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**REPORT 6**  
*(1215/52/IM)*

## **WORLD CITIES SUMMIT 2008 AND EAST ASIA SUMMIT CONFERENCE ON LIVEABLE CITIES – MAYOR’S REPORT**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

To report back on the Mayor’s attendance at the World Cities Summit 2008 (WCS) and East Asia Summit Conference on Liveable Cities (EAS) – separate conferences held concurrently in Singapore between 23-25 June 2008.

### **2. Recommendation**

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receives the information.*

### **3. Background**

The Mayor was invited to give a presentation to the World Cities Summit 2008 on environmental sustainability and climate change; to take part in a dedicated East Asia Summit on Liveable Cities Conference plenary session for Mayors and Governors; and to give a presentation at the East Asia Summit on sustainable development of cities (*see Appendix 1 and 2 for copies of the two presentations*).

The Council was also invited to submit a paper to the EAS conference on Wellington city’s liveability challenges (*see Appendix 3*).

The organisers paid the Mayor’s travel, accommodation, transfer and conference registration expenses. She received the daily travel allowance entitlement of \$312.94 in total for the four days she was away.

The World Cities Summit was organised by the Singapore Ministry of National Development, the Singapore Civil Service College and Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and was billed as a premier international conference on effective public governance and sustainable development of cities.

The invitation for the Mayor to speak came through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, after an approach to the New Zealand High Commission in Singapore. The theme of the Summit was liveable and vibrant cities.

The East Asia Summit Conference on Liveable Cities was held in conjunction with the World Cities Summit and focused on the interrelated issues of public governance, urbanisation, climate change and the environment.

The Mayor also attended a reception organised by the New Zealand High Commissioner to Singapore, Martin Harvey, at which she gave a speech on sustainability to about 30 international media.

More than 650 senior officials from 50 countries attended the combined conferences and it generated more than 150 media reports internationally.

#### **4. Discussion**

The first plenary session of the WCS was themed around the critical role good governance plays in sustainability and looked at the challenges cities face because of increasing urbanisation. It considered some of the key factors required for ensuring cities remain liveable, sustainable and vibrant, and key issues such as water, energy and environmental sustainability.

The speakers included Yoshiro Mori, the former Prime Minister of Japan and President of the Asia Pacific Water Forum, Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman Al-Hussayen, the Saudi Arabian Minister of Water and Electricity, and Anna Tibaijuka, the Under Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Habitat.

We heard that only one percent of the world's water is clean and that around 30 percent of water is lost as leakage in cities. Supply/leakage and conservation/decreasing demand are the two biggest water issues facing cities.

Population management will become key in terms of managing our water and other resources, and good governance is critical. Most successful, efficient cities have good governance environments, knowledge-sharing, professional city administrations and increased responsiveness to changing needs and opportunities.

The session also looked at the change in priorities where the order of family, home, job had been changed to job and work first followed by family and home. It challenged us as city leaders to think of our citizens' wellbeing and happiness because happy nations are economically prosperous, have low corruption levels, relatively low conflict levels and high levels of health.

A Gallup World Survey showed that the Danish have the best overall quality of life and Togolese the worst. So how do we keep our people happy? We not only need to make sure their basic needs are met including good jobs and a safe city, we need to be multi-culturally diverse and provide growth and development opportunities – all the things that our Creative Wellington Innovation Capital aspires to be.

But there was a second level of quality of life factors that successful, efficient cities needed in order to keep their citizens happy. They included low pollution, green space, easy commuting, a stimulating intellectual climate, low noise levels and strong social capital including engaged citizens and volunteerism.

The opening plenary session was an interesting, challenging look at what makes a sustainable city and I was pleasantly surprised to see just how up with current trends and thinking we are – and in fact, how we were rather at the head of the pack in introducing the CWIC vision a few years back.

There was another interesting break-out session on the first day of the conference that looked at urban planning and conservation and how cities can be distinctive and vibrant.

The speakers included Cheong Koon Hean, the CEO of the Singapore Urban Redevelopment Authority, Marilyn Taylor, the immediate Past Chairman of the Urban Land Institute and a partner in Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and Professor Peter Rowe, the Raymond Garbe Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Harvard University.

We were told that the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be the century of productive, inclusive and sustainable cities and the competitive advantages those things bring with them. There was a strong message around the importance of strategic investment in infrastructure by the public sector and the importance of maintaining quality of place and authenticity. Marilyn Taylor talked of the importance of defining points of difference, even within countries.

As we are already well aware, there is already competition between cities to attract talent and that competition is indeed between cities and regions, not countries. The session emphasised the importance of what was called a 'culture of motivation' as being the only strategy for long-term sustainability and talked about the creative class being a key driver.

We heard how talent and foreign investment was the key to all cities' future and that planning for population growth so it didn't strain our resources was critical.

Again, I felt Wellington's vision, strategy and policies were endorsed by this sort of thinking going on internationally.

The following day I attended a session on the collaboration between the private and public sectors. John So, the Mayor of Melbourne, gave a case study on his city and talked about how in the 1980s Melbourne had lost its way. It was built around entertainment, shopping and working 9-5.

So the Melbourne City Council worked with the Victoria State Government to transform the city into Australia's arts and culture capital, and they couldn't have achieved that transformation without collaboration and partnership with both the state government and the private sector.

Now Melbourne is considered a leading example of urban transformation and has been judged by world economists as the world's leading city three times in the past decade.

How did they achieve this transformation? By restoring their centre and boosting retail, commercial and residential development and providing enough car parking; the Federal Square development which cost \$450 million and was a joint project with the state government; by building a new \$1.3 billion Convention Centre, again with help from the state government and the private sector. As a result, Melbourne is now Australia's fastest growing city.

I did an interview with The Singapore Straits Times before I left New Zealand for the conference (*see Appendix 4*) and also three other interviews with a Chinese newspaper, a Singapore newspaper and the Jakarta News.

## **5. Conclusion**

The World Cities Summit and East Asia Summit on Liveable Cities was a very worthwhile conference to attend. It was heartening to hear other city case studies and experiences which collaborate our own, and to see how in step and at the leading edge of thinking on city sustainability and liveability Wellington already is.

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<b>Supporting Information</b>
<p><b>1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome</b></p> <p><i>Attendance at the conference supports the Council's overall vision of Creative Wellington Innovation Capital and our activities around sustainability.</i></p>
<p><b>2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable</i></p>
<p><b>3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations</b></p> <p><i>None</i></p>
<p><b>4) Decision-Making</b></p> <p><i>This is not a significant decision</i></p>
<p><b>5) Consultation</b></p> <p><i>Not applicable</i></p>
<p><b>6) Legal Implications</b></p> <p><i>None</i></p>
<p><b>7) Consistency with existing policy</b></p> <p><i>This report fits with Council policy on conference attendance by elected members and supports our policies on sustainability</i></p>