

## **City plays leading role in drafting Durban Adaptation Charter at COP17**

The City of Cape Town was one of the main signatories of the Durban Climate Change Adaptation Charter for Local Government signed on Sunday 4 December 2011.

“Local governments are leading the way in finding practical measures to tackle climate change,” said the City’s Mayoral Committee Member for Economic, Environmental and Spatial Planning, Alderman Belinda Walker, after the ceremony.

The Charter was agreed during the three-day Durban Local Government Convention in the Durban City Hall. Alderman Walker played a leading role in the political negotiations that helped to finalise the text, which was drafted by a small specialist Scientific Technical Team including an official from the City of Cape Town.

“Cape Town has been appointed as a 'Role Model City' as part of the UNISDR and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) 'Making Cities Resilient' programme. We are delighted to sign this Charter, which emphasises the importance of adapting to the worst excesses of climate change and building city resilience. Together with the Mexico City Pact, which we signed last year and which focused on the importance of reducing our carbon footprint and mitigating climate change, the Durban Adaptation Charter is a clear statement that local governments are playing a critical role in global climate change issues,” said Alderman Walker.

The Charter was signed by 114 Mayors and local government leaders representing a total of 976 cities, towns and municipalities from 28 countries across the globe including New Delhi, Dar Es Salaam, Banjul, Lagos, Windhoek, Thimpu, Dakar, Vancouver, Buenos Aires and Cape Town.

The signatories to the Charter call upon local, sub-national and regional governments to commit and upscale action to accelerate their adaptation efforts by committing to a series of measures including impact and vulnerability assessments; long-term local adaptation strategies to reduce vulnerability; eco-system-based adaptation; funding opportunities for local adaptation; registration of adaptation commitments and the promotion of partnerships and city-to-city cooperation.

The signatories designated Mayor James Nxumalo of eThekweni municipality to present the Charter to the high level segment of COP17/CMP7 meeting getting underway this week and to urge the Conference of Parties (COP) “to urbanise the global climate agenda and subsequently to present this Charter to the World Mayors Council on Climate Change to consider appropriate

implementation mechanisms." The Charter includes a commitment to develop a robust, reportable and verifiable register.

The Durban Adaptation Charter should be seen alongside the African Mayors Declaration on Climate Change as a significant African local government position. The Declaration, which calls upon the UNFCCC and its parties – the nation states – to recognise the role of local government and to make available resources for local implementation, was signed in Cape Town in February 2011 and has since been widely supported and signed by Mayors throughout the continent.

"The two documents are complementary. The Declaration is a higher level position on climate change emphasising both the need to continue to counter the global impacts through reducing emissions at local level and to adapt to the impacts of climate change which are already with us. The Charter is a more specific position, providing more detail on adaptation, but also recognising the importance of mitigation," said Alderman Walker.

**Photo available on request from [media@capetown.gov.za](mailto:media@capetown.gov.za)**

Caption: Alderman Belinda Walker flanked by Mayor of eThekweni municipality, James Nxumalo and ICLEI President David Cadman after signing the Durban Adaptation Charter at the Local Government Climate Change Adaptation Convention at Durban City Hall on Sunday.

### **What is the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition?**

The Climate Smart Cape Town Pavilion at COP17 is a project of the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition (CTCCC) representing an alliance of 28 organisations and partners who are committed to knowledge-sharing and capacity-building with respect to climate change in the city.

All partners have signed a charter that commits them to a programme that helps to reduce carbon emissions in Cape Town, to mitigate and especially to adapt to the impacts of climate change, protecting and enhancing the natural, cultural, social and economic environment.

For further information, please visit [www.climatesmartcapetown.co.za](http://www.climatesmartcapetown.co.za).

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