

LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION FORUM Civil Society Mobilizing for Climate Action in Kosovo







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OPENING STATEMENTS

ULRIKA RICHARDSON - UN Development Coordinator in Kosovo

The global climate crisis has been the talking point at all regional and global platforms over the last year. As we continue down the path of this pivotal 'Decade of Action' for climate change, we need to strengthen our collective efforts to address the crisis by turning global, regional and local promises into action.

The scientific evidence for the gravity of the climate crisis is clear, as highlighted in the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The current situation is a 'code red' for humanity, and presents structural challenges in the social, economic and environmental agenda of all global leaders. Key conclusions of Conference of the Parties 26 (COP26) held in Glasgow in November 2021 urge all actors of society at all levels to make all possible efforts to cut global emissions to half by 2030 and aim for global net-zero by 2050. This is no longer a matter of ambitious targets, but one of saving our planet, ourselves and future generations! For too long we have separated ourselves from our planet. Now, we know better: Our health and wellbeing depend on the health of our environment.

Kosovo has been making progress over the last years, and needs to step up its actions to match the ambition reflected in global commitments. Climate impacts in Kosovo risk to affect some of the most important results that have been achieved on economy and prosperity. Agriculture and industry, which make up for a large share of the Kosovo economy, are vulnerable to water shortages, heat waves, drought, and flooding. Rising temperatures and unregulated harvesting impact the extent and health of Kosovo's extensive forests, but also generate food insecurity for the people of Kosovo. And equally important is how adopting a "greener" and more inclusive economic development model will accelerate progress on all fronts, from renewable energy to sustainable tourism to green jobs.

Raising awareness of climate challenges and how to address them as well as finding ways to adopt greener development practices is a top priority for the United Nations (UN) in Kosovo. We need to work jointly to provide leadership through concrete actions, and lead by example to set pathways for carbon neutrality in Kosovo and beyond. At the same time, we need to advocate for increased ambition, including through new and innovative ideas at all levels – global, regional, local.

In this context, I am grateful to UN-Habitat for facilitating Local Climate Action Forum (LoCAF) as a crucial platform, where Kosovo local actors as a collective group can shape their climate-action initiatives going forward: Learn, co-design and drive more impactful solutions that bring positive, transformative change on the ground. LoCAF offers a ripe opportunity to Kosovo local actors to exchange ideas, collect best practices, support individual initiatives in support of a mutual objective in a synergetic and coherent way. It allows to pool resources, capacities, ideas of local climate leaders to take collective actions to reduce our energy consumption, and support our local economy by choosing more local products, reducing the amount of food that we waste.

We are very proud to support this initiative and invite all of you to join the platform and commit to working together for the sake of a green, healthier tomorrow to the benefit of everyone.



OMAR SIDDIQUE - Head of Office and Chief Technical Advisor /UN-Habitat Kosovo Office

UN-Habitat Kosovo welcomes you to this historic inaugural session of the LoCAF. We hope that this convenient, impactful, and meaningful platform for civil society will set a common agenda and accelerate partnerships for climate action.

This year, the World Cities Day themed 'Adapting Cities

for Climate Resilience' coincided with the first day of COP26, which brings us to the fact that climate change will have a huge effect on city residents around the world who might experience floods, storms and increasing periods of extreme temperatures.

In 2015, the countries of the world signed the Paris Agreement, an international treaty to tackle the climate crisis. The agreement committed to limit temperature rise below 2°C, aiming for 1.5°C to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Since then, the world has not nearly done enough. And now, to keep 1.5°C alive and within reach, we need low emissions by 2030. That's why we must take action to launch a consistent and concerted effort to reduce these emissions in the next 10 years. Every country, every municipality, every territory, every part of society must know and raise their responsibility to protect our precious planet.

Likewise, COP26 is asking all countries to set targets to reach net zero by the mid-century and to come forward with 2030 emission reduction targets. While Kosovo did not cause climate change, you are feeling impacts of it historically caused by the industrialization of western Europe and United States. Therefore the 'common but differentiated responsibility' concept within the Paris Agreement which sets a common responsibility for all, but the major emitters have to support climate adaptation and resilience for developing countries and territories that are feeling climate change. We're asking member states, companies, investors, cities, civil society to make commitments, to meet in practice and negotiate acts, to support action and work together to deliver to all communities most vulnerable to climate change. Moreover, it is vital that the donor community mobilizes a hundred billion per year to help developing areas respond to climate change as the current international climate finance allocated is insufficient at only 5%.

We're hosting LoCAF to highlight civil society leadership and needs for climate solutions, and to encourage collaborative climate action given that the government cannot act alone on these challenges.

Civil society helps raise awareness, builds support for strong government policies, holds leaders to account, creates the conditions for ambitious climate action at different levels. We hope they become essential actors to keep the 1.5 degree alive, support vulnerable groups to adapt to climate change, to create and unlock finance in the frontline of climate change. Let's use this platform today that we hope will be a regular platform to increase climate action at different levels, to support youth in setting common agendas, to break forward a brighter future for Kosovo.



SHEELA PATEL - Global Ambassador, UNFCCC

Very encouraging to see a lot of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) sitting together to explore collectively in the climate space. I've been involved in climate change and social justice activities for a long time. The reality today is that a lot of big countries are producing carbon emissions and the consequences of temperature changes are affecting all of us. We have to be

smart, intelligent and strategic in locating the opportunities in the climate space. We need to develop new ways to adapt to these changes, regardless of whether we created those problems or not.

