



Local Governments  
for Sustainability

AFRICA

# A year of highlights, a future of hopes

OUR 2023-2024  
JOURNEY



*Creating sustainable cities & regions, together*





### Message from Kobie Brand, our Regional Director

As we reflect on 2023, I am immensely grateful for the remarkable progress we have made together in advancing sustainable urban development across Africa. **Your commitment and dedication have been inspirational to our team at ICLEI Africa** and instrumental in driving our collective efforts towards creating resilient, equitable and environmentally responsible cities and regions across our rapidly urbanising continent.

We all know that the immense, interconnected urban sustainability challenges our world, and Africa in particular, currently face need to be tackled in an integrated, inclusive way with tenacity, boldness and proven expertise, and that our ICLEI Africa cities and regions are doing just that. But we also know that there is so much more to do, and that we stand at a pivotal moment in history. The decisions we make and the actions we take today will have a profound impact on the future of our communities, our planet and all life on Earth.

To this end our team has grown, worked harder, tackled more complex issues and strived to serve our Members better with new tools, projects, initiatives and networking opportunities. And we are determined to build on these enhanced services with even more innovative options tailor-made to the needs of our Members in the year ahead. During 2023 we have successfully hosted, and participated in, several high-level events, which have provided valuable platforms for knowledge sharing, collaboration and action – bringing together key stakeholders from across the continent and beyond.

We have advocated for the voices of subnational governments, large and small, from our continent on the global stage, and although there is still a long way to go, **we clearly sense that our leading community of ICLEI Members across Africa has not only grown, but also solidified with a unified clear message: We are ready to take action, we know what our priorities are, we need to act fast, together, and we need stronger mandates and direct finance to so. And implementation of global and national goals happen best LOCALLY!**

Our ICLEI Africa team, which I am extremely proud of, in partnership with our World Secretariat and many other ICLEI offices and other partners, have made significant strides in the securing and implementation of key projects within our cities and regions. Our collective impact is growing, and tangible results are key markers for our success in partnership with our Member cities. These projects, many of them highly innovative, address the critical, interlinked challenges facing African cities such as food security, climate change, biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration, and urban resilience, within the context of rights-based approaches and a special focus on gender, youth and equitable access for all.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are filled with hope and anticipation as we embark on several new and very exciting projects, and further stages of existing initiatives, as we prepare to host and participate in a number of major events and platforms, which will provide further opportunities to showcase innovative solutions, strengthen partnerships and accelerate our collective progress towards a sustainable future for Africa.

I am confident that with your continued support and collaboration, we can achieve even greater things in 2024 for our Member cities and regions across Africa. Together, we can create a brighter, greener and a more inclusive future for local and subnational governments and their communities across Africa.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to ICLEI!

Sincerely,  
Ms Kobie Brand  
Regional Director: ICLEI Africa

## RISE Africa Action Festival, online

MAY 2023

[RISE Africa](#) brings together thinkers, doers and enablers from across the continent and the world to inspire action for sustainable cities. The platform curates monthly engagements, [photographic competitions](#), thought pieces and networking events, taking a whole-of-society approach to imagining African urban futures. At the heart of RISE Africa is an annual event convened around Africa Day and focused on critically and enthusiastically demonstrating how to make our urban imaginings real – and how to forge ideas into action.

## MedCOP, Tangier

JUNE 2023

[MedCOP](#)'s 2023 theme was "The Driving Force of Climate Action at the Local and Regional Levels in the Mediterranean" and was highly relevant to the work of ICLEI Africa, as it demonstrated the important and valuable contribution of local and subnational governments in achieving global climate and biodiversity goals and targets. MedCOPs recommendations and commitments prioritised strengthening of collaboration across various levels and across multiple actors, and included capacitating women as actors in strengthening resilience – all outcomes and recommendations aligning closely with ICLEI Africa's priorities and work.

## Africa Climate Week, Nairobi

SEPTEMBER 2023

[Africa Climate Week](#) (ACW) 2023, recognised as one of the official Regional Climate Weeks by the UNFCCC, took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in September. A delegation of Mayors from the Regional Mayors Forum (RMF) of the [Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) (CoM SSA), for which ICLEI Africa hosts the Secretariat, attended ACW and made strong statements and inputs throughout the event. Previous ACWs had limited subnational government focus and attendance, and we were encouraged to see a drastic change in this situation this year. ACW 2023 had a track dedicated in part to cities; the opening session of which was hosted by ICLEI Africa, CoM SSA and partners. There was also a large subnational government contingent in attendance from across the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) community. This shift is in part due to the advocacy work that ICLEI Africa and LGMA partners have enacted over the years, to ensure that this pivotal event in the global climate change calendar better represents and hears from the vital LGMA constituency. Notably, the UNFCCC extended an invitation to ICLEI Africa and CoM SSA to submit a summary statement representing the key take-aways from the event from African subnational governments.

