

MEDIA RELEASE

15 NOVEMBER 2011

Gathering on climate change will focus on issues facing Cape Town

With COP17 being hosted in Durban during November and December 2011, climate change issues are in the spotlight. While climate change solutions are central to South Africa's future, there is a need for an increased focus on the issues and challenges faced by Cape Town to become a more resilient city, better able to withstand the negative effects of climate change, and to take advantage of the many opportunities this represents, such as advancing a low carbon economy, creating jobs and living more sustainably.

With this in mind, a gathering entitled 'Inspiring Change', will be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from 18 – 19 November 2011 to stimulate fresh thinking and share ideas about our city.

The gathering is hosted by the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition, a unique partnership in Africa of organisations and institutions from government, business, academia and civil society. Key partners involved in Inspiring Change, generously supported by Siemens, include the City of Cape Town, African Centre for Cities at UCT, Cape Town Partnership, Cape Town International Convention Centre, ICLEI, Provincial Government of the Western Cape and Cape Town Tourism.

'Inspiring Change' will comprise of two panel themes:

- Great Expectations: Cities taking on climate change.
- Can Cape Town be at the forefront of climate change solutions?

Speakers and panelists include Cormac Cullinan (Cullinan & Associates), Mark New (Pro Vice Chancellor, UCT), Tau Tavengwa (African Centre for Cities, UCT), Leonie Joubert (journalist), Robert Ziplies (environmental consultant), Sarah Ward (Energy and Climate Change: City of Cape Town) and others.

The City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic, Environmental and Spatial Planning, Alderman Belinda Walker, says that this jam-packed programme will enable Capetonians to engage with some of the issues to be discussed at COP 17 in Durban. "We want Capetonians to show their commitment to reducing carbon emissions. If Cape Town gets this right there will be new business, new investments, better services, more tourists and the type of living environment that attracts and retains skilled people."

"There will also be new ways out of poverty for people trapped by an industrial economy that may have offered a blueprint for development 60 years ago, but now finds itself operating a long way down the value chain and generating exactly the type of environmental degradation that perpetuates poverty," Alderman Walker added.

The gathering will also include 10 'Pecha Kucha' sessions. This Japanese-style of presentation consists of 20 slides x 20 seconds per slide. Each presentation will highlight an existing, real-world project pertaining to climate change solutions in leading cities, presented by a project leader.

Presentations include:

- *Can design inspire climate change solutions?* Bulelwa Makalima-Ngewana, Cape Town Partnership, chairperson: World Design Capital 2014 bid team
- *Arts for Climate Change.* Virginia Mackenny, Michaelis School of Art, UCT
- *Is micro farming the key to the future?* Rob Small, Abalemi Bezekhaya.

Says Rashid Toefy, Chief Executive of the CTICC: “The gathering will foster conversations beyond policy in order to point toward new possibilities, moving the discussion away from what we have to give up toward what we can create. It presents a rare opportunity to raise good questions and explore creative solutions in an optimistic and real-world way, with those who can make practical contributions. The CTICC is a proud partner of the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition and we are committed to reducing carbon emissions in our own operations in order to build Cape Town into a city which is more resilient and resource efficient.”

‘Inspiring Change’ is supported by Siemens. “We are proud to partner the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition and will be showcasing some of our offerings in a Sustainable Cities exhibition at the CTICC,” says José Machado, Head of Corporate Communications for Siemens Southern Africa. “It is a travelling exhibition that has been in many parts of the world and we’re now making our way around Africa, starting in South Africa. We will be stopping in different cities, like Cape Town, to discuss technologies and solutions for topics such as energy supply and power grid infrastructure, clean drinking water, green transportation and traffic solutions.”

“A highlight of the tour stop in Cape Town will be the Siemens electric mobility exhibition, which features the eRuf Roadster, a Porsche that has been converted into an electric car. It also includes the Siemens eChopper, a custom made American chopper built by Orange County Choppers from the hit reality TV show, American Chopper”, said Mr Machado.

On the second afternoon of ‘Inspiring Change’, delegates will enjoy site visits to places of relevance in Cape Town, including:

- *Urban Mobility on the Move*, where delegates will gain insight into the newly developed Integrated Bus Rapid Transit system and visit Kuyasa the largest solar heater roll-out project in southern Africa.
- *Splash - Coastal and Marine Tour*, where delegates will experience a ‘front row’ experience of the pressures on the development of Cape Town’s coastline, unpack the challenges in addressing them, and outline the practical strategies being implemented.
- *The Web of Life - Ecosystems and Biodiversity Tour*, which will explore some of the Western Cape’s floral and faunal riches in places off the beaten track (including sites on the Cape Flats and the False Bay Ecology Park), and afford delegates a greater understanding of the importance of preserving healthy ecosystems in building a resilient city.
- *Spin your Wheels Cycle Tour* and the *Stretch your Legs Walking Tour of Urban Cape Town* exploring some of the sites in the Central Business District, enabling delegates to enjoy the chance to learn about Cape Town’s heritage while riding from the vibrant Waterfront to the bustling inner city or walking through heritage areas, showcasing locations associated with Cape Town’s new status as World Design Capital for 2014.

For more information on Climate Smart Cape Town and to register for Inspiring Change, please visit www.climatesmartcapetown.co.za

Note to Editors:

What is the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition?

The Cape Town Climate Change Coalition (CTCCC) represents a loose alliance of organisations and partners who came together to support Cape Town’s bid to host COP 17 in October 2010. Even though the bid was not successful and COP17 will be hosted in Durban, the partners remain committed to continuing the strong network and the resultant benefits such as knowledge sharing and capacity building with respect to climate change.

The partners have resolved to utilise the energy and momentum from South Africa’s hosting of the Climate Change Convention Conference of Parties (COP17) from 28 November - 9 December 2011 to build Cape Town into a city, which is more resilient and resource efficient. 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. The coalition currently consists of 30 partner organisations.

The Climate Smart Cape Town (CSCT) Campaign is a project of the Coalition. The campaign creates awareness of how climate change will affect all who live in Cape Town and the region and encourages people to take action to reduce the risk.

Why cities and climate change?

Cities are places of flux and for some innovation and adaptation come easily. In looking for solutions, officials in Cape Town and the Western Cape are being stretched by increasing climate change impacts and the need for novel ways of managing urban spaces and the growing number of people that occupy them. Cape Town is also competing for its portion of the future economy.

Climate change is not about to go away and the need to both slash greenhouse gas emissions and cope with the consequences of the changes that are already unavoidable, will reconfigure competitive advantage and create a new set of winners and losers.

Successful cities will place a new urgency on developing and adopting innovations that foster growth while reducing material throughput of the economy. But the most progressive cities acknowledge that innovation on its own is unlikely to deliver the scale or pace of change required. The structure, layout and functioning of cities has to change simultaneously, and some cities are doing better than others in managing this process.

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Issued by: Communication Department, City of Cape Town

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