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The unfolding coronavirus pandemic has exposed the systemic vulnerability and inequity of cities and underscored their crucial role in driving a sustainable future. While urban environments have been greatly disrupted, cities also offer promising opportunities to respond and recover while accelerating the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient, more equitable future. Indeed, the crisis has generated unprecedented public demand and political space for bold interventions that can radically improve the resilience, inclusiveness and livability of cities.

This is a historic moment full of peril and of promise. Over the past six years, WRI Ross Center has earned a global reputation for its multi-level approach to one of the greatest challenges of our time: the need to create inclusive, resilient, low-carbon cities for all. We are well-prepared for the long recovery ahead, which will offer extraordinary possibilities for cities to plan and implement measures for sustainable and equitable growth. Through vital research, analysis and real-world testing, our teams have learned what it takes to change cities from the inside out. Our expertise, shared across more than 75 countries, is helping cities to create a vision of success and to leverage resources to achieve that vision.

In 2019-20, that journey encompassed successful new initiatives in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Ethiopia and beyond. WRI Ross Center’s work ranged from projects for improved public transportation, safer intersections and reduced vehicle emissions to the creation of national policies for more compact, connected and sustainable urban development. For example, in Addis Ababa, we supported the growing Menged Le Sewe (“Streets for People”) open streets movement, promoting safer, inclusive public spaces. In Hyderabad, we opened a new office and began partnering closely with the city on last-mile connectivity, public green spaces and electric buses.

In this report, we highlight the results of these kinds of actions and the promise that lies in scaling them up for wider impact.

With the generous support of Stephen M. Ross Philanthropies, WRI Ross Center has already met or exceeded most of the targets set three years ago for 2022. We have now reached more than 430 cities around the world through diverse levels of engagement. Partnerships and coalitions have been the key mode of our engagement, whether they support solutions on the ground, generate new knowledge and research, or catalyze the adoption of solutions at scale. We’ve had successful global collaborations through initiatives like the Coalition for Urban Transitions, Building Efficiency Accelerator, and Global Commission on Adaptation.

Cities must navigate formidable technical, financial, political and bureaucratic hurdles to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfill the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement. If they succeed, they will lead unprecedented, systemic changes in energy, land use and infrastructure. At this pivotal moment, WRI Ross Center offers the knowledge, guidance, tools and resources cities need to make this vision a reality.
WRI Ross Center’s global actions support city-level change for people and the planet through three levels of engagement. Since 2014, we have influenced more than 430 cities.
**5-YEAR GOAL:** Improve sustainability in 200+ cities via three tiers of engagement

**Deep** city engagement is characterized by working closely with key stakeholders in a city over several years, from project inception to implementation, in multiple sectors.

**Targeted** engagement includes technical assistance on a key solution in one or more sectors. The objective is to establish or replicate a good practice via precedent-setting projects.

**Catalytic** influence involves broader efforts that can impact several cities. Approaches include short-term technical assistance, disseminating tools, and transferring knowledge and expertise through research, capacity building or conferences.
WRI Ross Center maintains long-term, ongoing partnerships with several cities chosen for their demonstrated commitment to multi-year, multi-sector change. In each, we tailor our approach to local needs, focusing on projects with the greatest potential to improve the quality of urban life for all.

**ADDIS ABABA:**
Celebrating Safer, More Inclusive “Streets for People”

Like the city, the streets of Addis Ababa have experienced a tremendous population boom over the last 20 years. More than 4.7 million residents—twice the population recorded in 2000—now live in the metropolitan area. The number of registered cars has increased 132% in just five years. Worsening congestion, road safety, greenhouse gas emissions and pollution are the new normal. Conflict between pedestrians and vehicles is so common that pedestrians now account for 84% of traffic fatalities in the city.

In 2018, Ethiopia’s national government embraced a growing international movement to promote safer walking and cycling in cities. It began a series of car-free Sundays, closing 4 kilometers of roads in the heart of Addis Ababa and main arterial roads in six other cities to open the streets to everyone. That initiative, since handed off to local mayors, sparked the larger Menged Le Sewe (“Streets for People”) open streets movement in 2019, supported by WRI Ross Center.

Addis Ababa’s inaugural Menged Le Sewe covered seven different neighborhoods, closing 9 kilometers of roads. More events soon followed, each attracting throngs of cyclists and pedestrians. The enthusiastic turnout sent a clear message to local officials, demonstrating the importance of shared public spaces and the need to invest in safe, accessible infrastructure for walking and cycling.
The city listened. Addis Ababa invested in a safe cycling program, redesigning intersections and neighborhoods to prioritize accessibility, safety and public space. Its Transport Bureau has converted a lane on one of the most popular Menged Le Sewe corridors into a bi-directional bike path. And the success of Addis Ababa’s program has inspired other cities across Ethiopia, as well. With WRI’s assistance, the Menged Le Sewe taskforce is publishing a toolkit to help seven additional cities plan car-free days and is influencing leaders’ decisions and investments in walking and cycling.

