

## Remarks delivered at the launch of the Stockholm Network Carbon Scenarios

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The scenarios we've seen presented tonight give us three visions of how international climate policy could evolve over the next decade. They show how national governments, international agencies and the private sector will need to work together to address climate change. But these groups aren't the only ones that have a role to play in future climate policy and I'd like to say a few words about the role of cities in particular.

2007 marked the first time in history that over half of the world's population lived in cities.<sup>1</sup> In Europe, over 80% of us live in urban areas and across the de-

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<sup>1</sup>UN Population Division (2008) <http://esa.un.org/unup/>

veloping world too, people are moving from the countryside to seek a better life in town. But in addition to their economic and cultural benefits, cities also have significant environmental impacts. Approximately 75% of global resource consumption can be attributed to urban areas<sup>2</sup> and this means that solving climate change will be directly linked to the fate of cities, their energy consumption, the way they use their hinterlands, and also their potential to support global climate policy.

So what might be the role of cities in the three climate scenarios presented here?

First, cities might become ‘icons’ of climate change and its worst effects. The *Kyoto Plus* scenario notes how large-scale disasters could provide a tangible demonstration of the consequences of climate change, thus encouraging policy action. Having seen the effect of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans, the risk from more frequent and severe tropical storms no longer seems like an abstract threat. And while some cities may have too much water, others might not have enough.

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<sup>2</sup>Girardet, H (1999) *Creating Sustainable Cities* Dartington: Green Books

Barcelona is suffering from the worst drought in 60 years and this summer it is importing six shiploads of fresh water a month to meet demand.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately cities don't have to be confined to this negative role. The *Agree & Ignore* scenario, for example, notes that the divergence between the long-term horizon of climate change and the short-term demands of electoral politics can thwart even the most committed politician. It's hard to promote a policy that might be beneficial in the long-term if an opponent can portray it as a cynical short-term tax grab. However cities can help to align these two timeframes, through their need for long-term infrastructure investments and their use of diverse partnerships for policy delivery. These two mechanisms provide cities with an opportunity to encourage dialogue between stakeholders and hopefully align short- and long-term policy and climate goals.

Finally, cities can provide direct leadership on climate issues. The *Step Change* scenario considers 'the best possible solution to the worst possible problem'

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/may/14/spain.water>

and in this case, cities may begin to move immediately, without the support of national governments. Whether it's the solar power of Freiburg, the district heating of Copenhagen, or the best practices of the C40 climate group, cities already provide the testing lab for new technologies and policies and these successes may then encourage wider action. As the recent Shell energy scenarios note:

“The success of individual initiatives boosts the political credentials of mayors and regional authorities, creating incentives for national and international leaders to follow suit. National and local efforts begin to align with and amplify each other, and this progressively changes the character of the international debate”<sup>4</sup>

Of course cities can't do it all on their own. Markets and institutions still need to be right and events can overtake even the most prescient scenario planner. When we first met to discuss these scenarios, oil was less than \$100 a barrel; now Goldman Sachs says

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<sup>4</sup>Shell (2008) *Shell energy scenarios to 2050*, [http://www.shell.com/home/content/aboutshell/our\\_strategy/shell\\_global\\_scenarios/shell\\_energy\\_scenarios\\_2050/shell\\_energy\\_scenarios\\_02042008.html](http://www.shell.com/home/content/aboutshell/our_strategy/shell_global_scenarios/shell_energy_scenarios_2050/shell_energy_scenarios_02042008.html)

it could hit \$200 in the next 24 months.<sup>5</sup> But even if the details may be slightly off, these scenarios still give compelling accounts of how climate policy could evolve and I believe cities will be an integral part of that debate.

Thank you.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9oG5B2O7.htm>