



PRESS RELEASE

Accelerating adaptation: regional governments commitments and actions to raise climate ambitions at COP26

- COP26 is the most important climate conference since the adoption of the Paris Agreement and world leaders must come together to agree on the ambitious measures that will get us on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C in the coming decade.
- As UN Parties decide on a new Rulebook to accelerate action across all pillars of the Paris Agreement, non-state actors seek to inspire national governments with their leadership and accountability to fill the ambition gap for the climate agenda.
- As the voice of regional governments for sustainable development, [Regions4](#) catalyses the leadership, commitments, and ambitions of regions on climate adaptation. At COP26 regions bring some of the best practices in areas such as food security, water regulation, protection of ecosystems, and renewable energy, contributing to the resilience of 300 million people.
- Under the umbrella of Regions4 flagship initiative on climate adaptation, [RegionsAdapt](#), 76 regional governments have pledged to the UNFCCC [Race to Resilience](#), which aims to catalyze a step-change in global ambition to build the resilience of 4 billion people by 2030.

GLASGOW, 9 November 2021.- Regions4's high-level event at COP26 was held yesterday 8 November under the theme "[The Leading role of regions in raising ambitions for adaptation and resilience](#)". Organised on Adaptation Day and as part of the official programme of the LGMA Multi-level Action Pavillion, the event gathered 11 regional governments and over 20 partners to call for multi-level governance and radical collaboration to deliver for climate.

Regions4 is currently participating at COP26 in Glasgow to promote multilevel governance for increased ambition and effective action on climate adaptation through the key role of regional governments. In fact, as a key member of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency, Regions4 has strongly advocated for a multi-level action COP with collaboration between all levels of government as the new normal..

On 8 November, Regions4, the global voice of regional governments, organised a high-level event which included the best practices and commitments of regional leaders and global ambassadors; the launch of a brief report for COP26 on raising ambitions; and the presentation of a statement of regions in an open call for an effective multi-level partnership with the Parties to the UNFCCC to accelerate action on the global climate agenda.

The event celebrated the five-years' trajectory and contributions of Regions4's flagship initiative, [RegionsAdapt](#), which has worked closely with regional governments to catalyse ambitions and promote the development of adaptation plans, as well as their concrete implementation and accountability through annual reporting and capacity building.

Since 2021 RegionsAdapt is an official partner initiative of the UN-led campaign [Race to Resilience](#), bringing the commitments and contributions of 76 regional governments impacting over 300 million people, to catalyze a step change in global ambition for climate resilience by 2030, putting people and nature first in pursuit of a resilient world.



- **Highlights of Regions4's high-level event at COP26**

The high-level event "[The leading role of regions in raising ambitions for adaptation and resilience](#)" at COP26 addressed the contribution of regional governments and how they are key to deliver climate-resilient actions on the ground.

During the opening remarks, **Mr. Gonzalo Muñoz, UN High-level Climate Champion for COP26** expressed that: *"We need to support those in action and recognise their capacity of becoming agents of change. We need to actively promote locally-led adaptation and put resources behind it. That is why Regions4, RegionsAdapt and its community of 76 regional governments and fellow partners, are key actors of the Race to Resilience to build a future where we not only survive to climate shocks but thrive in spite of them."*

Ms Arantxa Tapia, Regions4 President and Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment of the Basque Country remarked that: *"At COP26 regional governments represent 60% of the global economy, our contributions to the global climate agenda are important and so are our expectations for COP26 to declare the multi-level governance as the new normal. It is time to recognise regions' tailored, integrated and innovative solutions; our partnerships with a wide variety of actors; and our continued efforts to generate new ways of financing the climate action targeting those left behind."*

Ms Màirìe McAllan MSP, Minister for Environment and Land Reform of Scotland highlighted that: *"Action on adaptation cannot wait and this COP must see governments not only commit to action at home, but also mobilise climate finance and recognise the need of joint work. Multi-level action is more crucial than ever: up to 70% of adaptation actions need to be implemented in subnational and local levels, and we need to raise the ambition."*

Regional leaders shared their experiences, as well as challenges and recommendations to mainstream adaptation across sectors and levels of government, so as to inspire the COP26 negotiations, and bring incentives for higher ambitions for climate in the decade of action.

