



UNFCCC COP16 Cancún
UN Side Event
Wednesday, 8 December 2010
18:30-20:00

Cities and Climate Change: Enhancing mitigation and adaptation action

Background

Cities both contribute to climate change and are affected by its impacts. Recognizing the urgency to accelerate implementation at the local level, the event highlighted the variety of approaches and tools the United Nations system is using to support cities to act on mitigation and adaptation. Approximately 150 persons from national delegations, sub-national and local government representatives, UN system agencies, civil society attended this event

First Segment : Key Messages

Introduction, **Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher**, Director, Global Division, UN-HABITAT

- Even though commitments are global, implementation is local. It is important to highlight the variety of approaches that the United Nations System is deploying to support cities to enhance mitigation and adaptation action.
- The objective of the side event is to give an overview on what is being done at the local level with the support of the United Nation and to identify challenges and implementation gaps.
- It is important to share experiences in bringing together actors to contribute to the management and planning of cities.



Strengthening resilience of cities in the face of climate change, **Ms. Helena Molin Valdes**, Deputy-Director, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

- The Panelist presented some actions and strategies implemented by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Climate change is altering hazard patterns, further increasing disaster risk. For example, sea-level rise will increase flood risks for



coastal settlements. Exposure of people and assets to disasters is increasing faster than their vulnerability is decreasing.

- The UN is helping the parties respond to climate change by improving understanding to reduce disaster risk, maintaining up dated data on hazards and vulnerabilities, investing in critical infrastructure, identifying safe land for low-income citizens, protecting ecosystems and natural buffers, promoting early warning systems and facilitating city-to-city learning.
- The Making Cities Resilient Campaign is now working with over 150 cities in reducing disaster risk.

Climate financing in the urban context, **Mr. Warren Evans**, Director, Environment Department, the World Bank

- Climate concerns must be including in any new urban infrastructure investment. Considering the huge challenges already facing rapidly growing cities, there is no other option than to partner and bring together all the support.
- There is a huge demand from local authorities from developing countries for support to help cities to deliver services, which should be done in a smart way by optimizing the use of scarce resources, blending several sources and mechanisms.
- City-wide approach to access Clean Development Mechanism funding would significantly reduce the transaction cost.

Second Segment: Key Messages

Cases of climate change action at the local level illustrating the diversity of UN support mechanisms.

Mrs. Alma Abreu, Coordinator of the Environmental Assessment Department, State of Mexico, on the experience in facing climate change at the local level and the Territorial Approach to Climate Change, *introduced by Mr. Christophe Nuttall, UNDP*



- The panelist presented the case of the project titled “Territorial Approach to Climate Change, State of Mexico” in which through a workshop with several communities, they could identify needs in terms of adaptability to climate change and its effects on health, the water provision, the solid waste management, the regulation of the land use and the environmental protection.



Ms. Luisa Isabel L. Jolongbayan, Assistant Director, National Economic and Development Authority, the Philippines, on the role of local government in implementing climate action, *introduced by Raf Tuts, UN-HABITAT*

- The Philippine government is addressing climate change, mitigation and adaptation through the national law known as “The climate change Act of 2009” in which local governments are recognized as the main actors in implementation of policies and strategies to address climate change.
- The Government and the UN System in the Philippines embarked in projects to support climate change action planning and implementation. From the experience gained in Sorsogon City, UN-HABITAT support has expanded to 4 more cities. Capacity development support to the Local Government Academy has also been extended specifically in tool development and training module development. Work is also underway to further enhance the Department of Interior and Local Government’s guidelines for local development planning.

Eng. Ammar Gharayeb, City Manager Amman, Jordan, on city wide programme of action on climate change and climate finance, *introduced by Mr. Dan Hoornweg, World Bank*

- The Amman Green Growth Program (AGGP) focus on sustainability starts with land use policy; encourage compact urban growth; increase transit use; promote mixed land use, public transit & pedestrian movement; protect and conserve agricultural lands; create a “Natural Heritage System” and conserve the “Cultural Heritage” of the City.
- The AGGP proposes a city-wide approach of emissions reductions through, amongst others, the Clean Development Mechanism.



Mr. Svein Tveitdal, Climate Ambassador, City of Arendal, Norway, on the Climate Neutral Network, *introduced by Mr. Satinder Bindra, UNEP*

- The process and methodology followed by the City of Arendal to become a climate neutral city is based on an ambitious time bound strategy to identify approaches to systematically reduce the carbon footprint of the various functions of the local government.
- Importance of the sensitization of politicians, citizens, the collaboration with United Nations organizations
- Importance to create and strengthen network with partners from different levels of Government (city, county, national) as well as private sector firms.

Ms. Daniela Torres, Head of the Green ICT department Telefonica, on smart grids for climate change mitigation, *introduced by Mr. Jose Maria Diaz Batanero, ITU*

- Smart Cities and Information and Telecommunication Technologies (ICT's) can contribute to tackle climate change in cities. Smart Cities are the new urban ecosystems that can maximize social, environmental and economic wealth in cities, thanks to the intensive use of ICT's that facilitate information gathering from different interoperable systems, in order to make better decisions and promote energy efficiency.

Third Segment: Key Messages:

Feedback from the “Mayors Summit on Climate Change and the “Mexico City Pact”, **Mr. Logie Naidoo**, Deputy Mayor, Durban.

- Local governments are also known as the hand and feet of national governments; cities are very important actors in mitigation and adaptation.
- The “Mexico City Pact” is important because enables cities to address Climate Change even in the absence of global or international agreements; also this agreement demonstrates how cities commit toward a common response related to Climate Change.



Feedback from the “Mayors Summit on Climate Change and the “Mexico City Pact”, **Mr. Ronan Dantec**, UCLG.

- The “Mexico City Pact” promotes strategies and network creation in order to establish agreements that bring together international actors in order to reduce emissions via cities and subnational planning.
- There is a need to work towards a common methodology between networks UCLG, ICLEI, United Nations, World Bank etc.

Contact points at the lead agency

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