

Biodiversity and climate change: making the links in local and subnational government agendas

September 2013

We, the ICLEI BiodiverCities Advisory Committee, chaired by Mayor Troy Pickard, on the occasion the 5th ICLEI BiodiverCities Advisory Committee meeting held in Joondalup, Australia, on 8 September 2013 in conjunction with the 2013 International BiodiverCities Conference, acknowledge the importance of urban biodiversity in achieving sustainable development, human well-being and in addressing global environmental change (particularly climate change) as highlighted in:

- Recent decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP) recognising local governments, specifically:
 - [Decision IX/28](#), Promoting the Engagement of Cities and Local Authorities;
 - [Decision X/22](#), the Plan of Action for Subnational Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity; and
 - [Decision XI/8a](#), Engagement of other Stakeholders, Major Groups and Subnational Authorities;
- [The 2012 Rio+20 outcome, 'The Future We Want'](#), in particular Paras. 134 – 137 on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements, which highlight the importance of green spaces for sustainable urban development.
- The report by the Secretary General, to the 68th Session of the General Assembly in 2013, ['A Life of Dignity for All: Accelerating Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals and Advancing the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015'](#), particularly Para. 94 which highlights the challenges of urbanisation and stresses the need to secure ecosystem services as an integral part of sustainable urbanisation.
- [The Durban Adaptation Charter \(DAC\)](#), the key outcome of the 'Durban Local Government Convention: Adapting to a Change in Climate', held in parallel to the UNFCCC's COP17-CMP7 in 2011, which prioritises the role of functioning ecosystems in local level climate change adaptation; and
- [The Durban Commitment](#): Local Governments for Biodiversity, the key outcome of the '2008 International Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Workshop', which commits local governments to improving biodiversity management, including under the conditions of climate change.

At this crucial moment in history, when Sustainable Development Goals are being formulated as part of the Millennium Development Goals post-2015 agenda, and the world's nation states are negotiating a new global agreement to address the challenge of climate change, local and subnational governments stand ready to make a unique and transformational contribution to the global sustainability debate. Urban areas are home to the majority of the world's population; are centres of global economic activity; and have the potential to reduce their global ecological footprint (through, for example, appropriate design and use of technology). The potential to substantially minimise the impact on natural environments, both within and surrounding cities, is a critical consideration given that current trends in population density and urban expansion will result in considerable loss of habitats in key biodiversity hotspots as indicated by recent research. This impact will be further exacerbated by the now unavoidable impacts of climate change.

In a world of increasing uncertainty, where the past is no longer a good indication of future conditions, and where biodiversity in cities provides a sustainable and cost-effective way to increase urban resilience and adaptive capacity, we propose that at the meeting of the ICLEI Global Executive Committee in Nantes, France, on the occasion of the EcoCities 2013 Summit in September 2013, that biodiversity concerns are integrated into the revised ICLEI Local Government Climate Roadmap and the [Nantes Declaration of Mayors and Subnational Leaders on Climate Change](#). It is also requested that the importance of urban biodiversity is stressed as a key adaptation and mitigation tool in the discussions held with the 'Friends of Cities' group of the UNFCCC, in order to ensure appropriate urban biodiversity inputs to the climate negotiations and in order to foster biodiversity related partnerships, both within and outside of the climate negotiations.

Other opportunities to advance a complementary urban biodiversity and climate change agenda include, *inter alia*:

- [Local Climate Solutions for Africa Congress](#) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, October 2013.
- United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) World Summit in Rabat, Morocco, September 2013.
- CBD COP 12, and the Cities Biodiversity Summit, Korea, October 2014.

In addition, we recommend that any discussions around an urban Sustainable Development Goal as part of the Millennium Development Goals post-2015 agenda also prioritise the importance of urban biodiversity in achieving sustainable and resilient urbanisation.