Sustainable Cities: Challenges and Solutions

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) reduction and sustainability strategies energy generation and distribution, transport, water management, infrastructure, green buildings and urban planning, all converge in cities where the bulk of the world's citizens reside. Thus "sustainable cities" has become a topic of immense worldwide interest.

The need to make cities and communities sustainable has been championed by government and non-governmental organisations and by the companies developing the technology solutions. A complex mix of "players" has emerged, all wanting to participate and to push their particular vision for sustainability.

This has resulted in an eco-system of swirling, connected and disconnected stakeholders, all with different aims and goals, and yet united in a common vision: to achieve "sustainability" in the development and operation of cities.

For all the hype, a gap remains between adoption of the plethora of innovative and truly sustainable technologies that are readily available, and the solutions which are implemented. The danger in not closing this gap is significant. In spite of all the interest on the supply side, the demand for these technologies and services may not grow fast enough for companies continue to invest in solutions, and GHG emissions may not be reduced quickly enough.

So what is stopping the adoption and implementation of these technologies? Some of these technologies are new: We are witnessing the "wow" factor of technology in action such as concentrated solar thermal arrays blazing in the sun which make for attractive videos and still images for TV, magazines and sustainability publications. But some of the technologies exist. However, their adoption may not be straightforward, but will require combining technologies, new ways through advanced networking and communications.

The challenge is that sustainability or climate change are not solely technology challenges, rather this is a deployment challenge. Informational, market, institutional, policy and organisational barriers remain. Market development will require removing these barriers and obstacles to make sure the existing technologies and solutions are capable of full deployment in a widespread manner worldwide.

In this break out session, with a lively ensemble of practitioners, who are actively involved in the business side of sustainability, we will identify the barriers and engage participants in a stimulating discussion within the following framework:

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1. What technology is available now - First we set the scene briefly to display the vast array of sustainable solutions available from an ICT technology perspective
2. Who are the players – Secondly, we will examine who are the players and the stakeholders in the eco-system of the development and operation of cities and what are their roles and aims
3. What are the barriers – Thirdly, we will examine the barriers to adoption of the various sustainable technologies that can be applied, by way of case study examinations and where a barrier to adoption was overcome by innovative, and ultimately, practicable and financeable strategies and solutions
4. Where are the examples of barriers being overcome?

The outcome of the session will be to engage in a robust debate on these issues and to raise awareness of an area of the sustainability debate which is often neglected, pointing to examples where barriers have been overcome, as a basis for developing strategies for market transformation

Speakers:

Dr. Hyuk Je Kwon
General Manager, Busan Development Corp, South Korea

Mr Zhou Weidong
CTO of Shanghai World Expo Coordination Bureau, Director of the Information and Technology Bureau, Director of the Information Center of World Expo

Dr. Chengri Ding
Assistant Dean & Director of China Group, University of Maryland, USA

Gordon Falconer
Director, Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group

Molly Webb
Head of Strategic Engagement, The Climate Group

Moderated by: Molly Webb (The Climate Group)