

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

GLOBAL CITY COOPERATION IN
THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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Welcome and Moderator:

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Panel:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PIPA: Hello, and welcome today to this session on global city cooperation in the response to COVID-19. Welcome to all of you, and thanks to you for joining us. My name is Tony Pipa, I'm a Senior Fellow in Global Economy and Development at the Brookings Institution.

I'm looking forward to this fireside chat, though you'll have to excuse the lack of a fireplace in my family's combined rec room and office. But I'm looking forward to this conversation. And as political leaders and government officials around the world have been seeking to keep their citizens and communities safe and healthy in the response to COVID-19, cities have really been at the forefront and have been taking decisive action. And I'm honored to have two fabulous leaders with us today, Vittoria Beria and Ambassador Nina Hachigian, from two cities, Milan and Los Angeles, that have really been at the center of this crisis, two cities that have really strong global orientation and that pre-COVID have been prioritizing really the key principles of sustainable development, principles around equity, and sustainability in their city strategies and what they're aspirations were for their citizens.

So we're going to hear about their experiences in providing leadership on this crisis and how they're thinking about moving from immediate response to longer-term recovery, but one thing we're particularly interested in exploring today is how cities are cooperating locally during this crisis. This is a global pandemic, a virus that knows no borders, and one that has really challenged the multilateral system and the idea of global cooperation. Cities, in addition to taking decisive action, have really been relying upon their own city to city networks and relationships with counterparts around the world. And we want to explore what that has meant, explore how that has been helpful, and also explore what the challenges have been as well.

Our hashtag today is #CityCooperation. You can Tweet your reactions and comments as we have this conversation. You can also ask questions via that hashtag or by emailing globalmedia@Brookings.edu.

So before we get underway, just a quick note on bios. Vittoria Beria is the director for international affairs at the city of Milan. She served as United Nations officer in various capacities, so has

a great deal of experience in the tradition of global cooperation, both at the headquarters in New York City and in the field, her work is focused on economic development and she was part of the public-private partnership created by the government of Italy for the World Expo in 2015 in Milan before becoming director of international affairs at the city.

Ambassador Nina Hachigian is the first deputy mayor of international affairs for the city of Los Angeles and holds the only such office currently in the United States. She served as U.S. ambassador to the (audio drop) under Obama and was on the staff National Security Council during the Clinton administration.

So I'd to (inaudible) to Vittoria and start the conversation. Vittoria, Can you talk about what's been the role of the city government and your mayor in responding to and managing the crisis? And also a little bit about your own experience in the role that you've played during the crisis.

MS. BERIA: Tony, thanks for the opportunity to speak today. I'll go right into the role of the mayor and then the council.

We have experienced and we continue to experience a very challenging time. The COVID-19 pandemic has been unexpected and very difficult to tackle. In Italy, the responsibilities and the instruments that are related to the management of the health crisis in general lie with the national and the regional government. But it's important for people to understand that there is plenty of space for a city government to take care of its citizens in terms of protections, in terms of serving our citizens (inaudible) better than normal times (audio drop) that are the same ones like transportation and waste management and assistance but become very difficult to manage down in situation of high risk of contagion. In the situation in which the majority of the group has been home bound and in need of care. So there is basically a shift from normalcy, so called, to a new (inaudible). And this is what we've been (inaudible), this is what we focused on: maintain the city in good function, responding to the new needs that were not present before, to the new clients that were autonomous before, I'm thinking for instance about the elderly or about all the people that used to volunteer and remain to support the efforts of city outreach and support the city and were home bound from overnight.

It is also why we were (inaudible) the emergency and still are. The mayor launched something called the mutual aid fund of Milan and started right away to think and explore opportunities for both the support of citizens during the crisis and the recovery phase after or from the blending of the recovery and management of the emergency.

In my own personal experience with my colleagues of course, the most important thing is teamwork. All of us have to take on additional urgent responsibilities and engineering all the processes to respond to what the city was facing and still are unfortunately.

MR. PIPA: And in that respect I mean, you know, officially your role is on international affairs. Have you had to be doing different things rather than just engaging internationally in the particular role that you have? Have you been part of that team?

MS. BERIA: I would say it's both, international engagement on other issues. So, for instance, I'm helping out the emergency team to procure medical equipment from abroad. I'm helping out trying to find information from the cities that went into management of the pandemic before we did. Of course, it goes both ways in that we do receive information and support and knowledge and pass it onto the ones that are coming after us. We had the misfortune of being the first European city very hard hit by the crisis and so that we can now pass on information and knowledge that is very quickly developed, because this is a very complicated phenomenon to manage and the learning curve is very steep and useful for people to know what they and foresee in terms of the various phases of the pandemic.