Solutions for this have to be created through mitigation and adaptation. For both actions, we need new alliances, new partnerships and a very loud voice of civil society that protects and allows to thrive those who have faced development deficits, have been denied infrastructure, quality jobs, good incomes and social services; those who have participated in and experienced war and divisive behavior. We have to work together to ensure aggregation of civil society and community voices that demand equal resources based on political action and adaptation for local communities to transform their lives. Adaptation requires all of us activists, professionals, communities to hold our governments, private sector, global institutions accountable for what they have denied us and we should be driven by the availability of new technology, knowledge and science. We have to create a community of support, introduce the transformations ourselves, seek accountability and raise the demand for dialogue, negotiations, access to resources.

In many countries, many local communities live by the river. Downpouring has become excessive during seasons and floods often result in deaths and devastations. In the past, our governments used to remove riverbed settlements through coercion and eviction. Today, many communities are negotiating with governments to reformulate the strategies by which they can either relocate or reorganize themselves. They've created open spaces (gardens, parks, vegetable gardens), they plant trees, they create conditions by which the soil doesn't get eroded. All have been launched initially as experiments, but are now being supported by private charities, international support programmes, national governments. Such projects will give the opportunity to city officials, politicians to look at local communities as organized communities that can produce adaptation choices that are good for them, the city and nature. The modernization story is mainly about roads, cars, motorized transport which is not sustainable for the fact that it produces air pollution, more carbon emissions, is bad for your health and is not good for the planet. Instead, we can reorganize the city so that people can walk, cycle, take public transport and reduce carbon emissions and air pollution. Thus, presenting potential community transformations and impact to city governments through NGO networks.

I am very excited to hear that through LoCAF, you're going to experiment ways of combining development and climate opportunities and help disadvantaged communities to look forward to a quality life that is good for them and is good for the climate as well.

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Abbreviations

CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CBM	Community Building Mitrovica
CO,	Carbon Dioxide
COP26	Conference of the Parties 26
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
EU ETS	European Union Emissions Trading System
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IBCM	International Business College Mitrovica
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IT	Information Technology
KNPEC	Kosovo's National Plan for Energy and Climate
LoCAF	Local Climate Action Forum
MESPI	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SC	Steering Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SUMPs	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans
SPARC	Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WB	Western Balkans

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TABLE 1: Matrix of challenges for civil society on addressing climate change.

TABLE 2: List of civil society organizations member of LoCAF.





BACKGROUND

The world is facing a climate emergency and increased action is needed to manage the adverse impacts of climate change and at the same time to mitigate/prevent it. If not 10 years ago, now is the secondbest time to join the global efforts and commitments (of countries, cities, regions, businesses, and financial institutions) to achieve net zero emissions. By 2030, we must cut emissions globally by 45 per cent to limit climate change to 1.5°C and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are not on course to do either and we cannot wait to ramp up the pace. We are in a code-red emergency! This is the year to walk the talk. Countries need to submit ambitious new action plans well ahead of the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow.

Due to the lack of knowledge and awareness on dealing with climate change in Kosovo, there is a need to address these topics in a wider scale, to help the policy makers, other municipal stakeholders and the general public make informed decisions when drafting plans. strategies and other related studies. A multistakeholder approach is essential in the design and delivery of cost-effective adaptation policies, to adjust with the COVID-19 recovery which has led to increased emphasis on a climate friendly recuperation in line with implementation of the EU Green New Deal in Western Balkans. An important aspect of addressing climate change in Kosovo, is a renewed engagement towards the general public, local and central government institutions, and the civil society focusing on the importance of multi-stakeholder climate action approach.

In order to join the global initiatives in addressing global warming and make Kosovo part of the initiatives to respond to climate change, UN-Habitat Kosovo has joined the UN-Habitat Campaign #climateaction4cities during October 2021, leading up the 11th World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland in 2022, and to inspire action in urban areas to prevent climate change and adjust to its ongoing or anticipated impacts. The campaign has engaged the UN-Kosovo Team which has an elevated focus on cities and climate change co-chaired by UN-Habitat.

INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

UN-Habitat Kosovo is continually looking for partnerships with different local stakeholders to help Kosovo provide its contribution on meeting SDGs and limit climate change to 1.5 °C. In the pace of #climateaction4cities campaign during this year Urban October, UN-Habitat Kosovo has launched the call for Kosovo-wide non-profit organizations to join the LoCAF, and contribute to lower Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions, advocate, and conduct impactful campaigns that will contribute to raising awareness on global warming in the community and local and central decision maker's level.

UN-Habitat Kosovo's role will be the facilitation of this forum along with UN Kosovo Team and supporting the members of the forum towards presenting and implementing their projects locally and internationally.

The goal of this Forum is the establishment of a Kosovo-wide climate action platform with local climate action champions that will continuously address climate change issues, create local, Kosovo-wide, and regional alliances, and follow global trends and policies for a more livable habitat for all. The UN has been at the forefront in helping countries and communities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. The UN development system is stepping up its capacity to provide integrated policy advice to governments and broker partnerships to massively increase action to ensure it can help countries seize the opportunities in the transition to a sustainable future

The selection process of LoCAF members was done through a public call for CSOs throughout Kosovo. This call was open for NGOs based in Kosovo that address community needs and have a previous expertise in addressing climate and environmental issues.

Proposals were received only as video materials, showcasing the previous work / activities of the applicant addressing issues such as local environment, naturebased solutions, climate induced disasters (flooding, fires, etc.), urban heat island effect, green/circular economy, waste management, reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, intervention in green public spaces, etc. and how will they influence their community and municipal leaders to address climate change.

