



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY – 9 PM EST
December 14, 2007

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MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG ADDRESSES DELEGATES AT UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE ON BEHALF OF ICLEI – LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

*The following is the text of Mayor Bloomberg’s speech as prepared.
Please check against delivery.*

“Thank you, Mister Minister. Mr. Executive Secretary; Excellencies; distinguished guests: It is my privilege to speak, not merely for the eight and one-quarter million people of New York City, but also for the nearly 3.3 billion men, women, and children—fully half the population of the Earth—who live in cities.

“Today, two powerful and historic forces converge: The urbanization of the world’s people and our alteration of the world’s climate. Both trends are accelerating. Fifty years ago, fewer than 100 of the world’s cities had populations of one million or more people. Within 10 years, nearly 500 cities will.

“The evidence of escalating climate change is also indisputable and the world’s cities, which account for 80% of humanity’s production of greenhouse gases, recognize that inaction is not an option.

“Mayors are at the level of government closest to the people, and we don’t have the luxury of talking about changes but not delivering them. It is, after all, our children who must breathe the pollution from power plants that also contribute to climate change, and our economies that are strangled by the ever-mounting automobile congestion that both fouls and warms our atmosphere. The Mayors of the world’s cities are the great pragmatists on the world’s stage. Results, not ideology, are what matter to us.

“Little wonder, then, that cities and localities around the globe, acting individually and in concert, have moved boldly and imaginatively to shrink our carbon footprints.

“More than 700 cities, towns, and counties worldwide maintain an active network promoting international environmental action through ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability, at whose request I am speaking to you today. The world’s 40 largest cities have come together in the C-40 organization, whose meeting my city hosted earlier this year, with great assistance from former President Clinton and the Climate Initiative of the Clinton Foundation. And although our national government has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol, some

(more)

700 US cities, representing 80 million Americans, have voluntarily agreed to meet Kyoto targets.

“That includes my own City of New York. We’re committed to reducing our global warming emissions by 30% by the year 2030. We’ll do that by working with our partners in State government to develop a pilot congestion pricing program. We’ll create incentives to replace old, polluting power plants with new ones using cleaner-burning fuels. We’ll plant one million new trees across our city in the next ten years. Just this week, we took steps to ensure that by the year 2012, our city’s 13,000 taxicabs will be hybrid or hybrid-equivalents. That alone will cut New York City’s carbon emissions by nearly half a percentage point, and save each cabdriver almost \$5,000 a year in fuel costs.

“Delegates: Like me, most of you are city dwellers. And like me, many of you also are parents. When you return to your homes, your children will ask you, as my children will ask me: What did you accomplish in Bali? Someday, our grandchildren may ask us that, too. Let’s give them an answer that we can all be proud of, not an excuse we’ll be embarrassed to explain.

“Let’s focus on what the nations that you represent, and the cities that I speak for, can do, rather than what they can’t. In that spirit, I ask you to take these two steps in finalizing the Bali Roadmap.

“First, set out, honestly and fully, the duties that we all share. If we are to stabilize the world’s climate, science says we must cut carbon emissions by some 60% to 80% worldwide by mid-century.

“Local governments yesterday launched the World Mayors and Local Government Climate Protection Agreement, committing themselves to these targets. But long-term targets can’t just become excuses for inaction. We have to set targets, propose realistic plans to achieve them, and hold ourselves accountable to do just that.

“As an American, I want my country to set the pace of change. A great nation embraces the duty to lead by example. And any country’s standing in the community of nations rises as it meets its obligations to a world that all our children will inherit. So we need fair commitments from all.

“And second, I ask you to make the cities and local governments of the world an integral part of this process.

“My hope is that when this conference re-convenes in 2008, local officials from every land will be able to speak for themselves, not as outsiders, but as full members of their national delegations. That will set the stage for their playing a productive role in negotiating the successor to the Kyoto Protocol in Copenhagen in 2009. The authority and the resources needed to address the greatest challenge that humanity has ever created for itself must be shared by the officials most directly confronting those challenges.

“We have much to bring to the table. From the dawn of civilization, cities have always been the hub of human industry and the matrix of human invention. In medieval times it was said that ‘city air is freer,’ because cities liberated people from the bonds of feudalism and unlocked human creativity and fired human imaginations.

“Now cities can and should help make the air freer and healthier, for everyone who inhabits our globe. I ask you to empower us to meet that challenge.”