



Press Release

Close cooperation between Rotterdam and Ho Chi Minh City on climate and water management issues

Ho Chi Minh City, 30 March 2011 - Vice-chairman of the Ho Chi Minh People's Committee, Nguyen Trung Tin, and Rotterdam vice-mayor Ms Alexandra van Huffelen (Sustainability, City Centre and Public Spaces) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Vietnam. The signing of this memorandum marks the start of close cooperation between the two cities, with the aim of promoting the environmentally sustainable development of Ho Chi Minh City as both a port and an urban centre. The signing took place in the presence of Prince Willem-Alexander, Princess Maxima and the Secretaries of State Henk Bleker and Joop Atsma.

Just like Rotterdam, Ho Chi Minh City is a densely populated city located on a river delta, and its large port plays a key role in the national economy. Economic development and rapid population growth are leading to a growing demand for extra space. The city's location on the delta is already leading to problems with flooding which will only intensify with the effects of climate change. These challenges call for a sustainable development strategy.

In 2009, Ho Chi Minh City indicated that it needed the knowledge and experience of 'Rotterdam Climate Proof' (Rotterdam's Climate Adaptation Programme and part of the Rotterdam Climate Initiative). By linking the effects of climate change with innovative spatial planning solutions, Rotterdam has been able to develop promising new strategies which could also be applied in other delta cities around the world. The Second Maasvlakte project means that Rotterdam also has a great deal of experience of relocating port-related activities further out towards the sea and redeveloping the inner city areas that used to accommodate these activities. Combining growth with the effects of climate change in delta cities is presenting the Dutch water sector with many new opportunities around the globe in terms of developing innovative, integrated methods of water management in river deltas and delta cities like Ho Chi Minh City.

The current collaboration between Rotterdam and Ho Chi Minh City sprang from the international city network Connecting Delta Cities (CDC) which was initiated by Rotterdam. The two delta cities are working in the so-called 'Vietnamese Ownership & Netherlands Partnership' framework, meaning that Ho Chi Minh City is implementing the project completely autonomously, while the City of Rotterdam/the Netherlands is making its knowledge and experience available in a purely supervisory and advisory capacity.

Rotterdam Approach

The signing of the cooperation agreement means that Ho Chi Minh City will develop an adaptation programme on the basis of the 'Rotterdam Approach' over the years to come. This approach essentially involves viewing climate change as an opportunity to create an attractive and economically strong city. This philosophy will be used to develop a long-term strategy, which will in turn be translated into short-term measures to create social and economic opportunities in the local area. For this strategy, it is particularly important that there should be routine contact with the various departments and agencies in Vietnam.

Dutch National Policy

The partnership between Ho Chi Minh City and Rotterdam is certainly in line with the Netherlands' national policy, which focuses on international cooperation in the areas of water management, climate and sustainability. National government wants to make available the expertise that Dutch local authorities have for this purpose. The government sees the partnership between Ho Chi Minh City and Rotterdam as a beacon project. As well as Ho Chi Minh City, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment is also helping with the Mekong Delta development plan. This plan is similar to the Dutch Delta Plan which was set up under the guidance of former minister Cees Veerman. There is a considerable overlap between the partnership project between Ho Chi Minh City and Rotterdam and the Mekong Delta Plan, in terms of both content and process.

Rotterdam Climate Initiative

The Rotterdam Climate Initiative (RCI) is aiming for a 50% reduction in CO₂ and 100% resistance to climate change in 2025. The RCI is an initiative of the City of Rotterdam, the Port of Rotterdam NV, DCMR Environment Service Rijnmond and Deltalinqs, the umbrella organization for Rotterdam's industrial sector. As an energetic and innovative world port, Rotterdam – along with the city's people, businesses and institutions – is taking responsibility for a sustainable future. By seeking to tackle both the causes and the effects of climate change, improving air quality and limiting noise pollution, Rotterdam's sustainability policy is comprehensive and dynamic. This unique approach makes Rotterdam an inspiring example for other cities. Its ambitions and accomplishments in the field of the environment, climate, energy and water management all contribute to a clean, green, healthy and wealthy city – Rotterdam is the world's most sustainable port city.