The evaluation panel was led by UN-Habitat Kosovo and was consisted of international organizations such as UN Development Coordinator's Office in Kosovo, (DCO), US Embassy in Pristina, UK Embassy in Pristina, Italian Embassy in Pristina, and UNDP. After closing the call for application, 28 Kosovo-wide NGOs working with the community and addressing climate change and environmental issues in different scales and aspects, have met on October 29. 2021, marking the World Cities Day, and establishing LoCAF. During the first meeting of the Forum, a number of presentations were held to initiate the discussions on what the situation in the field persists and what is the role of the civil society on addressing climate change. A number of exercises were conducted to define what are the key challenges civil society faces while addressing climate change and what their role would be on different topics. Furthermore, during this forum meeting, the structure of LoCAF was defined, as well as the steering committee and possible next steps.

On a concluding note, a joint statment agreed and signed by all member CSOs was handed over to the Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure (MESPI), Mr. Liburn Aliu, once again sealing the commitment of the civil society to jointly work on fighting climate change and its impacts.



PART 1: Challenges for Civil Society to address climate change

The very first working session of the forum started with a roundtable where NGOs presented themselves, the work they have been doing to address climate change and actions taken with the local communities they operate. The purpose of this session was the identification of challenges that civil society faces on addressing climate change, roughly separated in the following columns: multilevel cooperation/ transparency; financial resources; human resources/ capacities; CSOs partnership/ networking; availability of/ access to data; advocacy and awareness raising; and other. Identifying each two key challenges they face, the CSOs representatives populated the matrix below (see table 01).

Many of organizations weather recently established or having many years of experience seem to experience just about the same challenges. Noticeably the most populated column shows to be financial resources. Participants stressed that there is a lack of funds for environmental issues and this prevents to sustain the work of NGOs; instead of joining forces and working together, NGOs have to compete for the same funds, competing environment limiting their activities, and letting NGOs work strictly on voluntary bases and limiting their human resources capacities long-term and short-term as well. Lack of human resources and capacities was mentioned by many of them as a challenge. This is mirrored in institutions also lacking human resources capacities, deriving as a problem just as well from lack of courses on climate change in the academia.

Multilevel cooperation/ transparency and CSOs partnership/ networking are two equally populated columns too. Many NGOs face problems on creating network and cooperation with public institutions, there is also lack of cooperation between organizations working in similar field, lack of cooperation with business sector, and lack of partnership between academia, industry and government.

Likewise, advocacy and lack of awareness are two other areas where CSOs face difficulties to address climate change. It is indicated to be a challenge raising awareness to the general population on how to use and protect natural resources, on climate change and its impact, and raise awareness to the institutions as well on environmental protection. Mentioned in particular is the need of raising awareness regarding climate change among youngsters.

Although slightly mentioned, lack of/ availability of data seems to be another challenge, namely data on climate change in Kosovo and inconsistent data collection. Other challenges mentioned are lack of prioritizing the environmental protection and climate change, lack of inclusion of local NGOs in the processes, lack of implementation of Law on Environmental Protection, and the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

> Table 01. Matrix of challenges for civil society on addressing climate change

Challenges for civil society in addressing the climate change						
Multilevel cooperation/ transparency	Financial resources	Human resources/ capacities	CSOs partnership/ networking	Availability of/ access to data	Advocacy and awareness raising	Other
NGO actions PR focused. Lots of talks and no action.	Too small grants for green enterprises.	Sustainability of projects covered by Public Institutions.	Reactive instead of proactive.	Inconsistent data collection.	"Greenwashing" dominates the climate discourse.	Lack of willingness to collaborate.
Stakeholders; Local-central institutions; Lack of prioritizing environment protection and climate change; Education system.	Financial challenges (sustainability of the organization)	Sustainability: powerful institutions organizations and institutions "stealing" our increased capacities.	Partnerships/ networking; always not sure about partner capacities.	Network with one goal to be for climate change awareness.	Lack of awareness of climate related risks.	Lack of cooperation with business sector. They are the main pollutants of the environment and water.
Cooperation with institutions.	Financial structural problems.	Human resources.	Lack of cooperation within organizations North-South.		Longevity of incentives/ projects: community network, resistance.	Pandemic situation; Lack of business cooperation.
Lack of Law on Environment implementation.	Finances: lack and short period based.	Financial problems.	Lack of inclusiveness and sufficient local NGOs.		Lack of local will incentives, advocacy, awareness: climate change is not the primary concern.	Lack of ambition to reduce GHG emissions, decarbonization
Lack of cooperation between industry, academia and government.	Lack of long-term staff.	More space for persons from science to be part of the actions.	Cooperation of local and central institutions.		Uneducated children.	
Education.	Financing.	Human resources.	Local government uninterested.		Unmotivated and unactive youth.	
Lack of funds; Waste management; Legal gaps.	Financial difficulty.	Poor enforcement of existing laws on environmental protection.	Human resources		Low level of environmental awareness.	
NGO actions PR focused. Lots of talks and no action.	Lack of financial resources.				Lack of awareness campaigns throughout all levels of education.	
	Lack of finance for environmental issues.					

PART 2: Policy analysis on climate change in Kosovo

The second session of the forum provided an integrated approach of sharing knowledge i.e., the survey findings on municipal capacities to tackle climate change, followed by a presentation related to climate and energy policies in Kosovo and the role of CSOs to promote them, concluding with a Q&A interactive session among the attendees. Each part of this session will be elaborated further in the columns below.

Municipal capacity gaps and needs on integrating climate change aspects into Spatial Planning in Kosovo

Fjollë Caka, UN-Habitat Kosovo

UN-Habitat has conducted an <u>assessment</u> on measuring the knowledge and expertise of human capacities, and gaps and needs of the local staff working on spatial planning/ urbanism departments. Main targets were heads of planning sections, and people who oversee the development of spatial planning documents. All **38 municipalities** in Kosovo participated in an online and physical survey. Presented are some of the main data extracted from the **findings of the survey** in terms of demography, knowledge, expertise, measures, needs and collaboration.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

 Majority of respondents (65.79%) are middle-aged (40-61 years), followed by young adults (less than 39 years) with 31.58%;

 Men comprise more than half (57.58%) of the municipal staff in key spatial planning positions;

 Around 2/3 of the respondents have a master's degree (or equivalent);

 Almost half of respondents (47.36%) have a background in architecture and spatial planning;

 Most of respondents (44.74%) have a general working experience of 11-20 years, followed by around 1/4 with more than 21 years, and another 1/4 with less than 10 years.





