

## **Joint press release of the Federal Environment Ministry, the State of Baden-Württemberg and the City of Heidelberg**

Climate action / cities

# **International Climate Conference ICCA2019 kicks off in Heidelberg**

***Municipalities are key actors in climate change mitigation***

**Today, Federal Environment Minister Svenja Schulze, Minister President of Baden-Württemberg Winfried Kretschmann and the Mayor of Heidelberg Prof. Dr Eckart Würzner, opened the two-day international climate conference ICCA2019 in Heidelberg. "ICCA" stands for "International Conference on Climate Action". Around 1,000 people responsible for climate action in cities, regions and states worldwide are coming together with experts and representatives of civil society from around the globe to develop practical solutions to climate action and climate change adaptation and exchange experiences on climate action projects.**

Federal Environment Minister Svenja Schulze commented: "To mitigate climate change, we need all levels of politics: from the United Nations to cities and municipalities. Half of the world's population is already living in cities. Cities are responsible for more than 60 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. They are therefore an important part of the solution. In Heidelberg we want to find ways for cities to do even more for climate action. We will also be reporting the outcomes of this conference to the United Nations in New York."

Minister President Winifred Kretschmann stated: "This is a serious situation, but even so, climate change is still being underestimated. Many people think it won't be as bad as predicted ... But, you cannot negotiate the laws the nature. If we continue as we are now, the consequences will be grave: humanitarian disasters, conflicts, wars and influxes of refugees. Climate change is truly an issue of universal concern. Every month, every week, every day counts. We have no time to be pessimistic. Instead, we are focussing on constructive approaches."

Mayor Prof. Dr Eckart Würzner remarked: "We have to provide an incentive for climate-friendly behavior. In the past, we had the 'coal penny' in Germany. Today, we need a 'Planet Future Fund'. Switzerland has been leading the way for years. There, there is a tax on the use of fossil fuels. The money collected is used to finance support measures that can be utilized by everyone. What's more, every citizen gets a fixed sum back. Those who use a lot pay extra. On balance, those who act in a climate-friendly manner even make a financial profit. In my view, what is particularly important is a new perspective – a strategy for sustainable growth. Those who invest in future technologies create new, sustainable jobs and contribute to global climate protection efforts. We want people to want the future – the opportunities and the potential are there."

Cities are responsible for many climate-relevant service sectors. However, here they must be supported at national and regional level. Better coordination between states and their regions, cities and also civil society is therefore crucial to ensure that each level and each actor can best deliver their contribution to climate action. The outcomes of the conference will generate important momentum in cities and states and for the Climate Action Summit of the UN Secretary-General in New York on 23 September.

By 2050, over 70% of the world's population will live in cities, which today already consume over 70% of globally available energy. Cities have considerable steering possibilities in

climate-relevant service sectors such as urban and spatial planning, transport infrastructure, housing development, water management, energy management and waste management. However, basic legal and regulatory framework conditions are established at national and regional level. Better coordination at all levels of government is needed to enable cities to do more for climate action.

The conference is jointly hosted by the Federal Environment Ministry, the State of Baden-Württemberg and the City of Heidelberg. Affiliated to the conference are the Climate Neighbourhoods, which will engage with citizens and civil society with events around the city. After its successful launch in Hanover in 2015, the second Climate Neighbourhoods (CN) will take place in Heidelberg on 22 and 23 May 2019 in close proximity to ICCA2019.

Taking the theme "Let's scale-up solutions!" the 200 participants will develop strategies to intensify and disseminate climate mitigation and adaptation activities, which will be used as a basis for recommendations for the international climate dialogue. Representatives of municipalities, civil groups, businesses and youth – in other words local actors and implementers from all over the world – are invited to contribute. CN is organised by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (ifeu) and the city network Climate Alliance.

The Youth Climate Summit offers young people their own platform for discussion. This sends clear messages to political representatives in CN and ICCA, and signals the importance of involving young people in decision-making processes.

Further conferences and meetings, both formal and informal, will take place in the margins of ICCA2019 to discuss municipal climate action. These include events organised by networks of the global Under2Coalition, co-founded by the state of Baden-Württemberg, and the European city network Energy Cities, of which the Mayor of Heidelberg is president.

### **Local climate action events during ICCA2019 in Heidelberg:**

**20 - 21 May:** International Youth Climate Summit of the Climate Neighbourhoods (CN)

**21 May:** Field trips to examples of best practice in climate action, organised by Climate Neighbourhoods (CN)

**21 May:** BEACON Conference: Catalysing European Local Climate Action in the framework of the BMU's European Climate Initiative

**23 May:** UNSG Climate Action Summit, "Decentralized Finance", Subtrack Meeting

**21 May:** Cities Fit for Climate Change | Final Session

**23 May:** Energy Cities General Assembly

**23 May:** Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA) Members' Meeting

**23 May:** Field trips to examples of best practice in climate action, organised by Climate Neighbourhoods (CN)

Pictures from ICCA2019 and Climate Neighbourhoods (CN) can be found under:

<https://publicarea.admiralcloud.com/p/1ad750f4103343a5d1742e>

**More information on #ICCA2019:**

[www.icca2019.org](http://www.icca2019.org)

[www.cn2019.org](http://www.cn2019.org)

[www.bmu.de](http://www.bmu.de)

[www.baden-wuerttemberg.de](http://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de)

[www.heidelberg.de/klimakonferenz](http://www.heidelberg.de/klimakonferenz)