MR. PIPA: Yeah, that's helpful. And we'll get it -- should get a bit more into what it means to be sharing that knowledge and how important it is and how that's been working.

But let me turn to you, Nina. What's been the role of the mayor and the city government in the crisis in Los Angeles, and tell us a bit about your own personal experience during the crisis.

MS. HACHIGIAN: Great. Hi, Tony and Vittoria. It's nice to be with you. Thank you for doing this.

Let me know if I'm not coming through clearly.

So just a fact of Los Angeles, for those who might not be so familiar with the city, we're

the second largest city in the U.S., we have about 4.1 million people in a county of 10 million people. And we're extremely diverse -- 38 percent of our population is foreign born, we have some of the largest diaspora communities in the United States and the world, we had the fourth busiest airport, pre-pandemic, all of which is to say we were very open to the world and therefore in this case very vulnerable, also very lucky in terms of cooperation.

But in terms of the response and the responsibility of the city and the mayor, it's almost impossible to overstate I would say. We've done just every single thing, from putting up our own testing sites to procurement of PPE, which continues to be challenging, converting our manufacturing and our garment industries to 3D, you know, printing of face shields, sewing masks, you know, issuing all the orders for residents to stay home and to wear masks, turning our convention center into a hospital, creating new childcare centers for healthcare workers, and imposing an eviction moratorium, ramping up food delivery for seniors, setting guidelines about what businesses can remain open (inaudible), turning our rec centers into temporary homeless shelters, creating special parking zones outside of restaurants, and then raising a lot of money from individuals and foundations to help our most economically devastated residents. A sizeable portion of them are undocumented and so aren't going to get federal assistance whatsoever.

And now, of course, we're thinking and researching how we can open things back up again, which is very challenging. And we're doing all these things, trying to communicate in a very early way with daily press briefings by Mayor Garcetti, which have become, you know, a touchstone for many residents here, I think Andrew Cuomo's have for many on the East Coast. And we're doing this all while coordinating with the different jurisdictions and not waiting for them to act to make sure that they -- that we are aligned with the county and with the state. And then still running the basic functions of the city, collecting trash, deterring crime, keeping the power on, keeping the water running, and all that stuff.

And with a few happy exceptions I would say, this is has been all done without federal help. And, personally, I mean it's very intense, but mostly I feel really grateful, grateful, first of all, to be helping. I think I was most anxious when -- in the very early days when I wasn't sure how my team was

going to fit in. And so that's just who I am. Like I think I'd feel very nervous if I were not deeply engaged. I feel really grateful for living in Los Angeles, California with leaders who are making the hard decisions. And my role has changed and that of my team has changed, but it's still -- you know, we're just -- it's all hands on deck 24/7 kind of a situation.

MR. PIPA: And so let's -- and, Nina, let me just build on that. It is all hands on deck. People are repurposing. You just talked about multiple ways in which you're having to react quickly to situations as they arise. So you have very little time and folks are wanting to be efficient and trying to do multiple things at once.

So what's the role there of city to city cooperation, especially across international borders, how is that useful? What parts of those things that you're finding it important to be able to be reaching out to cities like Milan or others? What gap is it filling for you? Especially because time is of the essence and is so valuable? Why prioritize that?

MS. HACHIGIAN: Right. Well, let me first talk about the domestic response. And I would say that domestically we are banding together. For example, to call on the federal government to help us with our devastated budgets. So that's one thing that the cities are together doing domestically. And sometimes the California cities get together to make a point to the governor about the way some particular program ought to be executed.

Internationally, I think we found it helpful for comparing best practices. You know, we're all doing the same -- you know, more or less doing the same kind of things, maybe in different ways in different countries, and a very similar, although maybe slightly staggered timeline. So, you know, talking to cities who have gone through something right before you have has been extremely helpful to us.

MR. PIPA: That's very helpful. And so what I'm hearing is that there are also city to city cooperation happening on multiple levels, at the cities in California, in some ways sharing your experiences and banding together and getting aligned with how you engage with the state. The cities across the U.S. also, how they might engage nationally with the federal government. And then also sharing and comparing best practices from cities globally.

And so, Vittoria, I'm presuming, given that the crisis arrived in Milan early on, that you would be one of the cities that others are seeking to learn from and gain some of those best practices from. And so it would be interesting to hear your perspective on city to city cooperation. You might be, you know, hearing from a lot of your counterparts. How do you prioritize it, how do you think about prioritizing that, what does that city to city cooperation mean for you and sort of the gaps it might be filling as well.

