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Climate change: A battle  
to be won or lost in cities

A positive outcome  
is achievable in Doha

a daily  
multi-stakeholder  
magazine on  
climate change  
and sustainable  
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5 December 2012



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pic: Evan Leeson

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Outreach is a multi-stakeholder publication on climate change and sustainable development. It is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena, published at various international meetings on the environment; including the UNCSO meetings (since 1997), UNEP Governing Council, UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) and World Water Week. Published as a daily edition, in both print and web form, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability and climate change arenas, giving a voice to individuals and organisations from all stakeholder groups. To fully ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective, we aim to engage a wide range of stakeholders for article contributions and project funding.

If you are interested in contributing to Outreach, please contact the team ([acutter@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:acutter@stakeholderforum.org) or [jcornforth@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:jcornforth@stakeholderforum.org))  
You can also follow us on Twitter: @stakeholders

## OUTREACH EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor	Amy Cutter	Stakeholder Forum
Editorial Assistant	Jack Cornforth	Stakeholder Forum
Editorial Advisor	Farooq Ullah	Stakeholder Forum
Print Designer	Faye Arrowsmith	<a href="http://www.flogo-design.co.uk">www.flogo-design.co.uk</a>
Web Designer	Matthew Reading-Smith	Stakeholder Forum

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ali S Akanda	Tufts University	Phil Hogan	Irish Environment Minister
Maria Aroca	Universitat de Lleida, Catalonia	Tanya Kondolay	St. Georges University, Grenada
Vicki-Ann Assevero and Sonali P. Chitre	The Green Impresario	Sareka Jahan	British Council, Bangladesh
Verona Collantes	UN Women	Muhammad Arshed Rafiq	The Urban Unit
Peter Glynn	Institute of Sustainable Development and Architecture	Rozita Singh	TERI
		Raf Tuts	UN-HABITAT

# Climate change: A battle to be won or lost in cities

Raf Tuts  
UN-HABITAT

By 2050 it is projected that there could be as many as 200 million environmental refugees worldwide if urgent, integrated and sustainable action is not taken to mitigate and respond to climate change issues at global, national and local levels.

Densely populated and developed areas face heavy burdens from the effects of climate change. And the impacts of related disasters on the poorest communities in these conditions will be even harsher, as economic and social barriers confine them to the most vulnerable areas.

For example, Sri Lanka faces severe, widespread impacts from climate-related challenges including soil erosion and land degradation, pollution of inland waters, loss of biodiversity and depletion of coastal resources. Some 70% of the urban population and 80% of its economic infrastructure networks are concentrated in coastal cities; areas which are highly vulnerable to these impacts.

In response to the challenges faced in Sri Lanka, UN-HABITAT, in partnership with the Management Resources for Good Governance (MaRGG) and the Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka, held a regional Asia-Pacific workshop on the 8th-9th May 2012 on climate change and decentralisation.

This workshop explored how climate change initiatives can be better implemented through localised participatory approaches and multi-level governance. It also explored ways forward using the UN-HABITAT devised International Guidelines on Decentralisation.

Cities have the potential to influence the causes of climate change and they have the solutions to advance climate protection. When they are properly planned, adequately resourced and managed through the appropriate governance structures, they are places of innovation and efficiency. UN-HABITAT's Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) seeks to enhance the preparedness and mitigation activities of cities in developing and least-developed countries. This initiative emphasises good governance, responsibility, leadership and practical initiatives for local governments, communities and citizens. CCCI is also supporting climate change assessments and climate action planning in several intermediate cities in Sri Lanka. In one of these cities a demonstration project is being designed to demonstrate the positive impact of urban agriculture on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In Sri Lanka, the strong partnership between the country's Environment Ministry and UN-HABITAT has made inroads in beginning to address many of the nation's climate change challenges through the formulation of a national climate change policy.



pic: floods in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, Perambara/Amantha Perera

Other initiatives like BioRegional's One Planet Communities – an expanding international network of Earth's greenest neighbourhoods – is making it easy, attractive and affordable to implement solutions which reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and adapt them to the impacts of climate change. For example, the recently endorsed project Grow Community is the first One Planet Community in the United States to start construction on net-zero carbon homes.

