

ICLEI: Local Governments for Sustainability and the U.N. Connection



By Freedom Advocates

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ICLEI, *Local Governments for Sustainability* has had an abundant history of association with the United Nations and the [association carries on today](#). There are over 600 cities and counties within the United States that have contracts with ICLEI. The following quotation was found on the ICLEI.org website in 2009:

"During the Local Government Session at the World Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa (August 2002), local government leaders from around the world, as well as representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-HABITAT and the World Health Organization (WHO), joined ICLEI in launching Local Action 21 as the next phase of Local Agenda 21 (LA21)."

The above quotation existed on the ICLEI.org website up until at least 2009. It was originally linked as a reference within the [ICLEI Primer](#). That link no longer works on the ICLEI site but the screen shot is at the end of this article.

Before ICLEI changed their name to *Local Governments for Sustainability*, they called themselves the *International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives* (ICLEI). ICLEI is specifically endorsed on page 55 of the [United Nations Agenda 21 document](#). Here is what it says in the "Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development" Section 1.7.21 of the original document.

"7.21 Cities of all countries should reinforce cooperation among themselves and cities of developed countries, under the aegis of non-governmental organizations active in this field, such as the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and the World Federation of Twin Cities."

Maurice Strong, a Canadian oil billionaire, was the United Nation's Secretary General at the U.N.'s 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. This is when Agenda 21 was unleashed on the world. Since then, he was implicated in the oil for food scandal and now lives as a fugitive in China where he directs that country's implementation of Agenda 21. Maurice Strong had this to say in the forward to ICLEI's published document, [The Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide: AN INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING](#):

"When this mandate was set out in 1992, there was little information available on how to proceed. It therefore gives me particular satisfaction to report that, since 1992, more than 1,300 local authorities from 31 countries have responded to the Agenda 21 mandate by developing their own Local Agenda 21 action plans for sustainable development.

The task of mobilizing and technically supporting Local Agenda 21 planning in these communities has been led by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and national associations of local government. Now, with the further support of the International Development Research Centre and the United Nations Environment Programme, ICLEI is able to present the first worldwide documentation of Local Agenda 21 planning approaches, methods, and tools in this Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide."

In ICLEI's own annual report they openly advertise their relationship with the United Nations:

"To this end, we formed a strong partnership with local government associations, national governments, and international organizations including various United Nations agencies."
--Konrad Otto-Zimmermann, Secretary General and Kaarin Taipale, Chair

And more from ICLEI's older website pages that have subsequently been changed (we have noted where they originally were found):

"ICLEI coordinates Local Government advocacy towards the United Nations, especially: Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and Environment Programme (UNEP)." (www.iclei.org/partners)

"ICLEI coordinates the representation of local governments in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensuring municipalities are part of the global climate negotiations." (www.iclei.org/ccp)

"An association of over 1100 local governments that represents the interests of local authorities within the United Nations and at international policy forums." (www.iclei.org/about)

"ICLEI is part of the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity and organizes advocacy by local governments at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity." (www.iclei.org/biodiversity)

ICLEI Primer: Your Town and Free... x ICLEI Global: Local Action 21 x

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Local Action 21

Moving from Agenda to Action

During the Local Government Session at the World Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa (August 2002), local government leaders from around the world, as well as representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-HABITAT and the World Health Organization (WHO), joined ICLEI in launching Local Action 21 as the next phase of Local Agenda 21 (LA21). Local Action 21 will support local governments' ongoing efforts in response to *Agenda 21*, the Rio Conventions, the *Habitat Agenda* and the *Millennium Declaration*.

Local Action 21 was launched as a motto for the second decade of LA21. It is a mandate to local authorities worldwide to move from agenda to action and ensure an accelerated implementation of sustainable development. Local Action 21 will strengthen the LA21 movement of local governments to create sustainable communities and cities while protecting global common goods.

The movement from LA21 to Local Action 21 will reflect the following advances in local sustainable development planning and management. First, the creation of sustainable communities and cities will be furthered by identifying and removing barriers to sustainable development.

Barriers such as poverty; injustice, exclusion and conflict; an unhealthy environment; and insecurity, will be proactively addressed through strategies to create viable local economies, just and peaceful communities, eco-efficient cities, and resilient communities and cities.

Secondly, Local Action 21 will reduce cities' further contribution to the worldwide depletion of resources and environmental degradation, which have severe repercussions for cities and their inhabitants. Local government involvement in global campaigns and programs such as the Water Campaign, the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, and others, will work to protect global common goods.

Thirdly, Local Action 21 will introduce management instruments that will ensure unwavering implementation, effective monitoring, and continual improvement of municipal sustainability management. Municipal sustainability management will incorporate practices such as eco-procurement and instruments such as *ecoBUDGET®* or triple bottom line reporting, to anchor these concepts in political and administrative routines. The adoption of principles such as the *Earth Charter* or the *Melbourne Principles* will serve to guide these actions.

Local Action 21 will unfold as local governments take up the challenge, and as national governments and supra- and international organizations provide support.

Local Action 21

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