



DELTA IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE II INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE, SCIENCE, CITIES AND BUSINESS
ROTTERDAM THE NETHERLANDS, 24-26 SEPTEMBER 2014

Round Tables	
RT 1. If mayors ruled the world	
Moderator	Dr. Benjamin Barber, USA
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam, the Netherlands ● Raisa Banfield, Deputy Mayor of Panama City, Panama ● Cedric S. Grant, Deputy Mayor of New Orleans, USA ● Dao Anh Kiet, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam ● Sutanto Soehodho, Deputy Governor of Jakarta, Indonesia ● Cynthia Villar, Senator of the Republic of the Philippines, the Philippines
Summary	
<p>The Round Table 'If mayors ruled the world' puts the spotlight on the power of cities in climate adaptations in deltas and how they can work together to act on and fight the challenges due to climate change.</p> <p>Dr. Benjamin Barber, author of the book 'If mayors ruled the world' and founder and organiser of the Global Parliament of Mayors starts with a lecture on the necessity of adaptation by cities because governments are not up to it and international organisations like the UN do not take the lead. Cities can take steps on their own with the help from other cities. Nations talk about their differences, cities talk about similarities.</p> <p>City leaders from Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Manila, New Orleans, Panama City and Rotterdam share their views on their responsibilities and how to act accordingly. All participants stress that we live in a world with interdependent or even common challenges so cities should join forces to fight these. Despite the differences, there are a lot of similarities between the challenges representatives have to deal with. There is an urge for strong leadership to do it differently. As Mayor Aboutaleb puts it: 'the stone age did not end because of a lack of stones but because there was a need to do it completely different'.</p> <p>All attendees agree on the importance of working together and learning from each other. Mr. Anh Kiet from Ho Chi Minh City gives an example of international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge with Rotterdam. Deputy Mayor Grant of New Orleans provides an example of regional collaboration: after Katrina the Water board built a completely new infrastructure. But in order to make it profitable, it engaged in partnerships with the cities in the region on all sorts of levels.</p> <p>The mayors and representatives from the cities know what needs to be done because they are 'homeboys (and -girls)'. They know what measures to take and what responsibilities they have to claim even if they do not have the resources (yet) or if legislation is failing. Especially then it is important to set goals and take the first step. Even if the public is against it or if it requires a legal battle as is the case in Manila, where Senator Villar is fighting against a reclamation project that will aggravate flooding in the concerned areas.</p> <p>According to Deputy Mayor Banfield, Panama City Council also takes responsibility by integrating</p>	



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sustainability, preservation and protection against water into urban planning, despite the fact that this is not an important issue for the public yet. Deputy Governor Soehodho experiences something similar in Jakarta where they are working on new settlements and vertical building, to avoid encroachment of riverbanks and subsequent increased flooding during rainy days. Although the government knows what has to be done, it is not enough to tell it, people have to experience it. So all agree on the importance of acting and the necessity of taking the first step. Because every journey starts with the first step.