At Rio+20 preparatory talks in April this year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities". Here in Doha, a similar message must be carried forward to world leaders. Across the planet, hundreds of millions of people who live in cities will be adversely affected by climate change unless we can reach global agreements to stabilise GHG concentrations at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raf Tuts is Coordinator of the Urban Planning and Design Branch at the UN Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT

## MORE INFO

[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

[www.bioregional.com](http://www.bioregional.com)

[www.oneplanetcommunities.com](http://www.oneplanetcommunities.com)

UN-HABITAT International Guidelines on Decentralisation:  
<http://bit.ly/VieF48>

UN-HABITAT's Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI):  
<http://bit.ly/yCB6nz>

Grow Community project: <http://growbainbridge.com>



# Population vulnerability in emerging megacities: The climate-water-health nexus

Ali S Akanda  
Tufts University, USA

More than 80% of world's population is estimated to be living in a city by the end of the 21st century. By 2050, most of the world's megacities will be situated in coastal areas in Asia and Africa. During the same period, many of these regions will see significant shifts in regional climate patterns while coastal megacities will experience sea-level rise. Such trends will cause tremendous stress on urban ecosystems, as the varying nature of hydroclimatic extremes and socio-economic stressors increase vulnerability to water-related diseases.

The relationship between health, water, and climate will become more intimate in emerging major cities, where most new development is taking place without adequate urban or regional planning. Existing vulnerabilities will worsen, and natural disasters – such as droughts and floods – will expose millions to displacement and disease epidemics. Cities will thus need to incorporate the climate-water-health nexus when planning their water and sanitation infrastructure, so it can help build resilience against increasing vulnerability to diseases.

For example, the total slum population in the megacity of Dhaka, Bangladesh increased from 1.5 to 3.4 million within a decade (1995-2005). Most of the slum areas are located in low elevation areas around the city periphery without access to adequate water or sanitation facilities or municipal amenities such as utilities, healthcare, and education, while also being exposed to contaminated water bodies that receive the city's sewage and industrial waste. Such conditions make the slum dwellers vulnerable to climatic threats, such as severe water scarcity in drought conditions, and water and sanitation breakdown during monsoon floods. About 70% of slum dwellers in Dhaka do not have access to safe latrines and about 90% live below the poverty line of \$2 a day.

People living in these areas typically suffer increased water stress and thus reduced access to sanitation and hygiene during the dry season. Fewer safe water sources and cohabitation with contaminated water bodies increase the risk of pathogen exposure and disease transmission. However, almost half of Dhaka slums also get inundated (fully or partially) by heavy monsoon rains every year and only about 10% have sufficient drainage to avoid water logging.

Diarrheal diseases, such as cholera, dysentery and rotavirus, show distinct seasonal and spatial patterns in Dhaka City peripheries. Such vulnerability to water-related health hazards

is expected to worsen in Dhaka due to changes in monsoon patterns in the Indian subcontinent. Runoff in the Ganges basin is expected to drop, exacerbating salinity intrusion and sea-level rise problems, while the Brahmaputra basin is expected to receive up to 40% more runoff, and expose Dhaka and other downstream urban centres to future flood disasters.



pic: a girl eats beside an open sewer in Kibera, Africa's largest slum, Eoghan Rice/Trócaire

In Africa's largest and fastest growing megacity, Lagos, two out of three people live in slums with no reliable access to safe drinking water, sanitation, or electricity. The explosive growth rate of this city has led to unplanned development of water, sanitation, and waste management facilities, and local authorities are frequently unable to meet rising water demands or ensure water quality. Malaria is a serious public health problem in Nigeria and the rapid geographic spread of development in Lagos has greatly altered ecosystems and habitats around the city and worsened the malaria situation. Although Lagos was spared during the recent cholera epidemic, coastal proximity of the area's lagoons and the increase in salinity of these water bodies during drier months make Lagos especially vulnerable to future cholera outbreaks, by providing breeding grounds for the pathogen.

A combination of region-specific climatic variability and location-specific socio-economic conditions continue to influence vulnerability to water-related diseases in emerging megacities. Research should focus on how the impact of natural and anthropogenic changes on the water cycle will interact with surface hydrology and water and sanitation infrastructure in megacities, and how climate adaptation measures can incorporate and prepare for these changes in coming decades. Urgent focus is needed on linking distributed 'bottom-up' approaches involving local stakeholders with rigorous scientific studies that utilise a 'top-down' picture from Global Climate Models in order to identify potential impacts and produce a more effective and implementable adaptation strategy ■

## MORE INFO

This article is based on the paper "Climate-Water-Health Nexus in Emerging Megacities" published in EOS Transactions, 93 (37), 2012.

# A positive outcome is achievable in Doha

Phil Hogan

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Ireland

As we enter the final days of the negotiations here in Doha, I remain confident that we can make real progress. We all recognise the need to take action urgently if we are to get back on a pathway to meet the goal of keeping the global temperature increase below 2°C.

