

# Sustainable Cities

## Panellists:

**Rohit Aggarwala**, Special Advisor to C40 Chair

**Frans van Houten**, CEO and Chairman, Philips

**Ida Auken**, Minister for the Environment, Denmark

## Moderator:

**Andrew Steer**, President, World Resources Institute (WRI)

## Framing content

By 2050, up to 80 per cent of the global population is expected to reside in cities, which are increasingly becoming the focus of sustainability efforts. Cities will be the key figures of the 21st century; the success of our generation will be measured against our efforts in creating sustainable cities. In this session Participants reflected on how effective solutions to sustainability challenges in cities require innovative collaborations and policies across industry and government.

## Opportunities

Cities encompass all the elements needed for developing green economies; efficiency, density, shared space and recycling. Cities are spaces for more efficient transportation, shared recreational assets and new technologies exist which can help us to provide resilient solutions in terms of efficient urban lighting. Thus cities have to grow in a sustainable and inclusive way.

Participants agreed that public procurement has a lot of potential if it goes green. An example from the Netherlands illustrated how using tenders in an innovative way by keeping prices fixed on new public and asking bidders to compete on finding the best solutions in terms of social and environmental.

## Challenges

Politicians need to find the balance between giving freedom to cities to develop their creative spaces, while at the same time providing the political frameworks and standards. Participants also highlighted the

challenges in terms of getting governments' and parliaments' support for urban leaders and new green ideas at city level. Another challenge to creating sustainable cities are the difficulties in making people accept the initial high costs of green growth investments and accept that the benefits may not necessarily go to the same unit, which invested in the first place.

## Recommendations

The following points were highlighted:

- Financing: Focus on green public procurement and development of creative financing tools for mobilizing investment towards sustainability;
- Leadership: Dynamic leaders are needed to drive the process forward. Mayors with similar mandates around specific issues to create green growth networks similar to C 40;
- Tools: Need for new tools to assess urban sustainability strategies and solutions (taking into account both environmental, social and economic aspects)