In another project to improve road safety in Addis Ababa, supported by the Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety, WRI Ross Center worked with the Traffic Management Agency to install traffic-calming measures in the capital’s most crash-prone areas. TMA identified 10 hotspots and used WRI’s Cities Safer by Design guidelines to install a combination of rumble strips and speed humps to reduce speeds. Pedestrian fences, bollards and flashing road studs were also added. An assessment by WRI showed that after the interventions, vehicles traveled an average of 50% slower, and in many locations, traffic fatalities and injuries dropped to zero. A second phase of the program will extend robust speed management measures to other areas of the city.

Building on work that WRI initiated with Shell Foundation support, important progress is being made in using data for better transport planning. In 2018, WRI Ross Center collaborated with Addis Ababa University to map the city’s complex, 700-route public transport network, using nothing but smartphones. Today, that data is being used by the Addis Ababa Transport Authority and Federal Transport Authority for improved transport across the country, including Ethiopia’s first-ever digital trip planning application. With the encouragement of Ethiopia’s Minister of Transport, a plan is now being developed with local universities to replicate the simple, cost-effective mapping method in other major cities.
HYDERABAD: Sourcing New Solutions for a Historic City

Booming growth, especially in the tech industry, is altering the shape and rhythms of centuries-old Hyderabad. But WRI India Ross Center is helping to create a new paradigm for development that harnesses creativity in the private sector with government support to create enabling conditions for change. Through coalition-building, a clear vision, and a series of promising pilot projects, WRI India Ross Center is demonstrating sustainable solutions that can be scaled up in Hyderabad and other cities in the region.

WRI opened its Hyderabad office in 2019 and quickly established ties with more than 20 public and private organizations to encourage new approaches to transportation, pedestrian-friendly design and open space. One of the primary goals was to highlight new transportation options to decrease congestion and limit vehicular pollution. Recognizing that one of the main obstacles to public transit use was the lack of services connecting residential and commercial areas, WRI India Ross Center launched a competition in 2018 for ideas to help commuters complete the “last mile” of their journeys.

The juried contest invited entrepreneurs to submit their concepts, awarding grants to three finalists and launching seven pilot projects. A three-month pilot for
shared bicycle and auto services at select metro stations enabled more commuters to access the public transport system. Two additional pilot projects helped the city’s transport agency reach out to private mobility operators to deploy their services. Currently, more than 10 mobility enterprises are working to provide first- and last-mile connectivity services in the city.

Electric vehicles are another solution that holds tremendous potential for lowering greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality. In 2019, WRI India Ross Center worked with state government officials to incentivize electric vehicle and battery makers and other sustainable mobility startups to set up and expand manufacturing and operations across Telangana. Working closely with several agencies on policy, certification and infrastructure, the WRI team is also collaborating on ambitious plans to scale up e-bus operations, build charging stations, and convert government-leased vehicle fleets to electric vehicles.

WRI India Ross Center is also supporting reimagined public spaces at Hyderabad’s iconic Hussain Sagar Lake. A proposed redesign links water-quality improvement and ecosystem restoration with improved access for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles. The project was showcased at the 2020 World Urban Forum, where it attracted interest from investment banks as well as the Green Climate Fund.
BEIJING:  
Safer Streets, Cleaner Skies

Beijing’s Central Business District is a pulsing, crowded hub for finance, media and business. At just under 4 square kilometers, it’s one of the densest areas in the capital. In recent years, as congestion increased, conditions for pedestrians and cyclists became increasingly treacherous.

In 2018, at the invitation of Beijing’s Central Business District Management Commission, WRI China Ross Center partnered with the Beijing Transport Institute and Beijing Jiaotong University on a strategy to improve walking and cycling in the area. WRI experts provided key technical assistance and analysis, making recommendations to install bike lanes, widen sidewalks, provide on-street bike parking facilities, add pedestrian crossing islands and remove on-street parking for cars. The design was adopted by the commission and completed in May 2019.

Today, the improvements are providing a better experience for an estimated 300,000 pedestrians and cyclists and have significantly reduced dangerous interactions between people and vehicles. Expanded sidewalks, lighting at crosswalks, curb removal for handicapped access, and new bus stops for micro-transit shuttles help pedestrians move safely and efficiently.

The shift in emphasis from vehicles to people has led to impressive outcomes. Recognition that pedestrians and cyclists come first is soaring: the percentage of vehicles that stop for pedestrians in a marked crosswalk has more than doubled. Road safety has improved. Reports of traffic accidents involving pedestrians or cyclists are 17% lower than they were in 2018. And public approval is overwhelming. A post-implementation survey showed that 82% of pedestrians and cyclists in the area are satisfied with the improvements.
Mayor Chen Jining speaks highly of the project and has requested that other areas of the city follow its lead. The government of Chaoyang District, where the Central Business District is located, has made plans to scale the project up for other neighborhoods in the area.