The findings in the United Nations Environment Programme's latest Emissions Gap Report are stark. Instead of declining, greenhouse gases are actually increasing more rapidly than in previous projections. Even if the most ambitious level of pledges and commitments now on the table were implemented by all countries, we will fall well short of where we need to be by 2020. This must spur us to act collectively and effectively to move towards a globally binding agreement and also to increase our mitigation actions in the next few years.

To achieve a successful outcome, we must build on the progress last year in Durban and step up that momentum. This can only be achieved through securing a balanced outcome here in Doha that builds on all elements of the Durban package.

A balanced package from Doha will involve continuing with the Kyoto Protocol (KP) until 2020, but it also means taking action now across a range of the different elements to help deliver the new global, legally-binding agreement by 2015:

- agreeing on a high-level work plan for the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) negotiations, with a particular focus on actions and outputs in 2013, which keeps us on track for the 2015 deadline;
- making progress on closing the pre-2020 mitigation ambition gap – identifying options to close the

gap and build political momentum for increased ambition from all Parties;

- ensuring a smooth and seamless implementation of a second commitment period of the KP, from 1st of January 2013; and
- fulfilling the decision taken by all Parties in Durban to close the Long-term Cooperative Action (LCA) and KP negotiating tracks, and ensure as much of the work of these bodies moves to the implementation phase, including through the many institutions set up in Cancun and Durban, to allow sufficient focus of the negotiations on the ADP.

Strengthening the means of implementation for both mitigation and adaptation is central to effective action to address the challenges of climate change. As part of the overall EU effort, I'm happy to confirm that Ireland will exceed its commitment to provide up to €100 million for the Fast Start Finance period. To date, Ireland has delivered €110 million, which is being used to support activities in a number of countries experiencing the worst impacts of climate change, particularly in Africa.

Of course, support for climate action will continue beyond the Fast Start period as we determine the most appropriate pathway of funding towards the headline 2020 target of US\$100 billion and how we operationalise the new Green Climate Fund. For our part, and despite challenging financial circumstances, Ireland intends to maintain climate finance beyond 2012. Together with our EU partners, and as President of the EU in the first half of 2013, we will engage constructively in the discussions on scaling up the mobilisation of climate finance in the coming years.

The world is watching, and we have a responsibility and a duty to our citizens to move forwards rather than backwards in our efforts to close the ambition gap and effectively address the global climate challenge.

Negotiations are never easy, but we are optimistic that we can secure real progress here in Doha under the guidance of the Qatari COP Presidency ■



pic: Isabell Schulz

# City level cooperation for smart urban development

Muhammad Arshed Rafiq

The Urban Unit

The growing population and outdated social and physical infrastructure are both matters of concern and a challenge for provincial and city governments to cope with. Pakistan has been in a deep economic plunge for the last five years, but there has been progress at many levels with regards to empowerment of people and provision of justice, civic amenities and social welfare.

After the restoration of democracy in 2008 and eighteenth amendment to the Constitution in 2010, the people of Pakistan have seen unprecedented improvement in their standard of living and provision of municipal services. The provincial governments have realised that cities can be engines of growth in the 21st century, if region to region cooperation is promoted and economic prospects around the globe are explored.

The regional governments in Pakistan are pursuing the policy of securing international cooperation to promote economic activities and launch public welfare projects on modern lines. Turkey, and its metropolitan city of Istanbul, has become one of the role models and implementing partners for introducing low cost managerial, technological and infrastructure solutions in Lahore and other big cities in the Punjab region. Various projects on transport, energy, solid waste management, education, economics, trade and other social sectors are being implemented with the cooperation of the city of Istanbul and federal government in Ankara.

For example, the Metro Bus System is a landmark initiative set to change the face of Pakistan's transport sector and ease the woes of commuters in a city of 10 million people, whose right of mobility has historically been denied due to a crippling public transport system. The metro bus system will provide international quality, affordable and comfortable travelling facilities and act as a model for other cities in South Asia.

Purpose-specific autonomous bodies are being established to seek public-private partnership opportunities for improving quality and efficiency in service delivery. A Waste Management Company, Transport Company and Parking Company have been established in Lahore for better urban management and Urban Sector Policy and Management Units have been established in two out of four provinces of Pakistan.

A new solid waste management system has been implemented in a transparent manner in Lahore – a model that will be replicated in other cities of the province in future – and a significant improvement has been registered in sanitation arrangements as a result of public toilet



schemes implemented by the district governments. Major projects of urban water supply are also underway in at least three big cities and a new land fill site at Lakhodar is also being developed to generate energy from solid waste.

