

## **SUMMARY:**

**ZERO EMISSIONS SUMMIT, Sep. 21, 2017**

**Scandinavia House, 58 Park Avenue, New York**

### **Objectives of the Summit**

The main objective of the event was to highlight the citizens' emerging, but still under-recognized role in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Building on the work done at the conference, we launched a network to mobilize individuals and households to reduce their own carbon footprint. We will work both globally and locally in this effort. The event was prepared in close cooperation with the staff of the UN Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn (UNFCCC).

Recent studies have shown that the role of citizens is critical in achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement since the pledges of governments, cities, and global business sector are not yet enough. If a critical mass of individuals and households - starting in developed countries - would be willing to change their consumer patterns without affecting their quality of life, this movement would rapidly change business investments to a sustainable direction thus massively reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This mobilization could be a key element to implement the Paris Climate Agreement. In Finland, for example, households create around 70% of the national carbon footprint.

The main goals of the Summit were:

1. To raise awareness about the relevance of citizen climate action in helping to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.
2. To share best practices and success stories, and to demonstrate useful tools that could be applied in mobilizing consumers to make climate-friendly, sustainable decisions.
3. To launch a pilot study on citizens' increased role in climate change action at the sub-national level, with a view to expand these pilots to major cities and municipalities internationally.
4. To launch the International Citizens Action Network (I-CAN) and to begin a "tradition" of citizen climate actions on Zero Emissions Day, originally a Canadian initiative. If successful, this will become an event that will occur every year on September 21st where citizens across the world will be called upon to stimulate discussion and outreach on citizens' role for sustainable consumer choices and climate action.

Opening remarks were given by Chris Burdick, Town Supervisor for Bedford, N.Y. and Chairman of the Board for Sustainable Westchester, and Tapio Kanninen, President of co-host Global Crisis Information Network, Inc.

### **Opening keynote presentations**

*H.E. Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland: "Citizens' role is much more important than many think. I made my own Citizens Climate Pledge two years ago. My carbon footprint reduction campaign began already a few years before the pledge, when I had a geothermal heating system installed in our home. This cut our electricity consumption by about half. Since then we have switched to CO2-free electricity and are using more and more LED light bulbs. I have also paid more attention to reducing food wastage." (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))*

*Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change:* “The I-CAN initiative is crucial to achieve the key objective of climate neutrality. This new network can help everyone take action in their daily and professional lives. People, organizations, companies, and governments have realized that climate neutrality isn’t only good for the planet, but good for their businesses and themselves” (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))

Mrs Nahida Sobhan, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh told how climate change challenges the life of ordinary people like farmers and fishermen in Bangladesh, one of the most vulnerable countries in the world.

*Mr. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization:* “The warming has exceeded 1.1 C or 1.3 if the Arctic areas are taken into account. Economic losses have increased 50 fold since the 1950’s. The recent hurricanes have broken single event records and the trend continues.” (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))

*Ms. Zoe Tcholak-Antitch, Mission 2020, on behalf of former UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres:* “Bending the curve of emissions by 2020 is our best chance to limit global warming and ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals remain within our reach. It will also pave the way to delivering a just transition to net zero emissions by 2050. It’s necessary, it’s desirable and it’s achievable! This is the major opportunity to modernize our transport and energy, to clean our air, to create jobs, improve land use and have more livable cities.” (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))

#### **Panel: Enabling and encouraging citizens for climate action in countries, cities and counties**

Moderator: Mr. Jouni Keronen, Executive Director, Climate Leadership Council of Finland, Co-founder, Stormwarning Association

*Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union:* “IPU urges parliamentarians to lead by example. They can encourage others to take climate positive actions. Parliamentarians can work with their citizens and ensure that all communities understand well what can be achieved with current solutions and what still needs to be developed.” (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))

*Ms. Jennifer MacIntyre, Canada’s Ambassador for Climate Change:* “National governments cannot do it alone. This is why the Government of Canada is taking an inclusive approach to addressing climate change by engaging critical stakeholders, including cities, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples. A powerful example of this inclusive approach is seen in the development of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, in which stakeholder views were critical to the development of Canada’s comprehensive approach to meet or exceed commitments under the Paris Agreement.”

*Mr. Bill Peduto, Mayor, Pittsburgh:* “City of Pittsburgh has set an ambitious target to power itself with 100% renewable energy by 2035. Smart environmental policies have boosted the transition from the traditional manufacturing industry to modern economy and speeded up the development of clean energy industry such as wind turbine manufacturing. Implementation of climate actions creates an opportunity to green growth”

*Mr. Bryan Buggie, Director, Strategic Initiatives & Sector Development, Vancouver Economic Commission:* “Vancouver is ranked 26th in the world as a City-brand. The brand is mostly attributed to the City’s reputation for a clean and healthy city that cares about the environment. Going green has been able to help us attract the world’s best talent AND investment. And today, at 4% GDP growth and 4.9% unemployment, Vancouver is the strongest local economy in Canada and one of the strongest in the G7. So, don’t tell me that going green is bad for business!”

