

Climate Group and U20: Strengthening City–Subnational Collaboration for Social Inclusion and Equity

Caring Cities: Advancing Social Inclusion and Equity for All | May 2025

Climate Group are delighted to be partners with key G20 Engagement Groups - Think20 (T20), Urban20 (U20) and Business20 (B20). Climate Group acts as secretariat of the [Under2 Coalition](#), the largest network of subnational governments committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Group are working closely with the U20 Co-Chairs, the City of Johannesburg and the City of Tshwane to engage with a series of thematic webinars which are set to create opportunities for in-depth exchanges on specific topics that can contribute to joint U20 positioning. The U20 brings together major cities from G20 countries to highlight urban issues and enhance cities' roles in the G20 agenda.

The Under2 Coalition adds inputs for consideration to the latest webinar; *Caring Cities: Advancing Social Inclusion and Equity for All*. Reflecting on how can **subnational governments work with city to support inclusive urban development, expand access to opportunity, and ensure that no one is left behind?**

What are the opportunities to foster collaboration, vertical integration which facilitate strong levels of multi-level governance across cities, states, provinces, regions to embed social inclusion into governance. Subnational actors—through legal, fiscal, and planning authority—are crucial in complementing city-led efforts. This note highlights priority areas for effective collaboration.

Areas for Collaboration

1. Affordable Housing & Secure Tenure

Subnational Role:

- Address regulatory barriers and ensure access to affordable land and housing.
- Support inclusive housing policies and provide land for affordable housing development.

City Action:

- Co-design housing strategies with regional partners.
- Engage in land-use reforms and remove barriers to secure tenure in marginalized communities.
- Advocate for joint funding models to expand affordable housing supply.

2. Inclusive Public Transport & Connectivity

Subnational Role:

- Invest in regional transport infrastructure that connects underserved areas to opportunities.
- Ensure equitable access to transport for marginalized populations.

City Action:

- Coordinate with regional governments to prioritize transport infrastructure for low-income areas.
- Share city-level data to inform the design of regional transport networks that reduce spatial disparities.
- Promote policies that support affordable and efficient public transport systems.

3. Data Systems & Social Cohesion

Subnational Role:

- Build integrated data platforms that track and address exclusion and inequity across regions.
- Foster regional policies that enhance social cohesion and support migrant integration.

City Action:

- Contribute city-specific data to inform regional social equity strategies.
- Co-develop urban equity dashboards with subnational governments to monitor and target interventions.
- Advocate for the creation of platforms for collaborative dialogue on social cohesion, particularly concerning migrant communities.

4. Multi-Level Governance

Subnational Role:

- Support the establishment of inclusive, multi-level governance frameworks that enable collaboration between national, subnational, and local governments.
- Facilitate formal dialogue platforms to ensure integrated and inclusive policy-making across all levels of government.

City Action:

- Institutionalize formal channels for engaging with subnational governments, ensuring the voice of cities is represented at the regional and national levels.

- Advocate for multi-level governance structures that encourage shared decision-making, especially in areas impacting marginalized communities.
- Support participatory planning and policymaking processes that bring local, regional, and national stakeholders together to tackle urban exclusion.

Conclusion

Cities are key drivers of social inclusion, but to scale their impact, they must collaborate with subnational governments. By focusing on affordable housing, public transport, integrated data systems, and multi-level governance, cities and subnational governments can work together to address inequalities, promote inclusion, and build stronger, more equitable urban environments.