## AfriFOODlinks project commenced

[AfriFOODlinks](#) is taking a distinctly bold African approach to transforming urban food systems on the continent – and beyond. Funded by the European Union and coordinated by ICLEI Africa, the project gathers 26 partners across the globe to improve food security and urban sustainability in 65+ cities in Africa and Europe. By improving business innovation, infrastructure investment, and shaping cultural preference, AfriFOODlinks aims to contribute to the realisation of fair, equitable, healthy and environmentally friendly urban food systems from primary production to consumption. In June 2023, the full [AfriFOODlinks](#) consortium met in person for the first time in Kisumu, Kenya, demonstrating how African cities are leading the way into a new era of food systems collaboration.



## UNA Resilience project launched exhibition in Cape Coast and online

OCTOBER 2023

The Urban Natural Assets (UNA) Resilience programme proudly launched the "Preserve, Conserve and Tinker" exhibition at the Cape Coast Biodiversity Centre in October 2023. This exhibition featured a captivating array of visuals, including photographs of UNA cities, Bo City (Sierra Leone) and Cape Coast (Ghana), photovoice images from communities in those cities, and imaginative drawings of future city visions created by local youth groups. This exhibition was a captivating journey that delved into the tapestry of urban nature within our UNA cities. Through the universal language of images, we illuminated the story of urban nature, making it accessible for everyone to comprehend, relate to, and forge a meaningful connection with. View the online exhibition and make your commitments for urban nature [here](#).

## Fresh new ICLEI Africa website launched

ICLEI Africa recently launched our brand new [website](#), which provides an enhanced platform for communication, collaboration and knowledge-sharing among our Members and partners. This is a significant step forward in our digital presence, and we invite you to explore and engage with this exciting development.

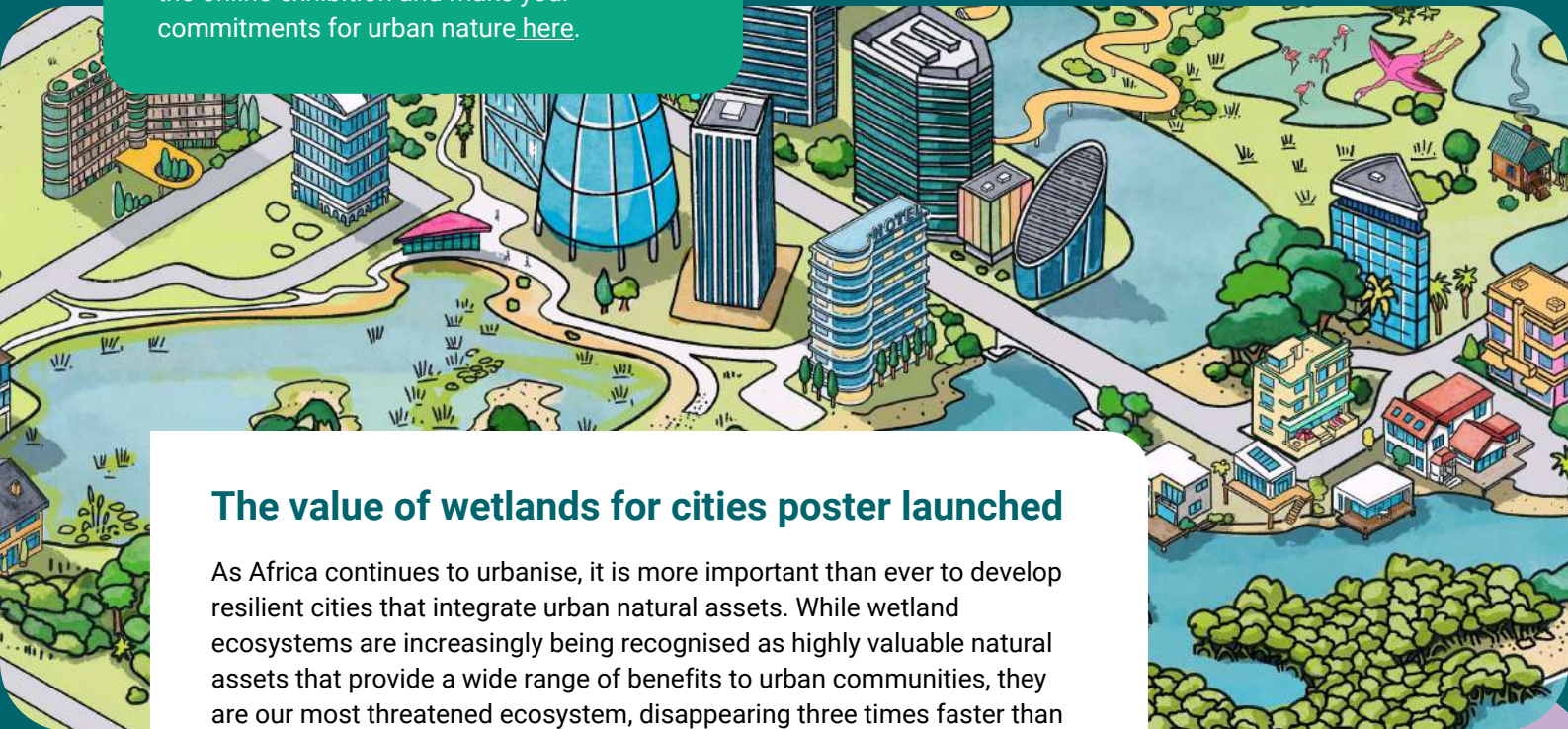
Our new website features enhanced Member profiles, where we are able to showcase their innovative and groundbreaking work. Please reach out if you'd like us to add additional information to your profile.

