

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CITIES OF THE FUTURE

## THE HUMAN DIMENSION – THE BERGEN EXAMPLE

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Bergen is Norway's second largest city, covering 460 square kilometres and with a population of 250.000. Bergen is lush and green, with mountain areas located 10 minutes from a lively city centre. Bergen has the longest urban tradition in Norway, and the harbour "Bryggen" is on UNESCO's list of World heritage Sites. Furthermore, Bergen is a narrow city with a rich cultural heritage threatened by the effects of climate change and heavy traffic.

New energy around Damsgårdssundet – a public and private Action Plan, is an example of the transformation of a run down industrial area close to the city centre. Action is taken with regard to seven dimensions:

- Democracy, participation and responsibility
- Infrastructure: quality, environment, energy and universal design
- Housing programme
- School as the heart of the community
- Industrial and cultural development, work places
- Health and welfare
- Competence

In order to successfully reach our aim for a future in accordance with our environment, we need integrated, coordinated, social and environmental programmes combined with human rights; we need to finance our plans and develop a social economy.

Today, mankind faces huge challenges with respect to future climate changes and their consequences. Local air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are part of our everyday life and play a prominent role in deciding the premises for our future. Both the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) have highlighted the focus on sustainable development in a number of different issues and international agreements.

Sustainable development has been on the specialist and political agenda for many years, with an overall focus on the economic, social and environmental aspects. Despite this, neither the targets for greenhouse gas reductions nor international, national and local climate targets are being met. The UN Climate Panel states clearly that if we are to prevent a worst-case scenario we need binding agreements and action within the next 10-20 years.

However, whatever happens, we will not be able to avoid climate change and adaptation to the changes will therefore be an important factor to be considered with regard to sustainable development.

In today's situation, the individual has no guaranteed right to sustainable decisions being made through either national or international governance. Fragmented political responsibility at all levels exposes coming generations to uncertainty, insecurity and a lack of sustainable decisions that can guarantee the future of our planet.

The Rio Declaration's principle that the polluter should pay applies to individuals, businesses, organisations and many others, but not to states. Under today's rules, cross-border pollution is tolerated and states have no liability beyond any agreements they might have signed. "The Bergen Charter of Climate Change and Human Rights" wishes to add a new dimension to the UN and EU principle of sustainable development – the human rights dimension.

This would mean extending the sustainability principle to include not only economic and social development and environmental protection but also human-rights aspects. The Convention must focus on the "public right", the right of the individual to an extended accessibility concept – the right to a society which focuses on democracy, social economy, air that we can breathe and the worth of the individual. Education, dissemination of knowledge and information about these rights must play an important role in the Bergen Charter.

The legal work on the convention will be exemplified by means of a concrete urban development case from Bergen – a management model in which these aspects and dimensions are duly represented. An extension of the model from the Damsgårdssundet project, with a clear human rights profile, may be a good place to start. In Bergen, we have a local expert milieu engaged in research into central topics that are relevant to the work on a new human rights convention with a holistic academic superstructure.

The city of Bergen has established a cooperation with UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) in order to establish a Bergen Office as a hub for the Institute's collaboration with Nordic actors.

The expertise available regionally, nationally and locally in the fields of humanitarian assistance, human rights and climate change research is significant. The office will ensure that this and other expertise is channelled through relevant UNITAR programs and activities. Most relevant of these are the Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), Climate Change, Governance Unit as well as Peace, Security and Diplomacy Unit.

The City of Bergen wants to establish collaboration with similar case projects in other cities and countries.