MS. BERIA: Yes, thank you, Tony. And I very much agree with what Nina said, the approach is very similar.

For us in Milan, the city to city cooperation is very much the way we function in general. So I would say it has been our natural way to approach this crisis management as well. We didn't think about it, it just came naturally. Both bilaterally with the various cities that we have relationships and work with, and Los Angeles being a very important one of them, and multilaterally through the various city networks we participate into.

Right away you were talking about a possible gap that this would fill. Right away I feel that for us, you feel the information gap because we didn't have the information that we needed to understand how to react to the crisis being a little bit in the front line. But that was very quickly, let's say overcome, because the spread of the virus was very, very rapid. At the beginning, it was the Chinese colleagues, I must say, that turned to us with offer of information, advice, and also donations of equipment. And then right away it was more and more cities calling us to get information and technical support because they felt they had to get as ready as possible, as prepared as possible and they didn't have the information and a clear view of what that would mean at the city level.

So how did we prioritize? I don't think we did. We felt under an enormous pressure to be able to help others. We felt that being quick and effective was key and the more we learned and understood in the various technical areas -- very, very technical. At some point I got a question, I remember, about the level of alcohol in the sanitation of detergents for the street. Of course, it is not something I deal with normally, but I got every possible information and I passed it on.

We really felt that at least given the very bad and sad situation, at least we had to transfer our knowledge, our improvised knowledge to fellow cities as quickly as possible to contribute to their prevention mechanisms, because we really felt daily that these would better contain the virus in their own cities and ultimately this would save lives.

MR. PIPA: So was this happening through sort of formal channels, informal channels? How were you managing and hearing from other cities, both from -- interesting to hear your engagement with Chinese cities, for example, where the virus started, and then wanting to sort of act quickly and efficiently and pragmatically to help other cities that might be seeing this as well.

But is this spontaneous, is it formal, informal, is it both? How is that being managed?

MS. BERIA: I think I have to underline that it was extremely quick. It was 24 hours, as Nina said. But it was both. There are formal dialogues taking place. I'd say little by little, every single city network is turning to focusing on COVID-19, even the ones that were reluctant at the beginning and they were saying we need to sort of continue with our core mission. I would say the conversation is very much is monopolized by COVID-19 now. So the city networks are active and are helpful, but there's also as always the human factor. So the special access to the people that are involved in partnerships that are already ongoing, in special projects, in joint initiatives, that are colleagues and often, very often, likeminded professionals and ultimately also friends.

So the best example I can think of -- and it's not because she's involved -- is something that Nina has created, a very informal WhatsApp group that is growing with city members every day. That has become basically the best outlet of information and connects people -- especially what she was mentioning before -- the staggering of the phenomenon. This group is connecting people in cities that are

at different stages in the management of the pandemic. So it really gets a flow of information. This is extremely useful, because even the people that are not facing some problems now, from the experience of other cities, they do understand what they will be facing tomorrow and they are better prepared to do so. So I think this is very informal, but extremely useful example.

MR. PIPA: Oh, that's really helpful.

And, Nina, I know that Mayor Garcetti, the mayor of Los Angeles, your mayor, hosted a gathering of mayors through one of those formal networks, the C40 network, which is a city to city network working on climate issues. These are cities that have made commitments around climate emissions and that's usually the primary focus, but to Vittoria's point, sort of within the crisis feeling like they needed to be activated and act.

So tell us a little bit about how did that meeting come about, why, and what were some of the focus and outcomes of that meeting?

MS. HACHIGIAN: Yes, thanks. Just to step back a second, so I think that's an example of a more formal channel, and I'll talk about that. But, jut like Vittoria, we've had the situations of, you know, one off requests. I remember I got a call from the -- or I think it was a WhatsApp maybe from the Toronto emergency management department and tried to find someone in our emergency management department to talk to them. It turned out our head of emergency management was willing to talk to their head of emergency management. And I didn't get a read out of that call afterwards, but I'm sure that was extremely useful and practical.

And, second, this WhatsApp group, which is not perfect. You know, if you were to design something to share knowledge, you probably wouldn't design a WhatsApp group with everybody asking

every kind of question, but it is extremely useful because you pay attention to the conversations that happened before, and even if they weren't relevant at that point, they become relevant later.

And the C40. So that happened very organically. I mean C40 is an organization of nearly 100 megacities all focused on reducing their emissions. It's a very well run network, it's robustly staffed, there's people all over the world. And, you know, cities right now, all they're talking about and all they're focused on is COVID. So being, you know, a network that is all about cities and trying to help cities, you know, it was natural that they would want to turn to help.

