



Strong Cities Network

Fourth Global Summit

19—21 September 2023

New York City Mayoral Declaration

*Mayoral Meeting
New York City, New York
21 September 2023*

We, the mayors and other city leaders gathered in New York City for the Fourth Strong Cities Network Global Summit:

Condemning the rising levels of hate, extremism and polarisation in all of their forms and manifestations and the increasing anti-establishment sentiment and gender-based, inter-communal and other forms of violence impacting our communities and *expressing* concern that misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories are contributing to these worrisome trends.

Recognising that mayors and other local leaders are on the front lines of these challenges and have a unique, but too often overlooked, role to play in addressing them, working in close collaboration with the communities they serve and civil society to strengthen social cohesion, build resilience and create cities of belonging.

Standing in solidarity with all cities and sub-national authorities that are committed to inclusive and diverse communities and rejecting efforts to exploit divisions, promote mis/disinformation and conspiracy theories, or otherwise using fear and hate to destabilise communities, their safety and well-being.

Appreciating that due to their proximity to and understanding of local communities, mayors and other local leaders are well-placed to identify the priorities of their residents and develop innovative approaches to identify and address feelings of exclusion, injustice and marginalisation before they manifest in violence and to mitigate the social and economic consequences if they do.

Underscoring the importance of the Strong Cities Network's mission to provide a global platform for mayors and cities – from capitals to rural towns, municipalities, counties and states – through which we can share, and exchange practical, impactful approaches addressing rising hate, extremism and polarisation that threatens social cohesion worldwide.

Commending the Strong Cities Network's efforts to elevate the voices of mayors and other sub-national leaders at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that local perspectives and ground realities are reflected in and informing global approaches and frameworks to address these challenges.



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Supporting the guiding principles underpinning the Strong Cities' mission, including *inter alia* to support, respect and protect the rights of all people, regardless of race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or any other social, cultural or ethnic group; to proactively address in their city any manifestation of discrimination or hate towards any individual or group; and to proactively support learning between mayors and the governments they lead to build strong, cohesive and resilient cities.

Welcoming the Strong Cities Network's inclusive approach that facilitates connections between its diverse members, with their varied priorities, while taking into account the need to provide support that is tailored to their local contexts.

Acknowledging the impact of Strong Cities' engagement with cities, from supporting the development of multi-stakeholder frameworks that leverage cities' traditional service-delivery capacities, to working with local and central government stakeholders to strengthen national-local cooperation, to unlocking the potential and power of city-led action in prevention and response.

Commending the Strong Cities Network's development of practical tools and resources for sub-national authorities, including in collaboration with the Global Counterterrorism Forum on national-local cooperation, and tailored guides for mayors and cities on prevention and response that will serve as living resources to further inspire and support the work and efforts of sub-national leaders and their administrations to drive forward city-led action.

Welcoming the Strong Cities Network's continued efforts to build and strengthen cooperation with other city networks and multilateral partners such and to identify and leverage opportunities for learning and sharing for its members.

Recognising that unlocking the potential of city-led action in addressing hate, extremism and polarisation can make an immediate and sustainable difference to the peace and security of local communities and contribute to global efforts to strengthen social cohesion, promote stability and prevent conflict.

Declare our commitment to, and *call on* all mayors and other local leaders across the world, to join us in:

1. Speaking out regularly and consistently against all forms of discrimination, disinformation, intolerance, hate, violence and extremism, and sending a clear and consistent public message of being an inclusive and welcoming city, recognising that public safety and well-being begin with inclusion at the local level, and that inclusivity



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and civility are the foundation for effective prevention and response.

2. Strengthening local democratic institutions, including by facilitating the active participation of all residents, including women, young people, isolated or marginalised communities, and new arrivals, to foster social cohesion, inclusive governance and resilience.
3. Investing in and building authentic, trusted relationships with and between civil society and the communities we serve as part of a long-term community cohesion and resilience framework, so that these established connections can be drawn on as part of a whole-of-city response when/if hate or extremism emerges or polarisation rises, or in support of ongoing efforts to address discriminatory historical or structural legacies or injustices.
4. Promoting transparency and pursuing open dialogue between city authorities, civil society and communities, to understand peoples' lived realities and aspirations, including by creating safe spaces for difficult conversations (including about racism, injustice, and hatred) among cross-sections of the local population.
5. Investing in and supporting data- and evidence-based policies and analysis thereof, which allows our cities to better understand threats to social cohesion in our communities and builds capacity to collaborate around multi-stakeholder frameworks that are effective in addressing local grievances and remain responsive to a continuously changing and increasingly interconnected and dynamic threat environment.
6. Promoting strong relationships and increased cooperation between local and national governments to ensure that the voices of cities and their communities are reflected in national frameworks are translated into local action and reflect the knowledge and experience captured by their partners.

Recognising that cities, in protecting the rights of all people, will implement these commitments in a manner consistent with the cultural norms and traditions of their citizens.

Express our further commitment to share with the Strong Cities Network on an annual basis the actions we have taken to implement this declaration.

Mayor of Toronto