



**Report on the recent visit, 9th – 13th December 2013, of Deputy Head:
Environmental Planning & Climate Protection Department, Dr Debra Roberts
and Manager: Climate Protection Branch, Dr Sean O'Donoghue to
Washington DC, USA, to further the implementation of the Durban
Adaptation Charter**

Project Title: Implementation of the Durban Adaptation Charter

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Introduction:

The aim of this series of meetings was to introduce the Durban Adaptation Charter to various influential and globally important organizations in order to secure endorsement for the Charter, to investigate funding opportunities for a secretariat for the Charter and to extend the network of partners contributing towards the implementation of the Charter.



Originally, eThekweni Municipality Mayor, Councilor James Nxumalo, was to head this delegation, but His Worship had to withdraw from the trip a day before departure because of urgent instructions received from Provincial leadership. Consequently, Manager: Climate Protection Branch, Dr Sean O'Donoghue, accompanied Dr Debra Roberts, to provide support within the various meetings convened during this trip.



This series of meetings was convened by Dr Tony Socci, from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Dr Socci is one of the numerous international partners that volunteer their time and expertise to guide the implementation of the DAC. The delegation included ICLEI Secretary General, Mr Gino van Begin, who has continued to commit ICLEI's support to the implementation of the DAC, especially through the inclusion of the DAC as a key pillar of ICLEI's annual Resilient Cities Congress. ICLEI USA was represented by Mr Michael Schmitz, who also confirmed support for the DAC, and has expressed an interest in addressing the adaptation needs of US and DAC signatory cities through collaboration.



Meetings held

Formal meetings were held with the USEPA, the Inter-American Development Bank, the US State Department, the World Resources Institute and the World Bank Africa. Due to a weather-related shut down of the US Federal Government on Tuesday 10th December, formal meetings scheduled with the World Bank and the Global Environmental Facility had to be cancelled. Instead, an informal meeting was held with the appropriate representative from the World Bank, and details from this meeting are contained within this report.

In addition to the above meetings, an informal meeting was also held on the morning of Thursday 12th December with former US Vice President, Mr Al Gore, who is a global advocate for climate change action. The purpose of this meeting was to request Mr Gore's endorsement for the DAC, so as to increase the reputation and awareness of the Charter, and to extend opportunities to further its implementation.

Outcomes

Generally, the DAC was very well received at all meetings, and there was strong alignment of the DAC objectives with various existing adaptation initiatives being implemented globally. Details of opportunities for DAC collaboration within these initiatives are contained within the minutes of the meetings. The meetings were very useful and a number of potentially useful collaborations surfaced that could help further the implementation of the DAC. One example of this was in the meeting with the Inter-American Development Bank, which aims to position itself as the "Adaptation Bank" through its work in central and South America. Given that this year's Conference of the Parties (COP20) will be held in Lima, and given the current paucity of Latin American signatory cities within the DAC, there is excellent potential for penetration of the DAC into Latin America with the establishment of regional partnerships built around adaptation champion cities throughout the continent.

The US Agency for International Development's representative, Ms Helen Santiago-Fink, reaffirmed the Agency's support for the DAC, and confirmed continued support for the development of African city regional partnerships, through the funding of city to city exchange visits, most notably with the return exchange visit between Durban and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA, in March 2014, and a round of exchange visits between Durban and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Through the development of regional partnerships, leading adaptation signatory city hubs, like Dar es Salaam, can extend their influence and expertise to neighboring and regional local government organizations to increase the effectiveness of adaptation action within respective regions. Globally, when a significant number of regional partnerships exist, there will be a critical mass to support effective adaptation action.

Way Forward:

- A letter will be sent from the leader of the DAC, Mayor James Nxumalo, to participants at the meetings to thank them for their interest in the DAC, and to request their endorsement of the Charter. This will help extend the influence of the DAC globally.
- Endorsement for the DAC will be sought from former US Vice President, Mr Al Gore.
- The establishment of regional partnerships within Latin America will be pursued with the aim of representation of the DAC and a signing ceremony of regional local government

organizations at COP20 at the end of 2014 in Lima, Peru.

- The extension of the regional partnership model will be pursued through USAID and its implementing agent, the International Cities/ Counties Management Association (ICMA), for which a Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted, and is being submitted to eThekweni Municipality's Executive Committee.
- Pursuit of more North – South partnerships, between USA and developing country cities should be pursued through ICLEI – USA.
- An investigation should be conducted of opportunities for the DAC to operate within the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee.

On Friday 13th December, Dr Roberts and Dr O'Donoghue also had an opportunity to participate in a meeting of the United Cities and Local Governments-led Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda towards HABITAT III. This workshop was convened within the ECOSOC Chamber at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The development of an urban sustainability goal is crucial as it confirms the importance of cities as key players in achieving sustainability, given the rapid growth of global urbanization, and the current impact that inappropriate development is having on environmental, social and economic economies. At this meeting, Dr Roberts represented Mayor James Nxumalo, in his capacity as ICLEI Vice-President and in support of ICLEI Secretary General, Mr Gino van Begin. The meeting also provided Dr Sean O'Donoghue with valuable exposure to international processes and provided an excellent networking opportunity.