

# The UN Forum of Mayors at a glance

## History

What began as a simple “Day of Cities” in 2019 has steadily evolved into a formal and recognized body within the UN system. Today, the UN Forum of Mayors functions as a subsidiary body to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), set up in 1947 by the ECOSOC. The Forum’s development underscores the rising appreciation among UN Member States for the role of mayors in driving sustainable urban transformation and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.



## A unique UN body for mayors

What sets the Forum apart within the UN system is its ability to allow mayors to participate directly in a UN process in their own capacity – rather than as part of national delegations or through city networks. The UN Forum of Mayors creates a unique opportunity for mayors to share their experiences with the international community, offer proven solutions, and formally convey recommendations to States on issues of shared concern.



This positions the UN Forum of Mayors as a vital entry point for local leaders into the UN system and a key instrument for strengthening the voice of cities in global multilateralism – an objective championed by the Global Cities Hub since its inception. In the long term, the Forum aspires to become a central pillar within the UN architecture, reflecting the indispensable role of cities and local governments in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future.



## Sustainable Development Goals

While the Forum has addressed a wide range of themes related to sustainable urban development since 2020, its future direction will focus increasingly on the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this capacity, it will serve as a local counterpart to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York. Each year, the Forum will align its discussions with the SDGs under review at the HLPF, offering cities a dedicated space to explore the local dimensions of SDGs.



## Global scope

The Forum has quickly expanded and it is aiming for global reach. Thanks to the collaboration of UN Regional Economic Commissions and the Global Cities Hub, mayors from all regions of the world have been able to take part in the Forum, helping to shape a more inclusive and representative dialogue on urban challenges.

## Future of the Forum

### Towards a Stronger Voice for Cities in Multilateralism

Looking ahead, the Forum will maintain its role in amplifying mayors' voices within the UN system. Currently, its recommendations are conveyed to UNECE Member States, but in the future, the Forum's outcome could be shared with other key intergovernmental bodies, such as the UN General Assembly or even Climate Change COPs. Additionally, the Forum will continue to bring together mayors, States and relevant international organizations to deepen multilevel collaboration on SDG implementation. The Forum should evolve into a platform for forward-looking dialogue on the future of sustainable development beyond 2030, fostering collective thinking on what should succeed the current SDG agenda.

