Resilient Cities, Buildings and Cooling Pavilion, COP31 Blue Zone

Financing Sustainable Cooling, Climate-Resilient Housing and Buildings at Scale

Date: 13 November 2026

Time: 14:00-15:15 UTC+3

Duration: 75 minutes

Organisers: UNEP Cool Coalition, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), Sustainable Energy Finance Association, Habitat for Humanity International, UN Climate Technology Centre and Network, Business Council for Sustainable Energy

Background

Buildings, cities and cooling systems are central to climate mitigation and adaptation, yet the financing needed to deliver sustainable, affordable and climate-resilient solutions remains insufficient and fragmented. Rising temperatures, increasing cooling demand, ageing housing and building stock and rapid urbanisation are creating substantial investment needs across energy efficiency, sustainable cooling, resilient housing and urban infrastructure.

In many rapidly urbanising areas, informal settlements and low-income communities face disproportionate risks from extreme heat and other climate hazards, while having the least access to affordable cooling and resilient housing. Financing mechanisms frequently fail to reach these vulnerable populations, highlighting the need for approaches that integrate climate resilience, affordability and social equity.

Despite advances in passive cooling design, reflective materials, resilient construction methods, and energy-efficient cooling equipment—and progress in supportive policy frameworks and innovative financing models—many promising solutions struggle to move beyond demonstration projects. Limited access to affordable capital, perceived investment risks, fragmented institutional responsibilities and insufficient project preparation continue to constrain implementation, particularly in developing countries and underserved communities.

This session will bring together city practitioners and financial, development, business and implementation perspectives to examine practical approaches to financing climate-resilient buildings, sustainable cooling and urban solutions. The discussion will include both large-scale infrastructure investments and household- and community-level approaches that improve housing resilience, reduce heat stress and expand access to affordable cooling.

Mobilising investment at scale requires stronger connections between public policy, project development, financial institutions and private sector delivery. Participants will explore how blended finance, project aggregation and innovative business models can help overcome investment barriers. Emerging work on cooling investment roadmaps can help countries prioritise and sequence investments, identify financing needs and develop viable project pipelines.

The discussion will also consider how stronger delivery frameworks can turn climate commitments into coordinated programmes and projects with measurable results. These frameworks connect the steps from policy and programme design through project development and financing to implementation and impact measurement.

Event Objectives

- **Examine financing barriers and opportunities** for sustainable cooling, energy-efficient buildings, and climate-resilient housing and infrastructure.
- **Explore investment mechanisms and business models** that can mobilise public and private capital and improve project bankability, including approaches that support housing upgrades, community resilience investments, building retrofits and housing microfinance.
- **Identify practical approaches and partnerships** to accelerate investment, strengthen delivery capacity and scale solutions across different markets, while ensuring that affordable, climate-resilient housing and sustainable cooling solutions reach underserved and vulnerable populations.

Agenda

Item	Speaker
Welcome	**Lily Riahi,** Head, Buildings and Cooling Unit, and Cool Coalition, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Opening Remarks	**Veronica Nyhan Jones,** Global Manager, Partnerships and Cross-Sector Expertise, World Bank Group
Panel Discussion: Investment mechanisms, business models	Moderated by **Giorgia Rambelli**, Co-Managing Director, GCoM Panellists: • **Amanda Lefton,** Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

	• **Ramzy Kanaan,** Director of Climate Resilience, Habitat for Humanity International • **Angeliki (Lina) Konstantinopoulou,** Executive Director, Sustainable Energy Finance Association • **Bob Hinkle**, President and CEO, Metrus Energy • **Helen Walter-Terrinoni**, Director of Global Climate Policy, Trane Technologies • **Ariesta Ningrum**, Director, UN Climate Technology Centre and Network (UN CTCN)
Interactive Q&A with the Audience	Moderated by **Giorgia Rambelli**
Closing Remarks	**Lily Riahi**