

# R-Cities at COP26

## Speakers



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**Mayor Sylvester Turner**

Mayor Turner is currently the Chairman of the Board of Directors at Resilient Cities Network. Sylvester is serving his second four-year term as the 62nd mayor of Houston. Since taking office, Mayor Turner has expertly managed significant challenges facing the US's fourth-largest city, including budget deficits, homelessness, Hurricane Harvey, and the COVID-19 pandemic. He has created more responsive and efficient delivery of city services while shoring up Houston's financial future.

Amid national unrest and calls for improving community and police relations, Sylvester signed an executive order restricting the use of force and created a Task Force on Policing Reforms. Sylvester's signature priorities include Complete Communities, an initiative to revitalize Houston's most underserved neighborhoods and create a more equitable and prosperous city for all Houstonians. He also created the Hire Houston Youth program to provide job opportunities for thousands of young people each year. He has forged public-private partnerships to improve neighborhood parks and increase Houston's technology footprint. Sylvester has also expanded municipal investments in renewable energy.

Before becoming Houston's mayor, Sylvester served for 27 years as the Representative for Texas House District 139. He worked on the House Appropriations Committee for 21 years and served as Speaker Pro Tem for three terms. Prior to his career in public service, Sylvester practiced law at Fulbright & Jaworski LLP, and later founded Barnes & Turner Law Firm.

Sylvester is a member of the US Conference of Mayors Transportation and Communications Standing Committee, Vice-Chair of the National Climate Action Agenda, member of the Global Covenant for Mayors for Climate and Energy, and an advisory board member of the African American Mayors Association. In March 2020, the University of Houston honored Sylvester with the Pioneer of Public Service Award. Sylvester is also the recipient of the Ohtli Award, the Mexican government's highest honor.

Sylvester is a graduate of the University of Houston and earned a law degree from Harvard University.



**Daniel Stander**

Daniel is the current Deputy Chair to the Board of Directors of Resilient Cities Network. Daniel is a special advisor to the United Nations on matters of risk analytics and finance. Over the last 20 years, Daniel has worked on every continent, advising public and private entities on a variety of complex risks, including natural hazards, pandemics and cyber attacks. He is a pioneer of #ResilienceFinance, helping capital find responsible investments in the face of climate and other extremes. He also supported the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wildlife Fund in a pioneering initiative to protect UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

From 2006-2020, Daniel held a variety of leadership positions at Risk Management Solutions (RMS), the world's leading catastrophe risk modelling company. Most recently, he was Global Managing Director at RMS, leading among other things the firm's relationships with all levels of government. In 2018, Mayor Francis Suarez presented Daniel with a City of Miami Proclamation recognizing his commitment to raise awareness, foster cooperation, and deliver resilience to urban economies and communities in the face of sea level rise and the threat of extreme events.

Prior to RMS, Daniel was part of the group strategy and development function at an 80,000-employee, £10-billion, global healthcare group, serving 30 million customers in over 190 countries. He also has considerable start-up experience, having been part of the founding team of an award-winning fintech. He continues to advise tech companies, including Agritask, whose precision agronomics platform is improving economic resilience, protecting livelihoods and increasing food security.

Daniel holds a Master's from the University of Oxford. He also studied for a master's degree at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and is a graduate of the Center of Creative Leadership. A frequent keynote speaker, Daniel is often quoted in the Financial Times, the BBC and other tier one media.



**Lauren Sorkin**

As Executive Director of Resilient Cities Network, Lauren oversees global efforts to strengthen cities in the face of the complex and interconnected challenges they face. Leading a team of professionals in London, Mexico City, New York, and Singapore in collaboration with Chief Resilience Officers in over 40 countries, she drove the co-design process to launch the Resilient Cities Network as an independent city-led network organization.

Lauren serves as an advisor and spokesperson on urban resilience, women's leadership, sustainable finance, climate risk, stakeholder engagement, and urbanization trends. She is on the Advisory Board of several sustainability-focused initiatives including Food Tank, the Singapore Sustainability Summit (S3), and Natural Capital.

Previously with the Asian Development Bank, Lauren led the Bank's first-ever climate change investment plan before moving to the ADB's Vietnam Office to mainstream climate risks and opportunities in the country's US\$7-billion portfolio. Before joining the ADB, she worked with USAID to implement clean energy, climate change, and conservation projects in Asia, Africa, and South America. She has published work on biofuels, climate change, public speaking for social impact, infant mortality, and HIV/AIDS.

Lauren holds a BA in International Relations from Tufts University, and an MSc in Environment and Development from the London School of Economics.

Lauren lives in Singapore with her husband and two daughters where she can be found practicing contemporary dance, yoga, and singing while working towards a better future.



**Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy**

Stewart is Director of Strategic Partnerships and Development and advises the North American region at the Resilient Cities Network. He previously served as Senior Advisor in Resilience Finance, Acting Director for Europe and the Middle East, and Acting Director and City Relationship Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean. He was also the lead on the 100RC prize challenge, and Resilience Coordinator for Context Partners, where he was Managing Director and Partner.

Stewart served on President Obama's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force and was Director of the Office for International and Philanthropic Innovation at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Stewart is Senior Advisor for the Global Island Partnership, member of the advisory committee for SeaAhead, member of the advisory council for The Policy Academies, and rapporteur for the evaluation task force of SMILO, the Small Island Organization. He is the founder of Precovery Labs, where creativity and community drive impact and awareness for clients such as NDN Collective/NDN Fund, Opportunity Finance Network, Ocean Conservancy, and the Intertribal Agriculture Council.

Stewart has a long history of work with indigenous communities, particularly in the areas of community finance and economic sovereignty. He is also a professional storyteller and photographer. He studied global management, marketing, languages, sustainability, and environmental science.



**Leader Susan Aitken**

Susan Aitken became Leader of Glasgow City Council when the SNP became the largest party on the Council and formed a minority administration in May 2017. She was elected as a councillor for the Langside ward, where she lives, in 2012 and has been leader of the SNP group since 2014, having previously served as the group spokesperson on health and social care.

Before being elected, Susan worked in a variety of policy and research roles in the Scottish Parliament and the third sector, and as a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and social care policy. She grew up in Biggar in South Lanarkshire, moved to Glasgow aged 17 and is a graduate of both Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities.

[See the full event schedule here](#)