Since 2014, WRI has also helped Beijing reduce transportation emissions with measures to improve non-motorized transportation and streamline green travel. Collaborating closely with the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport and the Beijing Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau, WRI China Ross Center assisted in establishing China’s first low-emission zone, which was extended to cover the entire city in December 2018 and strengthened with stricter limits in November 2019. By preventing the release of an estimated 95 tons of total air pollutants a day, the new standards are delivering substantial public health benefits for millions of residents.
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

Mexico City’s forthcoming General Development Plan 2020-2040, developed with technical guidance from WRI Mexico Ross Center, provides a robust framework for a wide range of initiatives that will accelerate sustainable policies in transportation, energy efficiency and nature-based solutions. The plan defines long-term goals; estimates economic, social, and environmental costs; and establishes indicators for monitoring progress in areas of strategic relevance for the city.

WRI Mexico Ross Center drafted recommendations on solutions for income collection and management, a critical component of financial viability, for the Integrated Mobility System of Mexico City, which includes several different transport services. We provided technical support to the Ministry of Mobility of Mexico City for the evolution of transport scenarios, mainly focused on proposals for two Cablebús lines. In response to the aftermath of Mexico City’s devastating 2017 earthquake, we joined with the Rockefeller Foundation to create a mobility action protocol that identified priority areas for improvement in the event of another natural disaster.

Propulcity, a WRI Ross Center platform designed to strengthen the city’s innovation ecosystem, supported new mobility startups including van-pooling, car-pooling, environmental monitoring, corporate transport, electric bicycles, and technologies for issuing alerts to users. Municipal officials also took part in TheCityFix Labs México, supported by the Citi Foundation. Participants from governments across the country received assistance on combining public and private resources to implement sustainable infrastructure projects.

GUADALAJARA, MEXICO

Improving air quality in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area is an important goal for the current city and state administrations. Experts from WRI Mexico Ross Center advised on the revision and integration of Air Quality Management Plans for both Guadalajara and Jalisco. WRI and Guadalajara’s Metropolitan Planning Institute also agreed to conduct an innovative participatory emissions inventory, which began in January 2020.

WRI Mexico Ross Center provided the state with an accessibility analysis about Guadalajara’s public transportation, which operates approximately 5,000 buses and 300 routes, and helped decision-makers assess opportunities and risks in a planned bus rapid transit system expansion that would make it one of the largest in the country, with 41 kilometers of infrastructure and 250,000 people served daily.
**RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL**

Having helped Rio de Janeiro plan a Clean Mobility Zone in 2018, WRI Brasil Ross Center secured support for an expanded version in 2019. Led by C40, Mayor Marcelo Crivella announced that the city will implement a carbon neutral district through 2030. WRI guided a first-phase implementation plan that included tactical urbanism interventions. In addition, we continue to work with the municipal government on a 10-year master plan. The city is incorporating innovative finance mechanisms and sustainable spatial planning strategies into the plan, due to be completed in 2021.

**BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL**

Belo Horizonte joined Cities4Forests to protect and promote inner, nearby and faraway forests. WRI Brasil Ross Center is now applying a first-ever analysis of access to green areas. This mapping will provide an evidence-based approach to implementing new parks and conservation areas.

WRI Brasil Ross Center advanced interventions to protect children walking to school through the city’s second low-speed zone. A project around the Anne Frank School in the Confisco neighborhood successfully reduced vehicle speeds, increasing safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

An exchange of best practices among cities in the nationwide QualiÔnibus Group, coordinated by WRI Brasil Ross Center, resulted in adoption of a plan to reduce traffic accidents involving motorcyclists. Based on a solution pioneered in Fortaleza and shared through the group, Belo Horizonte implemented safety stickers on buses to warn passing cyclists that drivers cannot see them, and the number of incidents quickly decreased.

**BENGALURU, INDIA**

As Bengaluru develops its Comprehensive Mobility Plan, WRI India Ross Center experts provided feedback on prioritizing road safety, cycling, walking and public transport. The team worked with the Bengaluru Metro to formulate last-mile solutions, including space allocation and feeder services. We also consulted with the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and other agencies on building a bus priority lane along the busy Outer Ring Road. In other outreach, WRI advised the BMTC on procurement of electric buses and provided inputs on a proposal to increase the safety of women on public transport.

Through a nationwide competition, TheCityFix Labs India solicited ideas to accelerate innovation in water, waste and energy management. From a field of 125 submissions, 10 companies were chosen to receive mentoring on their proposals from more than 200 businesses, city officials and impact investors. The project leveraged more than $28 million in new private financing. The finalists are now undertaking pilot projects with various public and private entities to address crucial city needs, largely across Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
WRI Ross Center’s targeted engagement includes technical assistance on key solutions in one or more sectors to establish or replicate good practices.

FORTALEZA:
Combating Sexual Harassment on Public Transport

Incidents of sexual harassment happen every four seconds in Brazil. Yet despite their prevalence, there are few mechanisms to report episodes to authorities. Nina, a new feature built into Fortaleza’s city transit planner app, is helping to change this paradigm.

