# Towards the Green Economy: Promoting Sustainable Urban Development and Green Infrastructure Investment

## UNCSD PrepCom 2 Side Event

## Monday 7 March, 13:15-14:45, NLB-4

**SPEAKERS**

**Joan Clos**
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

**Representative of ICLEI**
TBC

**Patxi Lazcoz**
Mayor of Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

**Ronan Dantec**
Deputy Mayor of Nantes, France*

**Matt Delnick**
CEO, Greenstar Recycling

**Tom Stewart (Moderator)**
Booz & Co

*This is a carbon-neutral event.*
**Winner, European Green Capital award*

Cities and city regions have a vital role to play in the realisation of sustainable development and poverty eradication in the context of a green economy. As more and more land is converted to urban uses, the patterns that this development assumes within the regions around cities will have far-reaching effects upon the world's economies, energy use and climate change.

The Side Event will focus on three key areas for infrastructure investment; namely, the energy (including buildings), waste and transport sectors. It will showcase a few cases of successful infrastructure investments in different cities and will discuss what worked and why and the policy environment, from the point of view of both mayors and the private sector. It will also seek ways for successful practices to be replicated in other cities, publish an analysis of lessons learned and develop further concrete actions for greening public infrastructure.

UN-Habitat has identified *seven strategies* for achieving urban patterns for sustainable development: (1) Embrace land mosaic patterns that provide for large green patches; (2) Promote compact cities and planned extension of urban areas; (3) Balance strategic facilities with diversified local economic opportunities; (4) Expand network infrastructure while getting the most out of existing networks; (5) Construct 'greener' built environments that use water and energy efficiently; (6) Protect valuable ecosystems services and biodiversity hotspots while increasing resilience to some natural disasters; and (7) Promote clusters of green industries and green jobs. These strategies can contribute to developing the city-region, within the context of the Green Economy.

Local governments organizations such as ICLEI have identified particular roles for cities in promoting the green economy, such as behaving as primary actors, steering municipal investments and purchasing power to influence the market, setting framework conditions for investments, influencing incentives and finance, informing private behaviour, driving local innovation and scaling up.

UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

nrg4SD

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

The Prince's Foundation FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

carbonclear

London Business School Carbon Club

## CITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Cities play a strategically important role in the fight against climate change as they contain half of the world's population, account for two-thirds of its primary energy demand and more than 70% of its CO2 emissions (2006). With continued urbanisation, energy use and CO2 emissions in cities are projected to increase.

Cities manage public resources, investments and infrastructure. They can implement solutions fairly autonomously, without waiting for progress on global negotiations, and directly impact citizens' welfare. Green infrastructure creates jobs, has a high social rate of return and fosters innovation. In the current economic environment green infrastructure investment can also stimulate aggregate demand while addressing the infrastructure deficit.

## ENERGY

Tackling energy demand of existing building stock is a priority for cities. New and innovative approaches in constructing buildings with green roofs, and energy-efficient materials and using appliances that consume a minimum of energy along with 'smart meters' for strategic use of energy at low-demand times have all been successfully encouraged.

Retrofitting buildings with innovative environmental design makes it possible for buildings to consume up to 50 per cent less energy. Stringent building codes, mandatory energy certificates, tax incentive and loans have all had an important impact on energy demand in a number of green cities across the pan-European region.

Eco-cities optimise the efficiency of energy use by adopting green energy systems like district heating and combined heat and energy plants. Energy performance is affected by the technology of energy generation, but also by reducing the distance between the energy source and user interface for cooling or heating systems. A grid-based, decentralised energy system, with district heating systems that provide space and water heating for large urban complexes have reduced energy demand.

## WASTE

Through recycling and energy recovery, ecocities reuse municipal waste, minimising what is sent to the landfill. Electronic waste has been very profitably recycled through the recovery of its precious metals.

Eco-cities are characterised by a sustainable water supply, including water treatment and recycling for reuse. In brown cities, water leakage is a major source of waste. Upgrading and replacing the water pipes has contributed to large savings of potable water. New methods for conserving water, recycling waste water, preventing saltwater intrusion, managing storm water and treating anaerobic sewage can all be part of the solution. Rain can be collected as 'grey water' and used for non-drinking domestic and industrial uses with virtually no treatment.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

This Side Event will also feature the launch of the UN-ECE public-private roundtables on green economy series, aimed at helping to mobilise private and public investment for green infrastructure. The first roundtable will take place on 7 March 2011, 18:00-19:45 at Booz & Co, 101 Park Avenue, New York

## MOBILITY

More than any other area, transport affects the environmental performance of cities. Innovative transport actions and policies have been pursued successfully by eco-cities to achieve their climate change targets and sustainable mobility plans. Reducing the use of vehicles is essential for an eco-city, for ecample through public transport, emissions standards, car-sharing schemes and car clubs. In order to discourage car use, inhabitants can be encouraged to walk or ride a bicycle. Suitable infrastructure in the form of well-lit footpaths and safe dedicated cycling paths is essential.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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