

Plenary closing session

Chair	Paula Verhoeven, director Climate Director of Climate Affairs, City of Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Speakers	Henk van Schaik, Programme Co-ordinator International, Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate, the Netherlands Rory McLeod, journalist, media entrepreneur and media trainer, United Kingdom Barbara Groom, World Duty Editor of the BBC, United Kingdom Ana Fornells de Frutos, Chair of the Ethics and Finance Committee of the Adaptation Fund Board, Spain Prof. Carlos C.A. Nobre, National Institute for Space Research – INPE, Brazil Prof.dr. Pier Vellinga, chairman Steering Committee conference Prof.dr. Cees Veerman, chairman Dutch Delta Commission
Rapporteur	MSc. Marjolein Pijnappels, Knowledge for Climate, Climate changes Spatial Planning, the Netherlands

Over 1.200 participants engaged in discussions, presentations and excursions during the three day delta conference Deltas in Times of Climate. The conference focused on exchanging knowledge, strengthening relations between delta cities and exploring links of science-policy-practice. A total of 72 parallel sessions were organized, the 2nd anniversary of Connecting Delta Cities was celebrated and the Delta Alliance was launched.

Mayors and governors from all over the world solitarily conclude they need to Act Now, Henk van Schaik reports back from the Round Table on the role of cities. Central governments don't move fast enough and delta cities should take care of themselves. Rotterdam intends to have as many people working in the environmental sector as in other sectors in the near future. Cities don't see adaptation as a social cost, but as an investment. One city alone doesn't have all the knowledge and skills to invest in adaptation, but all delta cities combined do.

Barbara Groom informs the audience of the conclusions by the Round Table members on Financing adaptation. The will and knowledge to act alone isn't enough. Investments are sorely needed. The amount of money required for adaptation is 70-100 billion dollar annually. The CoP15 negotiations in 2009 resulted in a pledge for 30 billion dollar by 2012 and another 100 billion dollar by 2020. A disquieting 372 million dollar has been put into the Adaptation Fund in the last year. The Adaptation Fund has been established by the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The Fund is financed with 2 percent of the Certified Emission Reduction (CERs) issued for projects of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and other sources of funding. It is unrealistic that the donor countries will come up with the pledged amount of money by 2012 or 2020. Cities take their own measures and bilateral partnerships such as *Water Mondiaal*, urban partnerships such as C40 and private initiatives grow ever more important. Sparking the interest of private parties interest in climate adaptation may be essential to the success of it.

The building sector has but a smouldering interest in adaptation, is one of the conclusions from the Round Table on the role of the Building sector in adaptation, facilitated by Rory McLeod. An impetus could be created by a rise in fuel prices. Starting lots of experimental projects could trigger quick learning: let's make all the mistakes we can as soon as possible. A major opportunity is presented by the 1.4 million Dutch homes that need retrofitting within ten years. The biggest player in retrofitting can only handle 4.000 a year. To improve involvement of the building sector climate proofing must be made sexy. Jargon isn't sexy. A message to all scientists: think about the language you use.

During the plenary closing session some interesting conclusions of the conference are brought before the spotlight by Prof. Pier Vellinga:

- an integrative approach is essential for deltas to adapt to climate change

- climate adaptation offers an abundance of economic opportunities, e.g. mass retrofitting and innovative building and architecture
- megacities with subsidence are extra vulnerable to climate change
- competing land claims will continue
- we already have the techniques, we should focus on its application
- we do not lack knowledge as much as skilled people who can practically apply adaptation measures
- health issues related to climate change are neglected
- delta cities refuse to wait for their governments to take action: they set up their own bilateral, urban and private initiatives
- delta cities demand a formalised position in the allocation of international funds

During the Award Ceremony for Best Young Delta Scientist of the Conference prof. Carlos C.A. Nobre awarded two PhD students for their excellent presentation and poster during the conference. Stephanie Janssen (Deltares) won the prize for the best oral presentation on social learning for fresh water scenarios. Michelle van Vliet (Wageningen UR) won the prize for best poster on the risks of high river temperatures for energy production.

In the closing statements of the conference Delta Commissioner Cees Veerman recalls the criticism voiced by climate skeptics this year: minor mistakes are motive to throw everything about climate change out of the window. 'Our only reaction can be: do better research and communicate results better', says Veerman.

Climate change is one of the list of problems that include hunger, poverty and terror. At the moment climate change may be at the bottom of priorities. Therefore it's important to convey the message from this conference to the COP16 later this year in Mexico. Veerman: 'Climate change is not just a threat. It's an opportunity in many ways. It's about how we use natural resources and take care of our fellow creatures. To govern well what has been given to us by our ancestors to give to the next generations.'