Joint ventures in traditional and alternative sources of power generation are also being identified. Important initiatives include:

1. Renewable Energy Development Sector Investment Programme
2. Wind energy development at Wind Corridor in the Potohar region
3. Small hydro power projects (up to 5MW)
4. Installation of solar tube wells
5. Provision of solar panels to households

Pakistan has the highest proportion of urbanisation in South Asia (more than 40%). It is expected that these projects will bring efficiency, especially in urban transport, water, waste and sanitation, and consequently help to reduce the carbon footprint of the major cities. The implementation of joint ventures will provide a new model of cooperation for cities, which contribute more than 70% to global GDP, are responsible for more than 80% of total energy consumption and account for an almost equal percentage of greenhouse gas emissions.

The experiences and success stories of low carbon development may be focused upon in this round of climate negotiations in Doha. The voices of regional governments should be heard during the course of COP18, as most of climate policymaking, action and knowledge never trickles down to regional and city levels, especially in developing countries. The successful collaboration and networking between cities, and local and regional governments, as cited above, can be harnessed for adaptation and mitigation measures as humanity has become predominantly urban for the first time in history ■

## MORE INFO

arshedrafique@yahoo.com, [www.urbanunit.gov.pk](http://www.urbanunit.gov.pk)

# Hurricane Sandy: Urban governance challenged by climate change

Vicki-Ann Assevero and Sonali P. Chitre

The Green Impresario

The recent Hurricane Sandy disaster demonstrates that even the richest countries in the world are not immune to the adverse impacts of climate change. Releasing its fury, this Category 1 storm devastated portions of the Caribbean, the Mid-Atlantic and North-eastern United States.

It drove a 4.2 metre-high wall of salt water into the heart of New York City (NYC), causing catastrophic flooding in low-lying areas, submerging tunnels and subway lines, and damaging electricity substations causing widespread power outages. Preliminary losses in NYC due to damage and business interruption are estimated at \$19 billion. Hurricane Sandy killed at least 253 people in seven countries including Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, and Bermuda, and the United States.

The fundamental question is: what legal and policy mechanisms are currently in place to address the inevitable devastation caused by a climate change induced 'super storm'? In a megacity like New York, what urban governance structures exist to deal with climate change adaptation and what more are needed?

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon affirmed that extreme weather due to climate change is "the new normal". Professor Allan Frei, Deputy Director of the City University's Institute for Sustainable Cities, described Sandy as a "Frankenstorm" whose severity was affected by anomalies in sea surface temperatures, atmospheric circulation patterns, and increased precipitation levels over the last decade. Mayor Bloomberg of NYC, always direct and blunt, said "It's global warming, stupid".

PlaNYC 2030, NYC's comprehensive sustainability plan, developed measures to protect infrastructure, the built environment, and shorelines by bringing together over 25 City agencies to prepare the city for one million more residents, strengthen the economy, combat climate change, and enhance quality of life. The Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability is responsible for implementing PlaNYC 2030.

In 2008 Mayor Bloomberg convened the New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) and the Climate Adaptation Task Force (CATF). A NYC Council Law, enacted on 22nd September 2012, enhanced the role of the NPCC and the CATF to institutionalise the ability to address climate risks. The NPCC will make near, intermediate and long-term quantitative and qualitative climate change projections and create a framework for stakeholders to incorporate climate change projections into their processes. The CATF will

review the NPCC's projections and make recommendations a year after their release, following inventory-taking of potential risks to vulnerable populations, public health, natural systems, and critical infrastructure.

A combination of public and private authorities, including the NYC Mayor's office, Metropolitan Transport Authority, utility companies, and others had to coordinate and act jointly in response to Sandy. Although the transportation, energy, and risk management sectors tried to prepare for and address the disaster, there were many failures in predicting the severity of the storm, as well as in adequately preparing the municipal response. On 30th November 2012, the Mayor's Office of Operations admitted that the City's plans to respond to Sandy were "not quite done yet".

The NPCC has recommended guidelines and strategies to adapt to rising sea levels, higher temperatures, and extreme weather events. Currently, however, a patchwork of city and state laws – along with incomplete federal regulations involving land use, environmental protection, and public health and safety standards – have to be used to grapple with responsibilities for action and liabilities. Greater coordination is needed to enhance the utility of legal and governance mechanisms including umbrella legislation specifically developed for these severe, climate change induced storms.

