

# **CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **COP17 panel discussion highlights Cape Town being first city in SA to be granted role model status by UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

A panel discussion held yesterday on the Climate Smart Cape Town Pavilion at COP17 highlighted Cape Town's selection as the first city in South Africa to be granted role model status by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

This status acknowledges the City of Cape Town's engagement with the increasing risks associated with climate change impacts such as temperature and sea level rise, storm surges, erosion and economic and health impacts.

On 11 May this year Cape Town joined 17 other cities around the world who have been awarded 'Role Model City' status by UNISDR, the UN office for Disaster Risk Reduction. It is also the second African city to be designated as a role model city by the UN; the first was St. Louis, Senegal.

This special status is recognition by UNISDR that Cape Town has made great strides in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and is now a leading exponent of the UN's global strategy to encourage local governments to become more active in disaster management.

Commenting on this status was Justin Ginnetti, Associate Programme Officer for UNISDR. Says Ginnetti: "Among the innovative measures that Cape Town is implementing is accurate risk identification and mapping, a crucial first step to successfully managing and reducing risk.

"My organisation has selected Cape Town as a role model based on its outstanding achievements over the past decade. Leading by example is often the most effective way to encourage others to follow suit. Highlighting what can be done and showcasing the gains to be accrued from making a city safe from disasters are at the heart of earning this accolade," he said.

The City's Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security, Alderman J.P. Smith, underlined the importance of developing a disaster risk management strategy for the City that is resilient to climate change.

"I am delighted at the role model status granted by the UNISDR. The City

wants to set an example, which other African cities can follow. The City of Cape Town together with UNISDR and ICLEI will ensure the success of this programme," Alderman Smith said.

Charlotte Powell, Head of Public Awareness and Preparedness: Disaster Risk Management Centre for the City of Cape Town, also spoke on the panel and stated that a role model city must provide opportunities to other local governments from which they can learn.

"A key factor determining designation as a role model is for a city to demonstrate its good practises in building resilience and safety in at least five out of the ten 'Essentials for Making Cities Resilient'. Cape Town meets eight of the ten including city-wide disaster risk assessment; safe schools and health facilities; protection of ecosystems and natural buffers; establishment of early warning systems and preparation of new flash floods guidance," said Powell.

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

The Cape Town Climate Change Coalition (CTCCC) represents a loose alliance of organisations and partners who are committed to the strong network and the resultant benefits such as knowledge sharing and capacity building with respect to climate change.

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 28 partner organisations.

The Climate Smart Cape Town Pavilion at COP17 is a project of the CTCCC. 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.

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

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