ICCA2015

Hanover, 1. – 2. October

Hanover Declaration – Local Action Driving Transformation

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

NATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate Protection

National Governments: Build upon local authority climate leadership!

The *International Conference on Climate Action 2015* (ICCA2015) showed that local governments and actors, as well as their networks and partners, are currently making very concrete and effective contributions to climate action – mitigation and adaptation. In essence, local authorities are making climate action a fundamental service for their citizens.

More and more local authorities are demonstrating real leadership, pursuing extremely ambitious targets that go way beyond targets set at national and international levels. The necessary next step is for others to follow and learn from the experiences of pioneers in the field.

Political strategies at all levels should be tailored to recognize, encourage and enable all local authorities' climate action by:

- setting ambitious **targets**
- establishing appropriate **frameworks** at the national and international levels that enable local authority climate leadership
- creating **incentives** for all local authorities
- providing long-term and predictable **finance**.

Given these necessary conditions, local authorities can fulfil their essential roles as key players in the transformation process.

It will be crucial to continue the international exchange on local climate action among local authorities, subnational and national governments and other stakeholders as initiated at ICCA2015.

Part 1: Hanover Declaration – Local Action Driving Transformation

Accelerated climate change and its impacts on humans and ecosystems call for resolute action at all levels. Ambitious targets and strategies on all political levels are required to limit average global warming to below 2°C and enable adaptation to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The global transformation to a climate-friendly society is possible. This is demonstrated by numerous examples being implemented locally in many regions of the world and in varying economic and structural contexts. Climate action and adaptation strategies need to be firmly established locally to realize the desired global impacts in the long term.

The key goal of the **International Conference on Climate Action (ICCA2015)** in Hanover on 1 and 2 October 2015 was to showcase the many positive examples of successful local government climate policy and to explore further potential. The German Federal Environment Ministry, the Lower Saxonian Environment Ministry and the German Institute of Urban Affairs invited representatives from local authorities, politics, networks, foundations and the scientific community to come together to present and discuss their approaches and exchange views and experiences on political strategies, the necessary framework conditions and successful implementation. The many examples of successful climate policy and effective implementation strategies from all regions of the world showed that local governments are indeed driving the transformation!

The ICCA2015 was very encouraging. It was extremely impressive to see how creative, energetic and credible many local authorities are in shaping the *Energiewende* - energy transition - and how they are making the most of the opportunities that social and economic transformation offer. It was also remarkable to see how far many local authorities have already come, and how resolutely they are pursuing their goals. We can learn a lot from these examples and can use them as a basis to draw up very specific recommendations for steering and shaping climate policy at local level.

The ICCA2015 is part of a series of conferences, campaigns and initiatives this year focussing on the challenges of climate change and sustainable development and highlighting how crucial it is to involve all actors, especially local authorities and local stakeholders, in climate action and adaptation to climate change.

- The **UN's** universally applicable **Sustainable Development Goals** have just been adopted in New York. All countries have agreed to implement sustainable development in all areas so that current and future generations can live healthily in a safe environment.

- Our focus now turns to the upcoming **UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015**, where ambitious and binding climate targets have to be defined and specified for all countries. Concrete contributions for implementing these targets before the entry into force of the new agreement, i.e. before 2020, will be compiled in an "Agenda of Solutions".

- In exactly one year's time, the United Nations will host the third summit on urban development: Habitat III will be held in Quito in October 2016. A **New Urban Agenda** will be adopted to define the foundations for global, sustainable urban development of cities – including megacities – and human settlements over the next 20 years. The key challenge will be to shape the global urbanisation process in an integrated, inclusive, safe, sustainable and climate-friendly way.

Local authorities are **key actors** in all these processes. They are central to structuring the necessary transformation towards a low carbon way of life and the decarbonisation of the economy, as well as to adapting to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The best possible legal and financial conditions need to be created to enhance the effectiveness of local action. The ICCA2015 showed that local authorities and actors, and their networks and partners, are ready and willing to make very concrete and effective contributions to climate action and adaptation to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The goal of political strategies at all levels has to be to encourage them and to offer greater support. The message from Hanover to Paris, especially for the Agenda of Solutions, is to highlight the essential role of local authorities as key players for the transformation process.

Local climate action and sustainability at local level cannot be implemented through programmes alone. Comprehensive **transformation processes** are needed with local authorities playing a leading role, making investments and setting the framework. They are the ones that actually create, practice and implement solutions locally. They are the ones in direct contact with the public, which is particularly important: for transformation to succeed in towns and districts, all major groups need to be involved, across all ethnic, confessional and gender groups. At local level, many stakeholders directly benefit from active climate policy if rights are respected and obligations are shared fairly.