Launched in 2019, Nina lets customers alert authorities immediately when they experience or witness sexual harassment on public transportation. With a single click, Nina notifies the police and registers the moment on surveillance videos from the bus or terminal. Based on evidence extracted from these images, a victim can file a police report.

The acclaimed and innovative solution got its start from a public-private collaboration between WRI Brasil Ross Center, the Toyota Mobility Foundation and Brazil’s National Front of Mayors in 2017. Soon after, the partners launched the InoveMob Challenge, a competition designed to support new remedies for pressing transportation issues. In 2018, more than 90 entrepreneurs applied to...
receive funding, technical support and the opportunity to pitch their ideas to Brazilian cities ready for innovation. A panel of jurors selected Nina and four other projects as finalists.

Over the next 18 months, with continued assistance from the InoveMob Challenge, Nina developed and refined its product. In addition to providing the startup with vital links to media opportunities, WRI Brasil Ross Center established a connection between the city of Fortaleza and Nina, resulting in the deployment of a pilot project in the city with its more than half a million daily trips by women on public transport. The project received nationwide media coverage, and Nina became fully operational on the eve of International Women’s Day in 2019.

Since then, almost 1,000 users have reported harassment through Nina, and 80 complaints have resulted in the filing of police reports. Other Brazilian cities, including Belo Horizonte and Recife, are considering implementing the feature, and transport operators as far away as Germany and Costa Rica have expressed interest. There are also ongoing conversations to adapt Nina to uses beyond public transport, such as large expos and sporting events.

“InoveMob allowed Nina to evolve from a pilot project on a university campus to a public policy in the country’s fifth largest city,” said Simony Cesar, CEO of Nina. “Through the integration of our technology with the already existing transit app of the city, we’ve done more than create a facilitated channel and a standardized protocol for realizing complaints of sexual harassment on public transport. We’ve also decreased the communication gap that exists between transport managers and users in order to offer safer, more efficient service.”

Nina’s importance exceeds its demonstrated effectiveness as an alert system. Through a unique collaboration between technology providers, bus operators and police, it has become a robust tool to empower women in Fortaleza and beyond.

“InoveMob allowed Nina to evolve from a pilot project on a university campus to a public policy in the country’s fifth largest city.”

SIMONY CESAR, CEO OF NINA
MEXICO

Traffic accidents are the second leading cause of death for children in the state of Colima. To reduce speeding—the biggest risk factor in collisions—WRI Mexico Ross Center worked with the state to issue a new road safety, traffic and mobility regulation. The code sets 20 kilometer per hour speed limits in school zones and allows municipal governments to enforce speed reductions statewide. In addition to contributing technical and statistical analysis to support the regulation shift, WRI also identified an unsafe corridor near schools along Avenida de los Maestros in the city of Colima and led a redesign to transform one of its most dangerous intersections. The joint work with local actors and the community allowed the city to develop a common understanding of the importance of road safety by police, planners, engineers, urban planners and school leaders.

A partnership created through the Building Efficiency Accelerator in the state of Sonora resulted in the first Efficient Campus Challenge for local universities. Led by WRI Mexico Ross Center alongside the state Ecology Commission, the National Commission for the Efficient Use of Energy, and the Youth Institute of Sonora, the competition sought energy efficiency ideas and proposals to be applied in existing university buildings. By engaging 36 teams of three to five students to carry out energy audits in 36 buildings, the Challenge raised awareness and built capacity among the students, the academic community at large, and the local government on energy efficiency and the environmental impact of campus buildings.
Eskişehir created a dedicated municipal energy management unit and began an inventory of energy use in public buildings.

BRAZIL

Eleven Brazilian cities have implemented innovations in street design following “complete streets” principles in a network of cities coordinated by WRI Brasil Ross Center and the National Front of Mayors. Complete streets prioritize people over cars, making streets safer, more enjoyable and more productive. WRI has provided capacity building, implementation of pilot projects and governance to help cities design complete streets that now benefit one in five urban Brazilians.

**Porto Alegre**’s first complete street provides extra space and safety measures for walking and cycling by focusing on speed reduction. The average speed of vehicles approaching one major intersection is now half the speed measured three years ago.

**Campinas** used tactical urbanism to build safer approaches to a school, benefitting 700 students and citizens. The intervention provided traffic-calming measures as well as green parklets that host cultural activities. Children, parents, teachers and neighbors were engaged in all phases of the project.

**Salvador** invested $1 million in cycling paths, sidewalks, traffic-calming measures and resting spots along a 1.1-kilometer avenue in its historic center. The project is part of a comprehensive plan for revitalizing the heart of the city. Salvador is monitoring the impacts of the new designs, which will make the case for other complete streets initiatives in Brazilian cities.

