

PRESS STATEMENT – African Local Government Climate Roadmap Pre-Copenhagen Summit Issued: 31 July 2009, City of Tshwane, South Africa

ICLEI Africa and UCLGA would like to thank their partners, the South African Cities Network (SACN), UN-HABITAT, SALGA, Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA) and the South African National Department of Environment for making this Summit possible. They jointly hosted a two and a half day Climate Change event from 29 to 31 July 2009 in Pretoria, South Africa, for African cities and local governments.

The main aim of the Summit was to mobilise African Local Governments to actively engage towards a strong Climate Agreement in Copenhagen in December 2009 at the UNFCCC COP15 and to ensure that local governments are formally recognized as key climate change role players.

The outcome is the Summit Declaration that will be posted on the ICLEI website (www.iclei.org) and fed into numerous other African and International processes and preparations ahead of the UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen taking place in December 2009. These outcomes will also be formally presented to the National Department of Environmental Affairs National Climate Consultation session on 4 August 2009 and subsequently fed into the African National Climate Change negotiating process.

Stephen Kabuye, Mayor of Entebbe and ICLEI Executive Committee Member said that “we are delighted to see the surge of mobilization at local level across the continent, joining the growing group of committed local governments across the world towards strong climate action. ICLEI members are demonstrating local leadership in this field and are rising to their critical role in sustainable development. It is in cities and urban centers where the battle against climate change will be won or lost.” This relates closely to the outcome of the ICLEI World Congress held in Edmonton, Canada, last month, where over 700 local governments called for “more rapid action, more radical solutions”.

Countries that were represented at this event included South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, Rwanda and Burkina Faso. This Summit is part of a series of similar ICLEI Climate Roadmap Regional events taking place in India, Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia and Europe.

Some of the initial Statements which will be used at the negotiations at COP15 are:

- As a continent, Africa has to date contributed very little to the problem of human induced climate change, and is accountable for a tiny proportion of the consumption of the ‘carbon space’;
- Science is increasingly showing that even aggressive mitigation measures are not going to eliminate the need for the world to adapt to climate change impacts and that the longer the delay in mitigating climate change, the greater will be the demand for adaptation;
- As detailed in the IPCC 4th Assessment, the projected 2 degree Celsius rise in temperature may be damaging to the African continent, with scientists anticipating decrease in crop yields of 50% by 2020;

- The African continent has the fastest growing urban population and it is the urban centres that are the site of substantial development pressure and are at the frontline of response to climate change;
- Within the context of the declaration, which is currently being constructed, We have recognized and illustrated that:
 - African vulnerability is exacerbated by high levels of poverty and limited adaptive ability;
 - That vulnerability is differently experienced within regions, and between social groups, with marginalized groups (women, youth, informal sector) experiencing greater vulnerability;
 - key local government competencies are important with regards to climate change response, including spatial planning;
 - Africa has substantial energy requirements for poverty alleviation and economic development;

As an outcome of this summit, African Cities are calling on the Parties and the Conference of the Parties to:

- To recognize local government as key partners in implementing climate change action;
- Build and develop a pro-poor framing of the global response to climate change;
- Realize a visible commitment [substantial resources] towards adaptation commensurate with the anticipated impacts and associated costs;
- Establish an adaptation framework that is flexible, accessible, supportive of long-term, sustainable development and responsive to the African local government reality, and its diverse regional characteristics.
- Initiate a process of emissions targets for developing countries that are cautious, consciously developed, reflect local levels of development;
- Support the empowerment and capacity development of African local government as the site of the major climate response implementation;
- Recognize the value of eco systems services in climate stability and include actions to avoid degradation as key within the global mitigation framework.

BACKGROUND

This high-level event formed part of the global Local Government Climate Roadmap process, coordinated internationally by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and supported by Metropolis, the C40 Climate Leadership Group and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change (WMCCC), in conjunction with their regional and national associations, networks and partners. It is a parallel process to the United Nations Climate Roadmap and focuses on strengthening both National-Local Partnerships and on the strategic importance of the inclusion of Cities and Local Governments in a post-2012 Climate Agreement

Cities and local governments are the level of government closest to the people and it is here where scientists agree the impacts of climate change will be felt hardest, especially among the urban poor of Sub-Saharan Africa. It is also within our urban communities where most of the world's energy is consumed and where changes in planning and decision-making are most needed towards building a new low-carbon economy and clean technology.

The African Summit further aims to build consensus and capacity among African cities, to understand the global UNFCCC process in Copenhagen in December 2009 and to join efforts towards a strong and global post-2012 climate agreement - that also addresses the needs and implementation requirements at the local level. This is done globally by developing common, participatory positions by Local Governments across the world on their contributions and future

role in a post-2012 climate agreement. For Africa, it is particularly important that cities and local governments are part of this process in order to ensure that a new global climate deal reflect African needs and realities.

The thematic areas that were addressed during the Summit included Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation at the local level ; local priorities, opportunities and obstacles for climate action on the ground; the role and position of African Local Governments in the post-2012 Climate Framework negotiations and outputs; preparation of an African local government position that will feed into the global Local Government Climate Roadmap process and the preparation for a strengthened African Local Government delegation to, and active participation in, the UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen and associated events.

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