



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, December 10, 2018

Contact: Megan MacInnes, [MMacInnes@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:MMacInnes@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212)319-9437

**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER  
ABEYWARDENA ANNOUNCE NEW YORK CITY WINS URBAN INNOVATION  
AWARD FOR LOCAL WORK ON GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

*World's first Voluntary Local Review recognized for providing common framework to help cities  
advance shared agenda for fairness and sustainability*

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena today announced that New York City has won the 2018 Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation for its creation of the Voluntary Local Review, a pioneering new tool to help cities share their local work toward the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a common framework.

Co-sponsored by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), World Association of the Major Metropolises (Metropolis), and the City of Guangzhou, China, the award recognizes urban initiatives that demonstrate innovation in improving social, economic, and environmental sustainability and advancing the quality of life for citizens. New York City is one of five winners this year, selected from 15 finalists among more than 200 cities from 70 countries and regions. "Global challenges call for bold local action, and this award for urban innovation recognizes fresh approaches that hold the promise to make our communities fairer and more sustainable," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "New York City is a leader in the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals through our OneNYC plan, and with the Voluntary Local Review, we have a groundbreaking tool for sharing strategies on ending inequality and tackling climate change with cities and regions around the world."

New York City became the first city in the world to submit a Voluntary Local Review to the United Nations (UN) during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on progress toward the SDGs in July 2018. Modeled on the Voluntary National Reviews submitted by member states, the Voluntary Local Review showcases New York City's achievements in sustainability since 2015 for a global audience, and provides a framework to help cities compare and discuss their efforts. Cities around the world have since joined New York City in pledging to submit Voluntary Local Reviews at the next HLPF in 2019.

In April 2015, the de Blasio administration launched OneNYC, a groundbreaking strategic blueprint for sustainable and inclusive growth. OneNYC charts a path toward achieving goals such as lifting 800,000 New Yorkers out of poverty, expanding access to nutritious and affordable food, and ensuring that communities on the front lines of climate change are protected. Later that same year, world leaders at the UN in New York City committed to the 17 SDGs to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and combat climate change by 2030. Also known as the Global Goals, the SDGs provide voluntary targets and a common framework for addressing global challenges. The Mayor's Office for International Affairs subsequently launched the Global Vision | Urban Action program to map the connections between OneNYC and the Global Goals, and to facilitate conversation about shared challenges and solutions with local leaders around the world through the common language of the SDGs.

“We are thrilled to receive this award in recognition of New York City's innovations in sustainability and the impact our Voluntary Local Review is making on the global conversation,” said **Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs**. “With urban areas now home to the majority of the world's population, and local governments on the frontlines of challenges from climate change to migration and inequality, city diplomacy is more important than ever to help generate solutions for pressing global problems. New York City is proud to be a trailblazer in local engagement around the Sustainable Development Goals, and we call on other cities around the world to join us in submitting their own Voluntary Local Review to the United Nations in 2019.”

The Mayor's Office for International Affairs developed the Voluntary Local Review in close partnership with the Mayor's Office of Operations, the Mayor's Office of Climate Policy and Programs, and in consultation with City agencies implementing OneNYC initiatives. Using data from the 2018 OneNYC Progress Report, the Voluntary Local Review shows how actions being taken by City agencies address each of the five priority Global Goals for that year, with practical examples. Each goal is mapped to corresponding OneNYC indicators, which are among more than 1,000 indicators tracked by New York City in a robust monitoring system developed since the 1970s.

“NYC has been developing performance data infrastructure since the 1970s,” said **Jeff Thamkittakasem, Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations**. “We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the global conversation around measuring progress toward the Sustainable Development goals while also learning from other cities about how we can strengthen our own accountability mechanisms.”

An appendix in the Voluntary Local Review also provides examples of the data tracked by the City, which is maintained by the Mayor's Office of Operations, including more detailed information about how the City monitors operational performance and progress toward its goals. New York City's Voluntary Local Review serves as a resource for cities around world that aim to track their progress using the framework of the Global Goals.

"With our groundbreaking OneNYC strategy, New York City is leading the way toward a more sustainable and equitable future for all New Yorkers and doing our part to achieve the

Sustainable Development Goals," said **Daniel Zarrilli, New York City's Chief Climate Policy Advisor and OneNYC Director**. "By sharing our progress with the world and linking local action to a global vision, we hope to empower more cities to join the discussion about what can be done to tackle poverty, inequality, climate change, and other pressing challenges."

The 2018 Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation was presented to winners in Guangzhou, China, on December 7. In addition to New York City, winners include Guadalajara, Mexico; Milan, Italy; Mezitli, Turkey; and Wuhan, China. Each winning city receives a grant of \$20,000 to advance its programming. Members of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Operations represented New York City at the competition.

"Representatives from cities around the world gathered in Guangzhou for fascinating and productive conversations around our shared commitment to local action and innovation," said **Alexandra Hiniker, Global Vision | Urban Action program director**. "The recognition of this award will help New York City bolster our efforts to empower cities to use the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework to make the world more just and sustainable by the year 2030."

"While the cities participating in the Guangzhou Awards varied in size and capacity, each brought significant experience and insights to the table," said **Dan Steinberg, Senior Advisor at the Mayor's Office of Operations**. "It was a privilege to help lead the global discussion on how cities can work together to tackle the challenges of growth, equity, sustainability, and resiliency as set out in OneNYC."

"The SDGs provide the roadmap to achieve the global goal of sustainable development. Analysis has shown that two-thirds of the SDGs will need to be implemented at the local level. The 15 shortlisted cities provide ample evidence of the important role of cities," said **Members of the Jury for the 2018 Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation**. "New York City connects its own strategic vision, One NYC, to the SDGs. In doing so, it developed a tool that New York City is sharing with all cities. While the United Nations calls for member states to submit Voluntary National Reports on progress in the implementation of the SDGs, New York City submitted in July 2018 a Voluntary Local Review (VLR), the first city ever to do so. This shows the strong will of New York City that the city will make the best efforts possible to achieve the SDGs and to help other cities in their respective efforts. New York's Voluntary Local Review will no doubt motivate other cities to follow up on the SDGs, and at the same time, it shows an effective model to do so."

To learn more about the Global Vision | Urban Action Program and to download the Voluntary Local Review, visit [nyc.gov/international](http://nyc.gov/international).

### **About the Mayor's Office for International Affairs**

The New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs works to foster positive relations and encourage collaboration between the international community and New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. The Office is focused on sharing New York City's policies and best practices globally, as well as responding to requests from foreign governments, the United

Nations, and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and on our website.

###