

## **Climate Change Mitigation Through Urban Planning and Development - An Overview -**

**Guenter Karl, UN Habitat**

UN-HABITAT's mandate was adopted by the UN Conference on Human Settlements Istanbul in 1996 and by the General Assembly in 1997. In its Global Plan of Action: Strategies for Implementation there is a section on sustainable energy use, paragraphs 145-146 and a section on sustainable transport and communication systems, paragraphs 147-151. In these sections the key issues of climate change are addressed.

Urban planning has become increasingly important since in 2007, 50% of the population live in urban areas. Besides the general entry point of urban planning, there are four entry points to sustainable urban development. These are transportation, home and office buildings, industrial production and poverty reduction. Each of these entry points are major causes of greenhouse gases and therefore climate change. They also have the ability to greatly enhance our ability to meet our goals in the mitigation of climate change, if well planned. All stakeholders have roles they can play to encourage the activities within these four entry points. Some of these roles include the creation of incentives for the use of sustainable technologies and practices, education and training on climate change issues and the research, creation and promotion of new technologies that can improve the environment.

Developing countries will increasingly become important in addressing the global climate change challenge. This fact has not been fully recognized. With their resource limitations they are unable to take the necessary steps needed for mitigation. Developing countries need support in their efforts and to be given incentives to use sustainable technologies and practices during this high growth period

UN-HABITAT's roles include enabling the Habitat Agenda Partners to implement the mandate of the Habitat Agenda, adopted by 196 UN member countries, on sustainable energy use and transportation systems. Other roles include catalyzing partnerships with UNFCCC, UNEP, youth and other relevant stakeholders to mitigate climate change and encourage urban planning. UN-HABITAT is mandated to address the issue of climate change in the context of urban planning and development. However, it needs other Habitat Agenda Partners in order to achieve progress in that area.