So the mayor chaired that meeting and he's done -- we've done another one since then. Mayor Sala joined both of those and then there's another one coming up. And I think it was really a profound moment for him on that first call to realize that we're really all in this together. We had Milan on that call, Seoul, London, Jakarta, Accra, Paris, Delhi, Hong Kong, Freetown, Guadalajara, you know, and then many more as well, all making interventions.

I think for that call, on a practical level, I think what it was most useful for -- and, Vittoria, you can chime in on this -- I think it was most useful for the mayors who had not yet seen COVID coming to their cities and I think it put them on notice that they had to act, even much more quickly than they think that they would need to act. As our mayor has said many times, you know, it's not fast enough unless it's not feeling right. If it feels right, it's too late.

MR. PIPA: Yeah. Vittoria, what's that experience from your perspective as well?

MS. BERIA: I definitely agree with Nina. It was amazing to see over 50 mayors Zooming together at the same time and being extremely interactive. I think something that is very fair to say is that the city to city collaboration is an area that is very collaborative, it is not a competitive sort of relationship

between cities. Even if there is some competition, and namely when you have to -- I don't know -- compete for sports events or these kind of things.

MR. PIPA: (Inaudible). (Laughter)

MS. BERIA: Exactly. But on average, I always find an extreme openness, a very like mindedness I would say. And this comes from the fact that cities across the globe have very similar responsibilities, duties, and needs. So mayors are very quick in clicking with each other, in feeling that they have something to say. It's extremely rare to find two mayors that hit it off and start discussing about stuff. So, obviously, in that situation as challenging as the COVID epidemic, we saw the multiplier effects of this.

In our experience, we went into that particular meeting having to probably bring the kind of worse information possible in the sense that we were the ones to describe what was happening, and at that time the city was really devastated and it was a very sad and difficult situation to explain. But at the same time, we came out from that meeting with the idea that there was such a potential in terms of brain work behind what C40 could do at this level, that it was our proposal to create a recovery task force. And this is the reason why it is an honor and at the same time a huge responsibility for Mayor Sala, the mayor of Milan, to be adding the C40 effort to round cities together on a post-COVID recovery.

MR. PIPA: Yes, that's really interesting.

So I'm hearing several different things. One is just a feeling of solidarity and of, as you were saying, sort of combined brain power and the understanding of the similar duties and responsibilities and also what that -- you know, what the dangers were to everyone's citizens and populous and being able to support each other on that.

And then to be thinking about what it looks like together, both in terms of the immediate response, but what it will like in terms of recovery.

So just one question before -- because I want to turn a little bit towards recovery and how we're thinking about that. And we've got questions from the register and from the audience. But you talked about sort of both the one on one bilateral relationships, informal channels, the whatsapp group, and now we're talking a little bit about the more formal city to city networks, C40 set up, you know, pre-Covid. Nina, as you said a fairly robust network staff, you know, worldwide perspective and worldwide presence.

What's been the intersection with the traditional multilateral system? Vittoria, you served in the United Nations, Nina, as an ambassador, you obviously intersected with sort of the nation state traditional multilateral system. Has there been interaction? What's been the interaction with that? I mean you're relying on the relationships you have with each other and cooperating globally in that respect. Has it intersected or not with sort of the traditional system? It would be great to get your perspectives on that.

And that's not necessarily the way a system was set up, so that's -- I'm not trying to judge, but would just be interesting to understand sort of how these two different types of global cooperation intersect or not, especially in this crisis.

Vittoria, just whatever perspective you have on that.

MS. BERIA: I mean the one thing I can think of is obviously European focused, but for us it's very important to bring the collective views of cities to the European Union institutions. And this is -- an example that comes to mind is the fact that with the thinking that came from the very hard hit cities of

Italy and Spain, there was a letter that was recently sent by the mayors of Barcelona, Milan, and together with Amsterdam and Paris, to the European Union institutions basically to say there's a voice of cities that can be very helpful in your thinking about how to tackle the crisis collectively, earmark financial assistance and direct it to the cities. In this continuity with the approach that was applied after the financial crisis, for instance, in 2008, basically the mayors wrote we have lived through that time, we have learned a lot, the cities have had the duty and the braveness at the same time to respond at the city level that a lot we can contribute, consider us allies. This is something definitely that I can think of in terms of an engagement -- immediate engagement that came through the needs of the crisis.

MR. PIPA: That's helpful.

Nina, what's your perspective on that? So what's been the experience from the Los Angeles point of view?

