Montréal mayor Valérie Plante appointed ICLEI Global ambassador for local biodiversity

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Montréal, 21 août 2019 —

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability announced today that Mayor Valérie Plante of the City of Montréal will take up the role of ICLEI’s Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity. The position will shine a spotlight on the role of cities to address the biodiversity extinction crisis facing the world and will serve as a global advocate for the protection of nature and biodiversity by local governments.

Mayor Plante is calling on Mayors around the world to join her in igniting a global wave of action in cities, towns and regions to plan with, conserve and restore nature.

“Now is the time for urgent action. Nature underpins our very existence and livelihoods and is integral to the effective functioning and well-being of urban communities,” said Mayor Plante. “Like its citizens, the City of Montréal is firmly committed to the protection of biodiversity. The creation of nature parks, including Canada’s largest municipal park, the achievement of 10% forested protected areas and the increase of our canopy, among the many measures that bear witness to it, Montréal is also proud to have hosted the United Nations Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on its territory for more than 20 years. Collective action at the local level is our best hope for seeing the change needed at a global scale. It is crucial that the voices of urban communities are heard in the negotiations on a new deal for nature leading up to and following the Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties in China in 2020.”

“Mayor Plante has been a champion for sustainable urban development in Montreal, and a strong advocate to the urban agenda in the context of the Convention,” said Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal. “I congratulate ICLEI’s President and its Executive Committee, as our long-time partners for their nomination. In view of other leadership and the long and productive cooperation with our host city, I stand ready to work with Mayor Plante in her new role, towards the full engagement of cities in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, also through the CitiesWithNature platform, and for safe cities that provide a healthy and vibrant urban environment for our growing urban planet.”

The decline of the natural world, due to human actions, such as over-exploitation of natural resources, pollution and unsustainable consumption, is a global crisis in its own right that also exacerbates the severity of climate change. In May, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released a report that estimated that one million species are threatened with extinction today and that extinction rates are accelerating. The report found that the current global response is insufficient and transformative change is needed.

ICLEI’s President, Lord Mayor Ashok Sridharan of Bonn, appointed Mayor Plante to this new role. Mayor Plante will work closely with ICLEI’s network of nearly 2,000 cities to ensure all urban communities, regardless of size, are supported in defending biodiversity and nature from imminent threat.

“The degradation of nature and climate change simultaneously threaten our cities. But urban communities are best placed to drive the necessary change, by working together and joining forces with states and nations,” said Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn and President of ICLEI. “Cities need a strong voice at the table. Mayor Plante has taken the lead in Montréal, and she will serve as a powerful advocate for urban nature globally.”

“Nature-based development and biodiversity conservation is a critical element of sustainable development. Local leaders such as Mayor Plante understand the extreme urgency of the conservation of biodiversity, and that local and subnational actors make a tangible difference and have an overall global impact,” said Gini Van Biezen, Secretary General of ICLEI. “We welcome Mayor Plante’s leadership to show how cities can lead in planning, designing and building cities with nature, respecting the services and benefits nature offers and restoring nature in ever-growing urban centers.”

ICLEI is home to the Cities Biodiversity Center (CBC), a leading global center that provides cities with skilled policy, legal and technical expertise on biodiversity and urban development.

The CBC developed CitiesWithNature – a rapidly growing global partnership initiative between ICLEI, the IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, World Urban Parks, the Biophilic Cities Network, WWF and other organizations – a platform for cities and regions to connect, learn, act and inspire one another to design, plan and work with nature; demonstrate what they are doing to restore connections with nature; and pledge their local actions and commitments to protecting nature.

CitiesWithNature is endorsed by the Secretariat on the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) as the official platform for cities and subnational governments to share and report on their ambitions and commitments to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. More than 70 cities from around the world are already committed to embark on this ambitious journey alongside Mayor Plante, including Melbourne, London, Manchester, Bonn, Kochi, Dar es Salaam, Cape Town, Barcelona, Fort Collins, Londrina, and many more on all continents.

Representing the voice of cities on biodiversity, one of Mayor Plante’s first challenges will be to co-develop a position paper on the ambitions of local governments towards biodiversity protection in advance of the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group Part 2-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

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About ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.
About the Cities Biodiversity Center

ICLEI’s Cities Biodiversity Center is a global Center of Excellence located in Cape Town, South Africa, and embedded in ICLEI’s Africa Regional Office. ICLEI CCB recognizes the crucial role that cities and local governments play in the pursuit of a sustainable future through efficiently mainstreaming biodiversity and nature-based solutions into urban development and planning. Through its multi-skilled team of biodiversity and urban development experts, it offers cities around the world a broad portfolio of supportive technical services, promoting innovation and seeking local solutions to address the complex challenges surrounding natural capital and the degradation of ecosystem services in a rapidly urbanizing world.