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**— PRESS RELEASE —**

**Countries could surpass pledged emissions cuts with help from cities, regions and businesses, report finds**

17/18 September 2019 — Climate commitments by cities, regions and businesses could push countries to over-achieve their emissions reduction goals under the Paris Agreement, giving national leaders more confidence to ramp up efforts to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

A report released today confirms previous findings on the significant potential for local governments and corporations to slash greenhouse gas emissions, especially when working through international partnerships such as the Global Covenant of Mayors, C40, We Are Still In and the Under2 Coalition.

It finds that in 10 of the world's biggest-emitting economies, the known and quantified **climate commitments set individually by more than 6,000 cities and regions and 1,500 companies could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1.2 to 2 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) per year by 2030**, in addition to the reductions those governments plan to make. These cuts amount to roughly 4 percent of global emissions today, but they are only possible if individual commitments are fully implemented. The 10 economies are: Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States.

In Japan and Mexico, action by cities, regions, and business could help governments meet current national targets. In China, India, and the European Union, they would help governments over-achieve their pledges. In Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, South Africa, and the United States, cities, regions and businesses can help close the gap between current policies and national targets.

However, local governments and corporations worldwide could make even greater emissions cuts when they come together to address common goals through joint initiatives, often alongside national governments. **The 17 high-performing international initiatives analysed in this report could reduce emissions by 18 to 21 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year by 2030 beyond current government efforts.** These reductions equate to nearly one-third of global greenhouse gases — enough to keep the global temperature rise within 2°C, rather than the 3°C or more that national pledges under the Paris Agreement are on track to reach.

All of this potential is promising, but it will only be achieved with substantial work. The international initiatives must expand their memberships, scale up their work, and ensure they do not displace climate efforts elsewhere. Individual local governments and companies must work to make their commitments reality. And better data and reporting is needed to measure additional climate action outside of national governments, which could not be assessed in this report.

Yet even if all of these commitments are fully met, they are not enough to keep the temperature rise to 1.5°C, which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says will significantly limit devastation for millions of people, plant and animal species compared to 2°C. The global economy is still ill-prepared to protect humanity from the worst impacts of climate change and urgently needs stronger and faster action from all national, local and private sector parties.

The results show national leaders already have greater space to hike their targets, thanks to commitments by their local governments and corporations. Some of the 10 major emitters analysed in the report could even over-achieve their existing Paris pledges, including (and see more specific country findings below):

- In the European Union, the full implementation of recorded and quantified individual commitments by cities, regions and companies could lead to an emissions reduction of up to 48 percent by 2030 from 1990 levels — a 20% jump from the current goal of at least 40 percent.
- In India, their commitments would add a 5.5 percent reduction to the current national policy projections for 2030 (equal to 3,800 to 4,200 million tonnes (Mt) of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year). The national policy already puts India on track to surpass its Paris pledge by 1,100 to 1,900 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year.
- In Japan, city, region and business commitments would lower emissions by up to 70 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year below the country's Paris pledge by 2030.

Subnational and corporate commitments are particularly important in countries like Brazil and the US, where national leaders are unravelling climate policies. In the United States, these commitments could put the country in range of meeting its climate pledge for 2025, despite efforts by the Trump administration to roll back policies.

To align with a 1.5°C limit, national governments must incorporate these city, regional and corporate commitments into their Paris Agreement plans, which are due to be revised and upgraded by 2020. They should also set policies to help these commitments become reality and share financial and technical resources to implement or scale them up. Cities, regions and businesses must do their part by fulfilling their commitments, and increasing them. International initiatives can help national and non-state actors cooperate on common goals, for instance to end deforestation or expand renewable energy and clean transport networks.

“We have shown that cities, regions and businesses set themselves emission reduction goals, many of which are very ambitious. Now these commitments need to be implemented. This is only possible if these actors and national governments work together, mutually reinforcing their activities,” said Dr. Takeshi Kuramochi, the project leader and senior climate policy researcher at NewClimate Institute.

The report builds on a study released prior to the Global Climate Action Summit in September 2018, which featured thousands of city, region, and corporate leaders and announced nearly 500 new climate change initiatives. This 2019 assessment aims to inform the United Nations' Climate Action Summit on September 23, which calls on leaders from government, business, civil society and elsewhere to strengthen their commitments in line with a 1.5°C limit.

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## About the report

This report, titled “Global Climate Action from Cities, Regions and Businesses. Individual actors, collective initiatives and their impact on global greenhouse gas emissions” is the most up-to-date, comprehensive effort to aggregate the potential of the numerous commitments by cities, regions and businesses. It was prepared by NewClimate Institute, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), Data-Driven EnviroPolicy Lab, University of Oxford and the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik/German Development Institute (DIE).

