

## Press release

For immediate release

### **Durban outcomes: nations invest in time, world must invest in cities**

*Durban, South Africa, 12 December 2011* - As nations finally reached a deal at the UN Climate Summit, cities fear that the Durban Outcomes are insufficient to slow down the pace of global warming, nor foresee adequate resources for adaptation actions at the local level.

“The Durban Outcomes are a significant step forward to bring the deniers of the Kyoto Protocol back around the table and free countries of their hostage held by oil and coal lobbies. This is important to save our today, but too little and possibly too late to save our tomorrow. There is indeed a dangerous gap between now and 2020 which is the most critical period to ensure a global transition to low-emission, climate-resilient development.” says Gino van Begin, Deputy Secretary General of ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability.

“It is now urgent and more than ever necessary to mobilise and support the ambitious climate actions of local governments who have been zooming past nations.” While nations have rallied to agree on a deal at the climate talks, cities have been ahead with their strength and commitment to climate action by adopting “the Durban Adaptation Charter”, by increasing the number of city-signatories to the “Mexico City Pact,” and through the release of the “carbonn Cities Climate Registry 2011 Annual Report” in Durban.

“The Durban Adaptation Charter is a clear indication that the impacts of climate change can only be addressed through development that promotes human welfare, ensures ecosystem integrity and promotes a new greener economy, especially at the local level, since one out of two people in the world now lives in cities,” says Mayor of Durban, James Nxumalo at the “Durban Local Government Convention” that gathered over 700 local government leaders and resulted with the historic Durban Adaptation Charter adopted by 114 Mayors, representing 950 local governments worldwide.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström welcomes the Durban Adaptation Charter as „it is encouraging to see city mayors and local governments forging ahead and agreeing to mainstream adaptation in local government development planning regardless of the COP17 outcome.” and added “local government is where the rubber hits the road when it comes to responding to the human impacts of climate change. We fully support funding for cities, towns and municipalities for their registered adaptation actions.”

Hailed by civil society, including Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director of Greenpeace International, the Durban Adaptation Charter is “one of the few practical and positive things that comes out of this entire COP and this meeting should have been in the centre of the COP.” Durban also saw the release of the First Annual Progress Report of the Global Cities Covenant on Climate – the Mexico City Pact, which is signed by 207 cities and local governments worldwide. Aside from demonstrating political commitment, cities have also presented tangible outcomes of their actions. The carbonn Cities Climate Registry (cCCR) 2011 Annual Report released in Durban compiles 107 energy and climate commitments.

Cities, recognised as ‘governmental stakeholders’ in the Cancun Outcomes of 2010, have since been

showing leadership in the fight against climate change. Nonetheless, Carlos Westendorp , Secretary General of Club de Madrid states that “to continue with this fight in an effective way, local climate action deserves full recognition.”

The Durban Outcomes only went partially along this road as cities call for appropriate representation in the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Committee, and the Technology Executive Committee. “In the follow-up to Durban, the critical step will be Rio+20 which particularly focus on enhancing the institutional governance for sustainable development. We will continue to advocate that cities and local governments need to be appropriately represented, engaged and resourced so that climate change and sustainable development challenge can be won in cities.” concludes Gino van Begin.

**Word count: 622**

**Background:**

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has 1,100 members worldwide and 200 in Europe. Founded in 1990, ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

[www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)

The Global Covenant of Cities on Climate (‘Mexico City Pact’) was launched at the World Mayors Summit on Climate in Mexico City in November 2010. To date it has been signed by over 200 Mayors and representatives of local governments. The Pact sets out why cities are strategic actors in combating global warming, and establishes a set of voluntary commitments to promote strategies and actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting cities to the impacts of climate change. By signing the Pact, cities and local government have also committed to register their emission inventories, commitments, and actions to the carbonn Cities Climate Registry.

[www.mexicocitypact.org](http://www.mexicocitypact.org)

The carbonn Cities Climate Registry (cCCR) is a global mechanism that encourages local governments to regularly and publicly report on their greenhouse gas reduction commitments, GHG emissions inventories and climate mitigation/adaptation actions. The cCCR was developed by local governments for local governments. The cCCR enables cities and local governments to publicly register their greenhouse gas reduction commitments, report performance and showcase actions. The cCCR ensures that local climate action is measurable, reportable and verifiable, and that data are consistent with the standards of the global climate regime. The cCCR supports the global credibility of local climate action and ensures transparency, accountability and comparability.

[www.citiesclimateregistry.org](http://www.citiesclimateregistry.org)

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