Transformation requires a **continuous process of learning and change in the entire system**: for individual capacities and capabilities, in communication and co-operation between different stakeholders, in political, legal and economic structures and in the values, thinking patterns and behaviour embedded in our cultures.

The following findings and recommendations on steering and implementing effective strategies for climate action and adaptation at local level were discussed at the ICCA2015:

Agents of Change

Agents of change are needed for local climate action. Many local authorities administrations, key stakeholders and citizens in towns and districts with profound expertise and passionate commitment are already far along the path to climate action and sustainability. The ability to trigger and implement changes at the administrative level, to actively involve civil society and the private sector, and to communicate effectively about climate action, climate change adaptation and sustainability are all crucial in this context.

Climate action needs to identify and draw upon **agents of change** who

- put decisive efforts for climate action at the top of their agenda
- understand, initiate and accompany processes to transform systems
- have comprehensive expertise and skills (capacity building)
- have good networks, positive reputation and are endowed with influence and power
- are able to transfer knowledge and best practice effectively and efficiently (know-how management) and
- can act as multipliers to convince and mobilise as many stakeholders and citizens as possible (participation) in order to jointly advance transformation and to develop a diverse range of sustainable lifestyles.

Governance

Climate action strategies and their implementation require coordinated action at different levels and by different stakeholders in order to mobilize all social groups. Decision-making frameworks and processes have to be continuously further developed as local democracy and its broad spectrum of formal and informal participation processes are constantly evolving. Positive examples and approaches need continuous, long-term support, both in terms of finance and in terms of services supplementing local capacities and competencies, particularly in small and poor communities. National programmes supporting climate action need to address local political leaders – often in voluntary office – together with administrations in order to help build political will.

We need **governance** that

- recognizes and formalizes climate action
- is characterised by strong, visionary and decisive local leadership as well as participatory and inclusive processes, so as to ensure that “collective wisdom” creates optimal solutions
- integrates aspects of climate action, adaptation to climate change and sustainability into all areas of action by local authorities
- is flexible enough to allow for creative new ways of local climate action
- promotes knowledge management and learning processes through good internal communication and continuous coordination
- considers potentially negative social side effects of transformation.

Finance

Local climate action requires long term, predictable and suitable funding. To achieve this, the right framework conditions are needed. It is essential for stakeholders at national, subnational and local level to confer and cooperate on this and also to address the issue of financing climate action across all government operations (such as health, urban development, housing affordability, and social).

We need **finance** that

- facilitates long-term investment in climate action and adaptation to climate change – recognizing tremendous infrastructure deficits, investments here are especially urgent - and secures local authorities’ capacity to act
- incorporates and mobilises investments and loans from private companies in a coordinated and integrated system of public funding
- includes alternative instruments such as revolving funds, energy cooperatives, crowd funding, or leasing models and
- guarantees the socially equitable participation of all parties in climate action
- sets the right incentives and provides support for behavioural change towards a low carbon, climate-proof society.

Infrastructure, Adaptation, Urban Development

Local authorities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Heavy rains and heat waves are becoming increasingly frequent, affecting the urban climate. They can lead to substantial infrastructure damage (energy grids, roads, buildings, etc.) and can also pose threats to people. Although there are still uncertainties, we know enough to take relevant action.

Urban areas are especially sensitive to climate change due to their density of population and infrastructure, and intensity of economic activity.

In view of the fact that towns and cities are the main cause of environmental and climate changes but are also most affected by them, they are key players in sustainable development. Forward-looking urban development has to take account of climatic changes and their impacts. Adaptation to climate change is a service of general interest and is in keeping with the precautionary principle.

Urban infrastructure is the hard-ware to urban transformation. We **need infrastructure, adaptation measures and urban development** that

- coordinate adaptation with other urban and regional development tasks
- use as guiding principle “quality of life and well-being”
- fully exploit the benefits of available climate friendly technologies
- support towns and districts to become resilient
- withstand extreme weather events, promote switching to renewable energy sources and prevent emissions
- include construction and modernisation programmes that increase energy efficiency in new and existing buildings and expand programmes to address adaptation to climate change - for example by identifying and outlining urban climate hazards and
- implement settlement structures and mobility concepts that are climate friendly and that include disadvantaged areas.

