



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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**International Affairs Commissioner Abeywardena Announces new signatories to the
NYC Voluntary Local Review Declaration**

*- Seventeen subnational governments from around the world commit to accelerating the
17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations -*

NEW YORK – Following the 10th World Urban Forum, NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs Commissioner Penny Abeywardena announced 17 subnational governments signed on to the NYC Declaration on the Voluntary Local Review. These cities, which represent nearly every continent on Earth, have committed to taking local action on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UN that seek to combat climate change and inequality in all its forms.

The United Nations established the World Urban Forum in 2001 to address issues of rapid urbanization. For the 10th session, which ran from February 8-13 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 169 nations came together to discuss ways to accelerate the SDGs during the Decade of Action, the global push to ensure the goals are met by 2030.

New York highlighted the importance of localizing the SDGs through a process dubbed the Voluntary Local Review (VLR). This process enables signatories to explore ways to address global crises unfolding in their communities. The Voluntary Local Review was listed among the World Urban Forum Declared Actions and was highlighted during the official closing ceremonies.

“The VLR is a way for local governments to exchange best practices and accelerate the SDGs through strategic engagement within their own communities,” said **Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner for the NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs**. “It has turned into a movement that is gaining momentum every day. And that is crucial as subnational governments look for ways to address the global challenges their citizens face.”

“I am thrilled to see more and more cities commit to the New York City Declaration on the Voluntary Local Review and encourage other cities to follow,” said **Maimunah Mohd Sharif**,

Executive Director of UN-Habitat. “Let’s work together and Declare Action for the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The Voluntary Local Review is a three-step, non-binding agreement that urges signatories to identify how existing local strategies align with the 17 SDGs, provide at least one forum for stakeholders to exchange best practices using the SDG framework, and submit a Voluntary Local Review to the UN during the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development.

Modeled on the Voluntary National Reviews submitted by UN member states, the VLR was created by New York City in 2018 to serve as a tool for local governments of all sizes to showcase achievements and challenges in achieving the SDGs.

“Inclusion is at the core of the work we are doing with through the VLR,” said **Aissata M.B. Camara, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships, NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs.** “We want to make sure local governments are able to partake in the exchanges of knowledge—it’s the reason the barrier for entry is low. This movement is about local governments building efficiencies to better serve constituents. We look forward to more subnational governments joining the Declaration.”

The 17 new signatories joined the Declaration during a special session at the World Urban Forum.

“Everyone has a responsibility to take action to protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of all. As a local government, Asker municipality is committed to accelerating the SDGs across political and professional divides, engaging citizens, businesses and NGOs to cooperate to provide for a sustainable future. We urgently encourage all local, regional and national governments to mobilize for a decade of action - for people and for the planet,” said **Mayor Lene W. Conradi, Asker, Norway.**

“Global sustainability is now the only way to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. We need to avoid constraints for cities in order to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and make sure we do it all together. The Capital Region of Brussels is defining strategies and programs to monitor and implement the Sustainable Development Goals and is committed to further advancing this agenda abroad,” said **Pascal Smet, Secretary of State, Brussels-Capital Region.**

“The responsibility and role of the local government as a front-line agency is crucial to achieving the SDGs. The policies and programs set by the local government play an effective role in reducing poverty, ending inequality and injustice and minimizing the impact of climate change. Therefore, I am confident that the Voluntary Local Review Declaration will make local governments more responsible and motivated to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,” said **Mayor Chintan Tamang, Dhankuta Municipality, Nepal.**

“Voluntary Local Reviews are the essential tool to demonstrate the commitment and capacity of local entities to be recognized as a key element in the implementation of the Agenda 2030,” said **Mayoress Pilar Díaz, Esplugues de Llobregat, Spain.**

To learn more about the Voluntary Local Review Declaration and to join the movement, visit our website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/international/programs/voluntary-local-review-declaration.page>

The cities that signed on to the Declaration during the World Urban Forum include:

- Acapulco de Juarez, Mexico
- Asker, Norway
- Barcelona, Spain
- Betio, Kiribati
- Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium (19 municipalities)
- Bauang, Philippines
- Dhankuta, Nepal
- Esplugues de Llobregat, Spain
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Rabat, Morocco
- Rostov-on-don, Russia
- San Justo, Argentina
- Seberang Perai, Malaysia
- City of Sipalay, Philippines
- Tandil, Argentina
- Tawau, Malaysia
- Turkestan, Kazakhstan

These cities join signatories who signed the NYC Declaration on the Voluntary Local Review during the 2019 UN General Assembly. Those cities include:

- Accra, Ghana
- Amman, Jordan
- Barcarena, Brazil
- Bristol, England
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Cape Town, South Africa
- Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Georgetown, Guyana
- Helsinki, Finland
- Kazan, Russia
- Los Angeles, United States of America
- Malmö, Sweden
- Mannheim, Germany

- Montevideo, Uruguay
- New York City, United States of America
- Santa Ana, Costa Rica
- Orlando, United States of America
- Santa Fe, Argentina
- Santana de Parnaíba, Brazil
- Stockholm, Sweden
- Yokohama, Japan

About the Mayor's Office for International Affairs

The New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs works to foster positive relations and encourage collaboration between the international community and New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. The Office is focused on sharing New York City's policies and best practices globally, as well as responding to requests from foreign governments, the United Nations, and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and on our website.

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