 Climate change related expertise by sector: Land use 57.14, Buildings 57.14, Waste 38.10, Water 28.5;

 Lack of experience on climate research and analysis, GHG inventory, measure designing.

Measures/actions taken by municipalities

• Sustainable urban mobility: Pristina, Mitrovica South, Mitrovica North;

 Energy efficiency in buildings: Kamenica, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Suva Reka, Elez Han, Novoberdo, Junik, Partesh, Sterpce, Prizren, Vushtrri, Mitrovica South, Zvecan;

> Renewable Energy Sources: Mitrovica South, Vushtrri, Prizren, Novoberdo, Fushe Kosovo;

 Waste management (closing illegal landfills): Suva Reka, Gjilan, Elez Han, Decan, Sterpce and Zvecan;

• Green areas: Novoberdo, Orahovec, Suva Reka, Zvecan, Mitrovica North, Mitrovica South;

> Forest logging prevention: Zubin Potok;

Air quality monitors:
Pristina, Mitrovica South, Zvecan.

 Insufficient multi-stakeholder cooperation when developing local spatial planning strategies and documents;

 Spatial documents do not only define how the municipality will develop in the physical component or spatial aspect, but also defines where the infrastructure goes, where do people live, what will they eat (food systems), transportation systems, waste management and many other things that compose a municipality or a settlement, including resources, and money-flow, etc.;

 When it comes to planning these important documents, these municipalities are only working with other departments and not even regularly.;

- There is lack of cooperation with academic institutions, inter-municipal cooperation.



CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Measures/actions taken by municipalities

Mapping flood-prone areas: Vushtrri, Suva Reka;

 Limiting settlements expansion & restriction of buildings on risk prone areas: Lipjan, Gjilan, Kamenica, Ferizaj, Viti, Elez Han, Ranillug, Suva Reka, Peja, Decan, Klina, Sterpce, Mitrovica South, Zubin Potok;

> • Restoring of riverbeds: Peja, Mitrovica South, Mitrovica North, Gjakova, Orahovec, Dragash, Sterpce, Ranillug, Elez Han;

• Drainage systems improvements: Gracanica, Kamenica, Novoberdo, Klina, Vushtrri;

 Damaged ecosystems restoration (from forest fires): Sterpce, Ranillug, Viti, Zubin Potok.

KEY FINDINGS

• There is lack of sufficient knowledge and expertise on climate change. Majority of respondents have never taken academic or professional training on climate change. More than half of them have never worked on climate change related issues;

 Municipalities lack institutional capacities, as almost none of them have designated staff dealing with climate change issues;

• Most local climate mitigation measures have been undertaken on improving energy efficiency in the building sector, increasing energy generation from renewable sources, sustainable transportation planning, reforestation, air pollution and waste management;

• Most local adaptation measures have been taken on mapping risk-prone areas and restricting growth on them, restoring riverbeds and damaged ecosystems, as well as drainage systems improvements;

 There is a strong need for increased capacities in climate change management and sustainable and climate-smart spatial planning.

While we criticize the local/central government let's not forget that they, themselves, don't know much about climate change so we could maybe support them rather than just criticize them.

COLLABORATION

EXPERTISE

Climate policy in Kosovo and the role of civil society in promoting energy transition Dardan Abazi, INDEP

Kosovo is going through a crisis in policymaking and facing challenges to prioritize the sector of climate, energy and environment. Some of the main challenges are: lack of substantial climate change contents in political party programmes; nontreatment of climate and environmental issues by high governing structures but only at division level; the drafting of inadequate strategies and priorities which do not reflect the improvement of citizens' lives or the reduction of pollution levels; lack of planning and prioritizing climate policies; lack of information and awareness regarding the impact of climate change in everyday life; and, poor implementation of climate laws, strategies and regulations that help mitigate and adapt climate change.

Our region is intensely affected by pollution and carbon dioxide. In the last three years alone, thermal power plants in Western Balkans (WB) have emitted 6-times more sulfur dioxide and 1.6-times more dust than allowed. These levels of pollution are extremely alarming and require immediate intervention from policymakers.

Recommendations:

► The EU has already started implementing restraining policies for countries that emit large amounts of carbon, namely by bringing the <u>Carbon Border Adjustment</u>. <u>Mechanism (CBAM)</u> in their agenda. This mechanism enables the EU to control carbon in its market, so as not to allow access to products for which high amounts of carbon have been emitted. As a third country, we will be affected by this mechanism, so we must take measures to ensure that our EU integration is not harmed.

One possibility would be derogation conditions through which CBAM can be avoided. Specifically, if EU imposes border taxes to allow the entry of products to its market, Kosovo can replicate with internal taxes for adaptation purposes or climate change implications, starting from the fundamental principle of environmental policies where the polluter pays. Gradually, a tax collection system will be put in place for each unit of CO, and other pollutants that are emitted during product manufacturing. Additionally, incentives can be given to certain industries to reduce CO₂ and other pollutant emissions e.g., tax payment for each unit, investment in solar panels and reducing emissions, etc.

The other structural problem is financing and management of public finances in general. A concrete example is the ecological payment for vehicle registrations which is directly allocated to the Budget of Kosovo, meaning it's not used for the baseline purpose for which the tax gets paid, i.e., for environmental purposes. Subsequently, the idea above this paragraph can be used to fix structural financial problems.

