



FOCUS 2015

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I'd like to thank the French government, and especially Ambassador Araud, for hosting today's conference. Urban sustainability is a vital topic, especially in the run-up to the Paris Climate Conference this December. I believe that cities will lead the way on climate change. The Nature Conservancy is pleased to be a partner in this effort.

In the coming decades, cities will account for 90% of population growth, 80% of wealth creation, and 60% of energy demand. A warming climate will exacerbate floods, droughts, storms and dirty air. Reducing carbon pollution and making people and property resilient to extreme weather will increasingly be the business of cities--your business.

Nature will be an important part of the solution. Natural systems--forests, wetlands, dunes, reefs--serve as infrastructure. When healthy, they absorb carbon and protect people, property and resources from extreme weather, often at a fraction of the cost of traditional gray infrastructure. Even better, natural systems provide multiple benefits and they appreciate over time as they grow.

As cities design for resilience, we can put nature to work.

Cali, Colombia provides a good example. I had the privilege of visiting Cali last November with the Latin America Conservation Council, a group of business and government leaders from across the Americas, led by former Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson and Mexico's Roberto

Hernandez. We spent time with Cali's remarkable mayor, Dr. Rodrigo Guerrero. He leads a dynamic, growing city of over 2m people in Colombia's Cauca River Valley. In two terms as mayor, he has applied his epidemiological training to curb Cali's murder rate, and he's created a model for other cities. Now he's tackling climate change. Water is a pressing issue for Cali: they have both too much and too little. The city is prone to damaging floods during extreme weather. But they also stand to run short of clean, fresh water as the city grows and surrounding mountain ranges lose their natural vegetation. Several years ago, sugar growers in the valley around Cali began to invest in restoring forests to maintain water supply. We visited some of the farmers implementing this work in November. Now the city is developing a larger system of conservation areas as part of its climate action plan. This system of natural infrastructure in and around the city will absorb floodwater and provide freshwater. It will also clean the air, reduce energy demand, and make the city greener and more livable.

Cali is not alone. The LACC is helping 40 cities across Latin America invest in natural infrastructure to protect their water supplies and provide other benefits.

Many of you here today could tell similar stories. Philadelphia will save over \$5 billion by investing in natural infrastructure to manage storm water. New York City and surrounding towns in New Jersey and Connecticut will become more resilient to storm surge by resorting coastal wetlands and oyster reefs.

We want to help more cities put nature to work to tackle climate change. So TNC is launching a global Resilient Cities Initiative. We will help city leaders assess opportunities to invest in natural infrastructure with science-based, decision support tools for coastal resilience, urban water management, and air quality. We will help cities implement proof-of-concept projects. And we will help them create natural infrastructure at scale by providing access to innovative financing, engineering, and policy expertise. We are pleased to partner on this effort with 100RC, C40, World Bank, IDB, and a wide range of private sector partners, including Swiss Re, JP Morgan, Dow, CH2MHill, FEMSA, and others.

We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and working with all of you. Thank you for the opportunity to share these ideas with you today.