Latin American Statement for Climate Justice and the Right to the City



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Habitat International Coalition América Latina
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Global Platform for the Right to the City
Plataforma Global por el Derecho a la Ciudad
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In the context of the global negotiations –the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30), the 13th World Urban Forum (WUF13) and other spaces– **we, as social movements, organizations, networks and local actors committed to habitat, housing and climate justice, raise our voices.**

The time has come to recognize and strengthen the role of those of us who inhabit, manage and transform cities and drive daily actions to address, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis.

More than 80 percent of Latin America's population lives in cities, one of the most urbanized continents on the planet. Our low-income neighbourhoods –urban and peri-urban– are communities that suffer the harshest impacts of climate change, but they are also places where creative and solidarity responses are emerging. Faced with a global crisis that is exacerbating historical inequalities, we reaffirm our capacity to organize, cooperate and self-manage, and demand effective, direct and urgent support with which to sustain and expand these responses.

1. Ensuring human rights, inclusion and climate justice

We demand that international commitments be reflected in policies and resources aimed at reducing inequalities and guaranteeing human rights, inclusion and climate justice, taking into consideration the specific contexts and needs of cities and the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

The Advisory Opinions issued in 2025 by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court HR)) mark a legal and political milestone in recognizing climate change as a global emergency with profound human rights implications. These opinions reaffirm the obligation of States –whether they have ratified the Paris Agreement or not– to take effective measures to safeguard these rights, to prevent loss and damage and to mobilize resources in accordance with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

States must respect, protect and guarantee human rights in the face of the impacts of climate change, which are not neutral: they disproportionately affect women, children, youth, older people, Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, migrants, people with disabilities and inhabitants of informal settlements or those with insecure tenure. These inequalities are expressions of racism and environmental injustice that reproduce historical exclusions, and which are exacerbated when official responses include forced displacement or relocation without including the affected population in discussing the solution nor offering them dignified alternatives, on the pretext of climate adaptation.

2. Fair and direct access to climate finance

We call for a transformation of climate finance mechanisms to ensure that communities, social organizations, local governments and municipalities can directly access them. It is essential to recognize the loss and damage that disproportionately affects the most

vulnerable groups, ensuring that policies and available funds promote climate justice and effective reparations.

Financing loss and damage is a legal obligation, not charity or best practice. There is an urgent need to simplify access mechanisms and overcome bureaucratic barriers and dependence on intermediaries, which hinder the implementation of local actions. The time, knowledge and commitment of communities must be recognized and sustained through stable funding.

We demand support and strengthening of self-managed capacities for social production of habitat, restoration of urban ecosystems, water harvesting and storage, green roofs, vegetable gardens and other community solutions that combine social and environmental justice. We also demand resources and effective protection for environmental defenders and guardians given the violence and criminalization they face for protecting their territories.

3. Ensuring participation and effective governance

Just climate action requires the real, informed and binding participation of communities at all levels of decision-making. Governance cannot be limited to formal consultations and symbolic validation of documents that have already been produced.

We demand timely access to clear information, community leadership training and citizen oversight mechanisms that will ensure effective implementation of commitments. Participation must be constant, not sporadic, and must have a direct bearing on the formulation of climate action plans, budgets, land management and locally and nationally determined contributions (LDCs and NDCs).

Transparency and representation are essential to build trust and co-responsibility between communities, local governments, civil society, academia and the private sector. Communities have demonstrated their capacity to organize, propose and implement solutions; what is missing are the formal spaces in which these voices can be recognized as part of the decision-making process rather than as external actors.

4. Strengthening capacities and co-creating knowledge

We demand the recognition and integration of local and community knowledge as pillars of urban climate action. This knowledge –practical, situated and collective– must dialogue on an equal footing with technical and academic knowledge in order to guide effective policies and actions from a rights-based approach.

The knowledge of women, Indigenous communities and other historically ignored groups must be rescued as a priority, and investments must be made in environmental education, training and strengthening of neighbourhood networks. Strengthened networks and exchange are key elements to countering misinformation and mobilizing commitments towards just urban transformations.

We demand concrete and urgent actions:

- **Fair, accessible and direct funding** for urban adaptation and mitigation initiatives that effectively reach low-income communities and local actors.
- **Inclusive and binding governance mechanisms** in which communities have a real say over urban and climate decisions.
- **Protection of environmental defenders and community leaders** from violence and criminalization
- **Recognition of local and urban knowledge,** in dialogue with scientific knowledge, as a basis for climate policies
- **Support for ongoing local solutions** such as urban agriculture, nature-based solutions, circular water management and sustainable housing rehabilitation.
- **Building of public-community alliances and coalitions** in order to scale up solutions and ensure that strategies are contextualized, decolonial and just

Urban climate justice is built from the bottom up, with organized communities transforming their neighbourhoods and cities into inclusive, sustainable and solidarity spaces.

The future of our cities and neighbourhoods depends on our **collective ability to put life, dignity and justice at the heart of global climate action.**

We urge states and international organizations to recognize, strengthen and multiply the work of urban communities in Latin America.

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