From Bharat to Antalya: Delhi Declaration 2026 Calls for Stronger Multilevel Climate Action Ahead of COP31

Second edition of two-day ARISE Cities Forum closes with a collective call for greater role of cities in global climate governance.

Theme of the forum addresses timely and urgent concerns, says Turkish Ambassador

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The ARISE Cities Forum 2026 concluded in New Delhi with the adoption of the **Delhi Declaration on Local Action for Global Climate Goals** on 28 October 2026. Held on 27-28 October 2026 at the India Habitat Centre, the second edition of the Forum was organised by ICLEI South Asia, in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

The Forum brought together more than 200 participants from 50+ cities across 18+ countries to bring urban voices from across the Global South to the forefront, emphasising the values of collaboration, sustainability, resilience, and equity in driving climate action through measurable, locally driven initiatives. The two-day Forum comprised three technical plenaries and 14 technical sessions.



Themed **“From Bharat to Antalya — Commit. Implement. Deliver,”** the Forum made a united call by cities and local governments across the Global South for stronger multilevel collaboration and recognition as indispensable partners in global climate governance. This collective ambition, articulated in the Delhi Declaration 2026, will now travel to COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye.

From commitment to implementation: Highlights from the Closing Ceremony

The Forum closed on 28 October 2026 with addresses by **H.E. Ali Murat Ersoy**, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to India; **Pravesh Wahi**, Hon’ble Mayor of Delhi; **Mikiko Tanaka**, Head of Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, UNESCAP; **Dr Vinay P. Sahasrabuddhe**, State In-Charge for the Bharatiya Janata Party in Delhi; President, Asiatic Society of Mumbai; **Dr Debolina Kundu**, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs; and **Gino Van Begin**, Secretary General, ICLEI. **Samed Ağırbaş**, COP31 Climate Champion and President of the Zero Waste Foundation, joined virtually for a special address.

H.E. Ali Murat Ersoy, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to India, “On behalf of the Republic of Turkey, as we prepare to host COP21 in Antalya, I extend our deepest appreciation to ICLEI South Asia, NIUA and UN Habitat for convening with the ARISE Cities Forum 2026. The journey from ‘Bharat to Antalya’ should be a continuum of action. Turkey's host priorities align seamlessly with the Indian approach to climate action, an approach anchored in the timeless philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, ‘the world is one family’.

Pravesh Wahi, Hon’ble Mayor of Delhi said, “ICLEI South Asia has supported Delhi in promoting public transport, expanding the electric bus fleet, and improving last-mile connectivity, working with municipal corporations in Delhi and the National Capital Region to build city leadership, raise awareness, and implement pilot interventions to improve air quality. I commend and thank ICLEI South Asia for this work.”

Mikiko Tanaka, Head of Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, UNESCAP, “I wish to support the Delhi Declaration with messages from a recent ESCAP regional discussion paper that underlines the importance of localizing NDCs to cities.Cities must

move to the centre of national climate action. They should close the gap between national commitment and implementation. Mayors need to sit at the table where national climate commitments are made. Climate finance must reach cities, and cities must be ready to use it. Climate action must not happen in sectoral silos. National climate commitments must translate into local climate action plans. South-South cooperation can help cities accelerate climate action."

Dr. Vinay P. Sahasrabuddhe, State In-Charge for the Bharatiya Janata Party in Delhi; President, Asiatic Society of Mumbai said **"**The concept of a dormitory city now dominates the discourse around urban administration. In this situation, people do not feel connected to the city where they work, even though it is their workplace. A sense of belonging is therefore important for sustainable urban administration. Cities are not just clusters of buildings, gated communities, and skyscrapers. Cities, after all, are living organisms. For cities to become vibrant centers of sharing and caring, some kind of emotional connection is essential. I therefore urge lawmakers and urban administrators to look into this."

Samed Ağırbaş, COP31 Climate Champion, President of the Zero Waste Foundation, "Local leaders know what their communities need. They must have the finance resources and partnership to act. That is why the Delhi Declaration is so relevant. I particularly welcome the Delhi Declaration's commitment to zero waste, because the future of our planet begins in our home. Let us turn the Declaration into lasting partnership and practical action."



Dr. Debolina Kundu, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs, India
"The ARISE Delhi Declaration 2026: Local Action for Global Climate Goals sets a collective direction for taking the outcomes of the Forum forward to COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye. Its emphasis on integrated local action, a just clean energy transition, accessible finance and meaningful community participation reflects the priorities that have brought us together."

Gino Van Begin, Secretary General, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability "The ARISE Cities Forum 2026 explored the role of multi-level governance and the cooperation required among all levels of government in the Paris Agreement countries to achieve the

Agreement's targets, at both the national and local levels. We discussed the priorities that need to be set for sub-national planning across sectors, from urban heat to water stress, infrastructure, and mobility. We discussed the need for investment and for rapid implementation. We discussed the need to accelerate partnerships and make them inclusive for climate-resilient development. We also reinforced our shared urban climate resolve by adopting the Delhi Declaration of the ARISE Cities Forum 2026."

The Closing Ceremony also marked the launch of the Delhi Biodiversity Map developed by ICLEI South Asia.

The ARISE Cities Forum 2026 closed with the adoption of the Delhi Declaration and its formal handover to **Gino Van Begin,** marking a key milestone in carrying the Forum's collective commitments and urban priorities forward to COP31 in Antalya.

Delhi Declaration 2026: Taking the urban ambitions of the Global South to COP31

Building on the 2025 Declaration, the ***Delhi Declaration on Local Action for Global Climate Goals 2026*** embodies the spirit of solidarity, partnership, and a whole-of-economy and society approach that must define climate action beyond COP31, offering the commitment of cities of the Global South to co-create a climate-safe, just, and sustainable future for all.

The Declaration positions **cities as key contributors to international climate negotiations**, bringing the experiences and priorities of the Global South into the UNFCCC process. It echoes the Local Government and Municipal Administration (LGMA) Constituency's push for stronger links between urban development and climate action by setting out **ten shared commitments**:

1. Advance the Global Climate Agenda from Pre-COP31 to COP31
2. Accelerate Adaptation and Synergies Across Conventions
3. Advance Circularity Through Cooperation and Collective Action
4. Achieve an Energy Transition Outcome that recognises and accelerates subnational delivery to return to the 1.5°C pathway
5. Prioritise Ambitious Just Transitions
6. Institutionalise Multilevel Climate Finance
7. Uphold Independent Science and Data Systems
8. Create a Systematic Joint Space for Multilevel Action
9. Champion Global South Climate Urban Leadership
10. Strengthen Youth and Community Leadership in Climate Action

With 2026 marking a pivotal 'Triple COP' year, the Delhi Declaration 2026 takes on added significance as a call for **coordinated action across the climate, biodiversity and land agendas**, recognising the interconnected challenges cities face.

As the global climate community prepares for COP31, the Delhi Declaration adopted at the ARISE Cities Forum 2026 reinforces the message that global climate goals can only be achieved when local priorities, resources and implementation capacities are integrated

into climate decision-making.

For more information on the ARISE Cities Forum 2026 and its agenda, please visit: https://arisecitiesforum.org/

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