



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT**

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**Title:** World Summit of Regions on Climate Change, nrg4SD, and joining the UNDP Partnership Programme (St Malo, France: 29-30 October 2008)

**Date:** 7 November 2008

**By:** Jane Davidson, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

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Last week, between 28-30 October, I was delighted to participate in the first ever World Summit of Regions in St Malo, Brittany which focussed on climate change. I also signed a Letter of Intent with the UN Development Programme to assist developing countries in drawing up a climate change action plan.

The Summit was organised by the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) with the support of the regional government of Brittany. Wales is a founder member of nrg4SD, which aims to share good practice in regional sustainable development activity amongst its members, and promote recognition of the role that regional governments play in sustainable development to world leaders and international bodies such as the UN.

The nrg4SD held its annual General Assembly and a Steering Committee meeting prior to the start of the Summit, and also re-elected the management positions of the network (which are determined for a three year period). Wales was one of the original Co-Chairs of the network from 2002 – 2005, and then took the position of Vice Chair and Focal Point for Europe. I am happy to report that at the General Assembly meeting in St Malo, Wales was re-elected onto the Steering Committee and also re-elected to the position of Vice Chair and Focal Point for Europe.

During the Summit I was one of the key speakers in a thematic session on 'New technologies – renewable energy' at which I explained the renewable energy and climate change actions we are undertaking in Wales. Many of the regions present were particularly interested in our Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales and our target to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 3% per year from 2011 in areas where we have devolved competence.

On the final day of the Summit I introduced and explained the nrg4SD's 'Saint Malo Declaration' to the full plenary session. This statement affirmed the commitment of regional governments to take action on climate change, as a critical part of sustainable development, and to call for greater recognition and participation of regional governments in international and UN climate change discussions.

During the course of the Summit I also met with representatives of the UN Development Programme, and together with the Director of the UNDP for Europe, Ms Cécile Molinier, I signed a Letter of Intent between the UNDP and the Welsh Assembly Government.

This Letter of Intent confirms that the UNDP and Wales intend to work together on a UN-Association of Regions partnership programme called 'Toward Carbon Neutral and Climate Change Resilient Territories'.

Climate change is a severe threat to the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals in poorer countries, and many are already feeling the impact of climate change despite the least developed countries and regions having contributed least to causing the problem. The aim of the UNDP's partnership programme is to sensitise 500 regions from the global south to the issues around climate change and its threats, using experts from developed regions.

Through the programme 50 of the developing country regions will then receive help, training and support to develop their own Integrated Territorial Climate Plan and access the different available sources of funding for its implementation.

In Wales we have a particularly strong community link between Rhondda Cynon Taff and Mbale in Uganda, through the community organisation 'PONT' (which is part of the Gold Star Communities project funded by the Welsh Assembly Government's Wales for Africa programme). Both Wales and Mbale were successfully selected as two of the pilot regions for the UNDP partnership programme.

Wales therefore aims to contribute to the partnership programme by:

- supporting the region of Mbale in Uganda to create their own Integrated Territorial Climate Plan (ITCP) and access the different available sources of funding for its implementation;

- investigating the possibility of other regions with which Wales has links benefiting from joining the UN-Associations of Regions Partnership ‘Toward Carbon Neutral and Climate Change Resilient Territories’;
- undertaking a joint study and produce a joint UNDP – Welsh Assembly Government publication of existing innovative financial mechanisms used by regions to fund climate change activity; and,
- hosting an international conference to take place in Wales to present, discuss and promote innovative financing methods for climate change activities (such as charging local carbon taxes for the travel of regional government staff, congestion charging, applying ‘green taxes’ on oil consumption or for non energy efficient buildings etc).

Finally, I was also able to take the opportunity of being in Brittany to visit to the La Rance tidal energy project, and meet with the Brittany Regional Council President, Mr Jean Ives Le Drian, and Deputy President for Energy, Environment and ‘Quality of Life’ (Cadre de Vie), Ms Isabelle Thomas. Wales has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Regional Council of Brittany which identifies a number of areas of co-operation, including the environment, and the desire to share exchanges of experience and information. Seeing the La Rance tidal energy barrage and discussing Wales and Brittany’s renewable energy policies was a very useful learning experience.