

43 Cities and Orgs Join Landmark Declaration, "Asian Cities Together Towards Zero Carbon", Led by Yokohama and Bangkok

At 12th Asia Smart City Conference, 43 cities and organizations joined Yokohama and Bangkok in Yokohama Declaration to reduce worldwide carbon emissions

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EINPresswire.com/ -- On November 15, 2023, an important step towards reducing worldwide carbon emissions was made at the 12th Asia Smart City Conference as the joint declaration, "Yokohama Declaration: Asian Cities Together Towards Zero Carbon", was announced, being proposed by Yokohama City, Japan and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand, and welcomed by 43 participating cities and organizations across Asia. The joint declaration aims to realize a sustainable and resilient zero-carbon future, using Bangkok's and Yokohama's declarations to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 as models, and calls for collaboration between all the participating cities to learn from each other's best practices and work together towards reducing carbon emissions.



43 participating cities and organizations join in the Yokohama Declaration



Mayor of Yokohama and Governor of Bangkok launching Joint Declaration

"Decarbonization" was the theme of the [12th Asia Smart City Conference \(ASCC\)](#), hosted in November 2023 in Yokohama in conjunction with the [Y-SHIP Convention](#). This ASCC featured many diverse sessions across

various fields, including public-private policy dialogues and more, conducted by the World Bank Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC), the Asian Development Bank/Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), CityNet, Smart City Institute Japan (SCI-J), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Yokohama Urban Solution Alliance (YUSA), Yokohama City University, and the City of Yokohama.

In the Joint Declaration session, these various organizations lent their support for the declaration led by the Mayor of Yokohama and the Governor

of Bangkok, with messages from Yutaka Matsuzawa, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Japan; Ming Zhang, Practice Manager for Urban Disaster Risk Management, Resilience, and Land in the East Asia and Pacific region, World Bank; F. Cleo Kawawaki, Head of the Office of Markets Development and Public-Private Partnership, Asian Development Bank; and Naoko Ueda, Head of the OECD Tokyo Centre.

The Mayor of Yokohama, Takeharu Yamanaka, commented on the declaration during his opening remarks for the session as a board member of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and a member of the OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth, hitting on the need for change and collaboration. "In order to build a future for sustainable, resilient cities, our entire economic and social system must undergo a green transformation." Mayor Yamanaka stated. He highlighted Yokohama's history of collaborating with cities in Asia, mentioning Bangkok, Cebu, Da Nang, Fiji, and several cities in Indonesia to complete urban development projects, and ended saying "Now is the time for cities to take the lead in mobilizing Asia and the world to confront global challenges."

Following the remarks from the Mayor of Yokohama, the Governor of Bangkok, Chadchart Sittipunt, further emphasized the importance of collaboration. "We cannot tackle [greenhouse gas emission] alone. We have to work together to solve this tragedy. The reason for being here is not only attending the conference but to prevent the tragedy of humankind." He concluded the speech by noting the significance of ASCC as a knowledge-sharing platform. "I would like to thank the City of Yokohama and everyone involved for bringing us together so that we can collaborate, and we can share information and inspiration."

During Japan's rapid economic growth in the 1950s-1970s, Yokohama City faced various urban challenges such as waste management, traffic congestion, environmental degradation, water resources, and a shortage of public land. The city was able to overcome these challenges by



Mayor of Yokohama, Takeharu Yamanaka at Asia Smart City Conference

implementing key urban infrastructure projects, focusing on control (regulation and guidance of urban use) and urban design, including strengthening the city center and constructing transportation networks.

Many cities in Asia are currently facing similar urban challenges due to their own rapid economic growth and population increases. Initiated by Yokohama City in 2012, the ASCC serves as a platform for discussing urban challenges and sharing solutions among cities and organizations in Asia and beyond. Supported by Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) since 2017, the 12th ASCC marked a return to in-person meetings, bringing together city leaders to Yokohama after four years of virtual proceedings.

Yokohama City and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration signed a memorandum of cooperation in 2013, aiming for environmentally conscious sustainable urban development. Both cities have declared goals to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, establishing themselves as leaders in Asia's decarbonization efforts.

The text of the new "Joint Declaration for Decarbonization in Asia" states, "We, the cities of Asia, commend each other for overcoming the challenges of city management amidst the COVID pandemic...Here, we declare our solidarity to co-create a sustainable and resilient zero-carbon future."

The Joint Declaration itself is a commitment on three major points:

1. Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development: Participating cities commit to integrate green infrastructure and renewable energy, enhancing resilience and reducing carbon footprint for current and future generations.
2. Community Engagement and Capacity Building: Participating cities will emphasize community involvement and capacity building, nurturing a sense of shared responsibility and fostering corporations and individuals for a zero-carbon urban future.
3. Inclusive and Citizen-centric Approach: Participating cities will ensure inclusivity, respect diversity, and focus on the well-being of all citizens in the design, planning, and management of our cities.

These goals align with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and mark an important step toward more cities across Asia making the next steps toward formal declarations of carbon neutrality across Asia.

Cities consume 78% of the world's energy and produce more than 60% of greenhouse gas emissions, despite accounting for less than 2% of the Earth's surface, [according to UN Habitat](#). As such, it is crucial to make sure cities around the world are involved with the effort to reduce carbon output, despite issues stemming from rapid industrialization. By proposing and leading this "Joint Declaration for Decarbonization in Asia" Yokohama City and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration aim to create a platform for cities across Asia to collaborate, uplift, and support each other in reducing carbon emissions and creating a sustainable future.

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