MS. HACHIGIAN: We have gotten emails from, you know, like the OECD and others that have compiled guides and things like that, which we have no time to read, but we get those. Other than that, I'm just trying -- I'm just racking my brain here. I can't really think of an interaction that we've had with the multilateral system. It would be great if we did. I think there's probably a lot of benefit in making those channels a bit thicker. I know that some cities have used -- I guess we've all in some ways used World Health Organization guidance, you know, but for us I guess it's filtered through the CDC. So I supposed there's that angle. And then, you know, the only other connection that I can think of right now is I know there are some folks in Los Angeles in the e-sports or entertainment world who have done benefit work for the WHO. But I can't think of really a particularly direct connection, unfortunately.

I just wanted to mention one other quick thing, which we haven't touched on. But there's

really a beautiful phenomenon for us of donations coming from foreign cities and from diaspora communities, and sometimes from our local diplomats working with the diaspora community or with their home government. And so we've gotten, you know, lots of masks and other kinds of PPE equipment from various cities, and that's been just a very lovely gesture and I just wanted to mention that.

MR. PIPA: Well, I'm glad you mentioned that.

MS. BERIA: Same here.

MR. PIPA: One of the issues I wanted to touch on a little bit was procurement. Both of you raised procurement and the importance of it in getting the supplies that you need actually to be able to respond and ensure that people are protected and safe.

What's been the role of the city to city cooperation, getting the materials that you have? Has there been talk of just sort of global cooperation so that there's less competition and more cooperation in making sure that materials get to where they need to go as well?

Nina, is that something that you have a perspective on?

MS. HACHIGIAN: Yes. You know, I love the idea of global cooperation for procurement. It's the kind of thing that we're scrambling so furiously that we haven't had time to kind of build that sort of a structure. And it's really challenging in the United States because we're all going to this -- well, first of all, there's a flood of offers, most of which turn out to be useless. And then when we actually have secured supplies, we've had all kinds of issues. Like sometimes we've been outbid by other municipalities, sometimes turns out to be counterfeit, we've heard of nearby -- not in our country, but nearby counties where it's seized by FEMA. So it is really, really challenging to just get the equipment that we need, just the N95 masks and the gowns and the gloves and such.

At the very least, it should be done Federally, in my view. But doing it globally is a lovely idea and, you know, we should certainly be thinking about trying to do something like that before the next crisis.

MR. PIPA: Well, Vittoria, it sounds like Milan benefitted from Chinese counterparts actually in getting what you needed at the very outset of the crisis as well.

MS. BERIA: Yes. I would say mostly from Chinese cities. And I think -- I mean looking at it in retrospective I think it was particularly because at the beginning they were probably the only ones that understood what was happening and saw that we were lost. But then, I must say, the overwhelming support from cities came from everywhere. We got letters and emails and calls, of course, from our long standing partners. Like we have a sistership relationship with Chicago that is 50 years old, and many other cities in the world. So the usual ones, but also cities we were not formally linked with. They reached out just to say we feel for you, but you can do it. We know Milan because of your design, food, culture, and everything. We want to be back, we will be back, we will enjoy being back. There was really a stream of support from everywhere.

And in terms of very concrete donations, the capital is going for a while and we are extremely grateful to our sister cities around the world and friend cities around the world for that. I must say, it was overwhelming how we got things shipped out of multinationals and at the same time individual families, just people that had visited as tourists and were saddened by the images that they saw on TV and managed to reach out and send 100 masks. It was really I would say very touching, very intense as a feeling.

MR. PIPA: I think it's important that we don't underestimate the feeling of support and

solidarity that such relationships bring, especially in a time of such crisis and danger and people going through, you know, very difficult times.

I'm going to switch a little bit now to some of the questions that I'm seeing from the audience that are coming out over Twitter. And this is interesting, one is a question around how Covid-19 might be changing how citizens see the role of their cities as a provider of security, which is a role that's generally played by national government.

You know, how are you experiencing that and what's your thoughts on what the long-term implications might be for cities' roles in global affairs because of that?

Nina, if you've got a perspective.

MS. HACHIGIAN: Well, I mean it's really -- that's a really interesting question. So I wrote a book with Mona Sutphan back in 2007 and we identified as the major national security threats ones that could kill your citizens in your -- you know, here in the United States. And so pandemics, terrorism, climate change were the three major ones that we chose. So if you look at national security in that sense, then mayors are directly involved, you know, in the response.

On a daily basis, obviously, you know, the mayors have police and fire under their command. So those are also forces that are on a daily basis, you know, keeping citizens safe. But I do think that in the era of these forces that cross borders, that it's going to be mayors who have to solve the problems. I mean these are our citizens, they are our neighbors, this is our job, is when they are being threatened, to act. And at the same time, obviously, we're organizing as a world and there are more and more people who are going to be living in cities.

