

5th Meeting of the OECD Champion Mayors For Inclusive Growth

28 May 2021
Paris, France

Pledge For Youth For An Inclusive Post-COVID Recovery



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PREAMBULE

By joining the **OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative** launched 29 March 2016, we, Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth from across the world, have committed to take action to tackle inequality within our city, region, country and worldwide.

Over the past five years, the OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative has demonstrated how greater mayoral leadership in fostering inclusive growth in cities can have a real impact.

- In the **New York Proposal** (2016) we defined the policy pillars of an inclusive growth agenda around education, skills and the labour market, housing and the urban environment, infrastructure and public services.
- We delivered the **Paris Action Plan** (2016) providing clear steps to advance the New York Proposal's pillars, such as capturing the multi-dimensional nature of urban inequalities, and supporting cities in implementing and evaluating their inclusive growth strategies.
- We focussed on two strategic areas within the **Seoul Implementation Agenda** (2017): how to bridge local climate and inclusive growth strategies, and how cities can create a level playing field to harness the inclusive growth potential of SMEs and entrepreneurs.
- With the **Athens Road Map** (2019), we committed to leverage the full potential of social, public sector and technological innovation to make cities places where prosperity is shared, access to opportunity is equitable, and well-being is expanded to all of society.

On the occasion of the **5th anniversary of the Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative**, we welcome the stock-taking document "Five Years of Inclusive Growth: OECD Champion Mayors", which documents and celebrates our collective achievements so far.

PURSUING INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN THE COVID-19 ERA

Today, as we are facing an unprecedented crisis linked with the COVID 19 pandemic, we reiterate our commitment to put inclusive growth at the core of our strategies and policy actions to fit for the future.

We acknowledge that the crisis is affecting every aspect of our lives, from physical health, jobs and education, to financial security, mental health, social relations and trust, but that it has a differentiated impact on places, firms and people depending on age, race, gender, socio-economic backgrounds, country of origins and locations.

We, Mayors, have been on the **frontline of responses to the crisis**. Beyond implementing nation-wide measures at city level, we have been providing a wide range of short and medium term responses to the crisis, including but not limited to, social distancing; workplace and commuting; vulnerable groups including young people; local service delivery; support to business and the culture sector; and citizen engagement.

As we prepare for a **post COVID-19 recovery**, we reiterate that our commitments set out in the *New York Proposal*, the *Paris Action Plan*, the *Seoul Implementation Agenda*, and the *Athens Road Map* continue to be at the core of strategies within our cities.

We will also work alongside other levels of government on the path to a **strong, resilient, green and inclusive recovery**, as called for by OECD Ministers at the 2021 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting.

SUPPORTING THE YOUNG GENERATION AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As we are all dealing with the impact of the crisis on our economies and societies, and preparing for recovery, we, Mayors, call on governments at all levels – local, regional, national and global – and other actors from the business sector and the civil society, to pay particular attention to the **young generation**, which has been suffering deeply and disproportionately from the pandemic's economic and social fallout.

We recognise the systemic social and economic challenges that were prominent among young people even before the crisis, including underemployment, low wages, stagnant job markets, rising student debt, and unaffordable housing. We acknowledge that these **challenges have been further exacerbated** by the COVID-19 crisis, especially for the young in already precarious situations, including youth from low-income backgrounds, immigrant families, youth with disabilities, youths in or out-of-home care, young parents, and youth from minority groups.

We are conscious that, while the many interventions put in place by countries have mitigated the impacts of the crisis, the opportunities lost because of the pandemic – including those related to education, employment, health and civic engagement – can create long-lasting scarring effects on **young people's prospects and well-being**.

We, Mayors, have a **crucial role to play**, being key actors in many domains that matter for youth, such as education, training and employment services, health care, family support services, social protection, as well as housing, local utilities and recreation including culture and sport, depending on each country's institutional setting.

While we are aware that local initiatives operate within broader regional and national policy frameworks, and we are committed to promoting an active dialogue with other stakeholders to advance national, regional and/or local agendas, we are well placed to provide **coordinated support services** to young people by coordinating different local providers.

As a symbol of our commitment, and taking into account our specific local and national contexts, we, Champion Mayors, herein pledge to work closely with communities, youth organisations, schools, colleges and universities, citizens, NGOs, employers, social enterprises, and other levels of government to **upscale our efforts to support young people** severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure a resilient and inclusive recovery for this generation. We will do so including by taking advantage of available grants, recovery and support funds that are being put in place, as well as other innovative financing mechanisms.

We will spur further our efforts to support young people by taking concrete actions in three main areas: i) youth access to local services; ii) youth access to local economic opportunities; and iii) youth participation in local public life.

