



United Nations  
Climate Change Secretariat



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **In Year of Climate Ambition, Cape Town Blazes a Trail for Urban Action**

#### **Prominent Figures in the Field of Climate Change Congratulate the South African City for Winning Earth Hour City Challenge**

**(Vancouver/ Bonn/ New York, 28 March 2014)** - Three prominent personalities in the field of climate action congratulated Cape Town for winning this year's Earth Hour City Challenge.

The Earth Hour City Challenge is a year-long competition to promote renewable energy and prepare for climate change. It is organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature. Cape Town received this year's award at a special ceremony in Vancouver on Thursday night.

Chicago, Copenhagen, Seoul and Stockholm were also recognized by the jury for their achievements.

In a joint statement, Gino Van Begin, Secretary-General of the global cities network ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change Michael R. Bloomberg and Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said:

“Cape Town is a worthy winner of the Earth Hour Capital 2014 prize and is especially notable for being the first city from the south to receive this prestigious award. This achievement clearly demonstrates the important contribution emerging economies can make in the fight against climate change.

2014 is a critical year for climate action, as nations work towards reaching a new global climate agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference in 2015. The leadership of cities like Cape Town will play a pivotal role in helping us reach a meaningful agreement by encouraging national governments to create more ambitious plans for reducing emissions. The city and its leaders deserve congratulation for their great work.”

UN climate chief Christiana Figueres and ICLEI head Gino Van Begin served as panel members on the jury that selected Cape Town as the winner. Former New York mayor Mike Bloomberg is coordinating global efforts of the world's cities to combat climate change at the request of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Cities, along with governments and business will play a major role at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit in New York in September.

In June, nations will gather at the UNFCCC Secretariat under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP).

A central theme of the negotiating group, supported by expert meetings, will be to look at how smart policies in the areas of urbanization and land use can further their collective ambition in the run up to 2020 when the new agreement is set to commence.

### ***Notes to Editors: Cape Town's Carbon Cutting Credentials***

Cape Town has long provided inspiring examples of climate actions and ambitions needed to drive forward global climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. Spearheading climate action locally and beyond, Cape Town is drastically transforming itself into a low-emission, livable city.

Since 2009, it has led innovative projects such as retrofitting over 43,000 streetlights, replacing 1328 traffic intersections with light emitting diodes (LEDs), installing solar water heaters in all 23 nature reserve buildings and 44 clinics, and holding strict standards on smart meters and sustainable procurement and financing.

In addition to being a member of the C40 Climate Leadership Group of the world's megacities and ICLEI, Cape Town is among the pioneer cities that have been measuring, reporting and verifying climate actions through the carbon<sup>n</sup> Cities Climate Registry (cCCR), the largest database of local climate action. The Earth Hour City Challenge uses the cCCR platform to ensure the transparency and accountability of its cities.

According to the cCCR data, Cape Town reported 27 mitigation and adaptation actions and 6 major climate and energy commitments including a 10% GHG emissions reduction target by 2014 compared to 2009 levels for both community and governments emissions. The city also registered a GHG inventory covering 20 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) of community emissions including ~ 200,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e of government emissions as of 2007.

Additionally, the city has reported 10% reduction in electricity consumption of Council operations by 2012; 10% city-wide electricity consumption by 2012 and ensuring that 10% of Cape Town's total electricity supply is met by renewable or cleaner energy by 2020. Both the municipal energy efficiency and citywide consumption reduction targets have been achieved and exceeded. Cape Town is

currently 20% below business-as-usual electricity consumption levels with consumption now even below 2007 levels.

#### **About ICLEI**

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is the world's leading association of cities and local governments dedicated to sustainable development. ICLEI is a powerful movement of 12 mega-cities, 100 super-cities, 450 large cities and urban regions as well as 450 small and medium-sized cities and towns in 83 countries. ICLEI promotes local action for global sustainability and supports cities to become sustainable, resilient, resource-efficient, biodiverse, low-carbon; to build a smart infrastructure; and to develop an inclusive, green urban economy with the ultimate aim to achieve healthy and happy communities.

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#### **About Bloomberg Philanthropies**

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#### **About the UNFCCC**

With 195 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. For the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. In Doha in 2012, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period under the Protocol. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

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