So I think the role of mayors in security is just going to increase.

MR. PIPA: Vittoria, what's your thought about how that also might -- what's the implications of that for cities and how they might have to engage globally and in global conversations, in global policies around that?

MS. BERIA: I believe one of the angles that are extremely interesting to see in this crisis and the way we reacted is the communication level. So mayors always say, we are the closest institutions to people, so it doesn't really matter whether some service falls under the purview of the city itself, the citizens expect responses. The citizens know who you are, where you live, they may meet you in the street. And it's banal, but it's extremely -- it's an image that is extremely clear to show how the linkage between local and global really works if you take the point of view of cities. So the fact that cities are knowledgeable and accountable at the same time.

I would say, to respond to your question, my thinking is that we are increasingly mindful of the fact that cities are engaging, are engaging more and more, and also of the fact that this is becoming more evident, the fact that cities coming together as stronger interlocutors can actually strike better deals sometimes with supranational institutions, their own national counterparts or Federal counterparts. We have in mind the tangible results that have been extremely visible during the Paris Agreement process, for instance, which has really opened up -- it was a (inaudible) shift, you know, way of opening up what cities can contribute. So it's not a matter of revindicating power or sit at a table, it's a matter of saying, hey, we are -- those concretely know if the COVID-19 hits, if a terrorist attack hits, if there's a natural disaster, if each wave will continue in this way. It's very factual.

MR. PIPA: Yes. And to Nina's point, it's also the responsibility of like first -- you've got the responsibility for first responders and for the immediate response of what actually happens, if and

when that occurs.

How are you cooperating with universities? And also are you having international organizations, whether they be nongovernmental or multilateral, that you're cooperating with that normally you might not have had a partnership with? Have new things happened with sort of external organizations and stakeholders because of this?

Vittoria, is there any examples you would point to?

MS. BERIA: I don't think there's anything brand new. Maybe it's too soon for that. There's definitely strengthening of linkages. There's definitely, as Nina was saying before, streamlining of efforts. So we go very efficiently to those sitting at (inaudible) university partnerships, multilateral cooperation that brings results right away. I think more -- maybe because the city of Milan was really very engaged already, but I see it as a deepening of relationships more than widening. Maybe we didn't need that.

I see it more as a new perspective, like we are part of Eurocities and C40 and the Mayors Migration Council and the U20, and of course the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. All these things are coming together under the pressure, and at the same time I don't want to say opportunity, which sounds like a too positive word, but the situation that potentially creates a catalyst time period for people to become more open to innovation, to find new solutions, to respond to problems that are very urgent and sometimes tragic, but at the same time open up for a new way of looking at things.

Just if we want to keep on honoring the same commitments that we had before. And for us I would say, namely, if I had to name the three areas we are most concerned about is the environment, inequality, and at this point very much the health of our citizens.

MR. PIPA: Well, let's turn to that, and as we think about, you know, what happens next.

And, Nina, you know, I know that as a city government, you're under intense pressure even just financially right now. And you can talk a little bit about the plan that the mayor has talked about just for city government where I know that you're having to look at furloughs and things like that just to be able to manage finances.

So in an environment like that, you are a city that was very focused on addressing issues of inequality, on addressing issues of climate and sustainability. You've been one of the leaders, a global city in that respect. How do you balance that? And are you thinking differently about those principles of development and sustainable development as you look toward recovery? I know you're a city that even, you know, committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, for example, as a city. How do you balance both the financial pressure and the pressure of getting the economy under way with sort of these principles and commitments and priorities to sustainability and how are you thinking about that?

MS. HACHIGIAN: I mean that's a giant question. The mayor addressed it a little bit last night because it was Earth Day yesterday. So he talked about it in his daily press conference. And we're going to look forward to Mayor Sala telling us how we balance these things. But we're absolutely committed to balancing them. I mean, you know, putting both sustainability and equality at the center of our recovery. As the mayor says, this is not just a time to reopen, it's a time to re-imagine. So in a way there could be opportunities to rethink some of the things that we wouldn't have before. He has pointed to how clean the air is in Los Angeles right now and how blue the sky is. So, you know, it's not an easy question to answer. All I can tell you is that those -- well, we're not going to lose sight of those core principles because that's, you know, who we are as a city.