A reminder for those who want to hone their skills to make a difference in African cities: Sign up for a free account on [Learn with ICLEI Africa](#).

## The value of wetlands for cities poster launched

As Africa continues to urbanise, it is more important than ever to develop resilient cities that integrate urban natural assets. While wetland ecosystems are increasingly being recognised as highly valuable natural assets that provide a wide range of benefits to urban communities, they are our most threatened ecosystem, disappearing three times faster than forests. ICLEI CBC developed this poster and accompanying fact sheet to provide a snapshot of some of the most significant aspects of urban life and municipal management that wetlands improve and contribute towards.

[View poster & fact sheet](#)



## 'The Future of Africa's Sustainable Cities: Why Clean Cooking Matters' report launched

Accelerating access to clean cooking is crucial given that over 990 million Africans, particularly those living in sub-Saharan Africa, currently lack access to clean cooking solutions. At COP28, the Clean Cooking Alliance (CCA) and ICLEI Africa unveiled the report "The Future of Africa's Sustainable Cities: Why Clean Cooking Matters," which highlights the critical role that clean cooking must play in ensuring sustainable and equitable urban growth, with a particular focus on the fast-growing cities of sub-Saharan Africa.

[Read the report](#)



## Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA)

2023

ICLEI Africa, as the host of the CoM SSA Secretariat and Technical Help Desk (THD), has provided technical support to over 100 signatories to date. During ACW, the CoM SSA RMF Mayors actively participated in more than 13 high-level events, sharing their experiences of enabling tangible climate action in their regions. A bold CoM SSA ACW Declaration was also issued as a guiding light towards COP28. This Declaration articulates CoM SSA's commitment to championing a unified African voice in the pursuit of a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future for all. It also acknowledges and honours the pivotal role played by local and subnational leaders in spearheading local solutions within the distinctive African context. Notably, in 2023, the European Union (EU) announced its commitment to fund Phase IV of CoM SSA, underscoring a substantial and long-term investment in advancing the Initiative's goals.

## Sustainable Finance Centre (SFC)

ICLEI Africa's Sustainable Finance Centre (SFC) was launched in 2023 in order to chart a new era of increased funding for subnational projects – ensuring we move from policy to practice. The SFC provides project development support, co-develops financial instruments, pilots business models, and builds capacity to help local governments finance sustainable projects.

[Read more here](#)





## UNFCCC COP28, Dubai

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023

The 28th edition of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP28) took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 13 December 2023, and marked a pivotal moment when the world took stock of its progress on the Paris Agreement. COP28 called for unity, action and delivery, emphasising the powerful cycle that action builds hope and hope builds action.

