



PRESS RELEASE

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USGBC Joins Six Major Organizations at Rio+20 to Launch the Global Initiative on Urban Resilience

Rio de Janeiro (June 21, 2012) — The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) joined today with six major organizations at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to announce the Global Initiative on Urban Resilience (GIUR), an effort designed to spur building and infrastructure development, create new investment opportunities and foster community action around the world. Partner organizations include the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, ICLEI International, the World Bank, the Eye on Earth Summit, the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies Program on Energy, Resources, and the Environment and the Earth Council Alliance of Rio de Janeiro.

“Resilience cuts across all issues and sectors, and provides a new and vital dimension to the cause of sustainable development,” said Jason Hartke, Ph.D., vice president of national policy at the U.S. Green Building Council. “This initiative will mobilize a new brand of leadership --- leadership that advances solutions today while preparing us for the challenges of tomorrow.”

The GIUR aims to create solutions by focusing on urban geographies, identifying the synergies between city governments, non- governmental organizations, financial institutions and different business sectors. The report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, “Resilient People --- Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing,” outlines a compelling vision, including 56 specific recommendations as well as a call to action.

“Mayors know the supposed choice between saving money and spending it on climate action is a false one. Mayors know climate change puts their cities at particularly great risk, but they also know there is economic opportunity for cities in the response to climate change. This initiative represents an opportunity for C40 to identify partnerships and resources that can turn plans for adaptation investment into action,” said Jay Carson, executive director of C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, in partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative.

The GIUR will focus on eight key areas, but will refine its reach as innovative ideas emerge. These goals of the GIUR are identified as: convene a core group of organizations that will coordinate stakeholders to provide global reach and dimension to the initiative; encourage a resiliency dimension to the green building movement; take a whole-of-urban government approach; develop new incentives for budget action on resilience by local governments around the world; build awareness of resilience as an indispensable precondition to sustainable development; develop harmonized metrics for success to better achieve milestones and outcomes; integrate geographic information systems and geospatial infrastructure into planning and budget decisions; and integrate systems for natural capital accounting, avoiding losses and reducing costs associated with shocks and disasters.

Konrad Otto-Zimmermann, secretary general of ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, representing an association of over 1220 local government members, observed that, “urban resilience must apply not only to climate change, but to all other shocks and stresses that affect community systems.”

“Building resilient communities worldwide requires innovation and new partnerships, bringing big money to portfolios of green economy projects,” noted Dr. David Jhirad, director of the Energy, Resources, and Environment Program at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and HRH Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Professor in Energy and Environmental Policy.

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“Disaster management as well as community sustainability and resiliency are both critical issues that demand our focus. On behalf of Eye on Earth Partners, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, we see the pivotal importance and urgent necessity of launching the Global Initiative on Urban Resilience,” said Cathrine Armour, programme manager of the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative.

“We have to change the way we think about infrastructure, agriculture, transportation, water, energy, how communities become resilient and what kind of information we share. We have to help people make infrastructure decisions that will prove resilient far into the future,” said Rachel Kyte, vice president for sustainable development of the World Bank.

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About the U.S Green Building Council

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. USGBC works toward its mission of market transformation through its LEED green building certification program, robust educational offerings, a nationwide network of chapters and affiliates, the annual Greenbuild International Conference & Expo, and advocacy in support of public policy that encourages and enables green buildings and communities. For more information, visit usgbc.org and connect on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About ICLEI Local Government for Sustainability

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability is an association of over 1220 local government Members who are committed to sustainable development. Our Members come from 70 different countries and represent more than 569,885,000 people. ICLEI is an international association of local governments as well as national and regional local government organizations who have made a commitment to sustainable development. Resilient Cities, a series of annual world congresses on cities and adaptation to climate change organized back to back to the UNFCCC Climate Talks in Bonn, was successfully launched in May 2010. Organized by ICLEI and co-hosted by the World Mayors Council on Climate Change and the City of Bonn, the event also hosted the Mayors Adaptation Forum, the leadership segment of the congress, and resulted in the Mayors Declaration.

About the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is a network of the world’s megacities committed to addressing climate change. Acting both locally and collaboratively, C40 Cities are having a meaningful global impact in reducing both greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks. Through a partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative, C40 brings together a unique set of assets and creates a shared sense of purpose. C40 offers cities an effective forum where they can collaborate, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change.

About the Eye on Earth Summit

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) hosted, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the inaugural Eye on Earth Summit under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. At the Eye on Earth Summit two of the Special Initiatives pertained to Disaster Management and Community Sustainability and Resiliency because they represent two of the most critical issues of our time and how they can be addressed, in part, through access to environmental and societal data and information by all those who need it.

About the World Bank

The World Bank Group supports growth while focusing on sustainability, ensuring that the environment is a key enabler for green, more-inclusive growth. Based on extensive consultations with more than 2,300 Bank Group stakeholders throughout the world, this strategy articulates a new vision for a green, clean, and resilient world for

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all. The organizations that make up the World Bank Group are owned by the governments of member nations, which have the ultimate decision-making power within the organizations on all matters, including policy issues.

About the Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies ERE

The Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies Energy Resources and Environment Program (SAIS ERE) has proven to be uniquely qualified to convene and connect key international leaders. One important tool in this effort is the Global Leaders Forum (GLF), a high-level speaker series that brings together critical leaders from around the world. SAIS ERE has launched several research initiatives supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, which are exploring ways in which new partnerships can alter the direction of capital flows worth billions of US dollars to ensure inclusive, equitable, resilient, and sustainable economic growth. As part of these efforts, SAIS ERE has convened a number of international meetings involving high-level representatives from multilateral development banks, foundations, governments and the private sector.

About the Earth Council Alliance Rio de Janeiro Office

Created at the Earth Summit of 1992 by the then UN-Secretary General for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Maurice Strong, the Earth Council Alliance is dedicated to promoting strategies and organizational links to promote a just, sustainable, and peaceful world. The Earth Council Alliance has been at the forefront of driving the process for resilient and sustainable infrastructure, helping to catalyze new investment flows, new whole-of-urban government approaches, and new ways to bring large scale financing to small scale projects.