

## UNEP AND CITIES ALLIANCE

UNEP is a member of Cities Alliance. UNEP's primary interest is to integrate environment in local development plans and strategic city development. The study *Liveable Cities – The Benefits of Urban Environmental Planning* makes the case for promoting the environmental dimension in rapidly growing cities and illustrates good practices from cities around the world.

In 2010, UNEP and Cities Alliance expanded their cooperation by concluding a joint work programme. This includes the preparation of a methodology to guide cities to better and more effectively incorporate environmental concerns in city planning and development processes.

UNEP, the World Bank and UN-Habitat, under the facilitating role of Cities Alliance, have also joined forces to address cities and climate change to contribute to a more coordinated and focused response. Products of this cooperation include:

- a reporting framework for greenhouse gas emissions originating from cities;
- an online knowledge center on studies related to climate change in cities; and
- an approach for assessing disaster and climate risk in cities.

## APPLYING UNEP'S STRENGTHS TO CITIES ALLIANCE

UNEP encourages decision makers in government, local authorities and industry to develop and implement policies, strategies and practices that are cleaner and safer, make efficient use of natural resources, reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment and incorporate environmental costs. As a source of scientific knowledge, UNEP provides strategic and knowledge support to facilitate action at all levels on the interactions between urban areas and the environment. UNEP has convened a unique network of partners at national and local level, universities and research institutions as well as business and industry to influence informed decision making.

As a member of Cities Alliance, UNEP sees its comparative advantage in:

- integrating the urban dimension in key global environment issues;
- promoting the link between local and global agendas and action; and
- promoting resource efficient and sustainable cities through its work on exploring clearer linkages between resource efficiency in the city and its environmental footprint.

### The International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management

Hosted by UNEP, this Panel provides independent scientific assessment of the environmental impacts due to the use of resources over the full life cycle, and advises governments and organisations on ways to reduce these impacts. An Assessment Report on urbanization trends, global material flow and urban infrastructure is under preparation. [www.unep.fr/scp/rpanel](http://www.unep.fr/scp/rpanel)

## UNEP'S THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR 2010-2013

### • Resource Efficiency

UNEP works to ensure natural resources are produced, processed and consumed in a more environmentally sustainable way, paving the way towards the Green Economy. The environmental performance of cities is dependent on a combination of effective green strategies and physical structure – urban form, size, density and configuration. UNEP approaches and instruments support city development, which limits resource consumption and carbon emissions.

### • Climate Change

UNEP supports countries in strengthening their ability to adapt to and mitigate climate change and, hence, move towards low-carbon societies and raise public awareness of the changing climate. With the building and transport sector being among the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, UNEP's activities on climate change mitigation have a clear urban angle.

### • Disasters and Conflicts

The sustainable management of natural resources can help reduce disaster and conflict risk and provide a strong platform for recovery, development and lasting peace. UNEP works with local authorities to conduct an environmental assessment of tsunami impacts and provide recommendations for sustainable reconstruction.

### • Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste

The global economy is generating increasing amounts of hazardous waste in countries that lack the systems and resources for their proper management. Industrial and manufacturing activities are concentrated in towns and cities with densely populated areas close-by. Here, UNEP's key interest is in the improvement of urban environments.

### • Ecosystem Management

A wide range of ecosystems are located in or close to urban areas. For their functioning, cities rely on natural resources from their hinterland. Continuing urbanization could lead to an over-exploitation of natural resources and hence endanger our own survival. In particular the urban poor are directly dependent on healthy ecosystems. UNEP helps vulnerable communities adapt to climate change through good ecosystem management practices.

### • Environmental Governance

In our globalised world of interconnected nations, economies and people, managing environmental threats, particularly those that cross political borders will require new responses at all levels involving a wide range of stakeholders. Effective environmental governance also requires action at the local scales of governance. UNEP works to promote the links between local action and global agendas.

Across all thematic priorities and through a number of activities, UNEP strives to link urban and environmental agendas. UNEP's Urban Environment Programme is the focal point for the collaboration with Cities Alliance and other partners working on urban issues, such as UN-Habitat.

## UNEP'S URBAN ACTIVITIES

### • Sustainable Buildings

Most buildings are located in cities. Therefore, responses to climate change should also focus on urban areas. Through a number of programmes, such as the UNEP Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative, UNEP promotes sustainable building practices worldwide, which includes reducing energy use.

### • Sustainable Transport

Various activities undertaken by UNEP in the field of transport aim to improve the urban environment and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through more sustainable infrastructure and modes of transportation, such as Bus Rapid Transit Systems or non-motorized transport.

### • Integrated Waste and Water Management

Through its International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC), UNEP promotes and implements environmentally sound technologies, including management systems for integrated solid waste management, water and sanitation at local level.

### • Green Economy and Cities

The UNEP *Green Economy Report* shows that a green economy creates jobs and economic progress. Cities will be important sites for the emerging green economy as they combine greater productivity and innovation capacity with lower costs and reduced environmental impact.

### • Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level (APELL)

The APELL programme has been developed by UNEP in conjunction with governments and industry to minimize the occurrence and harmful effects of technological accidents and environmental emergencies. APELL identifies and creates awareness of risks in a community, initiates measures for risk reduction, and develops co-ordinated preparedness between the industry, the local authorities and the local population.

### • Urban Environmental Assessments

Prepared for over 54 cities worldwide, UNEP's *Global Environmental Outlook* (GEO city) provides a methodology to better understand the interaction between urban development and the environment. The Training Module on Climate Change Vulnerability and Impact Assessments in cities considers some possible responses to climate change impacts in cities, highlighting ecosystem-based approaches.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**UNEP Urban Environment Programme**  
[www.unep.org/urban\\_environment](http://www.unep.org/urban_environment)

**UNEP Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative**  
[www.unep.org/sbci](http://www.unep.org/sbci)

**UNEP Transport Unit**  
[www.unep.org/transport/](http://www.unep.org/transport/)

**UNEP International Environmental Technology Center**  
[www.unep.or.jp/ietc/](http://www.unep.or.jp/ietc/)

**UNEP Green Economy Initiative**  
[www.unep.org/greeneconomy](http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy)

**Liveable Cities - The Benefits of Urban Environmental Planning**  
[www.unep.org/urban\\_environment/PDFs/LiveableCities.pdf](http://www.unep.org/urban_environment/PDFs/LiveableCities.pdf)

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**Cities Alliance**  
Cities Without Slums

*"By their density, compact cities offer the potential for sustainable development and the efficient use of natural resources. But most cities witness harmful environmental pollution hazards. They are a major contributor to and victim of climate change and related disasters. Sustainable urban development strategies should be matched by adequate investment and resources."*

**Cities Alliance Charter, 2010**

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# TOWARDS LIVEABLE CITIES

**UNEP's key role in Cities Alliance**