And there's the more kind of nuts and bolts of how you begin to reopen, and that's the kind of phase we're -- you know, we hope to be entering in once our cases -- I mean we've had a -- the rate of increase of our cases is getting slower and slower, but they're still increasing and deaths are still increasing. But, you know, massive testing. I mean I think we've done a pretty amazing job of setting up testing. We can now do 12,200 tests per day and we've done over 120,000. But that's still not enough. And that's key. The mayor has proposed -- along with the Oklahoma City mayor, who is a Republican -- has proposed something called a Cares Corps, which is like the Peace Corps or Teach For America group of -- you know, putting people to work who are unemployed now in doing all the contact tracing and tracking, which is a huge job. And then, you know, we need some monitoring of how that -- you know, real time somehow of live cases. And then, of course, all the R&D that's going to need to go to a new vaccine and new sorts of treatments for the disease. And then not to mention, an increase in hospital capacity too. So all that stuff we have to get right as we are beginning to think about -- or at least can see on the distant horizon a time of beginning to reopen.

One other thing I'd mention is that, you know, we -- I mentioned it before, but it's just worth -- the level of economic impact is going to be really intense. We are all going to -- the city government itself is going to have furlough and we will probably need to cut some services, but cities in the United States are a big part of the economic engine. You know, we think LA county contributes more to national GDP than any other county, but if you take all the big urban areas together, we account for a lot of the economic activity. And we are going to be majorly hurting.

We started this program for the lowest income folks in Los Angeles, which has just been raising money from private individuals and foundations, and on the first day that we opened it -- and this

is like cash assistance of like -- I can't remember the exact figure, like \$500 or \$1,000 depending on the size of your family -- we got 450,000 applicants for those cards from not just LA but like all around. You have to an LA resident, but just to give you level -- I mean there's going to be very major economic desperation. And so in all this we're trying to take care of the most vulnerable also.

MR. PIPA: Yes. Well, I can in an environment in which you're going to have enormous pressure to be able to act quickly and address people's needs and challenges quickly and get the economy, as you say, jump started quickly. And that's not just important for LA, but as you mentioned, it's important for the country as a whole because of the combined power of the urban economy and urban GDP.

At the same time, as you're mentioning -- and you're being innovative in that. Like there's, you know, putting that fund together. You both spoke about funds, about private donations coming in. But putting that fund together, even putting like the Cares Corps together, where you would take the unemployed and get people both back to work, but also being healthy and safe.

And it sounds as if you're still thinking, like as you said, the next steps are reopening versus long-term recovery, but there's an opportunity to re-imagine, as you go.

And, Vittoria, I know Milan, you've been starting to think about this a little bit and have even come out with a commitment around -- looking at the clean skies that Nina talked about in LA -- I think it's similar in Milan -- came out with a commitment around trying to transform city streets so that you are reducing the car use and keeping the car use low as you come back to recover.

So talk a little bit about the ways in which you've been thinking about recovery and those three goals that you talked about around the environment, around inequality and health. How are you

thinking about that and trying to integrate that while you also balance the pressures of moving quickly and moving decisively and get the economic activity going again?

MS. BERIA: Yes, yes, thank you, Tony. And I very much share what Nina said. Milan, the city itself contributes about 10 percent of Italian GDP, so there's a huge responsibility to get the economic engine moving, while in fact the situation in terms of the health crisis is not very conducive.

I believe we are all concerned about the potential brutal effect of this crisis.

Unemployment, inequality increasing, economic development interrupted, environmental degradation, these are potential effects.

The mayors are both concerned, but at the same time motivated to turn this negative experience, let's say, into a catalyst of innovation and especially acceleration of the goals that we had with the aim of cities becoming better cities. So the example you were saying, it's a program that is called Open Streets. It's an acceleration of what we had in mind that has now been optimized. The thinking has been accelerated and optimized by the need to think about reopening. I believe the idea behind our strategy and also the idea behind the proposal to C40 to have an ad hoc recovery group, is to ensure that first we do not set back in terms of what we were aiming at before the crisis, and we do not leave anybody behind, which is easier to say than to do. But the idea is that if we keep on being guided by the principles that inform us, as Nina was saying, and are more creative and more innovative in the way we turn the constraints and limitations of this experience, in terms of safety and everything, into opportunities to change the way the city lives. We are talking about changing the opening hours and the -- really the timetable of the cities, moving the cars out of some lanes to get the cyclists to move along those lanes, and to create almost sort of alternative mass transportation, which is individual based. I'd say there's a lot

that we can do strengthening the ideas that we had before and using them to respond to the new needs.

And I also wanted to say, you referred to the SDGs before. I think the SDGs will be the natural framework we will all refer to because they are a north star in terms of helping us, keeping the interconnectedness of the goals that we will be pushing together in order to be, as you said, quick and effective in responding to the very demanding needs that we have at the city level now.