▹ Another possibility would be to unify markets (e.g., that of Kosovo and Albania). Through this mechanism, the implementation of carbon tax would be either instigated or avoided in general. The <u>EU emission trading system (EU ETS</u>), which allows countries to set up a ceiling on CO₂ and other pollutants, gives the opportunity for industries to trade their units of through green certificates, thus promoting the transformation of businesses/industries into green energy.

Interactive session

This session allowed the attendees to engage in an interactive discussion, providing questions and comments mostly related to CO_2 emissions, while reiterating how important it is to put measurements and policies in place to reduce emissions and pollution in general. Main comments to highlight:

Kosovo will have to establish standardized measures or policies to define emission borders, the way products emit, building inspections of business operators, certifying buildings based on the law on energy performance of buildings, and so on. EU determines their own internal measures on how to calculate CO, emissions for each product that enters their market. The sooner we start preparations for these measures, the better the outcomes. There's lack of awareness regarding these topics as well as business production using conventional approaches that we need to get ahold of. A lot of policy measures and taxes should be imposed to be able to maintain a specific level and help transition;

Kosovo stands positive in terms of the Green Agenda, although we should point out that Kosovo is not part of COP26 since it's not part of the UN. For us, the mandatory international instrument is the Sofia Summit Declaration and other treaties in the energy sector. However, the Green Agenda will be turned into an Action Plan for all Western Balkans countries (respective Prime Ministers have signed for decarbonization until 2030). It is expected for this commitment to be turned into a strategy for energy in Kosovo's National Plan for Energy and Climate (KNPEC). New 2030 targets are also expected that will initially place decarbonization as an objective and then a 10-year strategy to progress;

Regarding the CO₂ assessment in products and services, manufacturers should not wait for government structures to place measures. They could practice this voluntarily as here are different methods to assess CO₂, including green international standards that could be applied;

The solution to environmental problems is not only related to policies but also to science and technology. Nevertheless, the political domain should be urged to take concrete steps for measures and rules that are stuck in the process. It's uncertain to know whether the transition to renewables is happening fast enough or if there's enough time to wait up until 2026/2030 for changes to follow. Our activity should be larger than politics and synergy between relevant environmental departments should be in place as this is currently lacking.



PART 3: Opportunities for civil society to accelerate climate action in Kosovo

Presentation by Jelena Đokić, International Business College Mitrovica (IBCM): Climate change impact to the environment

Professor Jelena Đokić presented to the forum an overview of the situation in the field in Kosovo, climate changes that have occurred during the past decades and the situation we are likely to face in the near future. The region has been facing extreme drops of relative humidity (sometimes under 10%) more frequently; the winds have become stronger comparing two last decades and there has been a shift of wind direction from North-South to South-West; dry period has been extended dramatically; higher concentration of pollutants; increased frequency of extreme events like floods, etc. Projections are that those extreme weather events are going to increase in frequency during upcoming years, and the region will be highly affected from climate change.

For this working session participates were divided in three working groups, each having a different assignment. This assignment was provided based on the Aarhus Convention:

the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities ("access to environmental information"). This can include information on the state of the environment, but also on policies or measures taken, or on the state of human health and safety where this can be affected by the state of the environment;

the right to participate in environmental decision-making. Arrangements are to be made by public authorities to enable the public affected and environmental non-governmental organizations to comment on, for example, proposals for projects affecting the environment, or plans and programmes relating to the environment, these comments to be taken into due account in decision-making, and information to be provided on the final decisions and the reasons for it ("public participation in environmental decision-making");

the right to review procedures to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general ("access to justice").

Working group 1: Connecting climate info to the people

Facilitator: Milan Branović

Assignment: Improving the population's access to climate information. CSOs might act as bridge between research institutions and the population, leading to a more direct dialogue.

Based on Aarhus Convention, every citizen should receive environmental information that public institutions hold. Civil society can serve as a bridge connecting information from both sides, especially helping communities to attain information. A need for raising awareness regarding climate change and its effects has been continually brought to light during the discussions, putting the focus to younger generations that can be accelerators (as has been proved in the past) of concentrating the discussion on climate change, the challenge of this century.

Kosovo has a young population, average age being around 30 years old, and this can be considered as an opportunity to boost the discussion on this topic and use the momentum on hand. Other opportunities listed are: limited available data, legislation, civil society, develop Information Technology (IT), and business community.

The civil society can undertake many actions and give their contribution in the field. Young population mentioned as opportunity, building capacities can be seen as one of the most important actions. The role of CSOs can be crucial on sharing information and creating platforms of communication between citizens and institutions regarding climate change and the environment. Furthermore, they are the most important stakeholder on promotion and campaign, raising awareness and mobilizing citizens. Mobilizing funds, providing experience and exchange of knowledge can be some other possible actions in hand.

Working group 2: Inclusion and just transition

Facilitator: Sanja Lazarević

Assignment: CSOs must ensure acknowledgment of the high vulnerability of vulnerable groups in public policy, through advocacy processes by promoting a participatory and inclusive approach in climate change actions and disaster risk reduction.

Climate change is undoubtably a topic that knows no boundaries and affects us all. But as usual, those who are the most vulnerable are the ones who are excluded from the discussion and do not have a place on the decision-making table. On the other hand, CSOs have a direct connection with the local community where they operate, and they have already built bridges with different stakeholders either in the community as well as in the institutions. Connecting the dots, civil society should be the stakeholder that ensures a participatory and inclusive process on addressing climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Opportunities for action can be: preparing workforce for new jobs; creating infrastructure for accountability, advocacy & lobbing for the vulnerable groups & people in need; capacity building; awareness campaigns. Civil society needs to create jobs of tomorrow related to climate change. Increasing accountability of the institutions, starting from the government, the accountability should be distributed to the private sector and civil society as well. Last but not least, co-creation of a network to understand and to create actions that include everyone, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups such as youth, women, children, people with disabilities and others.

