

PRESS RELEASE

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Local government is already streets ahead of Cancun says UN-backed environmental charity

Local government authorities around the world are best placed to tackle climate change at its root and are already well ahead of federal governments in addressing the sustainability issues raised at Cancun, says a UN-backed environmental charity.

The UN-backed International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom) annually recognises the communities that have done the most to foster sustainability and last month in Chicago, USA, identified the world's most liveable communities with a panel of judges saluting progress across a range of issues from healthy lifestyles to enhancement of the natural and built environment.

LivCom chief executive Alan Smith said: "Over the last decade we have noticed a significant shift away from communities simply focussing on provisions for recycling and creation of green spaces to a more joined up approach that links a healthy environment to healthy lifestyles for citizens.

"Local authorities today are thinking bigger than national governments – their perspective has also become more global with local communities suddenly grasping the idea that protecting the planet is not only within their reach but their responsibility. The result is that cutting edge, practical solutions are already being embraced and in many cases national governments are out of step with their local counterparts."

Applauding the fact that at Cancun local government delegates from around the world were officially recognised as 'governmental stakeholders' in the fight to tackle sustainability issues, Mr Smith added: "Reducing global warming won't be achieved overnight by backroom deals at headline grabbing talks like those in Cancun and Copenhagen, LivCom would urge the UNFCCC to work closely with local authorities to support the spread of best practice and steps to cut greenhouse gases on a local level".

At the climate change talks in Cancun, Mexico, heard that cities including Melbourne, Australia, are setting their own targets, bidding to be a zero carbon emissions city by 2020.

Welcoming delegates from around the world to Chicago last month Mayor Richard Daley said cities deserved recognition as the key actors in the fight to tackle climate change.

According to the UN, by 2050 two thirds of the world's population will be living in cities, while 75 percent of emissions come from urban areas.

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Note to editors:

LivCom Awards are made in three categories covering Whole Cities, Sustainable Projects and a Bursary Award. LivCom is non-political, embracing all nations and cultures, and over 50 countries are represented within the Awards. The LivCom Awards are the only forum in which International Best Practice may be observed and developed, and participation in the Awards is an investment in the future of a community.

For more information, images and summaries of presentations go to www.livcomawards.com

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