

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CITIES

With estimates that two thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2030, cities have become a focal point for ensuring sustainable development on a global scale. Programs such as Industry Canada's Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) are at the forefront of helping citizens to improve their cities, using a network of experts for analysis, planning, action and support to mitigate the impact of current and future development.

Durban, South Africa, is one of four African cities currently working with the SCI to implement a number of initiatives aimed at sustainability. This bustling port city has started cleaning up and planning the restoration of a popular beach resort and has looked at Canadian models for

improving the electronic connectivity of its government. Progress is also being made to establish a clean technology centre to assist Durban businesses in identifying cost-effective solutions to reduce dangerous emissions.

In Algiers, Algeria, following a recent earthquake, the SCI helped to carry out a high-priority risk assessment of damaged housing structures and review of rehabilitation procedures. In Dakar, Senegal, SCI projects include a plan for storm-water management, measures to relieve traffic congestion and the development of proposals to improve city lighting while promoting energy efficiency. The SCI's newest participant, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is currently developing projects focused on public transportation,

solid-waste management, municipal safety, urban planning and land use.

The SCI concept of engaging different sectors, including governments, non-governmental organizations and private companies, is proving to be an effective formula in building the cities of tomorrow, says Durban Mayor Obed Mlaba. "The expertise of the Sustainable Cities Initiative is in assessing what the city needs and mobilizing efforts toward implementing solutions," he says. "The SCI is able to deliver results that would take us years to achieve." ♣

For more information about Industry Canada's Sustainable Cities Initiative, see www.sci.ic.gc.ca.

Durban, South Africa: cities are a focal point for ensuring sustainable development on a global scale.

photo: CIDA-ACDI/Peter Bennett

MANAGING WATER FROM 800 KILOMETRES OUT

Space exploration efforts focused on the quest for water on far-off planets may be getting a lot of attention these days, but the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) is looking a little closer to home.

The CSA's satellite, RADARSAT-1, has the most powerful technology in the world for collecting information on the location and movement of water on Earth. It was developed in 1995 for ice tracking and land-boundary identification in the Canadian Arctic. Now the CSA is working to join forces with the European Space Agency to implement the recommendations of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable

Development by using space-based techniques to improve water management in developing countries. Called the TIGER Initiative, the project aims to develop Earth observation information services for the surveillance and management of water resources, with a focus on Africa.

"Space can contribute to initiatives with developing nations," says CSA Project Manager Yves Crevier. The Agency expects the technology to significantly improve the ability of Africans to manage and improve their water usage, consumption, distribution and quality. This includes everything from reporting on the general water

supply to investigating water-borne diseases, storm protection, erosion and irrigation used in agriculture. Collecting satellite data to monitor and manage African wetlands where malaria-infected mosquitoes thrive is just one of the many uses of CSA technology, Crevier says. "The TIGER Initiative provides the CSA with an excellent opportunity to confirm the usefulness of space technology in support of sustainable development." ♣

For more information about the work of the Canadian Space Agency, visit www.space.gc.ca.