*Mr. Chris Burdick, Town Supervisor of Bedford, New York State, Chairman of the Board of Sustainable Westchester Inc.: "Sustainable Westchester is a non-profit consortium of forty-one Westchester County local governments, representing 800,000 county residents. It was formed to improve the health and welfare of communities in New York State by coordinating and implementing energy efficiency, conservation, and sustainability efforts by and among residents and local governments in Westchester County, New York. The action group is designed to turn environmental challenges into opportunities to create more healthy, vibrant and attractive communities, now and in the future. In the end, we realize that citizen involvement is at the very heart of developing solutions and moving the needle. Every decision that citizens make matters."*

### **Keynote presentations on Inspiring Citizens Action**

*Success cases from Finnish businesses: Mr. Henrik Ehrnrooth, Chairman of the Board, Climate Leadership Council in Finland, Pöyry, Otava: "Finnish businesses have developed various sustainable solutions in electricity and heat production, mobility and food chain. For example, open pan-Nordic electricity markets and strong competence in biorefining have enabled several world class products and services. Planting trees is an interesting opportunity to offset emissions: if for example the wealthiest one billion citizens would plant 7-8 trees annually for the next 25 years the global forest loss during the last 25 years could be compensated."*

*Using business to invent individual action: Ms. Anne-Maria Salenius, CEO, Bank of Åland, Finland: "Last year a Finnish bank, the Bank of Åland launched a credit card helping users to know the carbon footprint of purchases. Together with number of partners the Bank of Åland has developed the Åland Index which calculates the CO2 impact of every credit card transaction. Customers can follow the impact of their monthly consumption from their credit card account and either change their consumption patterns or offset the emissions by donating to local or international environmental initiatives. The card has already won many awards. The Bank of Åland provides the Åland Index to any other bank and we see a big growth potential in this initiative that empowers consumers to make better-informed decisions."*

*Coordinating NGOs for citizens climate action: Mr. Wael Hmaidan, Executive Director, CAN International: "We are winning, but we are not winning fast enough. The world is heading towards 100% renewable energy, but we need to achieve that before 2050. The only way to do it is to change public perception, and show how 100% renewable energy does not only help with the climate, but also is good for jobs, economy, and security. This is a key campaign for us."*

### **Panel: Inspiring citizens' action**

Moderator: Mr. Joseph Carvin, Executive Director of OneWorld, Board Member of Sustainable Westchester Inc

*Ben Banerjee, Co-founder of Swiss Impact Investment Association and Member of Board of Councillors of EastWest Institute: "The amount of sustainable investments has grown rapidly and will soon be the mainstream. If your company is not aligned with Paris targets, you will have difficulties to get the money. Investments will be seriously affected negatively by direct and indirect consequences of Climate Change" (Based on: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))*

*Ms. Mari Pantsar, Director, Sitra -The Finnish Innovation Fund: "Sitra released today a service that will help people to lower their personal environmental impact by making smart and sustainable day-to-day choices. Our everyday lives - the way we travel, eat and live and what we buy - have a direct impact on the environment. Everything we do, no matter how big or small, helps."*

*Mr. Joseph Robertson, Global Strategy Director, Citizens' Climate Lobby:* "Political will does not emerge in a vacuum; political will arises when leaders are surrounded with a clear sense that action is needed. Ongoing citizen engagement through good-faith working relationships with lawmakers is catalytic, because lawmakers come to that clear sense sooner, and through a process that is closer to the core spirit of democratic service. Active citizenship can and should secure a livable future, so we provide always-active training and support, to help citizen volunteers do this work."

*Monsignor Tomasz Grysa, Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations:* "In his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that the ecological crisis summons us to a profound spiritual conversion and he calls Christians specifically to an ecological conversion, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ becomes evident in their relationship with the world around them (LS 217)." (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))

### **Conclusions and next steps:**

*Kai Mykkänen, Minister of Foreign Trade and Development, Finland:* "The government of Finland has taken an ambitious objective to exit using coal into energy and to halve the use of fossil oil by 2030. A week ago the Government of Finland released a report on Medium-term Climate Change Policy Plan 2030 - Towards Climate- Smart Day-to- Day Living. Finland aims to carbon neutrality by 2045. The plan contains a wide variety of actions to incentivize citizens in everyday life, especially in food, housing and mobility." (Source: [UNFCCC Report / 22. SEP, 2017](#))