## Additional quotes

**Prof. Dr. Niklas Höhne, NewClimate Institute:** *“Selected cities, regions and businesses have set themselves very ambitious goals. If they can successfully implement these goals and carry other actors along with them, the world can still limit temperature increase to 1.5°C.”*

**Mark Roelfsema, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL):** *“The proof is in the pudding. Although ambition shown by cities, regions and business is high, the bottom-up action still needs to manifest and can be increased by working more closely together with national governments.”*

**Dr. Angel Hsu, Director of Data-Driven EnviroPolicy Lab and Assistant Professor at Yale-NUS College:** *“While the results featured in our report demonstrate a lot of potential to narrow the emissions gap towards the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C goal, data and information on implementation is still lacking. Whether these actors are actually achieving the goals they commit to or not are key questions the global community needs to be asking of these actors to ensure their credibility moving forward.”*

**Prof. Thomas Hale, Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University:** *“Climate action from cities, regions, and businesses is helping the world get on track to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, paving the way for national governments to put forward a new round of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in 2020 that bring us toward the 1.5°C goal.”*

**Dr. Sander Chan, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik/German Development Institute (DIE):** *“Effective collaborative efforts by regions, cities, businesses and civil society to mitigate greenhouse gases hold great promise to also deliver on the global Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. A singular focus on mitigation impacts, however, could result in negative impacts in other areas of sustainable development, including for life on land, sustainable cities and communities, and decent work and economic growth.”*

## Targeted country and regional findings

The report focuses on more than 6,000 cities and regions and 1,500 businesses that have recorded quantifiable commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 10 high-emitting economies: Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States. The calculation of their potential mitigation assumes these commitments are fully implemented, and that these efforts do not affect the pace of climate action elsewhere (for example, they do not cause national governments or other cities, regions, or companies to slow or accelerate their efforts).

### **Brazil:**

In Brazil, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 40 to 80 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 2 to 5 percent below what's expected from current national policies.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a more substantial impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions in 2030 by 560 to 590 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year, or 33 to 36 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

### **Canada:**

In Canada, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 50 and 80 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 8 to 11 percent below what's expected from current national policies.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have an even more substantial impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions in 2030 by 290 to 310 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year, or 42 to 48 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

### **China:**

In China, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by up to 50 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year beyond what's expected from current national policies. That is roughly equivalent to less than 0.5 percent of China's current emissions. Contributions from Chinese cities, regions, and companies will play a critical role in implementing the country's climate policies and achieving its targets, although these contributions are difficult to quantify.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a significantly larger impact. If realised, their goals could reduce emissions in 2030 by 2,700 to 2,800 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 19 to 22 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

**EU:**

In the European Union, city, region, and company commitments could reduce emissions in 2030 by 110 and 320 MtCO<sub>2</sub>/year or 3.8 to 9.2 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies. This would lower the bloc's emissions by about 48 percent compared to 1990 levels, beyond its current target of at least 40 percent by 2030.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have an even larger impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions in 2030 by 790 to 1,200 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year, reducing emissions or 57 to 60 percent lower compared to 1990 levels by 2030.

**India:**

In India, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 220 to 250 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 5.5 percent below what's expected from current national policies. The national policy already puts India on track to surpass its Paris pledge by 1,100 to 1,900 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a more substantial impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions in 2030 by 510 and 590 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 13 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

**Indonesia:**

In Indonesia, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 100 to 180 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 3.5 to 5.5 percent below what's expected from current national policies.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a more substantial impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions in 2030 by 1,700 and 1,800 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 56 to 59 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

**Japan:**

In Japan, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 80 to 130 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 8 to 12 percent below what's expected from current national policies. The resulting emission levels would be up to 70 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year below than the emissions reduction target of Japan's Nationally Determined Contribution, enabling the country to overachieve – and potentially raise the ambition of – its goals.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a more substantial impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions in 2030 by 110 to 160 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 11 to 14 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

**Mexico:**

In Mexico, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 20 to 40 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year below what's expected from current national policies – an amount roughly equivalent to 3 to 5 percent of Mexico's current emissions.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a significantly larger impact. If they realise their goals, they could lower emissions in 2030 by an additional 390 and 420 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year compared to, or 50 to 57 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

**South Africa:**

In South Africa, city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by an additional 20 to 30 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 3 to 4 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have a significantly larger impact. If they realise their goals, they could lower emissions in 2030 by an additional 240 to 290 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year or 37 to 39 percent below the emission levels expected under current national policies.

**United States:**

In the United States, individual city, region and company commitments could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 by an additional 390 to 540 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year, leading to total emission levels of 21 to 24 percent below 2005 levels. This would fill much of the gap between the trajectory the country's current national policies put it on, and its Nationally Determined Contribution target to reduce emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

In 2030, the impact of city, region and company commitments would be even larger – a 540 to 820 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year reduction compared to the current national policies scenario, which would lower US emissions 25 to 32 percent below 2005 levels.

International initiatives, where cities, regions, companies, investors, civil society, and, in some cases, countries, pursue common climate goals, could have an even more substantial impact. If they realise their goals, they could reduce emissions to 36 to 43 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

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