Working group 3: Collaborative climate action

Facilitator: Shkumbin Hasani

Assignment: Promoting accountability and actively participating in inter-institutional coordination at local and central levels (special focus on finance opportunities).

Fighting climate change requires joint contribution of all stakeholders, and interinstitutional coordination in different levels. Providing accountability of all institutions and stakeholders, there are many opportunities financing climate change actions.

Based on the exercise there are two parted opportunities for financing: local and international. One of the main international sources of financing climate change action could be Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Although Kosovo has not been able to exploit the opportunities of IPA funds, it continues to be one of the key financing opportunities in the field. Financing start-ups (especially those focused on green innovation and eco-friendly) can open path for innovation in climate action. Research and development for energy sources and efficiency can add up to that as well. Other sources of financing can be/ be used for: subsides for heating, law adaptation & enforcement for social enterprises and sponsorship, collaborative climate action, decarbonization subsides, monitoring the law enforcement, participation in budget expenditures, LoCAF, landfill maintenance, Kosovo-wide ECO campaigns, formal & non-formal education, free public transportation, planting trees, eco-heating system, etc.

PART 4: STRUCTURE OF LOCAF



WHAT IS LOCAF?

LoCAF is an inclusive civil society platform for jointly pushing forward climate action and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Kosovo. LoCAF provides the opportunity to effectively create synergies and coherence of climate action initiatives by LoCAF members and partners to realize coordinated and multi-level climate action in Kosovo. Members of LoCAF are CSOs working on climate action in Kosovo



STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)

An Advisory role, providing strategic direction on:

 Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the LoCAF;

 Identifying measures which increase coherence and synergies among LoCAF members and partners;

Strengthening and identifying new partnerships to scale-up impact from LoCAF.

Meetings of the SC:

- At least two regular meetings per year;
- Ad hoc meetings on needs basis.



RESPONSIBILITIES

 To review and approve the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the SC and update and/or modify them, as necessary;

▶ To advise on the timing, format, membership, focus and strategic direction of the LoCAF;

➤ To monitor progress of the LoCAF and make recommendations to UN-Habitat Kosovo management on arising issues, such as risks, opportunities, fund raising, etc.;

 To monitor and provide advice on ongoing and future LoCAFs and other peer learning activities on local climate action; To ensure conformity of the LoCAF with central level climate plans and priorities, as well as opportunities with other climate related projects and initiatives in Kosovo;

▶ To review outcomes from LoCAF submitted to the steering committee.



MEMBERSHIP

 At least five (5) LoCAF members/organizations;
One of the members/organizations Chairs the Committee;

Both the Chair and other members rotate on annual basis.

Observers: Organizations that are not members of the LoCAF but are involved in climate related initiatives and projects in Kosovo (approved by the decision of the Chair in consultation with other Steering Committee members).



ROLE OF UN-HABITAT KOSOVO Secretariat for the Steering Committee

Responsibilities:

 Calling and organizing meetings of the SC;
Developing and circulating meeting agendas and minutes;

 Documenting, communicating and ensuring follow-up of the SC's decisions;

 Reporting to SC on the progress of the LoCAF and related climate action initiatives; and

 Having regular coordination meetings with the Chair of the SC.



NEXT STEPS

SC first meeting;

Comments on the ToR;

Selection of the SC members (voluntary basis).

PART 5: Closing remarks



Liburn Aliu - Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure.

Today not only we mark the importance of policies on climate change, we also highlight the value of each country's attempt on fighting it. Although Kosovo's contribution to climate change has been minor, it has already started to face its consequences, expecting an increase of frequency in the future. Kosovo does not have access to many funds due to non-membership on international organizations such as UN, even though, the commitment to mitigate our contribution to climate change goes on, as we aim for all government projects to be channeled through environmental impact assessment and impact on climate change assessment.

There is a connection between measures on climate change mitigation and economic development. Our transition towards mitigation of impact on climate change should not limit our economic development. The steps we take in this direction should always take into consideration the impact they have in many other fields. The transition towards the green energy may take time and it has many preconditions. Kosovo's strategic position in the region should be reshaped, and we need the help of international factor to achieve this. Kosovo should become an important factor in the region, trading corridors passing through can transform it to a communication junction.

Other options of renewable energy resources are limited in Kosovo, lacking renewable water resources producing electricity through hydropower is not an option, thus we will concentrate our transition towards the only two other options left (wind-power and solar energy).

I would like to express the government's will and commitment to work on mitigating the impact on climate change. This transition can happen only through an open cooperation with the civil society and citizens. The ministry will always have an open door for discussion and cooperation with all stakeholders on achieving this.



Hajriz Berisha - Professional Advisor at Committee for Environment, Food, Agriculture, Planning and Development.

The Committee considers crucial addressing urgent environmental issues on fighting climate change and its effects on the environment, as well as incorporating climate change measures into policies, strategies and plans. We recommend the advancement of education and awareness raising, increasing human and institutional capacities on mitigating climate change impacts. Although Kosovo Strategy on Climate Change 2019-2026 is in the initial stage of implementation, we encourage the government to fully implement this strategy and make it a priority for the upcoming year. It is important as well the finalization of the work plan for 2021-2023. Kosovo should take into consideration the alignment of strategic goals with EU goals deriving from The Green Deal. We pursuit to finalize the Law on Climate Change, which is in the initial stage of drafting process.

