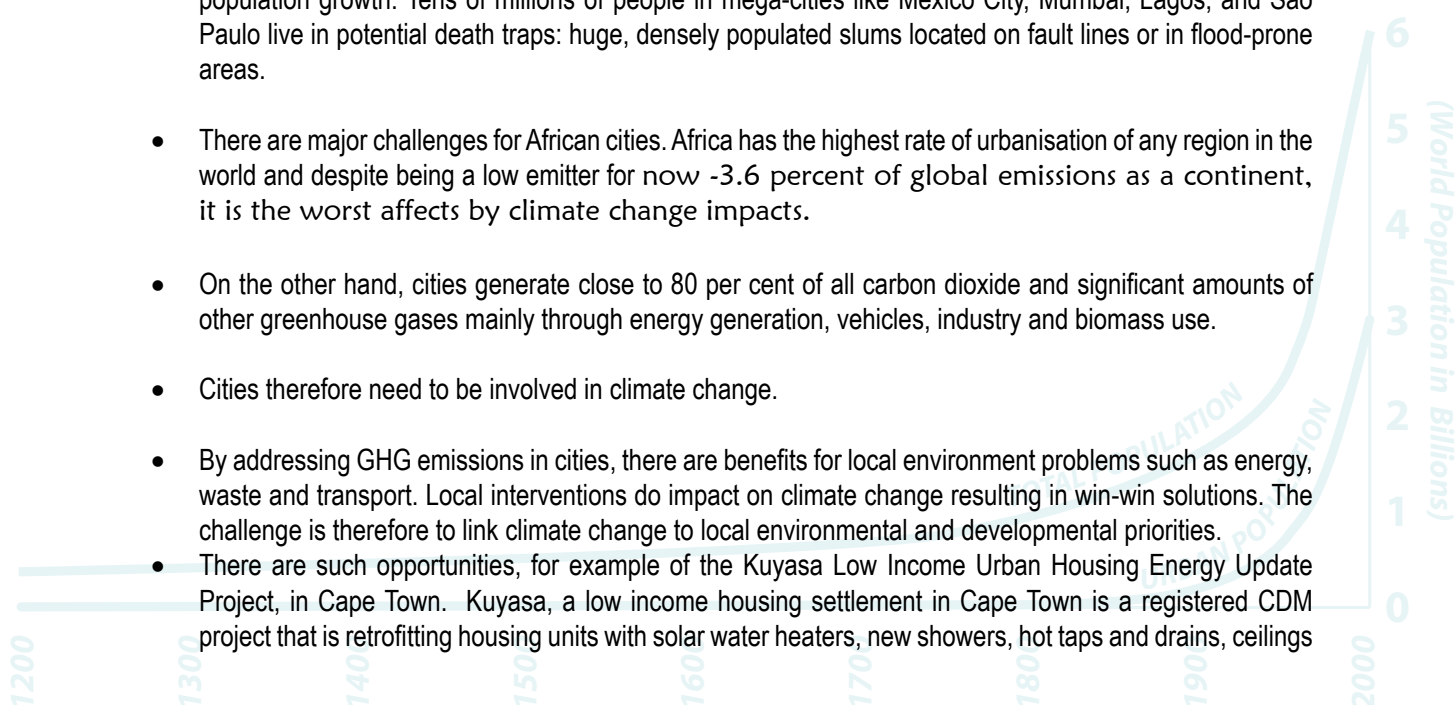


Background Information

Climate Change – Role of Cities

- By 2030, three-quarters of the world's population will be urban, and the biggest cities will be found in the developing world. The growth of cities is expected to continue up to 9 billion in 2050.
- As climate change threatens to change the face of the planet, mega-cities loom as giant potential flood or other disaster traps, especially for billions of the world's urban poor – always the most exposed and the most vulnerable.
- Therefore, an important lesson on which we have plenty of experience to draw is this: taking preventive action and planning ahead to offset the worst. The United Nations has calculated that one dollar invested in disaster reduction today, can save up to seven dollars tomorrow in relief and rehabilitation costs.
- Indeed towns and cities are now home to half of humanity, whereas in 1950, two thirds of us were rural. In many cities, especially in developing countries, slum dwellers number more than 50 per cent of the population and have little or no access to shelter, water, and sanitation, education or health services.
- The world's 1 billion slum dwellers are most vulnerable when it comes to disasters. All too often, they live in places where no-one else would dare set foot – along beaches vulnerable to flooding (such as Dhaka), near sites prone to landslides (Hong Kong, Tbilisi), near polluted grounds or shaky structures that would be destroyed the instant an earthquake hit. (Yerevan).
- The risk of mass fatalities is greater given modern land use policies, rapid urbanization, and urban population growth. Tens of millions of people in mega-cities like Mexico City, Mumbai, Lagos, and São Paulo live in potential death traps: huge, densely populated slums located on fault lines or in flood-prone areas.
- There are major challenges for African cities. Africa has the highest rate of urbanisation of any region in the world and despite being a low emitter for now -3.6 percent of global emissions as a continent, it is the worst affected by climate change impacts.
- On the other hand, cities generate close to 80 per cent of all carbon dioxide and significant amounts of other greenhouse gases mainly through energy generation, vehicles, industry and biomass use.
- Cities therefore need to be involved in climate change.
- By addressing GHG emissions in cities, there are benefits for local environment problems such as energy, waste and transport. Local interventions do impact on climate change resulting in win-win solutions. The challenge is therefore to link climate change to local environmental and developmental priorities.
- There are such opportunities, for example of the Kuyasa Low Income Urban Housing Energy Update Project, in Cape Town. Kuyasa, a low income housing settlement in Cape Town is a registered CDM project that is retrofitting housing units with solar water heaters, new showers, hot taps and drains, ceilings



and ceiling insulation, and energy efficient lighting. The project will cut reliance on fossil-based energy consumption by about 137,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent over 21 years.

- Cities present a great potential for implementation of climate change measures, as resources tend to mostly concentrate in cities, which can be easily replicated to other cities.
- Cities worldwide continue to commit to meeting or exceeding greenhouse gas emissions targets set by sub-national and national governments. Cities in developed countries, like London, could offer a wealth of experience on good practices and innovative approaches to cities in developing countries.
- UN-Habitat, UNEP and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability are collaborating to increase the awareness of climate change in cities, and to link local environment problems and GHG emissions. ICLEI is a non governmental organization representing cities that promote urban environment initiatives. Close to 500 cities participate in ICLEI's campaign Cities for Climate Protection (CCP). These cities – representing approximately 12% of global greenhouse gas emissions – have established baselines and are reaching their reduction targets.
- UN-Habitat and UNEP are also implementing programmes in cities through their Urban Environment Units to address local environment issues that have global impacts.
- City-to-city partnerships between developed and developing country cities need to be established so that local governments can be working together globally to reduce climate change. This will become even more significant as the world becomes even more and more urban.
- Cities can also raise their voices on this issue politically by participating in ICLEI's World Mayors Council on Climate Change. For more information please visit www.iclei.org/worldmayorscouncil.
- City of London is committed to reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2010, 23 percent by 2016 and 60 percent by 2050 and has established the London Climate Change Agency.
- London is already experiencing the impacts of climate change through more intense rainfall and rising sea levels. Summertime temperatures are increasing, with impacts on transport infrastructure, health and the local economy.
- London is a leading member of the C20 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group, which is working with the Clinton Climate Initiative to reduce emissions across the world.