TURKEY

In September 2019, the **Eskişehir** Metropolitan Municipality—a 2018-2019 Prize for Cities Finalist—became the second municipality in Turkey to establish a dedicated unit for energy management. WRI Turkey Sustainable Cities aided the shift by highlighting the benefits of integrated energy management for city officials, presenting global examples, and organizing a workshop for technical staff on the role, responsibilities and structure of the new unit. Eskişehir also began an inventory of energy use in its public buildings, starting with its central bus station, and will use the results to plan and implement measures to improve energy efficiency.
Three cities—İzmir, Eskişehir and Lüleburgaz—collaborated with WRI Turkey Sustainable Cities to plan major communication campaigns to promote cycling. WRI prepared a strategic communications toolkit and organized a training in each city, with participation from the municipalities and local cycling NGOs. The two-week campaigns, debuting in 2020, are designed to increase demand for cycling and promote the creation of improved cycling infrastructure. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Turkey Union of Municipalities, and Bank of Provinces, all responsible for building municipal capacity, will use the toolkit to promote cycling in other locations.

INDIA

Encouraging people-centric, inclusive and practical street design was the theme of the Mumbai Street Lab, launched by the Municipal Commission of Greater Mumbai in September 2019 with WRI as knowledge partner. Conceived as a platform to attract urban designers to redesign city streets, the juried competition drew entries from 50 teams. Five finalists are now working with engineers to plan renovations, and the city has budgeted funds to implement them. WRI India Ross Center worked for over 14 months to ensure that this was the city’s own initiative, initiating and building consensus for the Lab within the commission.

In Rohtak, WRI India Ross Center participated in a major project to improve infrastructure on streets frequented by schoolchildren, the first project of its kind in India. To reduce the high rate of traffic fatalities, the WRI team redesigned 13 kilometers of streets and supported public agencies in sustaining the initiative.

Electric vehicles, a crucial component of cleaner, healthier cities, gained traction in Kerala, which became the first state in India to adopt a roadmap to implement electric mobility. Developed with assistance from WRI, the roadmap lays out specific actions for the government to achieve its target of deploying 1 million electric vehicles by 2022. WRI India Ross Center analyzed mobility patterns in Kerala, leveraged its local expertise and developed the final product that was shared at an event with the state’s chief minister.

CHILE AND COLOMBIA

With support from WRI Ross Center, Santiago and Bogotá moved ahead on their acquisition of the largest electric bus fleets in Latin America. The cities issued tenders for the purchase of 400 and 500 electric buses, respectively, following WRI’s years-long engagement with officials and stakeholders on system needs, technical requirements and business models. The work in Santiago informed the adoption of electric buses in Bogotá, which had originally decided in 2017 not to procure them. WRI provided evidence of the model in Chile and held multi-level discussions with the mayor and transport agencies, which persuaded Bogotá to reverse course and issue a tender in 2019.
“Complete streets” interventions are helping to revitalize downtown Salvador.
CATALYTIC ENGAGEMENT

Catalytic engagement involves broad efforts to scale our impact to multiple cities. Through research and knowledge exchange, engagement and outreach, and capacity development, WRI Ross Center boosts the efforts of city staff and residents to meet a range of urban challenges through innovative policies and pilots.

MEXICO:
Building National Policies for Sustainable Urban Growth

Like their counterparts across the world, Mexico’s urban areas face a formidable challenge providing their growing populations with access to housing, energy, transportation and other basic services. The increasing stresses of climate change add an additional imperative: to solve these complex problems in ways that are both inclusive and sustainable.

“In order to achieve and implement a strong urban national policy that transforms the territory and guarantees development, we need strong alliances such as the Coalition working towards the same goal.”

MARIANA OROZCO, METROPOLITAN ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR FOR SEDATU
In November 2018, the **Coalition for Urban Transitions**, an initiative jointly managed by WRI Ross Center and C40, launched its Mexico program. La Coalicion por la Transformacion Urbana (CTU) is a major initiative supporting the national government of Mexico in its mission to transform urban areas.

In 2019, CTU assembled an influential team of the country’s federal ministers to realize this mission. CTU is working with the Ministry of Urban Development (SEDATU), the Ministry of Environment (SEMARNAT), the Mexican Senate and multiple state governments to implement a national policy for more compact, connected and sustainable urban development. With a focus on legislative issues, the group has created and supported an open, participatory forum that establishes Mexico’s urban transformation as a key narrative in the country’s overall advancement.

Since its establishment, CTU has presented more than 14 events, workshops, seminars and summits attended by more than 4,000 national decision-makers. The initiative has played an integral role in providing evidence and establishing priorities for coordination among metropolitan areas. A strong action plan is being consolidated to move cities toward a more equitable and sustainable form of development.

“In order to achieve and implement a strong urban national policy that transforms the territory and guarantees development, we need strong alliances such as the Coalition working towards the same goal,” said Mariana Orozco, Metropolitan Engagement Director for SEDATU. Carina Arvizú, Subsecretary for Urban Development at SEDATU, added: “The best mechanisms to be able to do something in urban development are collaborative and in solidarity with different actors.”

