

**UN system-wide side events for UNFCCC COP 16, Cancun, Mexico
Side Event #16**

**Wednesday 8 December
18:30 – 20.00
Room: Sandia**

**Cities and Climate Change:
Enhancing mitigation and adaptation action**

UN-HABITAT, UNEP, UNESCO, ITU, UNITAR, UNFPA, UNDP, ISDR, UNECE, World Bank.

1. Background

Description of event:

Cities both contribute to climate change and are affected by its impacts. Recognizing the urgency to accelerate implementation at the local level, the event will highlight the variety of approaches and tools the United Nations system is using to support cities to act on mitigation and adaptation.

Anticipated attendance:

150 persons from national delegations, sub-national and local government representatives, UN system agencies, civil society

Contact points at the lead agency

UN-HABITAT, Raf Tuts, cell + 254 713 601278, raf.tuts@unhabitat.org

2. Substantive Focus and Key Messages

This event is a follow up of related events organized at COP13, COP14 and COP15, offering an opportunity for delegations to discuss the implementation of mitigation and adaptation action being undertaken by cities with support of the United Nations system. The event will highlight the different approaches and tools the United Nations system is using to support cities in enhancing mitigation and adaptation action. This event will also build on the outcomes of the "Mayors' Climate Change World Summit" hosted by the Mayor of Mexico City on 21 November 2010.

Cities both contribute to climate change and are affected by its impacts. However, the degree to which any city's emissions contribute to climate change is not necessarily matched by the range and severity of impacts it will be obliged to endure and address. Cities might face devastation from a rising sea-level through loss of land and infrastructure, coupled with more frequent and severe tropical storms with the potential to cause major economic loss and danger to citizens. At the same time, cities are increasingly adopting strategies that, if applied at scale, can significantly contribute to low carbon and more resilient societies.

Both adaptation and mitigation strategies in urban areas require new and improved infrastructure and basic services. This provides cities in developed and developing countries with unique opportunities to redress existing and expected deficiencies in housing, urban

infrastructure and services and to create jobs and new opportunities to stimulate the urban economy. Effective adaptation and mitigation strategies require a concerted approach to pro-poor climate proof urban and regional planning and economic development strategies to be implemented at the local level in response to local circumstances and conditions. It also requires placing cities in the context of the dynamic process of national urban growth and urban-rural linkages and migration. For this to happen, predictable long-term financial and technological support will be required in many developing countries to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to participate in the formulation and implementation of such strategies and to facilitate linkages between local authorities within and across countries.

3. UN System support to climate change action by cities

Recognizing the urgency to enhance implementation at the local level, the UN system is assisting cities with the following responses:

- Providing tools to assess urban greenhouse gas emissions
- Undertaking risk assessments: hazards, vulnerability and adaptive capacity
- Encouraging cities to adopt measures to enhance urban resilience
- Supporting data collection on population and environment linkages, through census and surveys
- Assisting in developing local climate change adaptation plans in conjunction with NAPAs
- Promote urban patterns for sustainable development towards a green economy
- Facilitating policy dialogue on climate change between national and local government
- Offering training and capacity building in the field of cities and climate change and allow for peer learning by sharing lessons of experience
- Identifying and consolidate best practices in effective urban responses to climate change, setting globally recognized standards for urban development in the context of climate change
- Promoting Information and Communication Technologies to support climate action
- Opening channels for accessing finance for mitigation and adaptation action at local level
- Promoting networking between cities and city-to-city cooperation to ensure shared challenges and needs are heard across regions and at the international level
- Joint work programming by multilateral agencies on the topic of cities and climate change
- Other support modalities...

4. Organization of the event

Time	Description	Speaker / Discussant
10 min	Moderator presents overall theme, objective and structure of the event. United Nations System Climate Change action support modalities for cities.	Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher , Director, Global Division, UN-HABITAT Brief introduction to UN work on cities and climate action, with reference to the work of: UN-HABITAT, UNEP, UNESCO, ITU, UNITAR, UNFPA, UNDP, ISDR, UNECE, World Bank.
10 min	Challenges and opportunities of "Cities and Climate Change"	Mr. Erik Solheim , Minister of Environment and International Development, Norway
7 min	Strengthening resilience of cities in the face of climate change	Ms. Helena Molin Valdes , Deputy-Director, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

7 min	Climate financing in the urban context	Mr. Warren Evans , Director, Environment Department, the World Bank
7 min	Cities and Climate Change in the ECE Region.	Mr. Jan Kubis , Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECE – a regional perspective
20 min	<p>Short cases/testimonies of climate change action at local level, covering the diversity of contexts and UN system support mechanisms.</p> <p>Mayors, city representatives and urban practitioners from various regions</p>	<p>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, <i>introduced by Mr. Christophe Nuttall, UNDP</i></p> <p>Ms. Luisa Isabel L. Jolongbayan, Assistant Director, National Economic and Development Authority, the Philippines, on the role of local government in implementing climate action, <i>introduced by Raf Tuts, UN-HABITAT</i></p> <p>Eng. Ammar Gharayeb, City Manager Amman, Jordan, on city wide programme of action on climate change and climate finance, <i>introduced by Mr. Dan Hoornweg, World Bank</i></p> <p>Mr. Svein Tveitdal, Climate Ambassador, City of Arendal, Norway, on the Climate Neutral Network, <i>introduced by Mr. Satinder Bindra, UNEP</i></p> <p>Ms. Daniela Torres, Head of the Green ICT department Telefonica, on smart grids for climate change mitigation, <i>introduced by Mr. Jose Maria Diaz Batanero, ITU</i></p>
15 min	Moderator invites questions from the floor	Answers/comments by city representatives, practitioners and representatives of participating UN Agencies
10 min	Feedback from the “Mayors Summit on Climate Change” and the “The Mexico City Pact” and the ICLEI COP16 side event on “Introducing global mechanisms for Measurable, Reportable and Verifiable local climate action	<p>Mr. Ronan Dantec, Spokesperson of UCLG and Vice Mayor of Nantes, and</p> <p>Mr. Logie Naidoo, Deputy Mayor of Durban, nominated by ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability</p>
5 min	Summary of key points and closing by the moderator.	Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher , Director, Global Division, UN-HABITAT