

May 2015

## City climate action plans in spotlight at Oslo workshop

More than 30 experts from around the world met in Oslo, Norway on 2-3 March for a two-day expert group meeting on global Guidelines for City Climate Action Plans. The meeting was organized by UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) in close collaboration with Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme Partners, UNEP and the World Bank. In addition to those partners, participants included representatives from the Global Environment Facility, the World Resources Institute, Japan International Cooperation Agency, ICLEI, C40, the Government of Norway and the cities of Quito, Arendal, London, Seoul, Walvis Bay and Oslo. Also participating were experts from academia and the private sector. These experts discussed and shared experiences on city climate action planning. The meeting successfully closed with agreement on a basic set of building blocks for the guidelines and a solid drafting process towards the launching of a 'version 1.0'. The targeted launch date will be during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP-21) in Paris in December 2015. The Guidelines for city climate actions plans will complement UN-Habitat's tools and guidance on city climate action.

Cities are beginning to address the climate challenge in a more strategic and forward looking manner. A growing number of urban local governments have completed, or are elaborating, climate action plans. A first consensus suggests that Guidance should assist local authorities in developing strategies/plans that (i) are City-wide, (ii) are Multi-sectorial, (iii) address both mitigation & adaptation, and (iv) are either stand-alone, or else mainstream climate actions into existing or statutory plans. With forward looking urban climate action planning, cities will play a key role in the effort to curb, halt and reverse climate change and build resilience.

According to the Urban Climate Governance Report (Aylett, MIT & ICLEI 2014), one of the most important challenges to effective local government climate change plans is



*Participants at the Oslo workshop © UN-Habitat*

the access to funding for hiring sufficient staff for climate-related planning and implementation. In addition to capacity, staffing and planning, there is need for basic information on local emissions, localized forecasts of the impacts of climate change and ways in which the local governments can address the issue and adapt to the unavoidable effects.

The meeting in Oslo, Norway was organized following initial discussions and strong encouragement to UN-Habitat's to develop a normative guidance on city climate action plans. At an April 2014 meeting, members of CCCI's external Advisory Council (our close city and institutional partners) identified a gap on normative guidance regarding what city climate change plans should include, as well as how they are developed. Then at an initial scoping meeting with a range of partners at the Lima 2014 Climate Change Conference (COP-20), the idea for developing guidelines matured, leading to a process for formulating such global guiding principles. Over the course of 2015, a small number of expert group meetings will be

organized to define the guidelines through a collaborative, peer-review process. In all, over 50 local authorities, institutions and organizations are expected to participate. Application and piloting of the guidelines is currently under consideration with interested cities. At the same time the hope is that certain partners will seek to reference these guidelines in their initiatives, for example the Compact of Mayors, and the World Bank's 'City Climate Change Planner's Certification Programme'.

Ms Marit Viktoria Pettersen, Climate Change Expert of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underscored the timeliness of this important work by linking the various international efforts on this subject, "It will be an interesting year ahead for cities and climate change with the finance for development meeting in July, SDG Goal 11 on cities, the COP in Paris, and Habitat III looking further ahead into next year".

## City climate action plans spotlight at Oslo workshop (continued)

For more information on these and other initiatives visit <http://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/cities-and-climate-change-initiative/>



Among the cities represented at the Oslo meeting was Arendal, Norway. Arendal has reported a 79 per cent reduction in emissions from base year 2007. © Flickr\_ jechstra

## Expert group meeting on “Mainstreaming Climate Change into National Urban Policies” in Asia-Pacific



Participants at Asia-Pacific EGM © UN-Habitat

An Expert Group Meeting (EGM) was held in Bangkok on the 17th and 18th of March for the ‘Mainstreaming Climate Change into National Urban Policies’ project, a collaboration between UN-Habitat, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). The meeting brought together delegations from 8 countries in Asia-Pacific; Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, and included diverse government agencies; urban and environmental ministries, local government, and agencies such as housing development authorities.

Mr. Rae Kwon Chung, Director of Environment and Sustainable Development at UNESCAP, commented that, “integrating

urban planning and resource management is critical if we want to lower climate-related risks and increase resilience against hazards, while new forms of decentralization and local governance could offer options for more responsive service delivery, for better targeting of the poor, and for new opportunities for citizens to participate in local decision-making.”

The EGM saw presentations from participating country delegations on the status of climate change and urban policy in their respective countries. This was followed by a participatory work-plan design process whereby each country delegation identified policy areas with scope and potential to integrate climate change into urban policy over the next three years. This exercise foreshadows an innovative

approach to project implementation; that is, while countries will be supported at a regional level, the approach taken will be different at country level, depending on the needs identified by the delegations. The recommendations and country work-plan identified at this regional meeting will be discussed further at upcoming country level workshops with a broader range of stakeholders, and specific activities will be formulated for implementation.

## Euro-Asia dialogue “Climate Diplomacy and Urban Resilience”

UN-Habitat, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), and the European Union jointly organized the Euro-Asia Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy and Urban Resilience, on 3-4 September 2014 in Yangon, Myanmar. The event sought to enhance cooperation between Europe and Asia on climate change and urban resilience. Dignitaries from the Myanmar Government inaugurated the dialogue. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw, said that “Experience from other countries indicates that there may be undesirable patterns of urban growth in the long run if there are weaknesses in decision-making by urban authorities during urban development processes”.