Priority areas for CTU include better implementation of Mexico’s existing Urban National Policy, effective national land management instruments and stronger public finance tools for local governments. Mexico’s Urban Development Secretary has been an active participant, connecting program priorities to the UN’s New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

A long and trusted relationship with national and local governments has allowed CTU to play a formative role in Mexico’s urban agenda. The lessons learned and best practices created will not only help Mexico, but inform the way the Coalition for Urban Transitions supports national governments around the world as they move to more sustainable, inclusive forms of urban development.
WRI helped Ethiopia develop its first national transport strategy.

**LATIN AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Coordinated by WRI Ross Center, the **Vision Zero Challenge** is working with select city leaders to advance on-the-ground actions that reduce traffic fatalities. Twenty-four cities have been invited to participate in the 2020 Challenge, which connects cities in the region with the expertise of 10 partner organizations to change how streets and speed limits are designed, regulated and managed. The initiative offers training, support and resources to city leaders to help them move from vision to action.

**ETHIOPIA**

As part of the development of Ethiopia’s first-ever national transport strategy, WRI Ross Center helped the government identify five interventions necessary to promote compact, connected cities. They included reallocating capital investments to support public transportation rather than car-based infrastructure; integrating national urban and transport plans; establishing road pricing; creating metropolitan transport authorities; and using land value capture instruments. The **Coalition for Urban Transitions** is now working closely with the Addis Ababa City Plan and Development Commission to support transport infrastructure investment and governance.

**TANZANIA**

The **Tanzania Urbanisation Laboratory** (TULab), created and supported by the Coalition for Urban Transitions, has created a much-needed space for critical and constructive urban dialogues in Tanzania. Launched in 2019, it is a community-convened national initiative that brings together stakeholders from a variety of sectors and levels of government. TULab developed a roadmap for Tanzania’s Urban Development Policy, which earned the endorsement of the Government of Tanzania. It is now being utilized as a platform to deliver additional urban strategies. UNICEF has asked to use it for a program focused on youth in cities.

Through the work of TULab and with support from Africa Centre for Cities and the Economic and Social Research Foundation, the Coalition’s Tanzania country program has been instrumental in fast-tracking the urban agenda, anchoring the agenda in government policy, and creating champions within and across Tanzanian government ministries.

**GHANA**

The Coalition for Urban Transitions works with Ghanaian leaders and influencers to ensure that research is informed by reality and that findings are produced and owned by local decision-makers. These co-produced research and policy dialogues will support the national government during its current urbanization phase.

As Ghana seeks to transform itself into an industrialized, high-income nation, the **Ghana Urban Think Tank**, supported by the Coalition, has offered key assistance, delivering guidelines to revise Ghana’s National Urban Policy. The group’s recommendations make the case for
stronger links between urbanization, industrialization and a climate-resilient economy. The Urban Think Tank has been recognized by the Director of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development for presenting the ministry with an opportunity to carry out its first iterative, diagnostic, review and revision process in developing a national urban policy.

**CHINA**

A pilot program implementing WRI Ross Center’s recommendations on fiscal policy options for China is set to debut in 2020. Pilot partners include China’s Director-General of Policy within the Ministry of Finance, six Chinese provincial governments and the UK Government. In addition, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank have included WRI recommendations as part of their input for China’s upcoming 14th Five Year Plan.

The Coalition for Urban Transitions’ China Country Program is working on a new vision for China’s urbanization and a major policy recommendation to realize this concept in the 14th Five Year Plan. The recommendation explains how a new, high-quality form of urbanization could not only meet national economic goals but also deliver environmental, social and economic benefits in line with China’s ambitions. It draws on an ambitious, multi-year research program carried out with experts at Tsinghua University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Renmin University and WRI’s Beijing office.
In 2019, WRI Mexico Ross Center played a key role in a trio of federal actions that promise advances in decarbonization and urban sustainability across dozens of cities. WRI worked closely with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to develop a forthcoming national strategy for e-mobility, with recommendations for short-, medium- and long-term implementation. The strategy aims to avoid 5 million tons of CO2 equivalent by 2030, to have at least half a million electric vehicles in circulation (including 7,000 electric heavy-duty vehicles) and to launch e-mobility projects focused on public transportation in 10 Mexican cities. By partnering with many organizations advocating for sustainable mobility and transport, the WRI team succeeded in making investment in public transportation a top priority of the strategy.

Clean energy was also the focus of a collaboration between WRI and C&A, a Dutch clothing company that is one of Mexico’s largest retailers. WRI experts worked with C&A to select an energy provider that met its needs with cleaner energy and reduced its energy bill by 30%. After helping to determine C&A’s corporate energy profile, WRI subsequently produced a guidebook and workshops on corporate clean energy procurement. C&A has announced its intention to procure 100% clean energy for all its stores in Mexico.
With support from WRI Mexico Ross Center, a long-sought reform of the national constitution recognizing mobility and road safety as social rights was approved by the Mexican Senate. The bill clarifies states’ responsibilities to ensure the exercise of these rights. WRI joined with more than 20 road safety NGOs to draft the original bill, provided technical analysis on its constitutional and technical feasibility, and fostered a dialogue between the presidency and local mobility authorities.