Across these three areas, we commit to **engage actively with other local actors**, including public employment services, higher education institutions, community colleges and training institutions, social services, community centres, social economy organisations, innovation labs, the cultural and creative sector, and the private sector (including large, medium, and small businesses, and social enterprises) to deliver **well-coordinated support for young people** that follows them from education/training, and to expand opportunities for greater civic engagement for young people well-being and development.

1 | Improving youth access to local services

- We will accelerate our efforts to provide **immediate assistance to young people** to help mitigate the impact of lost income due to the pandemic, to provide support funds, food aid, social care support, and emergency housing for the homeless youth;
- We will continue to **support young people and students' learning during school closure** and as educational institutions progressively reopen, which may include facilitating access to IT equipment, educational technologies and digital learning material of all sorts to provide remote learning opportunities, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will also work to support youth in catching up and making up for their learning loss, which could include, as feasible, tutoring initiatives, after-school programmes, and summer schools.

- We will seek to invest in and promote timely and accessible **mental health support** for young people, including facilitating affordable support to those who need it. Particular attention will be paid to promoting sport, cultural and social activities, and providing youth-dedicated spaces for young people to come together and engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests.
- We will take new steps to boost **housing affordability and availability for all young people**, including through supply-side measures that target specifically young people; stepping up, where relevant, spending on social and affordable housing for students and young professionals.

2 | Supporting young people in their transition into the labour market and their access to local economic opportunities

- We will work to **improve connections between young jobseekers and local employers**. This includes strengthening local employment services by developing outreach programmes to engage those furthest from the labour market, including those with low levels of educational attainment and from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and taking action to tackle discrimination against groups such as young women and young immigrants. In doing so, we will seek to local community organisations, service providers and employers to help young people get the qualifications, skills, experiences and networks needed to secure and make the most of available employment opportunities.
- We will take new steps to **expand opportunities for young entrepreneurs**, including in the social economy field. This may include addressing the barriers to business creation faced by young people, in particular young women (e.g. limited access to finance, lack of knowledge and skills), and improving access to business networks and mentors.
- We will endeavour to encourage local employers to provide **apprenticeship opportunities or other forms of work-based learning**, and to support young people who struggle to find relevant opportunities. We will also endeavour to create opportunities for work-based learning within our own local administration, to support youth in gaining relevant work experience and developing professional skills.
- We will work to improve the **quality of jobs for young people**, particularly for low-wage or low-skilled young workers. This could include developing career pathways that support progression; addressing in-work poverty (including but not limited to living wage campaigns), tackling informal employment; working with employers to improve working conditions, including the safety, quality and accessibility of working environments where needed. We will also partner with local employers to spread good human resources and management practices that result in higher-productivity and higher-wage jobs, and support sustainable production and consumption.

3 | Creating pathways for youth participation in local public life

- We will work to promote new and broader forms of youth democratic participation and youth engagement in decision-making on local policies (ranging from climate action to access to education and housing, as well as other key policies), for example through citizen and youth councils, the use of digital and other innovation technologies and platforms, targeted citizen monitoring and public innovation labs.
- We commit to promoting **open government initiatives** to expand, facilitate and empower youth access to public data and information, to increase transparency and accountability of decision-makers, and to facilitate the co-creation and co-implementation of public policies.

- We will work jointly with, and support, **non-governmental youth stakeholders**; such as youth work sector, youth labour organisations and youth volunteering, to build resilience, social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity in our cities post COVID.
- We will endeavour to **provide civic space for youth**, including marginalised and underrepresented groups, to elevate the voice of youth, and to take into consideration their views in policy making.

ROLE OF THE OECD AND SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

We, the global coalition of Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth, recognise that our efforts are integral components of an inclusive economic recovery and better resiliency in cities. We will work together to ensure that in cities across the world every member of our society has a shot at success, regardless of background, income, age, gender or ethnic background.

We count on the OECD and the supporting institutions of the Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative [Bloomberg Philanthropies, Brookings Institute, Cities Alliance, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, Ford Foundation, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, National League of Cities, UCLG and United Way Worldwide] to support these efforts to design better local policies for better lives for our youth, by:

- Improving the evidence base, both in terms of data and indicators to **measure the multidimensional nature of urban inequalities** and post-COVID-19 economic impacts including youth socio-economic mobility, as well as the most effective policy solutions to advance Inclusive Growth.
- Providing **targeted support** to cities to implement, monitor and evaluate their own Inclusive Growth policies, programmes and agendas through targeted policy dialogues with Champion Mayor cities to support COVID-19 recovery efforts.
- Revamping the local inclusive growth policy pillars to ensure they **remain responsive and relevant** to pressing and emerging urban challenges, including those that are youth related.
- Continuing to provide and facilitate a platform to **bridge local and national level priorities** to tackle inequality and advance inclusive growth in cities.
- Facilitating the exchange of good practices to promote **inclusive growth for young people**, and continue to **raise the profile of our youth support** among national governments and international fora.



OECD CHAMPION MAYORS

for Inclusive Growth

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