Mr Pere Aragonés, President of Catalonia, highlighted the pioneering work of the region to reinforce the institutional capacity to combat climate change: *"Since 1992 we have built a solid institutional structure on top of accumulated experience which we now must use to accelerate change. We want to lead by example, and our aim with the Catalan Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change is to ensure the leadership of local governments in the implementation of climate action in our territory."*

Mr Javier Gallegos, Governor of Ica and President of the Mancomunidad Regional de los Andes, presented on the importance of integrating the agendas, and protect the natural resources for effective climate action: *"In our region and those that make up the Mancomunidad de los Andes we are carrying out a very important adaptation plan for the recovery of ecosystem services of water regulation in the micro basins. We are considering the construction of water resource reservoirs where we can store water to carry out the installation of vegetation seedlings as part of a reforestation programme."*



Mr David Speirs MP, Minister for Environment and Water of South Australia, shared his region's experience in sustainable urban planning for a climate-resilient territory: *"In order to sustain the liveability of our region, we must ensure that our territory is cooler, greener and wilder. The project Green Adelaide gathers 17 councils working on urban landscaping, restoration of wild areas and climate-responsible cultural practices for a resilient future."*

Mr Secretary Wade Crowfoot, of the California Natural Resources Agency, reminded the importance of international cooperation and knowledge exchange for climate: *"In California, we are proud of our climate action over the last 20 years. We are the 5th largest economy in the world, and we managed to reduce our green gas emission while greatly expanding our economy. But we didn't move quickly enough to advance climate adaptation because we thought that it would be a future planning exercise. We must learn from others, and make sure we can share information at the right level. Resilience is so localized that one-size-fits-all strategies will not work. We must strategize and learn from each other across sectors."*

Mr Eduardo Trani, Sub-Secretary of Environment of São Paulo State, reaffirmed their commitment with the international goals and global campaigns through legislation: *"In São Paulo, the resilience agenda is the biggest priority in the climate agenda as it has an impact in the lives of 45 million inhabitants. We are not only fostering multi-level collaboration by working with municipalities and the private sector, but we are also committed to initiatives such as the Race to Resilience campaign, which we have joined after passing a state decree."*

- **Regions4's brief report on raising ambition**

During the event, Regions4 and the Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3) launched the brief report for COP26: [Raising ambitions on climate adaptation: lessons learnt and contributions of regional governments](#), which shares 11 leading good practices from 5 years of experiences of the [RegionsAdapt](#) initiative, to develop integrated and multisectoral adaptation strategies.

Through this report, Regions4 and RegionsAdapt wish to contribute to meeting the COP26 objectives by providing insights to inform policy makers in further decision-making in the hope these cutting-edge best practices will be upscaled from the regional to the national and international level. Additionally, the report provides recommendations on the way forward for increased action and ambition to build global resilience.

- **Regional governments call to accelerate multi-level collaboration**

Finally, the event saw the presentation of the statement of regional governments led by the governments of Lombardy and Scotland and supported by Regions4 and over 15 regions to highlight the main asks and commitments of regional governments for the COP26.

As signatories of the [Race To Zero](#) and [Race To Resilience](#), regions call for: ambitious emission reduction targets and pathways to 2030; measurable and coherent actions on adaptation; multi-level, solutions-oriented radical collaboration to become the new normal to combat climate change; and the mobilisations of climate finance based on equity, economic cooperation and social inclusion, among others.

The statement is open for endorsement until 10 November 2021 by emailing climate@regions4.org. It can be accessed here: [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).



Regions4

Sustainable Development

About Regions4

Since 2002 [Regions4](#) has worked to bring the voice of regional governments to the main global processes and events on sustainable development. Today, our growing network of subnational leaders serves as a major advocacy platform to increase recognition of regional governments, share knowledge, and cooperate to develop transformative solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss, with the 2030 Agenda as our roadmap to ensure a sustainable and resilient future for all.

For more information visit: www.regions4.org

Regions4's flagship climate initiative [RegionsAdapt](#), mobilizes ambition and action on climate adaptation by facilitating access to the latest innovations, tools, and best practices at regional level. Through knowledge exchange, capacity building, advocacy, monitoring, and reporting, RegionsAdapt catalyses innovation on adaptation, fosters cooperation, and supports regional governments to improve their resilience. Driven by the governments of Rio de Janeiro and Catalonia, RegionsAdapt was launched at COP 21 in Paris. Regions4 coordinates this initiative and encompasses more than 70 signatory regions from five continents– impacting over 280 million citizens.

For more information on this project, please visit: www.regions4.org/project/regions-adapt/

Regions4's publications

All our publications are available at the [Regions4 Knowledge Hub](#) on our website.

The brief report ***Raising ambitions on climate adaptation: lessons learnt and contributions of regional governments*** is available for download [here](#).

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