



COP 28: Mayors of the World's Most Crucial River Basin Declare “this was the most important COP for cities ever” as the world moves to ramp-up multi-lateral climate projects in the face of worsening impacts

Dubai, United Arab Emirates (14 December): For the first time ever, cities and their climate work were made part of the official COP agenda with interventions from the COP Presidency and the UN Secretary General placing efforts of cities around the world at the center of the world's strategy to mitigate warming.

Mayor Mitch Reynolds of La Crosse, WI, Head of the MRCTI Delegation to COP 28, and MRCTI Co-Chair, said: “Finally, the official COP process has recognized that cities and subnational governments are where climate actions are and will continue to take place. It is critical the Paris Accord negotiations take into account the work of cities to reduce emissions and restore natural infrastructure. The Secretary General's call for *high ambition multi-level partnerships* through the CHAMP declaration is exactly what cities are uniting to achieve along the Mississippi River. In fact, our 105 cities through ten states of Middle America are currently deploying the largest non-federal climate ambition pipeline of projects in the Mississippi Corridor.”

“Therefore, we feel it is key that subnational entities be allowed to be official signatories to the CHAMP Declaration along with national governments as it is our cities that will host the majority of the climate projects resulting from the CHAMP approach.”

Mayor Errick Simmons of Greenville, MS, Assistant Lead of the MRCTI Delegation to COP 28, and MRCTI Mississippi State Chair, added: “We support the *Loss and Damage Fund* and we applaud this COP moving the implementation of the Fund forward. However, it is critical we prioritize for food-producing river basins like the Nile, Amazon, Ganges, and Indus in deploying the resources of the Fund in order to have the largest impact on the most critical services of the planet such as food production.”

“With waterways and ports along the Mississippi River ten-state corridor accounting for \$164 billion in annual agricultural exports, cities and towns on the Mississippi River welcome expansion of global investment that strengthens Basin economic competitiveness that protects the planet's food security.”

Mayor LaToya Cantrell of New Orleans, LA, MRCTI Delegation Member City, asserted: “As we join other municipalities in moving the Paris Accord process forward, it is essential we work to protect our critical ecosystems. These habitats include the wetlands of coastal Louisiana, which serve as a buffer to hurricanes and storm surge, as well as the rain forests of the Amazon which ensure the Mississippi River Basin receives adequate precipitation. Protecting these ecosystems will ensure the continued viability of our food systems – the majority of which are sustained by river basins. As both a riverine and coastal city, New Orleans understands the value of complex ecosystem services across geography types that are currently under urgent threat.”

Mayor Brad Cavanagh of Dubuque, IA, MRCTI Delegation Member City, said: “It was good to see some of the largest actors of the global commodity supply chain present at COP. We would offer an open invitation to them all to join us in developing a circular investment strategy where conglomerates can begin investing back into the ecological stock their companies depend on. This could take the form of companies supporting natural infrastructure projects that augment and sustain regenerative commodity production.”