

Global Town Hall@Metropolitan Solutions

7-11 April 2014

Hannover, Germany



ICLEI Global Town Hall 2014 at the Metropolitan Solutions trade show

7-11 April 2014, Hannover, Germany

Observations and first analysis

As of 11 April 2014

Today, the ICLEI Global Town Hall 2014 at the Metropolitan Solutions trade show in Hannover, Germany has come to a successful end. Five days of exchange between city and business representatives searching for low-carbon, resilient and eco-efficient solutions for urban areas, have resulted in important learnings.

Both on- and off-stage, in panels, presentations, bi-lateral talks, targeted tours of the fair and visits at exhibition stands, inspirations were captured from all sides. Convened by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the Global Town Hall was a venue created to facilitate these interactions.

Observations and first analysis

Key areas for changing our cities: Sustainable urban mobility, green buildings, and energy efficiency were among the most popular themes of the five-day Global Town Hall. The growing relevance of these themes was evident in the presentations given by cities such as Münster and Bremen, Germany; Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Poznan, Poland; Helsingborg, Sweden, and more.

Low-carbon development is the leading goal for a growing number of cities: Five days of discussions and exchange have confirmed that responsible local leaders are pushing all actors in their cities towards strategies and actions for reducing the use of fossil fuels and nuclear energy while promoting renewable energy generation. Be it the 'One Less Nuclear Power Plant' campaign of Seoul, South Korea; the cap and trade program of Tokyo, Japan; or sustainable action planning in Hannover and Hamburg, Germany – greenhouse gas reduction targets are coupled with concrete actions and systems to measure progress.

Rapidly growing urban populations need new visions for lifestyles that inspire sustainable resource and energy use within the limits of our one shared planet: Sharing products and services can be an answer for individuals. Designing productive and smart cities and local infrastructures is the challenge for public decisions makers and their counterparts in businesses.

Closing resource cycles requires new urban infrastructures: Changing one-way resource flows (resulting in waste to be disposed of) into cyclically organized urban economies requires new infrastructures, as was discussed, for example, during the session on urban agriculture. As we need to produce food also within our cities, each urban development should include green public and private infrastructure, such as facades, roofs and surroundings of buildings that can be mobilized for food production for inhabitants. Both Barcelona, Spain and Almere, The Netherlands provide leading examples of how such new infrastructures can be built in cities.

New and sustainable solutions need many actors who must learn to work together: the Global Town Hall 2014 highlighted the need for collaboration not just between businesses and cities but with stakeholders, including researchers, scientist, businesses and trade associations, educational institutions and start-ups, just to name a few.

Alexandra van Huffelen, Vice Mayor of Rotterdam and ICLEI Global Executive Committee Member noted that *“The cities that are fighting climate change through mitigation successfully are the cities where people are sitting together (transport, businesses, buildings, governments, academics) and working with each other towards finding solutions. You need to get out of your box and think ambitious targets!”*

Intelligent and smart cities with smart buildings, energy-efficient public services and other infrastructures can only be created if planners, products & service providers, and end-users are jointly involved from the beginning.

A smart city is not just about smart technology: As cities move towards becoming smart, the complex intricacies of networking, public involvement and innovation become clear. Solutions no longer work in a bubble. *“It has become obvious that we need much more interconnectivity and interaction of all responsibilities within a city and also within businesses to work towards smart cities.”* says Monika Zimmermann, Deputy Secretary General of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.

Smart cities are globally connected: Cities looking to apply ICT and other technological solutions for cleaner and more ecomobile cities can find inspiration and support from similar cities in other countries. Examples of such international exchanges given by Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Berlin, Germany made this obvious. *“ICLEI will continue to encourage and connect leading cities of the world to jointly reach the goals of low-carbon and resilient cities”*, confirmed Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI, in Hannover.

Technologies are often available, but what is missing is organizational and business models that allow a breakthrough on the market: Thinking smart is not just thinking in a technological dimension but also considering who could have which roles in making solutions happen and securing the necessary finances.

Information is key to new solutions: Intelligent and smart city approaches were heatedly debated in the Global Town Hall 2014. How do we use ICT for energy and water efficiency? How do we create buildings, transportation systems, or energy management systems that combine information on needs and availabilities towards efficient solutions? Are citizens’ data protected? What do citizens want?

Widespread realization of sustainable and smart cities can be supported by targeted standardization: Businesses, standardization organizations and local governments are working together to explore how

much standardization is needed for the application of new products (e.g. rechargeable batteries for light e-vehicles), for protecting citizens' data (e.g. when used for smart grids) and for measuring results in a (self-) critical way.

Public procurement can support innovation: Taking up this initiative of the European Commission, the opportunities by public procurement as a factor driving change was demonstrated by leading local governments such as Helsinki, Finland and Barcelona Province.

We must move from improving single services to integrated solutions: The Urban Nexus - integrating the provision of municipal services, integrated urban planning, connecting responsibilities of local administrations, and getting out of isolated activities - will be key to implementing solutions for metropolitan areas in the future.

Cities in the global South are seeking to leapfrog solutions: Cities being on the path to low carbon development and many others who are just starting their journey such as Rajkot, India, Balikpapan, Philippines, KwaDukuza, South Africa, Fortaleza and Recife, Brazil are working hard towards mitigating carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change. In this endeavor they are looking for solutions that are appropriate to their conditions.

The growing participation and attendance at the ICLEI Global Town Hall has demonstrated the strong need for interaction and cooperation. Stronger yet is the need for stakeholder involvement from the grassroots phase of sustainable development. Science, consultancies, institutions and especially citizens need to be enthusiastic about the future of their cities. Cities and businesses can individually create projections, form action plans and even work towards implementation, but unless they involve their citizens they will never create truly sustainable cities. As Hans-Jochen Schneider, CEO of EnergieCity Leipzig said, **“Smart cities need smart citizens!”**

Metropolitan Solutions 2015: The Metropolitan Solutions trade show will move to Berlin in 2015. New features, new ways of interaction and new opportunities for exchange will be developed for the next edition of the fair, which will focus on urban infrastructure for the future.

Video recordings of all presentations and panels can be viewed online, please visit:
www.iclei.org/gth2014

Monika Zimmermann, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General, 11 April 2014, Hannover/ Germany

ICLEI Global Town Hall team Monika Zimmermann, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General David Brugman, Smart Urban Infrastructure Program Manager Roman Mendl, J. Officer, Smart Urban Infrastructure Adriana Pischchio, J. Officer, Smart Urban Infrastructure	ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability World Secretariat Kaiser-Friedrich Stasse 7, 53113 Bonn, Germany Tel: +49-228/97 62 99 10 globaltownhall@iclei.org www.iclei.org/gth2014
--	--