public–private partnerships to attract investment in locally grounded climate action, particularly in developing countries.

6) Advance local leadership in nature and resilience finance: Direct resources to local and Indigenous civil society and actors and to locally managed sustainability ventures through mechanisms like the Tropical Forest Forever Facility and TFIF, recognizing their role in land stewardship, agroecology, biodiversity conservation, fire prevention, sustainable livelihoods and reforestation.

7) Scale local breakthroughs: Accelerate initiatives such as Beat the Heat in Cities, the Food Waste Breakthrough, and the Buildings Breakthrough, and formally recognize local contributions to methane reduction, climate-smart agriculture, housing resilience, and cooling transitions. Support cities as leaders on cooling and heat resilience with targeted finance and technical assistance.

8) Support subnational champions and roadmaps: Expand city- and region-led climate roadmaps with formal links to national climate plans and NDC implementation and financing pathways.

9) Promote knowledge and science-policy linkages: Strengthen local science-policy interfaces, including civil society and Indigenous knowledge, and connect to global processes such as the IPCC Special Report on Cities. Highlight scalable models such as the Ecological Living Module。

10) Invest in local data and reporting systems: Support local-level climate data systems, Voluntary Local Reviews, and the Enhanced Transparency Framework to align local monitoring with national and global stocktake processes, creating bottom-up accountability mechanisms co-managed by local actors.

11) Integrate climate-resilient infrastructure asset management: Use tools such as the UN Infrastructure Asset Management Toolkit to help local and national governments identify, finance and manage resilient public infrastructure.

12) Leverage agrifood systems transformation for climate resilience: Strengthen the integration of climate-smart agriculture and sustainable agrifood systems into local climate action plans. Support local governments and communities in advancing this transformation through initiatives such as urban and peri-urban agriculture, ensuring food security, livelihoods, and ecosystem restoration are central to local climate strategies.