



# Urban Environmental Accords

United Nations Environment Programme World Environment Day June 5<sup>th</sup> 2005

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. What are the Urban Environmental Accords?

Recognizing that majority of the world's population now reside in cities, and that cities consume 75% of the world's natural resources, the City of San Francisco, as host city of the United Nations World Environment Day 2005, selected "Green Cities" as the unifying theme for the event and developed the Urban Environmental Accords, a set of 21 action steps that intends to address the special environmental challenges and opportunities of cities everywhere. Given the unique capacity of mayors to initiate and steer initiatives that produce immediate and direct outcomes, mayors are recognized as excellent change agents for making urban communities into models of sustainable development. It is for this reason that mayors from all over the world came to San Francisco on June 1-5, 2005 to share ideas and discuss solutions to universal urban environmental issues on energy, waste reduction, urban design, urban nature, transportation, environmental health, water.

### 2. What is the goal of the Urban Environmental Accords?

The Urban Environmental Accords are a series of implementable goals that can be adopted at the city level to achieve urban sustainability, promote healthy economies, advance social equity and protect the world's ecosystem. By achieving success at the city level, the multilateral city commitments of the Urban Environmental Accords can inspire and mobilize expanded commitment at the national level. The Urban Environmental Accords build on and continue the legacy of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the 1996 Istanbul Conference on Human Settlements, the 2000 Millennium Development Goals and the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development

### 3. How do cities adopt the Accords?

Implementing the Urban Environmental Accords will require open and active participatory dialogue between the cities, residents, community groups, businesses, academic institutions and other stakeholders. At the end of seven years, a city that has implemented 19-21 Action Steps will be recognized as a 4-Star City, a 3-Star City for 15-18 Action Steps, a 2-Star City for 12-17 Action Steps and a 1-Star City for 8-11 Action Steps.

### 4. Some of the goals appear too high, unrealistic or may not necessarily apply to every city. How do cities handle the implementation process?

The 21 Action Steps of the Urban Environmental Accords are a series of action-oriented steps that cities can use as reference points for setting achievable goals and standards that can be tailored to fit the specific structures of their communities. The ability of cities to enact local environmental laws and policies differ from cities to cities. However, the success of the Accords will ultimately be judged on the basis of actions taken collectively. Accordingly, the Accords can be implemented through programs, services or activities even where cities may lack the requisite legislative authority to mandate laws.

### 5. How will implementing these goals result in cost savings?

Measures that support the sustainable utilization and management of energy, urban design, waste reduction, urban nature, transportation, environmental health and water resources often result in reduced resource consumption and improvements in the general health and economic wellbeing of cities. Adopting the Accords can leverage a city's purchasing power and promote the advancement of environmentally sound practices.



## 6. Who will monitor progress and enforcement?

City mayors may appoint a special city council, city department or advisory group that will work with the mayor in setting goals and oversee the implementation process. In many instances, the Accords can be integrated as part of the city's long-term Sustainability Plan. We will also be working very closely with the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and their partners to implement the Accords.

## 7. Which other cities have signed on?

As of June 5, 2005 the following 53 cities have pledged their support of the Urban Environmental Accords: Ahmedabad (India), Arnhem (The Netherlands), Austin (USA), Bahia de Caraquez Canton Sucre (Ecuador), Bamenda (Cameroon), Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Berkeley (USA), Burien (USA), Calicut (India), Cape Town (South Africa), Chalon-sur-Saone (France), Changchun (China), Chicago (USA), Copenhagen (Denmark), Curitiba (Brazil), Delhi (India), Denver (USA), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Emeryville (USA), Gampaha (Sri Lanka), Hyderabad (India), Istanbul (Turkey), Jakarta (Indonesia), Kampala (Uganda), Kiev (Ukraine), Larnaca (Cyprus), Lausanne (Switzerland), London (UK), Lurin (Peru), Lyon (France), Matale (Sri Lanka), Melbourne (Australia), Moscow (Russia), Mount Vernon (USA), Nairobi (Kenya), New Paltz (USA), Oakland (USA), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Rochester (USA), San Miguel de Allende (Mexico), Santa Monica (USA), Seattle (USA), Seogwipo (Korea), Sinaia (Romania), Stockholm (Sweden), Surabaya (Indonesia), Tainan, Taipei, Vancouver B.C. (Canada), Venice (Italy), Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain), Zurich (Switzerland), San Francisco (USA).

## 8. Is there a follow-up session to report and discuss the cooperative progress achieved by all signatory cities?

In 2012, seven years after the initial signing of the Urban Environmental Accords, a United Nations conference will discuss the progress of each city in implementing the Accords. Additional information regarding the Accords is available on [www.sfenvironment.org](http://www.sfenvironment.org) and questions can be directed at [accords@sfenvironment.com](mailto:accords@sfenvironment.com)