

UNHABITAT CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

June 2013

Sustainable resettlement and reconstruction in flood-prone peri-urban areas of Saint Louis, Senegal

Saint-Louis is located on the northwest coast of Senegal and was the capital city from 1673 until 1902. Its historic town centre was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in December 2000. The city counts approximately 250,000 inhabitants and is expanding rapidly. Unfortunately the city lacks an adequate supply of land that is “safe” for urban development.

Low-lying Saint Louis is vulnerable to natural hazards since it borders on the estuary of the Senegal River; it is also threatened by the erosive action of the Atlantic Ocean. This erosive action is expected to intensify in the future with the sea level rise resulting from global warming.

Saint Louis is part of a wetland ecosystem consisting of a myriad of islands that are characterised by low topography; these islands have been progressively consolidated into urban areas; as a result of which two thirds of the municipal territory is prone to flooding in case of high tide, river discharge or heavy rainfall. In 2003 a new outlet to serve as an emergency through exit for river water across the sandspit was dug out adjacent to Saint Louis, 20 kilometres upstream from the existing river mouth. This new outlet has had mixed results: tidal



Aerial view of Saint Louis, Senegal, a city surrounded by water ©UN-Habitat

surges can come in more easily, but river flooding can go out more easily.

There is high urban density in certain areas, in particular in the Guet Ndar neighbourhood located in the sandy stretch separating the ocean and the river. Guet Ndar is also suffering from severe erosion and housing construction takes place too close to the ocean. The biggest island, Sor, is characterised by poor sanitation, a high water table and an inefficient drainage system, as well as the accumulation of solid waste in several locations. All these factors contribute to squalid living conditions for the inhabitants

of Sor, and in particular in the Diaminar neighbourhood. Despite the current efforts of residents to cope with these environmental hazards, the current situation has worsened to such an extent that moving the most vulnerable households to more secure locations has become in some cases the only possible alternative.

It is against this background that CCCI began work in Saint Louis in 2009. Work on the topic of land use in flood-prone areas began in earnest in 2010.

In September and December 2010 experts from ARCADIS, an international consulting firm

Sustainable resettlement and reconstruction in flood-prone peri-urban areas of Saint Louis, Senegal (continued)

based in the Netherlands, carried out a study on the impact of climate change and the hydrological conditions affecting Saint Louis. They proposed adaptation options including reducing the probability of flooding, and reducing the damage caused by floods. (ARCADIS' professional services were offered at no cost under a partnership with UN-Habitat called The Shelter Initiative.)

At around this time, the Embassy of Japan in Senegal requested UN-Habitat to set up a project to relocate vulnerable populations living in flood-prone areas to safer sites. UN-Habitat responded by forming a partnership with the Municipality of Saint Louis to implement a USD2 million project targeting the neighbourhoods of Guet Ndar and Diaminar. The project is a pilot activity: it tests a mechanism which combines, on the one hand, urban upgrading and implementation of disaster mitigation measures for certain households and, on the other hand, relocation of the most at-risk families with construction of adequate shelter at a safer location.

As part of the Japanese cooperation, UN-Habitat carried out a preliminary mission in January 2011 to Senegal to identify a proper resettlement site to build low-cost houses where the population at risk in Diaminar and Guet Ndar would be relocated. A resettlement site was eventually identified, not too far from the areas of origin, which is an important aspect to be observed in any relocation project due to the dependency of the targeted population on location-specific



Low cost prefabricated houses under construction at the relocation site ©UN-Habitat

economic activities. The identified resettlement area is also close to potential connections to the water and energy supply networks, as well as public services.

In April 2011 the municipality of Saint Louis carried out an affordability study in the two affected neighbourhoods, disaggregated by gender, including an assessment of the willingness and capacity to pay for the new houses to be received, and a socio-economic analysis on the impact of the resettlement, including livelihood aspects.

Hands on Home Foundation, a non-profit organisation that specialises in low-cost housing construction using prefabricated technology, was hired for constructing low-cost houses at the resettlement site.

In June 2012, the Prime Minister of Senegal visited the relocation site and expressed his satisfaction with the project, signalling a strong political will by the national government to support

the completion of the project.

In April 2013, UN-Habitat transferred the responsibility for the management and administration of 68 completed houses to the Municipality of Saint Louis. UN-Habitat will continue supporting the municipality to set up a repayment system by establishing a partnership with a competent financial institution.

UN-Habitat and CCCI are currently exploring options with the municipality of Saint Louis for a demonstration activity to support livelihoods at the relocation site. UN-Habitat will also support the municipality financially and technically to carry out a thorough environmental impact assessment study of the relocation area.

Training event on Vulnerability Assessment and Local Climate Change Planning Methodologies



Groupwork session at the training for urban planners in the Philippines ©UN-Habitat

From 30 April to 10 May 2013 in the Philippines, UN-Habitat offered this training to urban planners and facilitators from thirteen countries in the Asia Pacific region.