It is important that Kosovo institutions channel climate actions and work on awareness raising and drafting environmental policies. In regard to energy transition, the decarbonization of three main sectors is essential: energy production, households and transport. This will be a long and gradual process, but it does not stop us to increase capacities on investment on renewable energy and increase energy efficiency. Since Kosovo aims membership in international organizations such as EU and UN, we should aim full decarbonization until 2050.

Discussions and questions raised

At the end of the session representatives of NGOs and minister Aliu had an open discussion regarding the situation in the field and plans/solutions the government has planned on many issues raised. Many topics were brought to table, such as: policies on transport, household heating, ecological tax, stimulating innovation, number of environmental inspectors, forest degradation, surface mining, waste recycle, etc.

Discussion remarks:

- Kosovo aims to draft Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) in each municipality;
- Cooperation between institutes, academia and business can help on bringing creative and innovative solutions;
- The environmental degradation does not derive only as a consequence of small number of environmental inspectors, but as well as many other problems in the whole structural circle;
- We should create proper mechanisms to control issuing the environmental permits on three phases: issuing environmental permits, implementation and operation;
- We aim to develop circular economy, where separating and recycling waste can be turned into profit. The changings should be initiated within the system.

JOINT STATEMENT: A call for collaborative climate action in Kosovo

Climate change is impacting Kosovo just as the rest of the world, with increased temperatures, heat waves, droughts, forest fires, heavy rainfalls and floods. All these are expected to further increase in frequency and magnitude, causing significant habitat, human and economic losses. Our institutions and citizens are not sufficiently prepared to deal with the related impacts; therefore, we need urgent mobilization of all actors in increasing efforts towards adapting to the foreseen changes and mitigating further greenhouse gas emissions!

CSOs in Kosovo dealing with environmental and climate change issues have joined the LoCAF, facilitated by UN-Habitat Kosovo, to establish an inclusive climate action platform that will continuously address climate change issues and contribute to lower CO₂ emissions. We are committed to advocate and conduct impactful campaigns that will contribute to raising awareness on global warming and related impacts in the community, to encourage increased action by local and central decision-makers, and to create local and regional alliances for implementing respective activities in creating more livable and resilient habitats for all.

We need visionary and proactive leaders in our local and central institutions, who see the benefits of tackling climate change issues and push forward the implementation of greener and more sustainable development agendas. We need increased transparency and inclusion of CSOs and citizen representatives, especially vulnerable communities and young people, when planning and undertaking decisions in tackling the impacts of climate change and working towards the decarbonization processes.

While Kosovo cannot directly benefit from international climate related funds, we need increased coalitions with public and private finance institutions to scale up financial mechanisms in supporting climate adaptation, building resilience and a just transition towards lowering emissions and pollution. Those processes are costly but have extensive long-term benefits to our communities and future generations! The international organizations in Kosovo can support local and central institutions in mobilizing finance, building relationships, and joining regional and global networks for knowledge exchange on the implementation of climate action measures.

Last, but not least, we need citizens to trust in science which is clearly telling us that climate change is happening at a faster pace than previously thought! Actions of all of us matter! We need to keep educating ourselves and adapting our behaviors in a way that sustains a better future for Kosovo! Climate change and its impacts cannot be tackled alone, we need all of us to be on board!

Approved and signed by:

7 Arte	Fondacioni Jeshil	BB Green Kosovo	Sustainable Leadership Kosovo	Center for Human Potentials Development
Çohu!	Qytetarët aktivë	Stand Out Vushtrri	Community Building Mitrovica	Values for a Better Future
EcoZ	Ec Ma Ndryshe	BoneVet Gjakova	Ambientalistët e Mitrovicës	Action for Social and Economic Development
Te pema	Keep it Green	Let's do it Peja	Ideas Partnership	
Gjethi	Space SyntaKS	Mitrovica WAHR	Me dorë në zemër	
INDEP	ALETRO	I4PA	Mundësia	



CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of the LoCAF marks the day when local NGOs working on different segments of climate and environmental policies and action, coming from different regions of Kosovo, working with different communities, and having different level of experience, joined forces to work together, creating networks and partnerships to exhilarate their impact. The civil society should not only be a voice monitoring the work of institutions, but also a voice contributing on defining policies on climate, environment and other related fields, providing solutions and expertise.

Most importantly, the role of the civil society is crucial on ensuring the inclusion of most vulnerable groups of the society in the process, having a place on the decision-making table. It is usually these communities that are the ones carrying the largest share of the burden and the most affected by the impacts of climate change.

Civil society certainly faces many challenges on addressing climate change. Lack of financial stability, limited human resources capacities, lack of multilevel cooperation, lack of partnerships/ networks with public and private sector, as well as lack of available data are some of the challenges that the NGOs present in the forum mentioned to have been facing.

Although Kosovo's contribution on causing climate change may have been unsignificant, it does as well face its consequences. The rapid assessment on municipal capacity gaps and need on integrating the climate change aspects into Spatial Panning in Kosovo shows us that the local institutions do not have the required capacities and expertise to address climate change. Therefore, support from the civil society and other stakeholder is needed. Investing in research and development, in innovation and building new capacities seem to be a must. In line institutions present in the forum mentioned how important it is for the government and the civil society to work together on addressing climate change. It was highlighted several times that the government will keep their door open for the civil society to join forces and work together.



LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION FORUM





ANNEX

Annex A: Agenda

9:00 - 09:30	Reception
09:30 – 10:00	Opening remarks Welcome note Omar Siddique, Head of Office and Chief Technical Advisor at UN-Habitat Kosovo Welcome note Ulrika Richardson, UN Development Coordinator Keynote speaker Sheela Patel, Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)
10:00 – 11:00	Roundtable - Challenges for Civil Society addressing climate change <i>Moderator</i> Milan Branović, UN-Habitat Kosovo <i>Summary / recap</i> Fjollë Caka, UN-Habitat Kosovo
11:00 – 12:00	Session 1 - Policy analysis on climate change in Kosovo Moderator Shkumbin Hasani, UN-Habitat Kosovo Presentation on Policy analysis on Climate Change Dardan Abazi, Institute for Development Policy
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:00	Session 2 – Opportunities for civil society to accelerate climate action in Kosovo Moderator Jelena Đokić, Professor at International Business College Mitrovica Break out groups Sanja Lazarević, UN-Habitat Kosovo - Group 1 Shkumbin Hasani, UN-Habitat Kosovo - Group 2 Milan Branović, UN-Habitat Kosovo - Group 3
14:00 – 14:15	Coffee break
14:15 – 14:45	<mark>Structure of LoCAF</mark> Moderator Fjollë Caka, UN Habitat Kosovo

- 14:45 15:30 Joint Statement *Moderator* Afërdita Syla, Community Building Mitrovica
- 15:30 15:45 Coffee break
- 15:45 16:30 Closing ceremony Summary of the sessions Dardan Abazi, INDEP

Responses:

Liburn Aliu, Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Fitore Pacolli, Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Rural Development, Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure UK Embassy representative Italian Embassy representative US Embassy representative Hand over the Joint Statement and group photo

Working Sessions

10:00 – 11:00	Roundtable - Challenges for Civil Society addressing climate change Moderator: Milan Branović, UN-Habitat Kosovo
10:00 - 10:05	Video from LoCAF applicants
10:05 - 10:10	Introduction to the session
10:10 – 10:45	Introduction by the NGOs and identification of the main problems / challenges for civil society in addressing the climate change in Kosovo
10:45 – 10:55	Open discussion / Q & A
10:55 – 11:00	Recap: Fjollë Caka, UN-Habitat Kosovo
11:00 – 12:00	Session 1 - Policy analysis on climate change in Kosovo <i>Moderator:</i> Shkumbin Hasani, UN-Habitat Kosovo
11:00 – 11:05	Video from LoCAF applicants
11:05 – 11:20	Presentation of the survey: "Municipal capacity gaps and need on integrating the climate change aspects into Spatial Planning in Kosovo" Fjollë Caka – UN-Habitat Kosovo
11:20 – 11:35	<i>Presentation</i> on Policy analysis on Climate Change Dardan Abazi, Institute for Development Policy – "INDEP"
11: 35 – 11:55	Open Discussions (Q&A)
11:55 – 12:00	Recap: Shkumbin Hasani, UN-Habitat Kosovo
13:00 - 14:00	Session 2 - Opportunities for civil society to accelerate climate action in Kosovo
13:00 – 13:30	Moderator: Professor Jelena Đokić - IBCM
	Working session First group: Connecting climate information to the people (facilitator Milan Branović) Improving the population's access to climate information. CSOs might act as bridge between research institutions and the population leading to a

more direct dialogue. Expected result: The CSOs will establish mechanism for dissemination of the climate data to the general population Second Group: Inclusion and just transition (facilitator Sanja Lazarević) CSOs must ensure acknowledgment of the high vulnerability of vulnerable groups in public policy, through advocacy processes by promoting a participatory and inclusive approach in climate change actions and disaster risk reduction. Expected result:

CSOs will propose modalities for inclusion of the vulnerable groups needs and voice in the public policies

Third Group: Collaborative climate action (facilitator Shkumbin Hasani) Promoting accountability and actively participating in inter-institutional coordination at local and central levels (special focus on finance opportunities) Expected result: Through active participation and monitoring CSOs will enhance accountability at local and central level.

- 13:30 13:50 Presentation of proposed results/actions from working groups
- 13:50 14:00 Recap: Professor Jelena Đokić IBCM

Annex B: LoCAF members

	NGOs	Location	Representative
1.	7 Arte	Mitrovica South	Lulzim Hoti
2.	Ambientalistët e Mitrovicës	Mitrovica South	Albana Berisha
3.	BB Green Kosovo	Pristina	Behare Bajraktari
4.	Çohu!	Pristina	Arton Demhasaj
5.	EcoZ	Pristina	Egzona Shala
6.	Fondacioni Jeshil	Pristina	Eris Drini
7.	Qytetarët aktivë	Pristina	Flutra Zymi
8.	Stand Out Vushtrri	Vushtrri	Blerim Ibrahimi
9.	Sustainable Leadership Kosovo	Pristina	Indira Kartallozi
10.	Mundësia	Mitrovica South	Hasime Tahiri - Hasani
11.	Ec Ma Ndryshe	Prizren	Valon Xhabali
12.	Community Building Mitrovica	Mitrovica South	Afërdita Syla
13.	Gjethi	Kacanik	Valon Raka
14.	Center for Human Potentials Development	Zvecan	Ivana Djokic
15.	Ideas Partnership	Fushe Kosovo	Elisabeth Growing
16.	Keep it Green	Obilic	Guxim Klinaku
17.	Let's do it Peja	Реја	Urim Xharavina
18.	RECPIK	Pristina	Betim Shabani
19.	Te pema	Pristina	Dion Deva
20.	Values for a Better Future	Malishevo	Veton Kastrati
21.	Space SyntaKS	Pristina	Gresa Neziri
22.	Mitrovica WAHR	Mitrovica South	
23.	Me dorë në zemër	Mitrovica South	Shqipe Qarkaj - Kadriu
24.	Action for Social and Economic Development	Leposavic	Bojan Milosavljevic
25.	ALETRO	Mitrovica North	Rada Rakic
26.	INDEP	Pristina	Burim Ejupi
27.	BoneVet Gjakova	Gjakova	Arber Lleshi
28.	I4PA	Pristina	Dea Gecaj

Table 02. List of civil society organizations member of LoCAF.

LoCAF members:

































гесрік



























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