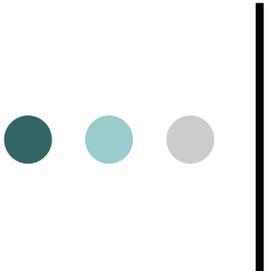




Outcomes of Researchers' Symposium Sustainable Human Settlements and their Governance

**Pre ICLEI World Congress Event
24-25 February 2006**



BACKGROUND

- Motivation for the Symposium was a recognition that researchers and local government practitioners share a common interest in addressing complex urban environmental problems and need to dialogue
- Researchers' Symposium built on the outcomes of the Conference on Sustainable Urban Development – From Research to Action - held in Nanning, China in Nov 2005
- The University of Cape Town (UCT) in collaboration with other tertiary institutions and the City of Cape Town acted as coordinator and institutional partner with ICLEI
- An Academic Advisory Committee worked with City of Cape Town to plan and guide this event.



OVERARCHING GOAL

- To discuss and identify mechanisms for strengthening collaboration between researchers and local government practitioners
 - so that research addresses key information needs of local authorities
 - thereby improving the quality of urban policy and enhancing sustainability practice



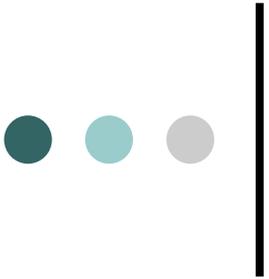
THE SYMPOSIUM

- Attracted a diverse group of researchers from across the globe representing over 12 countries
- Participants acknowledged and endorsed the outcomes of the Nanning Conference



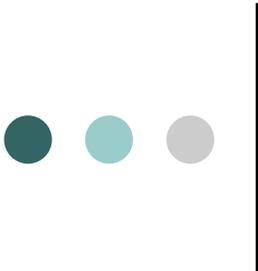
KEY MESSAGES

- Willingness amongst researchers involved in urban sustainability issues to engage in dialogue with local government practitioners around areas of common interest
- A desire to identify mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between two groupings



RECOMMENDATIONS: FOUR BROAD ACTION AREAS

- **Structural pre-conditions:** Providing a supportive and enabling environment that fosters understanding and trust between the two parties and promotes a sense of partnership and mutual learning in the research process.
- **Relevance:** Ensure that research is focused on information needs of local government and provides information that informs and enhances policy and implementation practices.



FOUR BROAD AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR ACTION cont.

- **Communication and Accessibility:** Improve communication between partners during the research process and enhance the communication of research results to local government and broader community
- **Linkages between local level research and broader research agendas:** Improve the linkages between broad (international) research agendas relevant to sustainable urban environments and local level research activities



Structural pre-conditions:

- Local authorities need to acknowledge that research is critical to their core business and should therefore:
 - identify and establish formal relations with research groups
 - encourage local government to be actively engaged in all stages of the research process
 - better articulate their information needs, deliverables and timeframes but appreciate the need for flexibility
 - build capacity to enable active engagement in research
- Universities and associated funding agencies need to identify mechanisms for “valuing” policy related research as well as outputs (e.g. products) that emanate from research.



RELEVANCE

- Researchers need to familiarise themselves with the “workings” of local government in order to align research and local government objectives and processes
- Local authorities need to familiarise themselves with broader research issues that have relevance to their core business
- Researchers and local government need to enhance collaboration in the design and execution of research
- Researchers need to assist local government make the linkages between broader global issues and research questions that have local implications



COMMUNICATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Local authorities need to better articulate their information needs and priorities to the research community
- Researchers need to package their outcomes and findings in an accessible and user-friendly format
- Ongoing dialogue between researchers, local government practitioners and other relevant stakeholders (local communities) should be encouraged



Improving Linkages between local level research and broader research agendas

- Local authorities need to familiarise themselves with broader research issues that have relevance to their core business.
- Local authorities need to take active steps to improve the co-ordination and management of information
- International organisations and national governments should provide easier access to relevant research by supporting the creation of knowledge centres



ACTION STEPS REQUIRED

- Provide a brief summary of outcomes of Researchers Symposium
- Establish a working group of both researchers and local government practitioners to take forward the ideas and proposals emanating from the symposium
- Promote the structured engagement between representatives of local government and the research community through ongoing meetings of this nature
- Request ICLEI to assist in facilitating improved linkages and communication between international research programmes, regional research initiatives and local government research activities



Acknowledgements

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