

UN Under-Secretary-General to lecture on climate change

16 June 2009

During a visit to The University of Auckland on 19 June Professor Anna Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, will give a free public lecture on climate change' s impact on urban sustainability.

She will also sign an agreement with The University of Auckland' s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stuart McCutcheon, to formalise the University' s involvement as a partner in the innovative Habitat Partner University Network. As part of this network of well-recognised international universities, The University of Auckland shows its commitment to support UN HABITAT' s mandate of promoting the socially and environmentally sustainable development of towns and cities in line with the United Nation' s Millennium Development Goals.

Climate change is fast becoming seen as the greatest development challenge of the twenty-first century, demanding bold global action in order to reverse it.

UN-HABITAT is convinced that climate change issues must be tackled within a broader framework of sustainable housing and urban development. This includes a holistic approach to participatory governance, urban environmental planning and management, and the harnessing of technologies that are ecologically sound. New forms of partnerships are needed to address issues of urban sustainability and climate change, particularly with the people and the communities themselves, which must include the perspectives of all ages and genders. The broader framework demands paradigm shifts in the critical areas of transport, energy, water and waste management. It also requires innovative approaches to post-disaster relief, so that the infrastructure is built back to be stronger.

Professor Tibaijuka will discuss these issues in her lecture on " Adaptation to climate change: The challenge of island states" , and will speak of the Habitat Partner University (HPU) Network which is intended to translate scientific knowledge from research into practice for more sustainable human settlements.

The lecture will take place at Case Room 2, Owen G Glenn Building, University of Auckland Business School, from 5-6pm on 19 June.

Professor Tibaijuka will be accompanied on her visit by others of high rank in the United Nations, including Professor Jossy Materu, Chief of the Urban Design and Planning Services Unit; Dr Andre Dzikus, Chief of Water and Sanitation, Section II; and Sarah Mecartney, Human Settlements and Programme Manager, Asia and the Pacific.

Their purpose is to engage with key researchers in fields relating to urban sustainability who will lead the University' s involvement with the HPU Network, to discuss possibilities for future collaboration, and to address interested students and academics on " Urbanisation, climate change and the global financial crisis" .

