

Livable Cities Newsletter



April 1, 2012 Issue 4

Focusing on Rio+20

This newsletter is used to provide updates and information to the Livable Cities Network. The theme for this edition is Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 Conference.

Please share this newsletter with your partner groups and anyone who might be interested.

What is Rio+20?

Rio+20 is the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) that will take place in Brazil on 20-22 June 2012. This Conference will include Heads of State and Government or other representatives. The Conference will result in a focused political document that will provide direction to members about how to address sustainable development.

The objectives of the Conference are:

- to achieve political commitment for sustainable development;
- to assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development; and,
- to address new and emerging challenges.

The Conference will focus on two themes: (a) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (b) the institutional framework for sustainable development.

In order to provide information to policymakers and other interested stakeholders, UNCSD prepared a number of Rio+20 Issues Briefs that discuss and review issues relevant to the objectives and themes of the conference. Several of these Issues Briefs might be of interest to members of the Livable Cities Network:

- Issues Brief 5 - Sustainable Cities
- Issues Brief 7- Green jobs and social inclusion
- Issues Brief 9 - Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture
- Issues Brief 11- Water

To find out more about Rio+20 and to download the Issues Briefs visit <http://www.uncsd2012.org>

Why is Rio+20 Important for Livable Cities?

A livable city is a sustainable city. Now that more than half of the world's population lives in an urban setting how a city is planned, designed, and lived influences the health of our world. For example, how our citizens move around a city affects the quality of the air we breathe and affects climate change, the compactness of our cities affects the amount of agricultural land that is available to grow food and the amount of open space and green space we have, and how our buildings are designed affects the amount of water we use.

Rio+20 is an important opportunity to develop an effective strategy for making the world more sustainable. The result of the meeting will be agreement on an Outcome Document titled "The Future We Want", which will provide direction to countries as to how to address sustainable development in their own nation.

Sustainable Transport is missing in the Draft of "The Future We Want"



Currently, the Zero Draft Outcome Document almost completely ignores sustainable transport and mobility. This Draft Outcome Document is based on over 11,000 pages of submissions by 677 parties. While transport was mentioned over 1000 times in the compilation document it was mentioned only once in the Draft Outcome Document. In comparison energy is mentioned 15 times.

Sustainable transport is considered part of many other objectives in the document. However, not having an objective specifically on transportation reduces transport's importance and potential impact. Sustainable transport needs to be an objective on its own if member states are to consider sustainable transport options as part of their national sustainable development frameworks.

What can you do? Advocacy!

Any Livable City Network member that is interested in sustainable transport should contact their country representatives for Rio+20 and encourage them to adopt sustainable transport language in the Zero Draft Outcome Document. To help local groups begin their advocacy campaign, the Partnership for Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) has developed an outreach campaign to explain why it is important to better integrate sustainable mobility in the Rio+20 campaign. For details of the SLoCaT Rio+20 Sustainable Mobility Campaign see <http://www.slocat.net/rio-plus-20>.

Ecocity Builders and HealthBridge Join Forces

Ecocity Builders is joining forces with HealthBridge to develop the International Ecocity Framework and Standards (IEFS) Initiative. This sustainable and healthy city program seeks to provide a vision for ecocities as well as a practical method for assessing and guiding progress towards the vision.

The IEFS takes a down-to-earth approach to establishing and maintaining the health of both human and natural systems. The IEFS will allow cities to plan and implement projects meant to increase the overall healthy performance of the city.



By participating in the IEFS, cities learn from each other and receive support and advice as they move through the IEFS process. They will also be asked to provide feedback on their experience. Ecocity Partner cities join an international coalition of cities trying to create and maintain healthy human and natural environments.

For more information, visit the website <http://www.ecocitystandards.org> or contact Kirstin Miller, Lead Facilitator and Executive Director, Ecocity Builders, kirstin@ecocitybuilders.org

Update on the UN High Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has posted their second Discussion paper on the global monitoring framework and targets as part of a new online consultation that will run to 19 April. WHO is inviting feedback from “relevant NGOs and selected private sector” as well as Member States. They have also posted a summary of Member State feedback on the first Discussion paper.

The global monitoring framework and targets is an important document that will provide direction for how countries begin to address NCDs. Visit the NCD Alliance website at www.ncdalliance.org to find out more about the global monitoring framework and targets and consider submitting a response to both the WHO and your country representative.

Resources of Interest

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD): <http://uncsd.iisd.org>

Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for walking and cycling.

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-publish/abstracts/health-economic-assessment-tools-heat-for-walking-and-for-cycling.-methodology-and-user-guide>

iwalk: The official website of the International Walk to School: <http://www.iwalktoschool.org>

The Alliance for Healthy Cities: <http://www.alliance-healthycities.com>

Next issue...

In the next issue we will be highlighting work that Evangelical Social Action Forum, our local partner in India, has been doing to create healthy parks for children.

Interested in becoming a Livable Cities Network member?

To become part of the Livable Cities Network, e-mail Kristie Daniel, Program Manager, Livable Cities at kdaniel@healthbridge.ca.



HealthBridge's Livable Cities program aims to improve health, gender equity, poverty reduction, and the environment in developing countries by focusing on how cities are planned, designed, built, and adapted.

HealthBridge's Livable Cities program works in partnership with local NGOs, academic institutions and governments in developing countries. We help local partners identify needs, develop and implement appropriate solutions, apply innovative and sustainable practices, and promote effective policies through research and action.

1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1004
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7 CANADA
www.healthbridge.ca
Tel. +1.613.241.2927
Fax. +1.613.241.7899