

## **Local Authority statement during the Rio2012 PrepCom II**

**Delivered by Susanne Salz, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, on 7 March 2011**

Thank you, Chair.

Today, over half of the world's population lives in cities. By 2050, it will likely be 2/3<sup>rd</sup> as urbanization and population growth will continue. Already today, the 100 largest urban areas of the world alone contribute 30% to global GDP. In OECD countries 85% of GDP is produced in cities. It is therefore clear that a global transition to a green economy will not happen without shifts from current urban economies to green urban economies.

Local Authorities urge the UN member states to consider these facts in their deliberations. Rio1992 included Agenda 21 and *Local Agenda 21*. We recommend that the Rio2012 outcome on a Green Economy includes a section on Green *Urban* Economy. Numerous Local Governments and Cities around the world are taking innovative actions. Many more could do so if they were better enabled and supported by international frameworks, national governments and other actors.

Local and subnational governments can be a crucial part of the global transition to a Green Economy, and many are already making it happen on the ground. We can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance

ecological services and minimize environmental risks. Urban density, and land-use, the construction of buildings, as well as urban utilities of energy, water, and waste systems can be improved to reduce resource use and energy consumption. Social opportunities arise as cities start to benefit from cleaner urban environments and improved living conditions. This is just to name some of the numerous examples of the roles of Local Governments and of cities in a Green Economy.

Urbanization is an issue the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to deal with. Local government, as the corresponding level of government, is at the forefront of dealing with many of the challenges and opportunities rapid urbanization brings. Rio2012 offers an opportunity to create a more coherent global framework on this matter. Urbanization can be linked to Green Urban Economies. How Urbanization and Green Urban Economies can be linked and to what extent depends on the local circumstances.

What is clear is that Local Governments and Cities have a crucial role to play in the global transition to a Green Economy.