One contentious issue involves waterfront development. Although Mayor Bloomberg continues to advocate such development, he recognises the need to balance that desire with the Vision 2020 (NYC's Comprehensive Waterfront Plan) goal to "pursue strategies to increase the city's resilience to climate change and sea level rise". Many waterfront developments may be halted and those living in vulnerable areas may lose their property rights completely if they are not allowed to rebuild.

Consequently, the concept of 'climate refugees' becomes universal. No longer are only the citizens of Small Island Developing States losing their property. Now affluent citizens of the richest city in the richest country may lose the right to develop their property and all of their belongings without any legally mandated compensation. New Yorkers are asking: Will people lose land and property rights? Will they be relocated, and if so where to? Will they be compensated and if so by whom? Will universal climate change insurance be mandated and will it be affordable?

Integrated policies must inform the legal frameworks that build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities in the world's megacities as they adapt to climate change. Coordination is paramount, especially because responsibilities for development of these mechanisms are now multilevel – municipal, state, regional, and global ■



# Cities and the rise of adverse health effects from air pollution

Tanya Kondolay

St. Georges University, Grenada

Maria Aroca

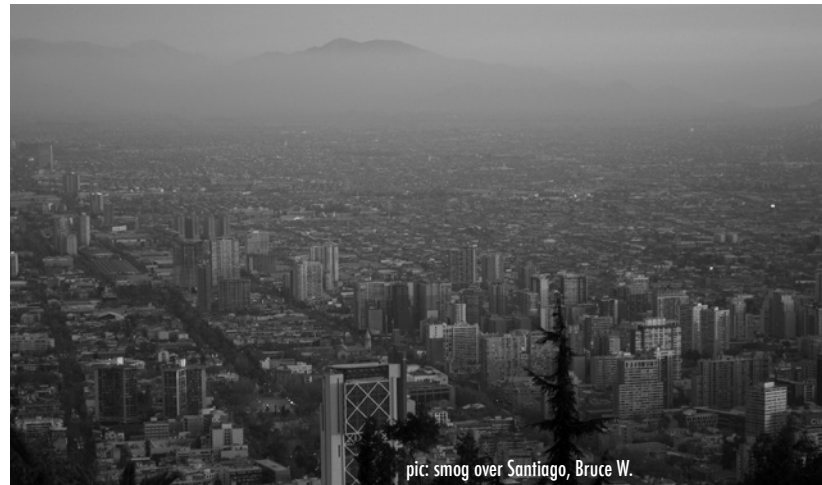
Universitat de Lleida, Catalonia

At the beginning of the industrial revolution in the 18th century, many had aspirations for the future, in hope of leaving the hardships of rural life far behind. However, with every new development and advancement there are both positive and negative repercussions which must be taken into account. A time has been reached where the advancements from urbanisation are becoming less significant than the negatives, in terms of health. From a public health standpoint, there needs to be a new frontier to address concerns and issues of the overall level of global health, before it reaches crisis point.

Now, in the 21st century, the continued abandonment of rural life for several decades has led us into an era in which an urbanised lifestyle is the social norm for more than half the world's population. With this rapid increase to urbanisation, it would be easy to assume that this continued rate will only increase in years to come. However, this upheaval has allowed people to degrade land faster than ever before, as well as enabled more people to live in areas of the world which are not necessarily suitable for human civilization; for example the arctic and desert regions, where agriculture is scarce and temperatures are inhospitable.

Despite the fact that urbanisation has had numerous positive consequences for populations, there are also many negative repercussions, including human health threats. City planning to mitigate these threats, therefore, is of crucial importance in both developing countries and rapidly growing cities elsewhere. Proper planning is imperative to lower carbon emissions and to decrease air pollution, both necessary for creating a healthier and sustainable future. In order to fulfil these eco-design principles, investments and knowledge sharing are needed, following the UNFCCC principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

City planners focusing on public and active transport options, that are both efficient and easily accessed by all, can make a significant contribution towards ensuring long-term sustainability by reducing carbon emissions, decreasing pollution and increasing physical activity, as well as lowering the risk of chronic and non-communicable diseases.



Migrants travelling from rural areas and settling in cities are potentially the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change but also likely to make significant contributions to carbon emissions due to their inefficient use of resources. As a result, governments should consider appropriate planning measures to accommodate those migrating to the city.