Participants at Euro-Asia dialogue © Gregory Wesolinski

The Deputy Minister of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECA), Dr. Daw Thet Thet Zin, applauded the newly signed Memorandum of Understanding between UN-Habitat, UNEP, and the MOECA under the EC-funded Myanmar Climate Change Alliance, and added that Myanmar is paying great attention in addressing environmental problems. Particular challenges highlighted at the dialogue include promoting active climate change collaboration between local governments to enhance policy dialogue on mainstreaming climate change into urban development; supporting local governments in developing climate change action plans and fostering awareness, education, and capacity-building that supports the implementation of actions that mitigate and adapt to climate change. CCCI partner city Iloilo, Philippines, was a key delegate at the event.



An aerial view of the damage caused by Cyclone “Nargis” in the Ayeyarwady delta region, west of Yangon, Myanmar, in May 2008. © UN Photo/Evan Schneider

## Actions by ‘Cities and regions’ to be showcased at COP-21

Preparations are under way for the 21st Conference of Parties (COP-21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This pivotal event, whose main outcome is expected to be a new, universally binding climate agreement, will take place in Paris late this year.

As revealed in a preparatory meeting that took place in Paris on 16 March, action in cities is shaping up to be an important action area to showcase at the time of COP-21. The Government of France, as well as the other partners to the ‘Lima-Paris Action Agenda’, have identified ‘cities and regions’ as a major action area.

It is likely that high-level announcements on ‘cities and regions’ made during COP-21 will reflect both actions taken by existing multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Compact of Mayors, as well as the launch of new ‘city’ initiatives.

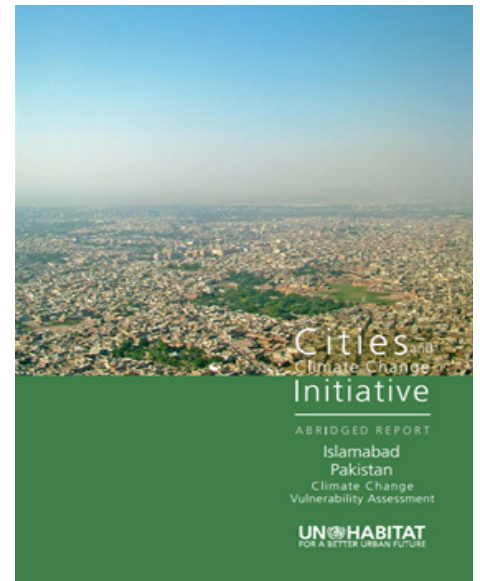
# Islamabad vulnerability assessment report launched

In March 2015, UN-Habitat released the vulnerability assessment report of Islamabad, the first report of its kind in Pakistan. The report highlights that average annual temperatures in Islamabad have increased by approximately 4°C since 1980 and are projected to continue increasing. The report also highlights that while there has been a slight increase in rainfall in recent years, the city is exposed to extremes of rainfall, such as the 2001 cloudburst that brought 0.62 meters of rain in 10 hours - the heaviest rainfall in 24 hours recorded anywhere in Pakistan during the past 100 years. These hazards are compounded by rapid population growth producing unplanned and informal settlements, often in exposed locations.

The report highlights 17 priority projects that can be implemented in nine 'hotspot' – highly vulnerable – areas throughout Islamabad and Rawalpindi. These projects are diverse in nature and range from hard engineering options such as upgrading drainage, to soft and green options, like capacity building and protecting ecosystems. UN-Habitat partnered

with a number of government agencies and research institutions in the development of the vulnerability assessment, including the Global Change Impact Studies Centre, the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, the Pakistan Meteorological Department, Islamabad Capital Territory Administration and the Capital Administration Development Division.

Adapting to climate change will be challenging in Islamabad, and a great deal of work is needed to enhance the city's resilience. However, this report marks a vital first step, and with such extensive participation, there is an excellent opportunity for UN-Habitat and its government partners to address vulnerability to climate change in Islamabad.



Publication © UN-Habitat

## ABOUT US

Headquartered at UN-Habitat in Nairobi, the Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) involves the participation of more than 40 cities worldwide. It targets medium-sized cities in developing and least-developed countries, and emphasizes good governance and practical initiatives for the municipalities and their citizens.

The CCCI team has adapted participatory processes developed previously by UN-Habitat so as to specifically address climate change

issues within the city. A complementary set of tools is being developed to support cities in raising awareness on the impact of climate change and support mitigation and adaptation activities. Since 2008, CCCI has been generously supported by the Governments of Norway, Germany and Sweden, the United Nations Development Account, the Cities Alliance and other sources of global, regional, national and local funding.

Newsletters of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative are periodically published electronically. For more information, or to be added to our mailing list, contact: [ccci@unhabitat.org](mailto:ccci@unhabitat.org) or visit <http://unhabitat.org/climate-change/>.

## CCCI Cities and Countries

