

## **CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **City of Cape Town plays leading role in drafting Durban Adaptation Charter signed by over 650 representatives of local government at COP17**

The Durban Climate Change Adaptation Charter for Local Government adopted on Sunday 4 December 2011 was hailed by United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Relief (UNISDR) Chief, Margareta Wahlstrom, as "the best possible start to a critical week in the life of this planet when we so urgently need real leadership on mitigation and adaptation."

She said: "Local governments are blazing a trail for nation states to follow. Just as they did in Cancun during the COP 16 talks, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability are leading the way with practical measures to tackle climate change".

The Charter was agreed during the three-day Durban Local Government Convention in the Durban City Hall – a stone's throw from the site of the main climate change talks hosted by the UNFCCC - attended by over 750 people including mayors, local government representatives, MPs, government ministers, NGO and UN staff.

Representing the City of Cape Town was the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic, Environmental and Spatial Planning, Alderman Belinda Walker, who played a leading role in both the drafting of the Charter and in the political negotiations that helped to finalise the text.

Says Alderman Walker, "Cape Town has been appointed as a 'Role Model City' as part of the UNISDR and ICLEI 'Making Cities Resilient' programme. Hence 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 focussed 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," she said.

Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) is the driving force behind a major effort to have the voices of cities and local governments heard at the UNFCCC-COP17 climate negotiations in Durban.

The Charter was read out by James Nxumalo, the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality which includes Durban, who then led a signing procession of 93 Mayors and local government leaders representing a total of 560 cities, towns and municipalities from 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 also designated Mayor Nxumalo 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.

Durban-born Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director of Greenpeace International, congratulated the Convention on the Charter and said: "It is one of the few practicable things that is going to come out of this entire COP." He urged more partnership between civil society and local government and on the issue of the \$100 billion agreed in Cancun to support adaptation by 2020, he said it was not a lot to ask in a world where huge sums were being paid to bail out banks.

ICLEI President, David Cadman, said the goal is to present the Charter at a high level segment of COP 17 next week and ICLEI would also be pressing for local government representation if there is a COP 17 agreement on establishing an Adaptation Committee.

He said he was remaining optimistic about a successful outcome from Durban. In a reference to next year's Rio+20 Earth Summit Conference, he said "It would be very difficult to go back to Rio twenty years later and to say we have done nothing on climate change, desertification and biodiversity. The Kyoto Protocol is not well adhered to. Countries like Canada, Japan and Australia are stepping back from it."

He added: "Africa is totally responsible for about 4% of the world's greenhouse gases so there's not much to mitigate. They are going to be hit hardest by desertification. We saw flash floods here in Durban last Sunday when we arrived, which killed eight people".

Last night Alderman Walker hosted a dinner in the award-winning Climate Smart Cape Town Pavilion. During the dinner, Alderman Walker shared Cape Town's vision for a low carbon future, a green economy and a hub for the mass rollout of renewable energy. She said that the city hoped to attract a range of partners who would like to share in Cape Town's journey and invited guests to join the Cape Town Climate Change Coalition and sign the coalition charter committing organisations to lowering emissions.

Guests included:

- Francois-Xavier Duporge - Secretary General of French Global Environment Facility
- Aurelie Ferry - Programme Manager - French GEF
- Satya Tripathi - Senior advisor on Climate Change UNDP
- Margareta Wahlstrom - UN Secretary General special representative for disaster risk reduction
- Barney Dickson - Head of Climate Change and Biodiversity, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, UNEP
- Charles McNeill - Senior Policy Advisor for UN REDD UNDP
- David Cadman - President of ICLEI
- Kobie Brand - Director ICLEI Africa
- Claus Astrup - Senior Country Officer (SA) World Bank
- David Sislen - Sector Leader (CC) World Bank
- Christian Huebner - Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
- Peter Boyd - Chief Operations Officer, Carbon War Room
- Louwrens Visser - Sustainability Officer, Siemens SA
- Brigitte Burnett - Head of Sustainability, Nedbank

Photo:

Alderman Belinda Walker flanked by Mayor of Durban, 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.



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**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).