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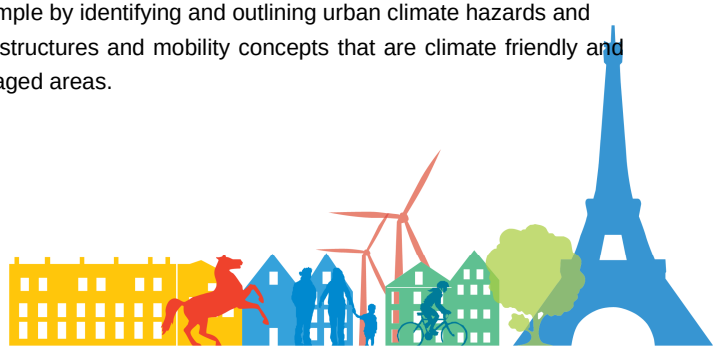

Ecosystems

Local ecosystems such as urban green spaces, wetlands, forests and peatlands are extremely sensitive to climatic changes. They are also important CO2 sinks and reservoirs, and provide multiple other benefits, such as reducing the impact of heavy rainfall or the urban heat island effect, clean drinking water supply and improved health and wellbeing. It is essential, in both urban and rural areas, to protect these ecosystems and to use them to support and advance climate action.

Ecosystems are a significant tool for climate adaptation and mitigation and their role as natural carbon sinks and GHG reservoirs should be recognized and integrated in subnational planning and implementation processes.

Small islands in particular are facing huge challenges in this regard and have experience in how we can all learn from mistakes and crises – a crucial ability for the transformation process.

We have to protect our **ecosystems** by

- incorporating the role of ecosystems in urban areas as an integral part of climate action, climate change adaptation and local food security
- designing appropriate ecosystem related strategies for cities growing as well as shrinking in size, managing spaces in the most effective manner
- integrating ecosystem based approaches for mitigation and adaptation in the 2015 climate agreement and national and subnational planning and implementation processes and
- combating forest loss, conserving, restoring and expanding forests as important CO2 sinks, and peatlands as important CO2 reservoirs.

Indigenous peoples have an important role as stewards of their environments and in reducing climate vulnerability.

It is crucial that we learn from the challenges and experience of small islands in dealing with climate change and that we support their efforts in making the transition to a sustainable future.

In addition, learning exchanges and increased coordination between the local climate action community and the nature conservation community should be encouraged and supported.

Networks and Groups

Communication and cooperation are key catalysts for climate action. Networks and groups with a wide spectrum of structures and members are extremely important, whether multinational local authority networks, regional collaborations or town partnerships. They all support a process of exchange, mutual learning and mobilisation. They also illustrate that many local authorities and other stakeholders are already resolutely implementing ambitious climate targets and effective adaptation strategies. They promote visions and values, give voice to local communities and their successes as well as their needs, and help reaching those who might lag behind. Developing and sharing common tools, they also support harmonization of methods, and can provide essential benchmarking.

Local authorities need to benefit from existing **networks and groups** that

- connect up local authorities: regionally, nationally and globally, and strengthen local influence on multi-level governance frameworks
- bring together different players: policymakers, administrations, private sector, the scientific sector and civil society and
- enable exchange and promote knowledge transfer
- facilitate cooperation, and use existing partnerships for climate action

Thus, they provide tangible as well as intangible outputs, both of which need to be financed. Networks need reliable support for their work, from members as well as national governments and international institutions.

Part 2: Voices from the conference – local authorities, networks and groups, citizens and young people

A broad range of climate projects were presented to the public in the Climate Neighbourhoods. There were discussions, exhibitions, films, theatre performances and activities for schoolchildren and young people, enabling the voices of individual stakeholders, citizens and young people to be heard.

The following examples illustrate their concerns and wishes, and the determination of local authorities, major groups, networks, scientists, members of the public and young people from Germany and all over the world:

From the participation process in the Climate Neighbourhoods:

What is important for me for local climate action?

Increasing awareness of climate change, global warming, and climate policies. More people need to support climate action, so that more can be achieved and changed. There should be more support for activists and project groups at local level to show that they enjoy respect and appreciation. We need more creativity and ideas so as to improve situations. We need more and better bicycle lanes and bus connections in order to make them more attractive, and thus achieve reductions in CO2 emissions.

What message am I sending to the climate change conference in Paris?

Stop making empty promises and start acting, otherwise we can't move forward.

Communicate more clearly about the 2°C goal, because it must be adhered to and some countries are already bearing the consequences of climate change. Get all countries on board, because just a few is not enough. We need to punish those who don't follow the rules, and nuclear power needs to be limited further while renewable energies need to be promoted more.

The world must be conserved for future generations. Promoting environmental protection (locally) helps people understand climate action and shows them what they can do, how they can change and how they can stop acting the way industry is telling them to. Mass meat production must be stopped – eat less meat!

What am I contributing to local climate action?

Using public transport and bicycles and trying to not use cars; flying less; only switching on lights when needed; using heating only in winter or autumn; using renewable energy sources; driving an electric vehicle; participating in climate projects and organisations; creating less packaging waste; separating waste; consuming less.

The abovementioned and often translated messages are from the first day of the conference. For an overview of both days please see here: http://icca2015.org/en/news/dok/15.php

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