CCCI in Asia Pacific is fast expanding its support to cities, and this training was attended by participants who are committed to providing support to on-going and future CCCI activities in the region. Participants learnt about the applications of CCCI

assessment and planning tools by following three city case studies in the Philippines - Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao. After analyzing and strengthening the vulnerability assessments, the participants went to these cities and applied selected steps of the methodology as part of the ongoing city processes.

The training will help cities to advance their climate change planning and resilience building processes.

Training event on Planning for Climate Change Tool

Over 40 Cambodian local government officials gathered in Sihanoukville, the capital of Preah Sihanouk Province, from 22 to 26 April 2013 to undertake training on UN-Habitat's Planning for Climate Change Tool. The training was co-organised by UN-Habitat and the provincial government, with funding from the multi-donor 'Cambodia Climate Change Alliance'.

The lead author of the tool facilitated the training, supported by experts from UN-Habitat, the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the Ministry of Environment's Climate Change Department.

The training will empower the officials to mainstream climate change considerations into local plans; a timely move as local investment plans are updated annually. With UN-Habitat's support, Sihanoukville is expected to become the first city in Cambodia to fully mainstream climate change into its plans.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2013

Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation

CCCI will participate in this forum organized by ICLEI in Bonn, Germany from 31 May to 2 June 2013. Specifically, CCCI will participate in the panel sessions on the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Making Cities Resilient Campaign; ecosystem adaptation; the city-region food system; regulating urban land use in flood prone areas; and incorporating climate change concerns in City Development Strategies.

Editors and authors will launch a special edition of Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability, entitled "Urban vulnerability, adaptation and resilience: lessons and new directions from the UN-Habitat Cities and Climate Change Initiative". The edition examines insights that are emerging from CCCI cities and their implications on urban vulnerability, adaptation and resilience in response to climate change.

CCCI will also showcase its tools and publications at an exhibition booth.

First meeting of CCCI Advisory Committee

This meeting will take place in Bonn, Germany on 3 June 2013 with representatives of all the major types of partner with which CCCI works.

The meeting will provide a chance for partners to network, so as to lead to joint collaborations and enhanced results both in the field and in global normative activities.

The meeting will also offer an opportunity to review the draft 'consolidated strategy' of CCCI.

CCCI announces blogging competition to win a trip to EcoMobility World Festival!

Organized through collaboration between the city of Suwon, ICLEI and UN-Habitat, the EcoMobility World Festival is taking place from 1 to 30 September 2013. This "Festival" is in reality a bold experiment involving real inhabitants in a real city. The residents of Haenggung-dong neighborhood in Suwon, South Korea will temporarily adopt an ecomobile lifestyle to experience how Eco-Mobility can influence their lives positively. The Festival will show how Eco-Mobility can provide innovative, environmentally friendly transport options to all of a neighbourhood's residents irrespective of age, gender or physical capability.

The Festival will showcase the

latest eco-mobile technologies, applying them to a real city environment. It is expected to bring together, policy makers, city-planners and experts across the world, gathered to see how one neighborhood can make the change from using private cars to eco-mobile modes of transport.

At a press conference held during the 24th UN-Habitat Governing Council in April 2013, Dr. Joan Clos the UN-Habitat Executive Director said of the Festival: "This is a natural experiment where people can see one of the possible alternatives to urban life in the future".

CCCI is inviting active young bloggers from CCCI cities to enter

a Blogging Competition on the concept of EcoMobility. Possible topics could include: Solving traffic nightmares, EcoMobile living reduces health risks, Transport in an urbanizing world, or Is your city investing enough in sustainable urban infrastructure?

The three top bloggers, as judged by a panel from UN-Habitat, will win a fully-sponsored one week trip to the Festival! To find out the rules, eligibility requirements, and to register for the Blogging Competition, please send an email to ccci@unhabitat.org.

To find out more about the Festival, please visit <http://www.ecomobilityfestival.org>

ABOUT US

Headquartered at UN-Habitat in Nairobi, the Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) involves the participation of more than 40 cities worldwide. It targets medium-sized cities in developing and least-developed countries, and emphasizes good governance and practical initiatives for the municipalities and their citizens. The CCCI team has adapted participatory processes developed

previously by UN-Habitat so as to specifically address climate change issues within the city. A complementary set of tools is being developed to support cities in raising awareness on the impact of climate change and undertaking mitigation and adaptation activities. Since 2008, CCCI has been generously supported by the Government of Norway, the United Nations Development Account, the

Cities Alliance, the Government of Sweden and other sources of global, regional, national and local funding. Newsletters of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative are periodically published electronically. For more information, or to be added to our mailing list, contact ccci@unhabitat.org or visit <http://www.unhabitat.org/ccci>.

CCCI Cities and Countries

