



PRESS RELEASE

The circular economy is crucial to achieving the Paris climate goals

THE NETHERLANDS AND THE FINNISH INNOVATION FUND SITRA TO HOST ONLINE WORLD CIRCULAR ECONOMY FORUM + CLIMATE ON 15-16 APRIL 2021

THE HAGUE – March 2021 **If we are to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, the world needs to transition to a circular economy. A circular economy will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by around 20 per cent and should thus be an integral part of the agreements made in the Paris Climate Agreement. The World Circular Economy Forum + Climate is the online conference to draw attention to the importance of a circular economy in reaching the climate goals.**

The virtual summit is organised jointly by the Netherlands' Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra. On the invitation of the Minister of the Environment of the Netherlands **Stientje van Veldhoven** and the President of Sitra **Jyrki Katainen**, governments, international organisations, knowledge institutions, the private sector and citizens will hold discussions on the circular economy on 15 and 16 April 2021. The conference will be closed with an Action Statement containing the pledges of the participating countries, companies and organisations.

Major challenge

“It’s time to change the game. If we want to tackle climate change, we need to look beyond energy efficiency and move towards a circular economy. For a healthy future we have to stop wasting our finite resources, reuse our valuable materials and turn them into new products. Together we can close the loop to a circular economy, a necessity for climate neutrality by 2050. It’s time for a major change,” says Minister for the Environment and host of WCEF+Climate, **Stientje van Veldhoven**.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time. A circular economy can play a crucial role in tackling this crisis. A circular economy entails using raw materials more smartly and carefully, thus avoiding waste and pollution. This could be done by stimulating the sharing economy such as car sharing, as well as by the smart reuse of materials. Circularity goes far beyond just recycling waste. Changing the entire chain as part of the transition to a circular economy will help bring about a sustainable economy and better living conditions. Innovation and collaboration are core to this transition.

“Overuse of natural resources is a major source of climate emissions. The circular economy provides us with a tool to tackle the climate crisis, to address the loss of biodiversity and to reduce our material consumption in an economically viable way,” says **Jyrki Katainen**, President of The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra who is co-hosting the conference. The WCEF



is a global initiative of Sitra and Finland, and the next annual forum will be held in Canada on 13-15 September this year.

In its national climate agreement, the Netherlands' target is to halve its CO₂ emissions by 2030. The Netherlands will also take extra measures to achieve the higher EU goals in line with the European Green Deal. Circularity is an important cornerstone of the Netherlands' climate plans and the EU's action plan for the circular economy as well as the European Green Deal. The Netherlands is aiming to reduce its consumption of primary raw materials by fifty percent by 2030, and to be fully circular by 2050.

Finland aims at reaching carbon-neutrality by 2035, and to be the world's first fossil-free welfare society. The means to achieve the target include new decisions on climate policy and nearly emissions-free electricity and heat production by the end of 2030s, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of building, promoting a circular economy, and a climate-friendly food policy.

Speakers of the WCEF+Climate include among others:

- **Stientje van Veldhoven**, the Netherlands' Minister of the Environment
- **Jyrki Katainen**, President of The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
- **Sigrid Kaag**, the Netherlands' Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
- **Frans Timmermans**, first Vice-President of the European Commission
- **Amina J. Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)
- **Frans van Houten**, CEO of Royal Philips and Chair of the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE)

Commitment

Ministers, companies and other organisations will reinforce their commitment to the transition to a circular economy at the WCEF+Climate. Agreements will be made, best practices shared and steps taken to prepare the world for a circular economy. Participants may submit their individual pledges until the end of the conference. These pledges will be recorded in an Action Statement that will be shared after the Conference. As declarations of intent, the pledges will help us take the next step towards a circular economy and meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. The next international climate negotiations will be held in November this year in Glasgow.

Information for the press:

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