

## ● Urban climate change challenge

**A leading geographer is one of the key members of the United Nations (UN-HABITAT)'s new "Cities and Climate Change Initiative" (CCCI).**

••• The initiative, launched at a conference in Oslo, Norway in early 2009, is considering the important role cities have to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the specific impacts climate change is likely to have on the main settlements of the world.

Cities are considered to have the strongest potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with more than half the world's population living in urban centres and generating four-fifths of all carbon dioxide emissions.

The initiative is seeking to forge and develop effective partnerships and networks, particularly between cities in developed and developing nations, promoting increased sharing of technologies, finance and knowledge in ways that tackle climate change.

The launch event was chaired by Professor David Simon FRGS, Head of Department at Royal Holloway, University of London.

"Chairing this landmark event provided fascinating insights, speakers emphasizing the global nature of the urban challenges we all face and the importance of addressing climate change in towns and cities of all sizes" said Professor Simon.

This event formed the first element of Professor Simon's consultative role with UN-HABITAT and was a key preparatory step leading up to the December 2009 Fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Taking place in Copenhagen, it is hoped that COP15 will lead to the successor international agreement to the Kyoto Protocol on tackling climate change. UN-HABITAT will play a key role

in these discussions, with Professor Simon set to play a leading role.

Following this, the fifth World Urban Forum (WUF5) will be held in Rio de Janeiro in late March 2010. Ahead of this Professor Simon is leading an "e-dialogue" consultation and contributing to UN-HABITAT's State of African Cities Report 2010 to be launched at WUF5.

*Professor David Simon, Head of Department, Royal Holloway, London*