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### **Afternoon sessions:**

#### **Plenary session: Practical cases of implementing citizens' action**

Moderator: Mr. Tapio Kanninen, President of Global Crisis Information Network Inc

*Mr. Chris Burdick, Chairman of the Board of the Sustainable Westchester Inc:* "Sustainable Westchester partners with local grassroots organizations to create and promote sustainability initiatives. The alliances between Westchester County governments, community committees, local universities and environmental organizations places us in a unique position to achieve a greater impact. Grassroots committees and organizations inform local governments of important issues and challenges in their backyards. And Sustainable Westchester leverages these opportunities to develop county-wide programs. Examples such as our Westchester Power program, the first Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) in NYS, promote 100% renewable energy. Other programs that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions include Solarize Westchester, our Clean Transportation initiative, Complete Streets, LED Street Lights initiative in conjunction with NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority), and our Municipal Solar Buyers Group program. Partnering with other community organizations such as Bedford 2020, Riverkeeper, Clearwater, Greenburgh Nature Center, and Teatown Nature Preserve, further extends our reach."

*Dr. Liisa Rohweder, Secretary General, WWF Finland, Chairman of the WWF Global Arctic Program:* WWF is aiming a global shift toward a low carbon and climate resilient future. WWF challenges politicians and works together with businesses, people and local communities. WWF have inspired people to act by coordinating many successful campaigns. Probably the most well-known campaign is the Earth Hour organized annually all over the Globe. This year 187 countries and territories took part in Earth Hour by switching their lights off and protecting the planet. In addition, WWF is focusing in sustainable food and for example published a meat guide for "less and better" meat in Finland.

*Ms. Tuija Kalpala, Commercial Development Manager, Neste, North America: “Neste is a world leading producer of Neste MY Renewable Diesel that provides 100% sustainable and renewable alternative to petroleum diesel. Renewable Diesel reduces greenhouse gas emission by up to 80% among reducing other harmful tail pipe emissions. Neste also developed the EduCycle game that teaches children reality about the impact their decisions have on the environment. The Game’s challenge is to reduce the world’s carbon dioxide emissions to the level specified in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. New gaming platform uses augmented reality (AR) and the environmental science behind the game is based on research data by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change).”*

*Mr. Fredrick von Schoultz, Deputy Mayor of Porvoo, Finland and Joseph Carvin, Board Member of Sustainable Westchester Inc: “City of Porvoo is enabling citizens to make smart choices and providing information on local choices citizens can make to reduce their carbon footprints. Minimizing emissions is the driving force in all city planning in Porvoo and for example Porvoo energy utility offers 100% bio-based district heating and 100% renewable diesel in used in all vehicles owned by the city. In addition, the Ecopass concept developed for schools raises awareness of climate issues among children and youth. Due to the cooperation of City of Porvoo and Sustainable Westchester, the Ecopass concept has been implemented in Westchester, too.*

*Mr. Teemu Kirjonen, General Manager, Lahti Symphony Orchestra, Finland: “This summer, Lahti Symphony Orchestra and Ticketmaster Finland launched the Storm Warning Association's campaign the Green Button to enable concert-goers to offset fossil fuel based travel CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions when purchasing symphony tickets online. With 1-3 dollar donation a person can compensate one tonne of carbon dioxide emissions, which is roughly equivalent to 2,500 miles of travel in a regular petrol-driven car or one four hour flight. The funds will be channelled by Storm Warning Association to UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat’s Climate Neutral Now initiative. This campaign is well in line with the ambitious climate targets of Lahti City. Also, cities can have a leading role to motivate its citizens for positive climate actions.”*

*Ms. Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC): “Global sustainability is no longer an option – it is a necessity. Climate change is an issue for all of us and we must all act. Acting together globally we can put the pressure on governments to rise their ambition in climate policies. The transition and building of new sustainable industries creates new jobs, sustainability and hope and opportunity for good decent work for our sons and daughters. Additionally, retraining possibilities and sufficient social security is needed. ITUC is about to launch a “Workers right to know” campaign where employees are encouraged to ask their employers what are their plans to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement – and what employees can do to implement those plans.”*

*Mr. Jouni Keronen, Executive Director, Climate Leadership Council: “According to a recent evaluation, the carbon budget of staying below +2C with 66% probability is around 700 Gt before 2050. With current emission level (>50 GtCO<sub>2</sub>eq/y the budget will be used in just 14 years. Legal and COP processes are too slow compared to the short time period and therefore activation of cities, businesses, investors and citizens are needed. At the moment, holistic and systematic citizens engagement actions are missing. Therefore, we are launching today the I-CAN Network cooperating worldwide with the actors from different fields of life such as education, work, religion, sports and entertainment.”*

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