



Local Solutions to Global Crises: San Francisco's Actions to Combat Climate Change and Human Trafficking

Cumbre #MayorsCare sobre

Esclavitud moderna y cambio climático: el compromiso de las ciudades

Aula nueva del Sinodo, 21 de julio del 2015

Edwin Lee – Alcalde de San Francisco

His Holiness,

Bishop Sorondo and distinguished guests,

It is an honour to be here with all of you today to discuss our collective response to the global crisis of climate change and modern slavery. Thank you to His Holiness for his leadership and call to action. In his powerful and thoughtful Encyclical, His Holiness reminded us of the exemplary life and teaching of St Francis of Assisi. He simply stated "Saint Francis taught us to be good stewards of our environment and to help the most marginalized in our society". St Francis is, as all of you know, the patron saint of the city of San Francisco and the namesake of His Holiness. He remains an inspiration to all of us.

The city of St Francis is a world-class city and a compassionate city. With our strong economic foundation, we have a special opportunity to improve the lives of all of our residents by ensuring that every San Franciscan shares in the city's rising prosperity. Diversity, equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice are all San Francisco values. These values drive our commitment to live and act with resolve on climate change and human trafficking.

In San Francisco we have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions 23% below the 1990 level. We are so proud of this, especially considering our population has grown by 15% and our economy has grown by 49% over the same time. And as we grow, we are growing sustainably. And we must ensure that our solution to climate change benefits San Franciscans of all races and incomes, and across all neighbourhoods. Solar energy and electrical vehicles, for example, must be for everyone and not just the rich, and we are succeeding. We are successfully fighting climate change while creating jobs and directly improving the lives of our residents.

San Francisco's strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is represented by simply 3 numbers: 0, 50, 100. Zero waste to landfills; 50% of all trips by methods other than cars; 100% renewable energy. Let me briefly explain to you the 0, 50, 100 and their significance.

First, zero waste. The production, transportation and disposal of our waste comprise 42% of our greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Recycling and composting, both mandatory in San Francisco, help cut this down by creating jobs and conserving resources. Zero waste is among the quickest and most cost-effective strategies for local governments to implement. And thanks to our residents and business partners, San Francisco is at 80% waste reduction rate.

50% transportation. In San Francisco, we are investing every day in bike share, pedestrian networks, and our public transportation system. And I am pleased to report that San Francisco reached the 50% target just a few months ago, years ahead of our schedule.

Finally, 100% renewable energy. Just over half of greenhouse gas emissions come from energy used in the cities' commercial and residential buildings. It is the biggest carbon source that we have. So we use less energy to power and heat our buildings, and we need to change our energy supply and source for renewable power. Well, how are we doing this? We are leading by example. Last month, City Hall of San Francisco, where I work, which is the oldest building in the nation to receive LEED Platinum Certification, the highest possible rating from the US Green Building Council, and our building is 100 years old. We have launched city solar incentives, we are empowering our low-income and under-served members of our community to benefit from solar economy and we are working on a renewable energy program that will offer our residents and businesses electrical options that are cleaner than the existing energy and just as affordable.

Well, I am excited to announce today our city's next big step towards environmental justice and fighting climate change. And how better to share this news than with His Holiness and with our Governor Jerry Brown, who have both called for the reduction of the use of fossil fuels and in California our Governor, as you heard, has set

the ground-breaking climate change targets of reducing petroleum use in cars and trucks by 50%. His Holiness and Governor Brown, distinguished colleagues, San Francisco has heard the call, and we are acting locally.

Today, I am announcing that our city and our county of San Francisco will completely replace the use of petroleum diesel in our municipal fleet – all of our fire trucks, all of our municipal buses, all of our heavy-duty trucks – and replace it with renewable diesel by the end of this year. This action will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our diesel fleet by over 60%, and thanks to the credits at the federal and state level, the city's fuel costs will actually be reduced. In addition, by transitioning away from petroleum and diesel, we will reduce those harmful emissions that cause respiratory problems in our workers and in our communities' air quality issues.

As Mayors, we know that we need to act aggressively to fight climate change and our cities are the foundations and at the frontlines of the impacts of climate change, and as His Holiness has correctly pointed out, we must also focus hard to eradicate all inequities, wherever it lurks. Fighting human trafficking has been and will always be a priority of my administration. My wife Anita, who is here today with us, has been a tireless advocate to end human trafficking and also helping to support victims of trafficking in San Francisco. Thank you, Anita, to your leadership, to empower women and girls in promoting the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which San Francisco was the first city in the world to adopt.

Our compassionate city is also taking a hard line on human trafficking but with our San Francisco values. In 2016, the Bay Area has the honour of hosting the National Football League's Super Bowl 50; and while we celebrate the hosting of this worldwide sporting event, at the same time we must increase public awareness of human trafficking that unfortunately occurs. We are collaborating with our neighbourhood counties and the Super Bowl Host Committee to train 7,000 volunteers and staff at local hotels, restaurants and other hospitality-related businesses to help identify people who have been trafficked and get them the services that they need. And while the Super Bowl is a great opportunity to amplify the awareness of human trafficking, we know that our vigilance must last 365 days a year and extend across the globe. I am motivated by the commitment displayed here today to tackle these difficult issues. But when we come together, all moving in the same direction, we can truly change the trajectory of humanity. Thank you again for allowing me to speak with you today.