

Dear Participants of the Conference Berlin High-level Dialogue on Implementing Rio+20 Decisions on Sustainable Cities and Transport, as the President of the Federal Environment Agency I would like to welcome you all to Berlin. Sustainable cities and transport are an important topic for our future. I am therefore very proud that the High-level Dialogue takes place in Germany.

The mobility of people and goods is increasing with the rise of globalization. It connects economies, rural areas with cities, and opens up new horizons. Traffic and transport infrastructure is the basis for new developments. The Rio+20 Conference in 2012 stressed the role of transport as an essential basis for sustainable development.

Given the rapid growth of cities, especially urban transport needs to be environmentally friendly and not detrimental to the health of people and their surroundings. From an environmental point of view, the immense increase in urban transport poses new challenges especially engineers, urban and traffic planners and politicians at all levels, with concerns for air quality, climate protection, noise protection, soil and land protection as well as biodiversity, at the centre.

Despite intense efforts in the past and success with the reduction of environmental pollution, faster progress is necessary to conserve the environment, its quality and that of our lives.

I am happy, that these challenges will be discussed at the High-level Dialogue and at the exchanges among high-level experts provides the momentum needed to make progress on the issue of sustainable development of cities and urban transport.

I wish all the participants an inspiring Conference and a pleasant stay in the capital of Germany.