



Press Release

## **Pioneering cities and experts meet to pave the way for implementation of the Durban Adaptation Charter**

Durban, South Africa, 25 March 2013

*For immediate release*

Local government thought leaders from around the world, including representatives from Bulawayo, Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Durban, Gorakhpur, Hanoi, Lagos, London, Mandurah, Quintana Roo, and Thimphu met in Durban from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March to further the implementation of a set of political commitments towards addressing the impacts of climate change, known as the Durban Adaptation Charter. The workshop identified numerous needs from local governments, echoing many of the currently available approaches to climate change adaptation. These included *inter alia*: data, information, access to funding, global advocacy, capacity, leadership, national support, integration with local agendas and plans, and city-to-city sharing via exchange visits. Further innovative ideas were put forward and foremost amongst topics discussed was the need for tracking mechanisms to track and assess effectiveness of adaptation measures at the local level. Most critical was the identification of a dual approach to engaging policy- and decision-makers and that of local government practitioners through separate but complimentary mechanisms. The local government thought leaders provided guidance on establishing a governance framework that will draw on the expertise of multiple organizations and that is designed to advance the international profile of adaptation as well as provide ongoing implementation support for signatories.

eThekweni Municipality, under the leadership of Mayor James Nxumalo, ICLEI Vice President and head of the ICLEI resilience portfolio, is seeking to further the implementation of the Durban Adaptation Charter (DAC) for Local Governments by assessing mechanisms to assist signatories to turn political commitment into strategic action. The Durban Adaptation Charter for Local Governments was the primary output of a local government convention held in parallel with the UNFCCC COP17, led by eThekweni Municipality, the South African Local Government Association, South African Cities Network, South African Department of Environmental Affairs, South African Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. During this momentous gathering in December 2011 the Charter was signed by 107 mayors and elected officials representing 950 local governments globally. Since then the number of signatories has grown to 971, including local governments that signed at a ceremony at the ICLEI World Congress in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, prior to RIO+20. By signing the charter, leaders pledge their political commitment to strengthen local level adaptive capacity to climate change, and undertake to become key drivers and champions for the local government adaptation agenda.

To further ensure a concrete implementation path for the DAC, an Implementation Guidance Workshop was held in Durban from the 20 to 23 March 2013. This event was hosted by eThekweni, funded by USAID through their ICMA-implemented CityLinks program, and organised by ICLEI – Local

Governments for Sustainability –Africa. In his opening address, Mayor Nxumalo said, “Ethekwini Municipality and a growing list of partners are advancing on the Durban Adaptation Charter with the Resilient Cities Congress as the platform for the annual review. Through this Implementation Guidance Workshop, we will further identify potential **governance mechanisms**, the need for support for the **implementation** of the DAC and for appropriate mechanisms for **documenting progress**.”

ICLEI Secretary General Gino Van Begin, who presented during the opening plenary said: “Our hope would be that this workshop would trigger the potential for further funding, fostering a multi-regional approach that will multiply these experiences to other DAC cities, serving to strengthen implementation of adaptation actions and foster the recruitment of new cities to the DAC.” The outcomes from this workshop will be taken forward via two key outputs, a summary report of findings and a concept note for furthering the development of a long term secretariat for the DAC. The findings will also be presented at the upcoming Resilient Cities Congress in Bonn, Germany, from 31 May to 2 June 2013.

For more information about the Durban Adaptation Charter go to [www.durbanadaptationcharter.org](http://www.durbanadaptationcharter.org). For more information about ICLEI globally go to [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org) and in Africa [www.iclei.org/africa](http://www.iclei.org/africa). For more information about USAID go to [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov). For more information about ICMA go to [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org) and visit [icma.org/citylinks](http://icma.org/citylinks) to learn more about CityLinks.