

Global best practice shows how climate resilience can become the new normal

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The Centre for Liveable Cities and Urban Land Institute set out transferable lessons from five cities adapting to climate risk

SINGAPORE (19 January 2021) – A new book from the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) and Urban Land Institute (ULI) has called on cities worldwide to recognize their common challenges in building climate resilience. It sets out a strategy for mobilizing individuals, whether in business, in government, in civic organizations or as residents, to act as global citizens and take steps towards making their cities more climate resilient.

'Building Climate Resilience in Cities Worldwide: 10 Principles to Forge a Cooperative Ecosystem,' presses the need for a whole-of-society approach that addresses other threats and inequalities alongside climate risks in order to win the cooperation of all stakeholders and achieve genuine, city-wide resilience. The best solutions, meeting specific local needs, are shown to have been developed together with the people most affected.

Combining the expertise and experiences of five cities around the world – Hong Kong, Miami, New York, Rotterdam and Singapore – CLC and ULI set out practical guidance for city governments, businesses and communities to act together on risks, such as rising temperatures, wildfires, droughts, more intense storms, heavier rainfalls, and rising sea levels, which threaten the functions and sometimes even the existence of cities.

The 10 Principles for achieving collective action by multiple stakeholders are translated into recommended actions which are, in turn, illustrated with real-life examples of best practice from around the world. The principles include:

1. Elevate resilience as a goal for all sectors and stakeholders
2. Work across space, time and organizations
3. Leverage opportunities to enhance liveability
4. Provide transparency through data and knowledge sharing
5. Strive for equity, access and inclusion
6. Spur united action through a common narrative
7. Nurture a culture of collaboration
8. Embody flexibility in approaches and solutions
9. Motivate the market, spur innovation
10. Normalize green finance to fund projects

The report also features in-depth case studies of the resilience challenges and policies in the five cities which the book focuses on: Singapore, Hong Kong, Rotterdam, New York and Miami.

In addition to organizational action, individuals are urged to make their own properties more resilient and their investments greener, while pressing for resilience to be elevated to the same level as profitability or sustainability in their working lives. Where a local area lacks a resilience working group, civic leaders are encouraged to bring people together – whether professionals or members of the public – and engage with other stakeholders.

Global chief executive officer of ULI, Ed Walter, comments: “If there’s one overriding message, it’s that we all need to break out of our silos. We need to plan longer term, collaborate beyond our usual boundaries and look beyond our own sectors, interests and responsibilities. We have to stop setting up discreet programmes that address just one risk and start thinking instead about how we incentivize broader behavioural change.”

“It’s not so common for a best practice book to emphasise individual responsibility – what each of us can do in our working lives or as private individuals. The younger generation are right in telling us not to be passive, but to work with our neighbors, governments and businesses to drive change.”

Hugh Lim, Executive Director of the Centre for Liveable Cities shared that, “We can see from recent decades that the best prepared cities don’t just recover from climate shocks. They emerge stronger and thrive by adapting to unexpected disruptions and translating challenges into opportunities. The benefits from resilience investments are reaped by cities in the form of ‘resilience dividends’, which will benefit all stakeholders and future generations whilst building stronger community bonds.”

“Those benefits are not merely a happy side effect of a whole-of-society approach, but provide the motivation for bringing people together, despite their disparate interests.”

The book offers insights to cities worldwide from the five case study cities that participated in the research through workshops with local stakeholders and experts, which formed the basis for the 10 Principles. Select practices and next steps from each city include:

- In Hong Kong, industry leaders are helping drive adaptation through finance: Link REIT issued the first local “green bond” of HK\$3.9 billion (US\$500 million), alongside a new Green Finance Framework to select projects that incorporate climate resilience and sustainability. The government is supporting resilient development in part by working to create a new landslide barrier system for the city’s steep slopes, as well as requiring major public projects to comply with planning standards that reduce the urban heat island effect. Hong Kong has great opportunity to build on its strengths as a leading financial market to innovate

around insurance of climate-related risks and provide capital for sustainable development. The city can also continue to support the wider business community in further embracing sustainability and addressing climate vulnerabilities through research and technological advancements.

- The City of Miami has demonstrated the potential of regional collaborations with neighboring governments, cross-jurisdictional initiatives, and local financing mechanisms. The city's resilience plan, Resilient305, was developed in concert with the next-door city of Miami Beach and Miami-Dade County and aligns with the Regional Climate Action Plan put out by the Southeast Florida Climate Change Compact, a 4-county body that provides localized climate science and guidance on policy and advocacy to local municipalities. Further land use and planning decisions can be unified under a comprehensive development plan that broadly embeds resilience in the city's development, while directing growth toward higher-elevation areas and preserving housing affordability long-term.
- New York City is working on ambitious protective waterfront infrastructure, especially around Lower Manhattan – a result of its success with innovative public-private design competitions such as Rebuild by Design. Broadly, its resilience work is driven by a combination of proactive planning and science-based policy guidance. A major next step for the city will be to scale up resilience retrofits across its existing and aging building stock, in part by using existing energy efficiency retrofit programs and financing mechanisms.
- The book celebrates Rotterdam's historic culture of collaboration, originating in communal maintenance of the city's sea defences. Residents have been further motivated to take part in building resilience by the reimagining of public spaces as infrastructure for balancing recreation and managing stormwater. Additionally, the city works with developers on co-financing and incentives to encourage adoption of resilience strategies like green roofs, complementing requirements to capture stormwater onsite to reduce flooding. Rotterdam can stimulate even greater private sector participation by clarifying the business case for resilience, creating new or highlighting existing incentive programs, and incorporating flexibility within building regulations to allow for innovative development.
- Singapore is mobilizing to respond to climate change with large government funding commitments, dedicating S\$100 billion (US\$75 billion) over the next 100 years for resilience measures. Channelized waterways are being restored to natural conditions to reduce flooding, while elevation requirements for some critical infrastructure have been adjusted based on updated sea level rise projections. Meanwhile, private developers are incorporating climate-sensitive designs and pushing the environmental performance of their buildings. This trend can be accelerated through greater data sharing and dialogues between sectors to change industry norms, enhance collaboration and create a shared narrative on the need for resilience among businesses and the public.

The “Building Climate Resilience in Cities Worldwide” book will be discussed at a deep dive panel session, “Public and Private: Joining Forces for Climate Resilience”, at the World Cities Summit 2021 Preview, on 29 January 2021. The virtual session will bring together speakers from the cities featured in the book, including Elijah Hutchinson, vice-

president of waterfronts, New York City Economic Development Corporation; Henk Ovink, special envoy for international water affairs, Kingdom of the Netherlands; Ellie Tang, head of sustainability, New World Development Company Limited; Esther An, chief sustainability officer, City Developments Limited; and, Lauren Sorkin, executive director, Resilient Cities Network. For more information, visit: <https://www.worldcitysummit.com.sg/>

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Notes to Editors

'Building Climate Resilience in Cities Worldwide: 10 Principles to Forge a Cooperative Ecosystem' is available at ULI's Knowledge Finder platform.

About the Centre for Liveable Cities

Set up in 2008 by the Ministry of National Development and the then Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC)'s mission is to distil, create and share knowledge on liveable and sustainable cities. CLC's work spans four main areas – Research, Capability Development, Knowledge Platforms, and Advisory. Through these activities, CLC hopes to provide urban leaders and practitioners with the knowledge and support needed to make our cities better. For more information, visit www.clc.gov.sg.

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a non-profit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the institute has more than 45,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. For more information, please visit uli.org or follow us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.