

CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

THE CHALLENGE

Hundreds of millions of people in urban areas across the world will be affected by climate change. The overall vulnerability of human settlements in this urban era will increase through rising sea levels, frequent and stronger tropical cyclones, and inland flooding. At the same time, cities are major contributors to Greenhouse Gas emissions and therefore they need to be at the forefront of mitigation efforts. Mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts must take into account the sensitive and vulnerable natural and human systems. Climate change may negatively impact on the infrastructure and worsen the access to basic urban services and the quality of life in cities. Most affected are the urban poor – the slum dwellers in developing countries.

APPROACH

The Cities in Climate Change Initiative targets cities in developing and least developed countries. It emphasizes good governance and practical initiatives for the municipalities and their citizens. The participatory Environmental Planning and Management process is adapted to specifically address climate change issues within the city. A set of tools will be developed to support the cities in raising awareness on the impact of climate change and support the mitigation and adaptation of the city.

ACTIVITIES

Outputs expected from the Cities in Climate Change Initiative by the end of 2009 include:

1. The setting up of global, regional, national and city to city networks of national and local government associations, non-governmental bodies, universities, the private sector, and UN organizations addressing climate change
2. Localization and implementation of national adaptation and mitigation strategies
3. The strengthening of capacities of local authorities to integrate climate change concerns in local and city wide planning and budgeting for cost-effective policy responses
4. The strengthening of the capacities of local government training institutes to provide training for local governments



Flooding will occur more often and stronger due to changes in precipitation. Slums, like this one in Nairobi, are especially vulnerable. ©UN-HABITAT

OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative are:

1. To promote active climate change collaboration of local governments and their associations in global, regional and national networks.
2. To enhance policy dialogue so that climate change is firmly established on the agenda.
3. To support local governments in making these changes.
4. To foster the implementation of awareness, education, and capacity building strategies that supports the implementation of climate change strategies



Factory emissions contribute to climate change. Bangladesh ©UN-HABITAT



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GEOGRAPHIC REACH

- Four initial pilot cities; Esmeraldas, Ecuador; Kampala, Uganda; Maputo, Mozambique; Sorsorgon, Philippines supported by Norwegian funding
- An additional five African cities joined the initiative in July 2009: Mombasa, Kenya; Bobo Dioulasso Burkina Faso; Walvis Bay, Namibia; Saint Louis, Senegal; Kigali, Rwanda
- Cities of 9 Asian countries are preparing to join the initiative
- Additional cities in the Pacific and Caribbean as soon as funding is available.



Motorized transport is one of the main factors contributing to climate change. Ibadan, Nigeria ©UN-HABITAT

THE RESPONSE

Cities and local authorities have the potential to influence the causes of climate change and to find the solutions to advance climate protection. As an initial component of UN-HABITAT's Sustainable Urban Development Network (SUD-Net), the Cities in Climate Change Initiative, seeks to enhance climate change mitigation and preparedness of cities in developing countries. The initiative hinges its activities on national poverty reduction strategies. In particular, it seeks to provide support towards the development of pro-poor and innovative approaches to support the implementation of climate change policies

and strategies. This initiative builds on UN-HABITAT's long experience in sustainable urban development, specifically through the experience of programmes such as the Environmental Planning and Management approach of the Sustainable Cities Programme and Localizing Agenda 21, and the organization's established capacity building tools. The initiative will develop, adapt and make available the necessary methodologies that will provide city managers and practitioners with the guidelines on how to best cope with climate change.



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Flooding in Zanzibar ©UN-HABITAT