**TURKEY**

Turkey’s landmark commitment to the Zero Carbon Buildings for All Initiative at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit received critical support from WRI Turkey Sustainable Cities. The WRI team assisted the country’s Ministry of Environment and Urbanization throughout the Climate Summit process and consulted on proposal design and project management, resulting in the country’s pledge to achieve zero-carbon buildings by 2050. WRI Ross Center also led the development of the overall Zero Carbon Buildings for All initiative, creating a framework for the effort and leading a coalition of public, private and civil society stakeholders to drive ambition for building decarbonization over the next three decades.

**INDIA**

Support for Vision Zero road safety initiatives, a central tenet of WRI Ross Center’s focus on traffic safety measures, gained significant momentum at the state and national levels in 2019. At the highest level, President Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to a Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill that comprehensively strengthens the nation’s road safety regulations, planning guidelines and laws. The approval was the culmination of a five-year effort by the WRI team, which helped inform several topics including infrastructure, public transport, data collection, crash investigation, driver training and vehicle testing.

Three north Indian states—Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan—also adopted the Vision Zero approach, moving towards saving 20,000 lives a year. The Haryana government expanded the program to all its 23 districts in 2018; the Punjab government piloted the program in 10 districts in 2019; and the Rajasthan government will launch the program in 2020. WRI India Ross Center assisted in identifying 800 hotspots in the region and has developed street design and traffic management solutions for over 6,500 kilometers of roads.
WRI Ross Center has earned a global reputation as a source for reliable, practical research on how fast-growing cities can deliver core urban services. Our role as a knowledge provider has been cited as an essential contribution to the success of many initiatives around the world.

**WORLD RESOURCES REPORT: TOWARDS A MORE EQUAL CITY**

Since 2016, *Towards a More Equal City*, part of WRI’s flagship World Resources Report, has led the field in presenting in-depth research on transformative change in cities. In 2019, we delivered the final thematic papers and case studies in the series, which examines whether providing equitable access to core urban services and infrastructure, like housing, water, sanitation, energy, and transportation, leads to more economically productive and environmentally sustainable cities.

We are now completing the final phase of this research, which will compile insights and lessons learned into a synthesis report. Publication is scheduled for 2020. A symposium in India attended by government officials, urban planners and practitioners, academics, and activists, as well as a virtual workshop with African participants, validated key findings of the synthesis report, including the importance of strategic, cross-sectoral urban planning in improving access to core services.
GLOBAL COMMISSION ON ADAPTATION

In 2019, WRI Ross Center was invited to work with the UN’s Global Commission on Adaptation to review and assess the current literature on transformative climate adaptation. Through a comprehensive look at examples and evidence from a wide range of cities across the global north and south, we examined how urban adaptation solutions can move beyond incremental change and lead to a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive future. This paper was part of a series of background papers commissioned by the Commission, which includes more than 30 international government, business, science and humanitarian leaders.

WRI Ross Center Global Director Ani Dasgupta presented the paper’s findings at the C40 Mayors Summit, attended by more than 70 mayors, in Copenhagen. A workshop at Connect Karo in New Delhi further informed the research.

Towards a More Equal City explores how to reduce inequality in cities like Mumbai.
Untreated and Unsafe: Solving the Urban Sanitation Crisis in the Global South

The final thematic working paper in *Towards a More Equal City*, this study presents new sanitation data from 15 cities in the global south that show almost two-thirds of sewage and human waste is unsafely managed. It finds that the provision of sanitation infrastructure has inflexible, high, one-time costs, disincentivizing households to use safe practices.

Surabaya: The Legacy of Participatory Upgrading of Informal Settlements

This case study, part of *Towards a More Equal City*, describes the history of Surabaya, Indonesia’s inclusive housing policy, and how the Kampung Improvement Program became a model for slum upgrading efforts both nationwide and internationally.

Enhancing NDCs: Opportunities in Transport

This paper highlights three key opportunities to enhance Nationally Determined Contributions via transport: accelerating electrification while addressing fuel economy; strengthening “avoid and shift” measures; and seizing new opportunities to address freight emissions.

How to Tackle Climate Change and Inequality Jointly in Cities

Part of C40’s Climate Action Planning Resource Center, this toolkit provides comprehensive planning support to cities in their efforts to advance climate action through an inclusive engagement and planning process that results in more equitable outcomes for all.
Unlocking the Potential for Transformative Climate Adaptation in Cities

This paper, part of a series commissioned by the Global Commission on Adaptation, systematically reviews literature and case studies across the global north and south to assess the barriers and enablers to transformative climate adaptation, focusing on examples and evidence from a wide range of cities.

The 8 Principles of Sidewalks: Building More Active Cities

This guide, originally written in Portuguese for a Brazilian audience, provides municipal technicians and city planners with a practical approach and guidelines on how to design high-quality sidewalks.

