STATEMENT

by the Kazakhstan Climate Network

“Climate-Resilient Cities – for People and Future Generations”

COP31, Antalya, 2026

Civil society organisations and experts, united in the Kazakhstan Climate Network, welcome the inclusion of climate-resilient cities among the priority areas of COP31.

Climate change is having an ever-greater impact on people’s living conditions in cities. Heatwaves, a lack of green spaces, air pollution, the risk of flooding, high energy consumption in buildings and the growing strain on urban infrastructure call for a shift from isolated measures to a systemic urban climate policy.

We are convinced that a climate-resilient city is not merely one with lower emissions. It is a city that is able to adapt to climate change, ensure decent and safe living conditions, use energy and natural resources efficiently, and give citizens real opportunities to participate in the decisions that shape the future of their homes, neighbourhoods and cities.

For Kazakhstan, where a significant proportion of the population lives in cities, this task takes on particular importance.

According to the assessment of organisations and experts of the Kazakhstan Climate Network, systemic changes are required in the following areas:

1. Energy efficiency in buildings and the modernisation of the housing stock

Buildings must become one of the central focal points of climate policy.

Current approaches to the modernisation of existing housing do not fully utilise the potential for improving energy efficiency. At the same time, it is necessary to progressively raise energy efficiency standards for new construction.

The modernisation of the housing stock must mean more than the repair of individual structural elements and building services. A comprehensive approach is required, combining the thermal insulation of buildings, efficient heating and cooling systems, ventilation, the regulation and metering of energy consumption, energy audits and the monitoring of the results achieved.

At the same time, the climate modernisation of housing must not be carried out at the cost of worsening the economic situation of citizens.

The mechanisms for financing this must be transparent, accessible and socially equitable; they must take into account the financial capacity of households and the situation of socially vulnerable groups, and must not allow costs to be disproportionately passed on to citizens.

2. Green infrastructure as a tool for climate adaptation

Urban greening should be regarded not as an element of urban landscaping, but as fully fledged climate infrastructure.

Mature trees, green corridors, parks, courtyard greenery and shaded public spaces help to reduce the impact of urban heat, maintain a favourable microclimate and increase the resilience of the urban environment.

A shift is needed from a predominantly quantitative count of trees planted towards a sustainable system for managing green infrastructure.

Such a system should include preserving existing mature trees, assessing whether their removal is justified, ensuring that new plantings survive, developing shaded spaces and taking into account the environmental, social and economic value of green spaces in urban planning decisions.

3. Climate-responsible spatial planning

Climate risks must be taken into account at all stages of spatial and urban planning.

Insufficient consideration of environmental and climate factors in urban development may increase the risks of air pollution, urban overheating, flooding and other adverse consequences.

Decisions on the development of land must therefore be based not only on economic feasibility, but also on an assessment of long-term climatic, environmental and social impacts.

Of particular importance are the conservation of natural areas, the development of green and other climate-resilient infrastructure, and the avoidance of decisions whose consequences would later have to be remedied at the expense of society and the state.

4. The climate transition must be people-centred and socially just

Technological solutions alone are not enough.

Climate policy directly affects the cost and quality of housing, utility bills, health, mobility, the accessibility of urban infrastructure and the quality of everyday life.

People must therefore be at the heart of the climate transition.

Such a transition must contribute to the realisation of every person's right to adequate housing and must not create new forms of social and economic inequality.

Citizens must have access to complete, clear and timely information on decisions affecting their homes and the urban environment, including information on expected results, costs and financing mechanisms.

Local communities must have genuine and accessible opportunities to participate not only in discussing decisions that have already been prepared, but also in identifying problems, setting priorities, and developing, implementing and publicly monitoring climate and urban planning measures.

We attach particular importance to the participation of young people and women. Young people will have to live with the long-term consequences of the decisions taken today; therefore, their voices must be taken into account when shaping the future of our cities. Equally important is the full participation of women in the formulation and implementation of climate and urban planning decisions, including participation in decision-making processes at local and national levels.

We call for

First, enshrining energy efficiency in buildings and the comprehensive modernisation of the existing housing stock as one of the priority areas of climate, energy and urban development policy.

Second, integrating climate change adaptation, green infrastructure and climate risk assessment into spatial and urban planning.

Third, developing transparent and socially just mechanisms for financing energy-efficient modernisation that make solutions affordable for citizens and take into account the situation of socially vulnerable groups.

Fourth, establishing and developing sustainable, accessible and transparent mechanisms for the participation of citizens, local communities, young people and women in the formulation, implementation and public monitoring of climate and urban planning decisions.

Fifth, expanding cooperation between state bodies, local public administration and local self-government bodies, civil society, the scientific and expert community, business and international partners in order to develop, test and scale up effective solutions for climate-resilient urban development.

Our common guiding principle

COP31 provides an opportunity not only to discuss global experience, but also to translate it into concrete national and local solutions.

We call for this opportunity to be used to shape a model of urban development in Kazakhstan in which emissions reduction and climate change adaptation simultaneously contribute to greater energy efficiency, better housing quality, the development of green infrastructure, social justice and genuine citizen participation.

A CLIMATE-RESILIENT CITY IS A CITY WHERE CLIMATE POLICY WORKS FOR PEOPLE.

IT IS A CITY THAT WE ARE CREATING NOT ONLY FOR OURSELVES, BUT ALSO FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Endorsed by the participants of the Kazakhstan Climate Network: 10 November 2026.

Presented at: COP31, Antalya, Turkey.