

Press release

For immediate release

Local Sustainability 2012 recommends actions to accelerate global sustainable development

Freiburg, Germany, 30 May 2012 – To design “the future we want”, local actors must be empowered and the critical role they play in sustainable development recognised at national and international level, states *Local Sustainability 2012*, a study produced by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability to mark the United Nations Sustainable Development Conference *Rio+20*.

The enhanced culture of public participation, the trend towards decentralisation and the growing role of local governments as international actors are examined in the study. The evolution of the notion of Local Agenda 21 - the UN mandate for implementing sustainable development at the local level, of which ICLEI has been a key driver – is charted since the original Rio Conference twenty years ago.

ICLEI Secretary-General Konrad Otto-Zimmerman said: “The understanding of the past will help us define goals and design the most effective policies for the decades to come. This study, along with the 14 local sustainability cases it features, shows the different ways in which cities and local governments have taken up the work towards sustainability over the past two decades.” Five local sustainability process types are evaluated: Local Government Strategy, Civil Society Initiative, Concerted Action, National Policy, and International Cooperation.

The study proposes a list of recommendations to leaders at the international, national and local level to be implemented, including:

- 1. For the Green Economy to become a serious contribution to sustainable development, it has to be linked with social - not only technological - innovation. Decentralised solutions and public control over common goods are key.**
- 2. The global community needs to agree internationally on environmental and social standards enforced through national legislation to provide a reliable framework for both the global economy and local sustainability processes.**
- 3. Global programmes for sustainable development must combine the variety, creativity and adaptability of local strategies with universal national and international support structures.**
- 4. To inform and contribute to global agreements and targets, cities and their actors require the necessary capacity to be part of their design and have the capacity to report on progress.**
- 5. To design “the future we want”, local governments at city level have an important role and the recognition of this role needs to be acknowledged at national and international level.**

Jean-Marc Ayrault, French Prime Minister and former Mayor of Nantes, upcoming European Green Capital, praised the study’s selection of case studies: “This case study series provides a diverse array of examples of local urban based action and is a welcome addition to the discourse on the importance of sustainable urban development as well as recognising city’s efforts in urban sustainability.” Examples come from, amongst others, Cape Town (South Africa), Tokyo (Japan), the State of Veracruz (Mexico),

Portland (USA), and Melbourne (Australia).

Rio+20 takes place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 20–22 June. *Local Sustainability 2012* forms part of ICLEI's contribution to the preparatory process of the UN Conference as Local Authority Major Group co-organising partner, and is produced in association with the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation and UN Habitat.

The study is available for download at: local2012.iclei.org/local-sustainability-study

Word count: 499

Background:

With around 1200 members, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is the largest association of local governments committed to sustainable development. ICLEI Members come from 74 countries, represent over 570 million people and are served by 12 offices worldwide. Founded in 1990, ICLEI has a strong track record in achieving tangible improvements in global sustainability through cumulative local actions. ICLEI connects leaders, accelerates actions and serves as a gateway to solutions. www.iclei.org

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