



**World Mayors Summit on Climate Change
Nantes, 28 September 2013**

**Statement by
Richard Kinley, Deputy Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Excellencies,
Ministers and Mayors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank ICLEI for inviting me to speak and thank Nantes, this year's "Green Capital of Europe," for hosting this event.

I am here on behalf of Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres who regrets being unable to join us.

I am pleased to take her place because the leaders of cities and Friends of Cities – you – are on the forefront of the fight against climate change.

Climate change amplifies many existing threats, and effective response requires action at all levels of government and private sector.

City leaders are a powerful force in meeting the climate change challenge locally, nationally and at the global level because community results resonate far beyond the community.

Today, I want to connect city-level results to three things:

- Why we work on climate change;
- How we work on climate change; and
- What we do to produce results.

Why we work on climate change

Let's start with why we work on climate change.

I got involved in climate change because I believe creating truly sustainable development is the foremost challenge of our time.

I work in the UNFCCC negotiations because an inclusive global process helps governments and business meet this challenge.

I believe it is our moral duty to provide future generations with a better world than the one we inherited.

I believe a better tomorrow begins with leadership today.

These beliefs, these values, may reflect why you entered politics.

You want a better city, more effective governance, a higher quality of life, a well-protected and resilient community.

Working on climate is an opportunity to achieve all of these.

How we work on climate change

This brings me to how we work on climate change.

You as civic leaders and those of us in multilateral processes face different challenges in how to act on our beliefs and values.

But we also share similarities in how to accomplish goals at international, national and city levels.

These similarities are seen in action, not rhetoric. And we need more action.

Actions such as envisioning a better future, building consensus, and crafting and implementing policy all foster development and progress.

City policy can transform local growth from carbon intense to low-carbon, high-resilience growth sustained over generations.

This benefits security and safety, economic development and job creation, and families and public health.

Now is the time to seize these opportunities.

Consider the future:

- By mid-century, the urban population will almost double with most growth in developing country cities.
- Cities will need more food, water and energy, and already use two thirds of the world's energy and emit 70% of CO₂.
- Cities will be most affected. More than half already face costly impacts, and with 90% of urban areas near coasts, impacts will increase with extreme weather, flooding and sea level rise.

So climate friendly policy has direct benefits for cities and it is in the best interest of cities to implement low-carbon policies.

Through policy, through action, civic leaders prove low-carbon is not just possible, but preferable.

By sharing results, by advocacy, civic leaders bring credible voices to the national and international climate dialogue.

These voices must get louder and stronger now, as momentum builds towards a new, global climate agreement.

What we do

It is therefore critical to look at what we do to produce better results.

What we do results in lower emissions and higher capacity to adapt.

There is a worldwide trend to curb emissions for practical reasons, and we have heard many examples of that today.

- Some Gulf State cities are exploring renewables and efficiency to minimize domestic fuel used to develop.
- Cities in China and India are exploring renewables and carbon markets to improve air quality without slowing growth.
- And the Clean Development Mechanism credits emission reductions in cities of all sizes.

Adaptation is increasingly recognized as essential investment.

- US east coast cities see a need for extreme weather resilience.
- Pacific island villages are building for encroaching seas.
- And many cities are creatively adapting, like flood-prone cities with floating schools or cities that turn waste into energy.

Successful initiatives serve as examples of what can be accomplished and increase the global capacity to act.

This is exactly what the world needs from cities: action and advocacy. Models of success.

Because to meet the climate challenge and stay below 2 degree Celsius warming, current action and advocacy is not enough. We need much more.

We need advocacy in communities and upwards to governments.

We need advocacy that engages the private sector as an urban low-carbon growth engine that transforms development and creates jobs.

Through public-private partnerships, global financing flows and business collaboration, cities can leverage this private capital.

In this context, the GEF's efforts to support community action to curb urban emissions and build urban resilience are commendable.

So this is what must be done:

- Setting policy that covers emissions and efficiency, energy use and waste and resource management.
- Investing in infrastructure and adaptation to protect populations and secure economic potential.

This policy and investment puts us on the path to sustainable development city by city.

Simply put, smarter policy and investment equals better results.

Call to action

We need better results now.

As leaders on the forefront of the fight against climate change, your action and advocacy is crucial to domestic preparations that allow Governments to come forward with ambitious commitments.

We cannot wait until 2015. Action now sets the foundation for an ambitious agreement. If we wait until 2015 to act, it will be too late.

I encourage you to turn rhetoric into reality, bring your voice to the process and join those proving climate action is opportunity.

Nothing succeeds like success, and your successes are crucial to a new climate agreement in 2015 and to closing the emissions gap.

We must define 2014 with ambitious policies, targets and pledges that bring low-carbon benefits and high resilience to your communities.

Doing so helps your goals as community leaders, and takes us one step closer to truly sustainable development.