This year, ICLEI, the focal point of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency and UN-Habitat – co-hosted a joint Multilevel Action and Urbanisation Pavilion in the Blue Zone at COP28 which functioned as the global stage for the city and subnational climate agenda at COP28. The Pavilion was co-hosted by the Scottish Government and Bloomberg Philanthropies, in partnership with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) and C40 Cities.

Our ICLEI cities and regions across the African continent made their voices heard loud and clear at the recent UNFCCC COP28 as part of the LGMA Constituency, through a range of interventions – stressing the urgent need to scale up a rigorous all-of-economy, all-of-society approach, which leads to urgent and significant climate action this decade.

While ICLEI Africa closely aligned with CoM SSA and other relevant partners to ensure that this call to action was realised, we were immensely proud of the ICLEI Mayors and Governors who spoke out so clearly and eloquently about the realities facing our cities today. Thank you for bringing your important voice to the Climate COP. This COP is being recognised as a COP that has now started the phase out of fossil fuels, and the COP where there was even greater recognition of the critical role that subnational governments play in tackling climate change, and the need to enable direct access to loss and damage finance, in particular. We cannot and will not return back from this landmark COP, and can only move forward towards a more livable and sustainable future for all, within the goal of 1,5oC! Together, we boldly advocated for and presented a strong, unified constituency of African subnational government leaders at COP28 – which demonstrated a shared commitment to urgent action and on-the-ground delivery. To find out more about ICLEI Africa's activities at COP28, please consult our COP28 webpage [here](#).

# Looking forward to 2024

As we move into 2024, we find ourselves at a critical juncture, where we have to map a better course for our future if we are to combat the devastating impacts of climate change on our continent, and reconnect our communities with nature. ICLEI Africa is committed to genuine collaboration and true inclusivity as we embrace innovation and strengthen our support for creating resilient, sustainable cities and regions. We have made great strides in urban sustainability, together with our Members, and in the coming year, we will focus on scaling up our impact and services across Africa to catalyse transformative change at the local level. We are particularly excited about the following upcoming opportunities to share learnings and bring context-specific innovative solutions to our Member cities, enhancing the quality of urban life for all:

## RISE Africa Action Festival

MAY 2024

Set to take place virtually in May 2024, the RISE Africa 2024 Action Festival will have a strong solution-oriented focus – sharing ideas and committing to actions that will create the resilient and innovative African cities of the future. Sign up for the RISE Africa monthly digest for announcements and updates on the festival theme, call of sessions, multimedia competitions and more by clicking on [this link](#).

## Tackling integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

In 2024 a cohort of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation projects will begin delivering outcomes of relevance to cities across Africa, in terms of how integrated resilience solutions can build cities' disaster preparedness, while proactively adapting to climate change, improving equality and gender inclusivity.

## ICLEI World Congress

JUNE 2024

Our [ICLEI World Congress](#) is on the horizon and is scheduled to take place from 18 to 21 June in São Paulo, Brazil. This gathering of innovation and ideas from the ICLEI network across the globe promises to be an opportunity for exchange of ideas, best practices, and collaborative actions towards local sustainable development. Become a part of the movement and connect with fellow ICLEI Members and partners from all over the world to learn about innovative solutions and make a collective impact towards a more sustainable future! More information will follow in due course.

## Scaling up finance, where it is needed most

In 2023 ICLEI Africa, in partnership with the DBSA and UK PACT, assisted four intermediary cities develop renewable energy projects and successfully enter DBSA's project preparation facility. These projects are earmarked to receive climate finance from the Embedded Generation Investment Programme for implementation. Collectively, these projects have CAPEX costs of \$100 billion and will lead to the reduction of 36,6 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>eq. In 2024 ICLEI Africa's Sustainable Finance Centre aims to up-scale these lessons and experiences to additional cities.



In closing, ICLEI Africa extends its gratitude to our valued ICLEI Members for your commitment and insight in 2023. Together, we are embarking on a journey towards an exciting and sustainable 2024, where our collective efforts will forge a brighter, greener future for local and subnational governments and their communities across Africa!

Join us in this transformative year, and let's continue to inspire change, innovate solutions, and, together, build sustainable cities and regions that will stand as a testament to our dedication and vision.

## For more information, you can read our updated ICLEI Africa Company Profile

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