Financing Electric and Hybrid-Electric Buses: 10 Questions City Decision-Makers Should Ask

Building on guidance provided by existing literature, this paper examines common financial issues faced by cities considering e-buses. Topics covered include technologies, plans, operations, procurement strategies, regulations and financing opportunities.

Climate Emergency, Urban Opportunity

This report, a collaborative effort of more than 50 organizations brought together by the Coalition for Urban Transitions, outlines the immense social and economic benefits of creating compact, connected and clean cities with net-zero emissions, and presents a clear six-part action plan for national governments around the world.
City stakeholders seeking to move towards greater sustainability, resilience and livability often lack access to data that can help them make more informed decisions. This knowledge gap can be due to a lack of publicly available data, as opposed to an overall lack of data collected.
To address the gap, WRI Ross Center collaborated with WRI’s Resource Watch platform to create two data dashboards to support decision-making and informed action by city stakeholders. These two dashboards are an integral aspect of WRI Ross Center’s expanding data initiative, aimed at leveraging new and emerging streams of data and analytic methods to enable integrated, strategic and collaborative urban planning that is sustainable and equitable.

AIR QUALITY DASHBOARD

The Air Quality dashboard, developed for public officials, think tanks, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, is a go-to resource for global data on air quality and emissions. The dashboard enables users to analyze air quality issues at local and global levels based on robust datasets. Among the aspects covered are the broader geography of emissions, the direct sources of emissions, and how air moves across national borders.

The dashboard exemplifies WRI Ross Center’s commitment to democratize data and provide local leaders with the knowledge they need to push for sustainable solutions to poor air quality. It enables users to calculate how much of harmful emissions are generated by the transport sector, industrial processes and power generation. It also helps them to track the build-up of harmful emissions and predict dangerously poor air quality.

CITIES DASHBOARD

The Cities dashboard uses data and data visualizations to highlight the key challenges that cities face in the fight against climate change. Users can view trends in urban population growth, urban land use and required infrastructure investments.

The Cities dashboard also illustrates the themes that WRI Ross Center has placed at the center of its strategy: urban housing, clean water, sanitation, energy, transportation, water resources and air quality. Users can view how cities have taken action—through denser planning, smarter and more efficient transportation systems, and greater use of clean energy and more efficient use of resources—to address their contributions to climate change, and to mitigate the adverse impacts of increasing global temperatures on urban residents and systems.
WRI Ross Center launched the second cycle of the Prize for Cities in February 2020 at World Urban Forum 10, adding a new theme in line with the Year of Climate Action.

As the world reaches critical milestones for the Paris Agreement, cities need concrete ways to translate global goals into local action. At the same time, cities are being asked to balance climate and sustainable development goals with the need for economic development. The 2020-2021 Prize for Cities invites submissions from initiatives and projects that show how to live and thrive in a changing climate by tackling both the climate crisis and urban inequality together.

“As the climate crisis disproportionately affects the most vulnerable in cities and worldwide, it is crucial that inclusive climate action is placed at the heart of all urban decision making,” said C40 Cities Executive Director and new Prize for Cities Juror Mark Watts. “It has never been more important to celebrate the most inspiring and impactful initiatives that are transforming the landscapes and experiences of cities for the better.”

Watts joins the Prize Jury this cycle alongside fellow new jurors Maimunah Mohd Sharif, executive director of UN-Habitat, and Martha Delgado Peralta, deputy secretary of multilateral affairs and human rights for Mexico.

“Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda means leaving no one and no place behind,” said Mohd Sharif. “These are global goals, but we need actions on the ground in this Decade of Action. City changemakers can make a world of difference. As more people move to cities, we know they must be at the forefront of change to succeed in creating a more equitable and more sustainable world for everyone.”

The 2020-2021 Prize for Cities will award projects that foster inclusive climate action.
The Prize for Cities is the premier global award celebrating and spotlighting transformative urban change. The Prize was presented for the first time in April 2019 to SARSAI, a road safety project by the NGO Amend. SARSAI was selected by a world-class jury from among 193 submissions from 120 cities and 41 countries for its demonstrated impact on road safety around especially dangerous school areas in nine African countries.

Prize for Cities winners and finalists help cities understand that transformative change is possible. They apply big ideas to critical urban problems, demonstrate life-changing impact, and have ripple effects on institutions, the wider city, and beyond. The winner of the $250,000 prize will be announced in spring 2021.

Among other approaches, inclusive climate projects can be projects that:

- Protect lives and livelihoods threatened by the changing climate
- Increase accessibility without increasing carbon footprint
- Fuel innovation and economic opportunity without polluting byproducts
- Shift traditional models of behavior and daily practices
- Use new data, knowledge, governance and/or finance
- Tackle the potentially negative effects of climate policies

“City changemakers can make a world of difference. As more people move to cities, we know they must be at the forefront of change to succeed in creating a more equitable and more sustainable world for everyone.

MAIMUNAH MOHD SHARIF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN-HABITAT
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WRI Ross Center staff at Transforming Transportation 2020, held with the World Bank.
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