Increased use and improved efficiency of public transportation, cycle lanes, sustainable buildings and sanitation infrastructure, in particular, are essential to decreasing carbon emissions and achieving long-term sustainability, whilst simultaneously providing health co-benefits. For instance, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), approximately 80% of transport-related carbon emissions are related to road vehicles. This is an indication that proper planning of urban areas must include transportation both within cities, and to and from them. Urban public and active transportation provides an opportunity to promote active lifestyles while generating co-benefits in the form of climate change mitigation and economic savings for public health systems.

The promotion of local trade is also beneficial for both carbon emission reduction and local economies. Local trade reduces the distance that goods need to be transported and, as a result, leads to a reduction in air pollution and packaging.

Ultimately, a joint effort across professions is needed to achieve sustainable development and more environmentally friendly cities. Therefore, architects, policy-makers, engineers, and health professionals must collaborate to build less polluted and more sustainable cities for our world. This is not just vital for our youth and future generations, it is crucial for people living in cities today.

As the African proverb says:

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."



# Just transition, decent work and quality jobs: How to ensure this is a meaningful commitment

Peter Glynn

Institute of Sustainable Development and Architecture

The UNFCCC negotiators recognised the impact of their response measures on employment and the workplace by introducing into the Cancun Agreements provisions to promote a just transition for the workforce, the creation of decent work and quality jobs. The recent Rio+20 Conference was of a similar mind, introducing requirements to promote full and productive employment, decent work for all and social protection.

However barriers in the implementation phase may frustrate the fulfilment of these good intentions. To that end, negotiators in Doha should be considering what can be done to avoid perpetuating these barriers in any post-Kyoto agreement.

To appreciate the significance of these commitments, it is worthwhile reviewing the terms and their formality, which is drawn from the Conventions and from recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

- **Just transition:** is erected on the cornerstones of workers' rights, decent work, social protections and social dialogue.
- **Social dialogue:** includes all types of negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest.
- **Decent work:** achieving decent and productive employment; access to social protection systems; respect for core labour standards (right to organise, right to collective bargaining, forced labour and discrimination).
- **Social protection floors:** the provision of essential health care; basic income security for children – providing nutrition, education and care; basic income security for unemployed, sick, disabled, aged.

Practice in many countries requires consultation with the social partners (employers' organisation, trade unions and the government) on matters related to social policy, labour law and the workplace. In Europe, the European Parliament and Commission are required to consult with the Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in advance of any proposal moving into law. The EESC consists of representatives of organisations of employers, of the employed and of other parties representative of civil society. The adoption of this process at the UNFCCC COPs – whereby employers' organisations and the industrial advocates from within the trade union movement act as advisors – could facilitate more effective drafting and timely implementation.

The shift to a low carbon economy, combined with the momentum towards a greener economy requires a comprehensive policy approach. The ILO refers to a three pillared strategy of the right mix of incentive structures and support; policies that deliver employment, decent work and social inclusion; and the placement of social dialogue at the centre of policy making. The impact of the shift on the workplace is profound; working conditions, work practices, work planning and commuting must all be thoroughly revised. The process of social dialogue is considered integral in the change process, as is the role of the employees and employers.

The UNFCCC, while recognising the economic and social impacts of its work, stops short of engaging in the process of social dialogue to inform its negotiations. When on the one hand the implications of its policy direction are so pervasive, and on the other the importance of the social dialogue process is informed by a material body of research and practice, it seems eminently logical that the UNFCCC adopt this process and bring the social partners in to advise the negotiations on these issues for future agreements ■

## MORE INFO






ILO/UNEP study: Working towards sustainable development. Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy: <http://bit.ly/KZrxq9>

## Crowdsourcing accountability: DecisionMakr rankings Day 8 – who's on the bottom?

The next few days will be critical for COP18 observers and the outside public to apply pressure on ministers to lay a solid foundation for the road to a 2015 global deal. Today DecisionMakr focuses on the countries currently at the very bottom of the rankings. The last-minute door-closing of what were supposed to be open Durban Platform for Enhanced Action plenaries invited some outcries from App users. At the top of the rankings, the UK is the only developed country to receive more than four stars. It won these by making the pledge of 1.8 billion pounds (\$2.9 billion) in climate aid for 2012. But "Will they follow thru?"

The big question posted by @JeffChowChiFai.

The DecisionMakr smartphone and web App that allows Twitter users to rate the quality and content of negotiators' statements. DecisionMakr is available free at the Apple iPhone App Store and at [www.DecisionMakr.org](http://www.DecisionMakr.org). Follow the action on Twitter @DecisionMakr.