MR. PIPA: Well, it's inspiring to hear that. And I also imagine that it's a place global cooperation around these particular types of principles and these priorities could be really helpful because it can send a signal to investors, national governments, global institutions as this is the type of recovery that cities and mayors are really looking for for their citizens.

And, Vittoria, back to the comment that you had made earlier about being closest to your citizens, you're sort of channeling the voice on the global stage. And so likely a place where global cooperation could be really helpful.

We're coming up on our time, so I want to ask another question that we had gotten from the audience and then just close with -- give you both an opportunity to provide some final comments.

But one interesting question that we -- and we haven't really touched on this -- how are you thinking about -- is there a way that you're thinking about our seeing gender as something that you need to be sensitive to, both in the response and the recovery? Are you incorporating a gender lens in some way into this coordination and response?

Nina, what's been the experience in Los Angeles? Because I know that's something that the mayor had even done, you know, executive directives on beforehand, pre-COVID.

MS. HACHIGIAN: Yeah, he has an amazing track record on gender equality in city

government in terms of equal pay, in terms of increasing hiring in nontraditional professions, like firefighting and computer programming, and the like. And I think it's really part of how we work. It's integral to how we work. He has a gender strategy that goes across all departments, as well as all they mayor's office. So there are just a lot of women in leadership. And so I think it's part of how we operate.

I'd say in terms of the specifics, we have an odd phenomenon right now where the reported cases of domestic violence are going down, but we suspect that there is more -- or I should say that the police suspect that there is more of it happening. So we've been trying to figure that out and -- at the same time, women are not moving out of domestic abuse shelters the way they were, so we've secured hotel rooms -- again using those private funds -- secured hotels so that there's more capacity. So that's on specific example. As well as setting up childcare centers for healthcare workers is another particular example that might affect women more.

But I'd like to think it's just part of how we operate every day.

MR. PIPA: That's helpful. So, as we close, just, Vittoria, where do you think Milan might be by year's end? Where would you hope you would be by year's end? And scientifically, I think that's hard to predict. We don't know really what's going to continue -- there is still a lot of uncertainty as to the path of the pandemic and whether it might even reemerge, but what are your hopes and what are you thinking for Milan by year's end?

MS. BERIA: We do really hope to be able to welcome visitors and tourists and people that come and go for business reasons and for culture. We don't know when, but this is really our desire. Milan is a city that has always been extremely open, we are a city with 27 centuries of history. And the idea is to be open and to bring to the city the richness of the outside world.

So we are really suffering from having been cut off. There's a sort of vicious mechanism. We are very confident on the fact that we will bounce back. We know that it's not going to go -- this will not mean going back to our old normalcy. We look forward to find a new normalcy at some point. There might be some on and off now, we've seen in terms the pandemic, but a new normalcy that if we do things right and we have the opportunity to do things right, it will put us on a better trajectory than the one we had before the crisis.

So this is why we feel that we will be more appreciated and even more attractive in the future. We look forward to this.

MR. PIPA: Thank you.

Nina, final thoughts from you also on Los Angeles and where you're tending towards and hope to be.

MS. HACHIGIAN: I hope that we have done some of that reimagining in a concrete sense of how we're going to go into the future in a slightly different way. I hope that our most vulnerable populations of undocumented and homeless and just, you know, people who are very, very low income, have a safety net and that we've able to provide for that. And that we can -- you know, that enough businesses have restarted that unemployment is maybe in a different way, but that unemployment isn't going to be such a challenge. And I, like Vittoria, also hope that we can once again welcome visitors and tourists. That's also very much part of our culture and DNA.

And that we've avoided the potential spike and fall cases that some people have been talking about because of our, you know, testing and tracking system.

MR. PIPA: Well, thanks very much for spending some time with us and for the leadership

that both you and your mayors and city governments are providing in this time of crisis.

And I love the sense of optimism in innovation and aspiration that we're ending on. Let's make that become viral (laughter) as we go forward.

But thanks very much. This has been really a rich discussion. And thanks for showing a window and shedding a light on the global cooperation that's happening as well, and how reinforcing and important that is.

So, thanks very much.

MS. BERIA: Thank you.

MR. PIPA: As we look forward to -- and good luck to us as well as we go forward.

MS. HACHIGIAN: Thank you.

MS. BERIA: Yes, to us all. Thank you. Thanks for the opportunity. Ciao.

MR. PIPA: Ciao.

MS. HACHIGIAN: Thanks. Thanks, Vittoria. Bye, Tony.

MR. PIPA: Thank you.

MS. BERIA: Thank you.

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