



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER
ABEYWARDENA ANNOUNCE HISTORIC DECLARATION, COMMITTING LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

- Local governments from around the world will commit to submitting a Voluntary Local Review, an accountability tool created by New York City, sharing achievements and challenges in implementing the global Sustainable Development Goals-

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena launched New York City's Voluntary Local Review Declaration, bringing together nearly two dozen global cities to commit to taking local action on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and combat climate change by 2030.

During an event at the UN Headquarters during the 74th UN General Assembly, New York City was joined by more than 20 cities from 17 countries throughout the world to sign the Declaration. Signatories agreed to three non-binding commitments, including identifying how existing local strategies align with the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing at least one forum for stakeholders to exchange best practices using the SDG framework, and submitting a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) to the UN during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development. As urgent global issues increasingly unfold on the local level, and with some national governments withdrawing from global commitments to fight climate change and inequality, the VLR gives local governments a concrete tool through which they can become directly involved with the work of the United Nations for the first time.

Modeled on the Voluntary National Reviews submitted by UN member states during the annual HLPF, 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 advancing sustainability, equity and prosperity.

“As too many federal governments fail to act on global warming, cities and states must step in to save our planet. New York City's Green New Deal shows how we can meet the challenge of global warming with aggressive action,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Through the Voluntary Local Review Declaration and as host city to the United Nations, our City has led this movement on the

world stage. We look forward to bringing more cities to the table as we continue to do our part to achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030."

"The Voluntary Local Review Declaration is a groundbreaking step in connecting local governments directly with the work of the United Nations," said **Commissioner for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena**. "New York City's VLR model has launched a global movement of local leadership, bringing city voices to the conversation even though too many national governments are stepping back. By working together at the local and global level, we can achieve the SDGs by 2030."

Using data from OneNYC 2050, the City's comprehensive strategic plan released in April 2019, New York City submitted its second VLR in July 2019 to show how actions taken by City agencies addressed each of the priority SDGs at this year's HLPF. Each goal was mapped to corresponding OneNYC 2050 indicators, using practical examples.

New York City shares its pioneering VLR model with cities around the world, and provides guidance to local governments interested in tracking their progress using the framework of the SDGs. In 2019, cities like Helsinki, Finland, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Los Angeles, USA, and many more joined NYC to submit their own VLRs. Through the Voluntary Local Review Declaration, even more local governments are committing to the SDGs and the VLR is becoming a global movement.

The Voluntary Local Review is developed by the Mayor's Office for International Affairs in partnership with the Mayor's Offices of Operations, based on OneNYC 2050 developed by the Mayor's Office of Climate Policy and Programs, in consultation with other City agencies.

"In New York City, we recognize our climate crisis for what it is - an emergency - and also that what matters most is not words, but action," said **Daniel Zarrilli, NYC's Chief Climate Policy Advisor and OneNYC Director**. "By launching the Voluntary Local Review Declaration, we are showcasing the tangible steps that can be taken at the local level to confront our global challenges. This type of collaboration is critical to achieve the commitments laid out in OneNYC 2050, the City's Green New Deal, as we continue building a strong and fair city for all New Yorkers."

"It's exciting and encouraging that cities around the world are leading the charge against climate change," said **Jeff Thamkittikasem, Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations**. "New York City's Voluntary Local Review is an important tool for accountability and lays the groundwork for making our city, and others, more sustainable and resilient. I'm proud of the work the Mayor's Office of Operations has continued to do in this field, and look forward for what's to come."

"It has become clear that many of the world's great transformations, from digitalization, climate change, and urbanization, take place at the local level. Cities are the new powerhouses of the world, and now build international relationships and collaborations much like nation-states before them. The desire to impact the global agendas is shared among many cities. Although a nation-state level commitment, the United Nation's Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development

Goals are universal. They are the closest thing we have to a global contract. Cities as pragmatic, human-centered and action-focused should naturally be at the forefront of the SDG implementation work. In July 2019 Helsinki became the first city in Europe to submit a Voluntary Local Review of the SDG's to the UN. We aim to highlight the importance of collaboration between cities and nation-states in achieving the global goals. However, where countries are unable to deliver, it is even more instrumental that cities step up. Regardless of the support we receive from nation-states cities are and increasingly will be an instrumental part of ensuring the efficient delivery and success of the SDGs on a global scale,” said **Mayor Jan Vapaavouri of Helsinki, Finland.**

“After being among the first cities presenting their VLRs in July 2019, Buenos Aires is deeply committed to continuing its efforts towards achieving the SDGs and inviting other cities and local governments to join those efforts. In Buenos Aires, we believe that exchanging good practices and co-creating solutions and public policies can lead to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs and the other international agendas we are committed to. Equally important is being accountable, monitoring our progress, and reviewing what we need to improve to leave no one behind,” said **Mayor Horacio Rodríguez Larreta of Buenos Aires, Argentina.**

“As former Mayor of Penang, Malaysia and as the head of the United Nations agency responsible for housing and urban development, I am keen to promote dialogue between local and national governments. The Voluntary Local Reviews provide such an opportunity, demonstrating locally how countries are realizing their national commitments, while also informing national policy. We are looking forward to continue to support and promote this initiative in the world Urban Forum 10 in Abu Dhabi from 8 to 13 February 2020,” said **Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat.**

“Today’s declaration makes it clear that mayors and local government officials are forming the frontlines of SDG implementation, translating Agenda 2030’s ambitious aspirations into progress felt by real people living in real communities,” said **Tony Pipa, senior fellow in the Global Economy and Development program at the Brookings Institution.**

“NYC created the Voluntary Local Review in 2018 to build on our ongoing efforts to use the Sustainable Development Goals as a common framework to learn from others in areas where we can and must do better. We are thrilled that so many cities from around the world are now committing to the Voluntary Local Review Declaration. We welcome local and regional governments of all sizes to join us to help achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The more that commit, the stronger this movement becomes,” said **NYC Global Vision | Urban Action Program Director Alexandra Hiniker.**

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>.

Cities that have signed on to New York City’s Voluntary Local Review Declaration include:

- Accra, Ghana

- Amman, Jordan
- Barcarena, Brazil
- Barcelona, Spain
- Bristol, England
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Cape Town, South Africa
- Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Georgetown, Guyana
- Helsinki, Finland
- Kazan, Russia
- Los Angeles, United States of America
- Malmo, 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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