	Australia 8 reviews	★★★★
	New Zealand 6 reviews	★★
	Chair AWG-DP 3 reviews	★★
	Canada 1 reviews	★
	Poland 2 reviews	★

# Improving urban governance through ICT: A game changer for climate change adaptation

Rozita Singh

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

The population living in urban areas is projected to increase from 3.6 billion in 2011 to 6.3 billion in 2050. Most of this rapid growth will take place in the urban areas of Asia and Africa – the urban population will increase by 1.4 billion in Asia and by 0.9 billion in Africa.

Though megacities will continue to grow, the bulk of this population expansion is expected to be in the medium (population between 1-5 million) and small (population <500,000) cities. Many cities have thus started planning for specific adaptation and mitigation strategies and plans with a view to build long-term resilience to climate change impacts.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN HABITAT) 2011 global report on human settlements, titled “Cities and Climate change: policy directions” notes that urban areas with weak governance systems – as a result of political instability, exclusion of climate change from the political agenda, or lack of governmental resources – are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts.

In this context, Information Communication Technology (ICT) offers promising solutions. ICT tools like Geographic

Information Systems (GIS), e-Governance, Early Warning Systems (EWS – including telemetry), and wireless communications can revolutionise the way local municipalities function in cities. It has tremendous potential for revamping and empowering governance by making it more participatory in nature. These tools enable two-way sharing: between government and citizens, and within government ministries and offices. Their biggest strength lies in making the government-to-citizen transaction more transparent, thereby reducing the potential for corruption.

To contribute to building urban resilience, GIS and e-Governance can be utilised for disaster prevention and recovery purposes, while wireless communications and EWS can be adopted for efficient disaster warning and emergency response. For example, through survey of river flows, storm tides, rainfall, and other topographical features, the city of Honolulu created a GIS which enabled any resident with internet access to find out the flood-vulnerability level of any spot in the city.

ICT tools can thus go a long way in preparing our cities for some of the unavoidable risks posed by climate change ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rozita Singh works as a Research Associate in Centre for Research on Sustainable Urban Development and Transport Systems, TERI, New Delhi



JOIN BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL NGO  
LEADERS AT THE  
**SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION FORUM**



**14:00 – 22:00, 6th DECEMBER, 2012**  
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL, AL ISTEQLAL ROAD, WEST BAY LAGOON, DOHA, QATAR

### Speakers include:

- Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP
- Arne Otto, Senior Vice President Corporate Strategy and Business Operational Excellence, OSRAM
- Barbara Kux, Member of the Managing Board and Chief Sustainability Officer, Siemens AG
- Daniele Violetti, Chief of Staff, UNFCCC

### Topline agenda:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 13:00 - 14:00 | Registration opens and light refreshments   |
| 14:00 - 14:50 | Opening Keynote speeches  |
| 14:50 - 20:30 | Plenary sessions and Practitioners Debates  |
| 20:30 - 22:00 | Closing Keynote speeches, followed by networking with complimentary drinks and canapés. |

You are welcome to join us at any time during the afternoon/evening proceedings.

For more details on the agenda, visit: [www.cop18qatar.com](http://www.cop18qatar.com)

# COP18 side event calendar

DATE	TIME	VENUE	TITLE	ORGANISERS
WEDNESDAY 5th DECEMBER	11:30–13:00	Side Event Room 6	The cost of climate change adaptation: new findings, old gaps and policy implications	FEEM and Ca' Foscari University
	11:30–13:00	Side Event Room 7	Climate-proofing Affordable Energy Services: local experiences that support sustainable development	HELIO International and INFORSE
	13:15–14:45	Side Event Room 6	Change we can believe in: Countries making a difference through gender-responsive cc frameworks	Liberia and Ramsar Convention
	13:15–14:45	Side Event Room 8	Grasslands climate change mitigation and adaptation potential	Mongolia and ILRI
	13:15–14:45	Side Event Room 7	Experience and Outlook on Climate Technology Transfer	World Intellectual Property Organization
	15:00–16:30	Side Event Room 2	Mid-term Emission Reduction Potential in Developing Country and Japanese Cooperation	IEEJ, GISPRI, JCI and JEMA
	16:45–18:15	Side Event Room 4	Equity and ADP: How equity should become an integral part of the ADP negotiations	India and Centre for Science and Environment
	16:45–18:15	Side Event Room 8	The Contribution of Subnational Governments to Closing the Mitigation Gap	nrg4SD and The Climate Group
	17:00 – 19:00	Theatre Room	Momentum for Change: Women for Results Launch	Momentum for Change Initiative
	18:00 - 20:00	Sahara Forest Project and Bellona room, Hall 3	Social dimensions of climate change: Mobilizing the social sciences knowledge base for climate change adaptation	UNESCO
	20:15–21:45	Side Event Room 4	DEFYING DISASTERS: TRI-CONTINENTAL SOUTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE (W/Tree of Action to Confront Climate Change)	EarthSavers Movement
	20:15–21:45	Side Event Room 10	National Development Banks' Approaches to Leveraging Private Sector Climate Investment	KfW



