



Joint Press Release



Joining hands for greener cities

UNEP and Gwangju Metropolitan City sign cooperation agreement

Gwangju/Korea, 31 March 2011 – A major summit on catalyzing low carbon, resource efficient cities is to be held in the Republic of Korea this October in support of that country's commitment to green growth at home and abroad, it was announced today. The 2011 Gwangju Summit of the Urban Environmental Accords is to be organized by the Metropolitan City of Gwangju and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment.

In preparation of the Summit, UNEP and Gwangju will conduct a study outlining the scope of an Urban Environmental Evaluation Index. The outcomes of this study feed into the process of better defining the elements constituting a sustainable city at the global level. In addition, UNEP and the City of Gwangju agreed to prepare a feasibility study to better explore the potential of developing carbon financing mechanisms at city level. This cooperation agreement was officially announced during the visit of a UNEP Delegation to the City of Gwangju today.

"The Republic of Korea has become a pioneer of green growth and a country where many of the ideas and actions underpinning a transition to a Green Economy are already being tested. The Summit is an excellent opportunity to evolve such strategies in terms of cities and the overarching aim of a far more resource efficient world -- both in terms of consumption and production", said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director. Kang Un-Tae, the Mayor of Gwangju City, said: "The 2011 Gwangju Summit of the Urban Environmental Accords will be a good opportunity for cities and local government to come to the front regarding the adaption to climate change, and the Urban Environmental Evaluation Index and Urban CDM which will be co-developed by Gwangju City and UNEP will considerably contribute to the "development of Green Economic and Sustainable City"

The Gwangju Summit of the Urban Environmental Accords also will be co-hosted by the City of San Francisco, where the Urban Environmental Accords (UEA) were signed by 52 cities on 5 June 2005 on the occasion of World Environment Day. This international agreement counts 109 member cities from 45 countries. The Accords are a set of 21 concrete actions across seven thematic areas to achieve sustainable development at city level. The key issues addressed include energy, waste reduction, urban design, biodiversity, sustainable transport, environmental health, and water.

Today, over half the world population is living in cities. Urban areas are space efficient and occupy only 2 per cent of the terrestrial surface. Nevertheless they consume three quarter of all natural resources. Cities produce about 80 per cent of the global economic output. They are also accountable for approximately 75 per cent of CO2 emissions and between 60 and 80 per cent of energy consumption.

In the recent UNEP Report *Towards a Green Economy*, UNEP shows that in most countries cities will be important sites for the emerging green economy. A central feature is high density and compact urban structure. The proximity of economic activities brings efficiency gains and technological innovation capacity to cities while reducing resource and energy consumption.

Therefore, cities will become increasingly central to decisively evolving sustainable development and to meeting the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Sustainable development and international environmental governance are the two key themes of next year's United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, also known as Rio+20. with its two key elements: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development

The 2011 Gwangju Summit of the Urban Environmental Accords will take place from 12 to 13 October 2011 in Kimdaejung Convention Center. The Summit is expected to bring together over 600 participants from all over the world. More than 40 cities have already expressed their interest in attending this international conference.

For More Information, Please Contact:

Nick Nuttall, UNEP Spokesperson and Head of Media, +41 795965737 or +254733632755, or nick.nuttall@unep.org

See young Choi, Public Relations Management Coordinator of UEA Gwangju Summit Secretariat, Gwangju, Republic of Korea, +82-62-611-3793 or gwangju@2011uea.com

Notes to Editors

UNEP

Created in 1972, UNEP represents the United Nations' environmental conscience. Based in Nairobi, Kenya, its mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics - based in Paris - helps governments, local authorities and decision-makers in business and industry to develop and implement policies and practices focusing on sustainable development.

The Division leads UNEP's work in the areas of climate change, resource efficiency, harmful substances and hazardous waste.

Metropolitan City of Gwangju, Korea

Gwangju is the fifth largest city in Korea and the largest city in Korea's Southwest Region. The total area is 501.25km² and the population is 1,46,8000. Gwangju has achieved remarkable economic development fostering five main industries, namely car-manufacture, electronics, photonics, cultural items, and green energy. In particular, Gwangju become the environmentally-friendly leading city through big growth of e-co friendly industry such as the photonics industry and green energy industry, the carbon bank policy for the adaptation to climate change and urban park business promoted by governance