



LCOY South Africa 2025 U20 2025 Contributions: Climate Action and Urban Resilience

The notion that the global is local and the local is global positions cities as critical cities where climate action and justice intersect. This brief is guided by the principle of subsidiarity - decisions must be made by those closest to the realities on the ground. Our recommendations are rooted in recognition and procedural justice to ensure that marginalised voices, especially youth and frontline communities, are acknowledged and included in urban sustainability governance. With insights from youth consultations held via three webinars engaging nearly 300 young people, this brief outlines actionable policy pathways for U20 mayors and G20 leaders to champion urban just transition pathways aligned with the 1.5°C goal. Cities are spaces of innovation and diversity but also deep inequality. Transformative urban policy must challenge existing power structures and promote inclusive, equitable development.

U20 2025 Just Transition Recommendations

1. Build Capacity in Cities to Deliver on 1.5°C

- **Target:** Align urban climate plans with an ambitious 1.5 degree scenario NDC 3.0 submissions and the Global Stocktake outcomes.
- **Call to Action:** The G20 should place urban climate action on its September Taskforce meeting, formally recognising cities as primary implementation agents and embed multilevel governance that decentralises climate action decision-making and financing.
- **Just Transition Lens:** Prioritise locally led solutions that centre youth, informal workers, and affected communities.

2. Enable Circular and Inclusive Urban Economies

- **Target:** Enable circular and inclusive urban economies that prioritise regenerative systems, local livelihoods, and equitable access to green opportunities.
- **Call to Action:** Establish municipal-level circular economy hubs that support youth-led innovation, formalise informal recycling sectors, and incentivise closed-loop production models through public-private-community partnerships and [collaborations](#).
- **Just Transition Lens:** Ensure meaningful participation of marginalised groups including women, youth, workers, LGBTQIA+, and persons with disabilities in economic planning



and benefit-sharing mechanisms.. Recognise [informal green skills](#) as essential to a just transition.

3. Scale Up Adaptation Finance for Cities

- **Target:** Double adaptation finance by 2025 post-COP 30, with direct flows to local governments.
- **Call to Action:** Prioritise funding for disaster response in urban communities facing heat, drought, and flood risks. These are challenges for marginalised and affected communities from the Global North to the Global South.
- **Just Transition Lens:** Ensure funding for adaptation supports early warning systems and disaster risk management, incorporating social protection interventions and robust stakeholder engagement throughout the policy cycle.

4. Deliver Climate Justice through Localised Finance

- **Target:** Mobilise [\\$800 billion/year by 2030](#) for urban climate action, allocating at least 40% to vulnerable communities.
- **Call to Action:** Improve local government access to grant-based climate finance . Cities must not be further indebted through loan based financing which deepens municipal debt and constraints transformative action
- **Just Transition Lens:** Prioritise community-owned solutions that focus on reskilling workers, strengthen local social infrastructure and redistribute economic and ecological value to historically excluded groups

5. Implement Climate Responsive Budgeting in Local Governance

- **Target:** Integrate climate targets in municipal budget processes in consultation with both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.
- **Call to Action:** Support local governments with capacity strengthening and climate focused data systems to assist in monitoring and evaluation of climate responsive budgeting pilot projects.
- **Just Transition Lens:** Monitor social outcomes of climate responsive budgeting; include urban and peri-urban dwellers in the budget oversight.

6. Secure Urban Water Justice

- **Target:** Expand rainwater harvesting systems, and safe access to sanitation for all by 2030



- **Call to Action:** Invest in integrated, climate-resilient water governance informed by civil society, technical experts and think tanks.
- **Just Transition Lens:** Prioritise low-income and informal settlements in water and sanitation planning, ensuring equitable access, community oversight, and water as a common good, and not a commodity, in urban climate adaptation strategies.

7. Champion Gender Justice in Urban Climate Action

- **Target:** Mainstream gender justice into urban climate action by mandating gender impact assessments as part of local governance climate action plans and voluntary local reviews.
- **Call to Action:** Invest in women-led climate resilience and gender diverse projects in informal areas. Provide training for local governance workers on intersectionality, gender justice and climate justice. Address gender gaps in city planning, policies, and budgeting.
- **Just Transition Lens:** Recognise gendered labour in climate emergencies and women's contributions to care economies. Prioritise gender justice in new projects, enable women to actively participate in the economy and land ownership.

7. Conclusion

The just transition can be achieved by integrating its principles and pillars- restorative justice, procedural justice and distributive justice- in local governance. This will ensure that the constituents of urban areas have their dignity, prosperity, and environmental integrity safeguarded.

Priority Recommendations:

Formalising youth climate councils in local governance structures. To provide input and consultation, in addition to independent oversight of effective implementation.

- Striving towards inclusive governance by ensuring data-driven planning including gender, age, and spatial equity metrics.

The time for bold, justice centred, youth responsive, local governance is now.