*This story is part of a series that will run ahead of the third edition of the One Planet Summit which will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, on March 14, 2019. The Summit will bring together global leaders, entrepreneurs, international organizations, and civil society, to help accelerate and focus attention on climate investments in line with the Paris Agreement objectives. The Summit will focus on promoting renewable energies, fostering resilience and adaptation and protecting biodiversity in Africa. Follow #OnePlanet for live updates and tune in live on March 14.*

An aerial view of Nairobi shows it nestled between two large swathes of green. Nairobi National Park and its world famous wildlife lies to the south, and the city’s western and northern sides are bordered by two dense rainforests. On a clear day, you might see Mount Kilimanjaro piercing the sky from the south. Turn around, and Mount Kenya’s rocky peaks grace the northern horizon. It’s no surprise that Nairobi is popularly referred to as the “Green city in the sun.” But on March 14, Kenya’s most dynamic city will add a new qualification to this moniker.

As [the first regional host](https://www.oneplanetsummit.fr/en/events-16/one-planet-summit-nairobi-africas-pledge-67) of the [One Planet Summit](https://www.oneplanetsummit.fr/en), Nairobi will host global leaders from the public, private, and civil society sectors. While the Summit will showcase Kenya – and Nairobi’s – impressive progress towards sustainability, it will also provide a uniquely African perspective on the Summit’s mission: to speed up the global transition to a low-carbon economy.

**An urban perspective**

Our efforts to successfully limit global warming hinge on cities. [As urban populations continue to swell, so does their demand for resources and impact on the environment. Currently, cities consume over two-thirds of the world’s energy and account for more than 70 percent of global carbon emissions.](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/03/04/sub-saharan-african-cities-can-inform-global-climate-action) The concentration of people, industry, and infrastructure leaves cities especially vulnerable to climate change and uniquely placed to combat it.

More than 470 million people live in Sub-Saharan Africa’s cities, a number that is expected to double over the next 25 years. By 2050, the region is expected to house 20 percent of the world’s urban residents. Climate change is a leading factor contributing to this urbanization trend. Extreme temperatures and unpredictable rainfall have already affected income from agriculture in the region, signaling further rural-to-urban migration.

Nairobi is no exception. Its population has doubled in just over 30 years, and it currently grows at a rate of 4.7 percent, amongst the highest on the continent. To sustain its current contribution of almost 13 percent of the nation’s GDP, Nairobi must address key issues like a growing demand for affordable housing and water shortages. [While the city has made impressive progress – Nairobi currently sources 70 percent of its energy from renewable sources – there are opportunities to attract investment in other sectors.](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/03/04/sub-saharan-african-cities-can-inform-global-climate-action)

IFC analysis found that Nairobi has a [$8.5 billion climate investment opportunity](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/bffd2386-ff4c-454d-8366-8d801bf3b9c5/201811-CIOC-IFC-Analysis.pdf?MOD=AJPERES#page=98) leading up to 2030. The biggest investment opportunity - $5 billion – lies in electric vehicles, followed by public transport ($1.6 billion), green buildings ($1.1 billion) water ($360 million), renewable energy ($240 million), and waste ($140 million). These investment opportunities are in part due to strong policy frameworks such as the [Integrated Urban Development Master Plan](http://www.kpda.or.ke/documents/Nairobi%20Integarted%20Urban%20Development%20Master%20Plan.pdf). The plan provides a guiding framework for the city to 2030 focusing on sustainable transport, water and wastewater, power, municipal solid waste, and telecommunications.

**A global opportunity for the private sector**

The magnitude of investments required to meet growing commitments to climate action far exceeds public budgets. To meet this need, [IFC is supporting Sub-Sharan African cities to create favorable environments for private sector investments to crowd in the required financing to invest in climate-smart infrastructure and services.](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/03/04/sub-saharan-african-cities-can-inform-global-climate-action)

So how do we convert this opportunity into actual investments? This is just one of the topics that the One Planet Summit will tackle over the course of the day. In addition to a high-level component co-chaired by France’s President Emmanuel Macron and Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta that unites CEOs, high-level officials, and inspiring voices from youth and civil society, the Summit has dedicated the afternoon to a series of break-out sessions on specific sectors like those outlined in the report, and how to crowd in private sector financing.

Nairobi already has a strong private sector presence as the eighth most attractive city in Africa for foreign direct investment. As such, it can share important lessons learned with other cities in the region and around the world. The One Planet Summit provides the perfect space to do just that by actively inviting new partners to collaborate and launch new initiatives.

Today’s city-level decision-making and infrastructure investments will have long-term impacts that shape the direction of urban growth and development for decades. [As global climate leaders gather in Nairobi this March, they will continue to build momentum and demonstrate how climate change can be converted into opportunity while ensuring a sustainable and productive future for all.](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/03/04/sub-saharan-african-cities-can-inform-global-climate-action) It’s up to them to make sure that cities like Nairobi stay green – in more ways than one – for generations to come.