United Nations  
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## LAUNCH EVENT MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

### WOMEN FOR RESULTS PILLAR

5.00 - 7.00 p.m

Qatar National Convention Centre, Theater Room

*This open event will launch Momentum for Change: Women for Results to provide recognition to the essential role played by women in mitigation and adaptation to climate change.*

#### Special remarks by:

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser

#### Remarks by:

Ms. Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary and Heather Grady, Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation

#### High-level Roundtable:

Ms. Christiana Figueres and Ms. Judith Rodin  
Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator  
Ms. Lakshmi Puri, UN Women Deputy Executive Director  
Ms. Mary Robinson, The Mary Robinson Foundation  
Ms. Terezya Huvisa, AMCEN Chairperson and Minister of State in the Vice-President's Office, United Republic of Tanzania



# Reflections from COP18, Tuesday 4 December

Verona Collantes  
UN Women

With negotiators saying yes to gender equality, it seems that where there's a will, there's a way.

Negotiations could drag on for years, even a decade, but they could also close in two days or less. Such was the case in the consultations on the draft text of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) decision on "Promoting gender equality and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol". What a welcome relief that in a very tense negotiating environment, where entrenched positions of key players delay reaching compromise agreements on many fronts, Parties could actually agree that gender equality must be promoted in the UNFCCC.

The prompt endorsement of this decision for consideration by the COP is very rewarding and a source of inspiration to someone like me who has seen protracted negotiations that remain in deadlock after a decade (yes, I'm talking about the Doha round of the World Trade Organization negotiations), or negotiations that resulted in failure to reach a compromise outcome because of controversial terms linked to sexual and reproductive health or sex education. The Rio+20 negotiations that went on until the wee hours of the morning the day before the high-level officials were expected to endorse the Outcome Document, also risked a deal or no deal package.

On the gender equality decision, I've seen delegations put forward what looked like a make or break deal; delegations were slighted and quieted down. But the high spirits lingered. The willingness to have a "historic decision", as one of the co-facilitators kept on reminding the negotiators, was sustained throughout. It was clear to everybody in the room that they did not want to leave Doha without that gender issue gavelled. All delegates – women and MEN (yes, there were men there too) in a common endeavor to support what should be obvious, but unfortunately not yet so obvious to all, said, yes to gender equality in climate change negotiations.

But then again, we're not done, we're never done – the implementation awaits. So now, it is up to all of us to ensure that actions are taken not only on gender balance but ultimately, that this will result in a gender-sensitive climate policy for the benefit of all.

Sareka Jahan  
British Council, Bangladesh

The objective of my participation at COP18 is to raise the voice of gender and climate education. Since the beginning, I have followed all official discussions and side events on these two issues. At this round of negotiations, the first ever official gender day has been observed at COP18 and has encouraged me to engage more actively on gender justice. When the COP18 President Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah declared that gender is firmly on the agenda for COP18, I felt proud to be a gender activist.

Under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) agenda Item 21; there has been a lot of discussion on the topic; mainly focusing on how gender can become a formal agenda and how to increase the participation of women by 2015. At the negotiation table, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) called for greater representation of women in the UNFCCC process. But exactly how many from developed and how many from developing is subject to further negotiation.

Climate Education is another area which I am devoted to, something evidenced in my regular endeavors around tailoring, customising and translating a web-based educational resource for teachers and students called Climate4Classrooms. I was privileged to be a panelist in the side event on "Engaging and empowering children and young people for resilience and green development" jointly organised by the British Council, Earth Child Institute, UNICEF and UNEP on 29 November. During the panel discussion; I shed light on innovative, web-based approaches of mainstreaming climate education in line with UNFCCC Article 6.

Community engagement was another core intervention area of the British Council delegation, in which I have taken a lead role in facilitating climate education sessions focusing on climate science, conceptual clarity and active engagement, with school students of Qatar being the primary audience of the sessions. Here we tried to ignite the interest of the young people of Qatar in climate change and to improve their understanding and ability to address adaptation and mitigation issues. Our journey will continue until the majority of world's future generation is aware of climate change ■

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