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Contact: Lauren Zelin, World Resources Institute, (202) 729-7736, lzelin@wri.org

Policy Blueprint for Building Efficiency Shows Urban Leaders How to Boost Economy and Cut Emissions

Eight recommended actions can improve energy efficiency in buildings to unlock a “triple win” and address economic, environmental and social challenges in world’s urban areas

Key points:

- **Nearly 70 percent of the world’s population, or 6.3 billion people, will live in cities by 2050, increasing energy demand and associated air pollution**
- **Increasing efficiency in buildings is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve cities – every \$1 invested saves \$2 in new electricity generation and distribution costs**
- **Better building efficiency can help alleviate many urban challenges – from climate change to public health, and underemployment to energy poverty**
- **Improving building efficiency can contribute to reductions in global CO₂ emissions from buildings by 83 percent below business-as-usual by 2050.**
- **WRI policy guide *Accelerating Building Efficiency: Eight Actions for Urban Leaders* offers actions mayors, local governments, real estate companies, financial institutions and utilities can take to unlock building efficiency benefits in cities**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 11, 2016) — A new policy roadmap from World Resources Institute, [***Accelerating Building Efficiency: Eight Actions for Urban Leaders***](#), shows how city-level leaders worldwide can overcome barriers to improving building efficiency and reduce energy demand through policy and market action. WRI finds that better energy efficiency in buildings can unlock a “triple win” of economic, environmental and social benefits for cities, and taking action now can avoid locking in decades of inefficiency.

Unprecedented expansion means cities are the next frontier on global sustainability, especially in the developing world. Nearly 70 percent of the world’s population, or 6.3 billion people, will live in cities by 2050, increasing energy demand and associated air pollution. Multiple barriers keep cities dirty, polluted and crowded, affecting quality of life and making it harder to support a growing population. And local leaders are often not aware of available technologies or policies to enable solutions through better buildings.

Buildings are key to unlocking a cleaner future for urban areas. Increasing building efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve cities – every \$1 invested saves \$2 in new electricity generation and distribution costs. More efficient buildings offer better design, new technologies and increased productivity that make them better places to live and work. Improving building efficiency could also reduce global CO₂ emissions from buildings by 83 percent below business-as-usual by 2050.



WRI's new policy guide, ***Accelerating Building Efficiency***, outlines a comprehensive approach to improve building efficiency through eight clear and specific actions. These recommendations will help mayors, city planners and local governments, real estate companies, financial institutions and utilities usher in an era of better buildings designed for the 21st century. As an urban development strategy, better buildings can increase economic opportunities, meet local and global climate goals, and improve the quality of life for urban residents.

WRI's eight actions for unlocking building efficiency include:

1. **Building efficiency codes and standards**: Cities are built upon a foundation of building codes. Well-designed codes and standards requiring minimum levels of energy efficiency in design, construction and/or operation of building systems can cost-effectively decrease energy expenses over buildings' lifetimes.
2. **Efficiency improvement targets**: Local governments must set clear energy reduction targets to improve building performance across cities, or at least in government-owned buildings. Governments can also introduce voluntary targets to incentivize private sector action.
3. **Performance information and certifications**: The market can function if there is clear data differentiating performance. Increasing the transparency of building performance enables building owners, managers, and occupants to make informed real estate transactions, improve building performance, and track performance against targets.
4. **Incentives and finance**: City-level leaders have opportunities to make strategic investments in building efficiency, and can work with national and private sector financial institutions to help overcome inertia and spur new investment in buildings. Financing to help cover upfront costs can spark greater investment.
5. **Government leadership by example**: Successful government policies in one city should be shared among other urban areas to improve building efficiency while creating greater demand and acceptance for building efficiency.
6. **Engaging building owners, managers and occupants**: Local governments should engage private-sector building owners and occupants through partnerships, competitions and awards, user-feedback, and energy management activities.
7. **Engaging technical and financial service providers**: The public and private sectors should work together to train the local workforce to implement energy reduction strategies. Engaging service providers enables them to meet demand for building efficiency projects and create good jobs.
8. **Working with utilities**: Governments can tap utility-customer relationships to provide better data and make efficient technologies more accessible.

Accelerating Building Efficiency includes dozens of case studies from successful building efficiency efforts in cities across the world, including Johannesburg, Ho Chi Minh City, Puebla (Mexico), Abu Dhabi, New York City, Buenos Aires, Lviv (Ukraine) and more. The report seeks to inspire new action among local governments and private industry to make buildings more efficient, through technologies and retrofits of existing buildings.

WRI's policy blueprint also outlines strategies to help governments understand current efficiency baselines, develop successful programs, identify key stakeholders and develop metrics to track progress over time.



The report was produced by the WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities' Building Efficiency Initiative, developed in partnership with Johnson Controls, with contributions from a dozen experts and organizations.

To read the full report visit www.wri.org/buildingefficiency.

For more information on WRI's Building Efficiency Initiative visit www.buildingefficiencyinitiative.org.

QUOTES:

Jennifer Layke, Director, Building Efficiency Initiative, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, World Resources Institute

"Every new building investment made today lasts 30-100 years, so accelerating building efficiency avoids locking in decades of inefficiency and emissions. The world's urban leaders have the power to improve their cities by improving their buildings."

Odón de Buen, Director General, National Commission for the Efficiency Use of Energy (CONUEE), Mexico

"Urban leaders are important trendsetters on energy efficiency. Cooperative action between multiple levels of government and private stakeholders is helping to transform the built environment in dozens of cities across Mexico. We've seen the value of city actions by highlighted in this report and look forward to working with WRI on expanding their adoption."

Clay Nesler, Vice President of Global Energy and Sustainability, Johnson Controls

"The private-sector plays a key role in helping cities accelerate the pace of building efficiency improvements. The business community brings a unique set of capabilities in constructing, renovating and operating buildings along with the capacity to quickly deliver environmental and social impacts at scale."

Yuko Nishida, Bureau of Environment, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Japan

"This how-to guide builds upon earlier findings on good practices for city efficiency and lays out a straight-forward, locally-customizable pathway for city actions on building efficiency. Those who use it will help usher in a better era for cities and their residents. Considering the crucial role of cities' policies and actions in the building sector, building energy efficiency is a 'must-do' for city policymakers."

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World Resources Institute

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WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities

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