

Barcelona – 14-15 March 2011

Strategies for urban development in the Mediterranean

Summary of the session ‘Addressing Climate Change and Providing a Fair Environment’

Prepared by Adrien Labaeye – 06/04/2011

Moderated by Emilio D'Alessio, former member of ICLEI Executive Committee, the session brought together five sound presentations. The panel opened with hindsight on ways cities reduce their urban carbon footprint. Thus, the Barcelona Diputacio, in the person of Ferran Vallespinos, presented the way it leads efforts to reduce carbon emissions in 136 municipalities, supporting the Covenant of Mayors, a European effort. Xavier Hoang, from AFD, detailed the program “Sustainable Urban Transports in the Mediterranean”, offering new perspectives.

The impacts of climate change are hitting the Mediterranean hardly. To better understand those effects on large urban coastal areas, the World Bank is conducting an in-depth study on the cases of Alexandria, Casablanca, and Tunis. The first results on Tunis and its region were presented by the expert Yves Enesser, from Egis International. Impacts such as increasing droughts drove the Barcelona Metropolitan Entity for the Environment (BMEE) to design a wide program to reclaimed polluted waters and change water consumption behaviors. Carles Conill, Director of the BMEE, emphasized the importance of communication in the success of the measures implemented.

As a conclusion, Khaled M. Abdelhalim showed the audience that, because of a strong community ownership, informal neighborhoods are often more sustainable than newly built formal developments of the Cairo, Egypt.

With five entry points to the complex question of urban sustainability, the session provided a thoughtful mix that triggered interested reactions from the participants.