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**W**e are currently living in what many refer to as the century of cities. By 2050, more than 70% of the world's population are projected to be living in urban areas, increasingly turning cities into the focus of the world's economy. At the same time, many of the most pressing adversities and challenges we face today arise disproportionately in urban areas. From the effects of climate change to mass migration, inadequate infrastructure, pandemics and cyber-attacks, cities stand at the forefront of the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Of course, the challenges cities face are rarely of a single dimension. Most cities face a combination of challenges, which can contribute to further weakening the fabric of a city on a day-to-day or cyclical basis. The difficulty of sharing information on what works well without addressing these adversities across different geographies has been a considerable barrier to scaling up existing solutions. This is where networks such as 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) can help.

Cities don't exist in siloes – they are systems where people live, work and play. In such a context, learning from others is vital for developing. Europe as a region has a long tradition of collaboration and partnerships between cities and regions. Numerous important and experienced networks have facilitated advocacy at the European Union, building and leveraging resources and the joint creation of new solutions.

While national governments slowly navigate delicate international politics to reach solutions, city leaders often have to act fast to meet the day-to-day needs of their residents while also ensuring steady long-term solutions. Over the past decade, organisations such as 100RC and C40 have emerged in this context to further support cities by generating connections on a global scale while at the same time leveraging the expertise of the non-profit and private sectors.

Created by the Rockefeller Foundation on the foundation's centennial in 2013, 100RC not only seeks to help individual cities become more resilient, it also supports them in building a new agile model of governance that can address the physical, social and economic challenges they face on a systemic level.

When confronted with a puzzling challenge in their everyday life, most people's first reaction is usually to reach out to a trusted friend or colleague to help generate new ideas on how to solve the problem at hand. In a very similar way, 100RC looks to build an environment where our Chief Resilience Officers (CROs) can do the same on a global scale, drawing help and inspiration from resilience-building efforts in cities from across the globe. This means working with – not for – the city, leveraging the expertise of all actors across the board to break down siloes and create consensus, innovation and ownership in futureproofing the city.

The development of a Resilience Strategy is a hallmark of 100RC's partnership with cities. This process is a way to create a roadmap for the future, articulating a city's long-term challenges, vision and priorities, as well as specific initiatives for implementation that will have a positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of citizens.

Over the past five years of close cooperation with actors across all levels of governance/operation of our member cities, we have learned a thing or two about how we can work together to help cities thrive.

## **I. Developing functioning cities is not a zero-sum game**

At the end of the day, every city in the world is different and requires a vast spectrum of expertise and support to prosper. The source of that expertise is less important, and the city won't care significantly whether it's 100RC, C40 or Eurocities reaching out a helping hand. We all need to work together, ensuring our services are complementary rather than competitive, and most importantly we need to make certain city staff at all levels understand "why" and "to what end" they are partnering with us and how this improves the impact of their work.

## **II. Cities need to focus on the global and local scale simultaneously**

While global advocacy is hugely important in ensuring the voices of cities are heard and considered far and wide, equal effort needs to be focused locally on ensuring municipal staff can leverage resources more efficiently and provide better services for all their citizens. With 100RC, we are partnering with cities in inspiring work on the ground in their communities.

## **III. Inclusivity at the top of the agenda**

Deep and meaningful dialogue with citizens and stakeholders is a critical aspect of creating an effective city for all. Too often, the voices of residents, especially the most vulnerable, aren't integrated into city actions. Because the poor and vulnerable are also often disproportionately impacted by shocks and stresses, their perspective must inform the creation of the policies and programmes that will affect them.

We see the cities in our network doing incredible work and indicating their sustained commitment for the long haul. With over 2,000 specific projects and initiatives globally across a spectrum of published Resilience Strategies, our focus has now turned to ensuring project implementation with high resilience value.

Working closely with financial institutions, the aim is to help the market understand the value of investing in high-resilience value projects. We are also experimenting with new ways of building urban resilience, which can be seen in our recently unveiled schoolyard project in Paris, transforming Paris's schoolyards into urban cooling islands while simultaneously addressing the need for more communal areas for Parisians.

Cities are embracing a central agenda-setting role in addressing the challenges of the 21st century, and urban policies will be instrumental in shaping the next few decades. As we witness many national governments falling victim to partisan politics, it reinforces how important a strong network of cities taking action can be for our collective future. If we get cities right, we can set a new trajectory for a vibrant global future.

