European Waterfront Cities Network
Summary of a MIPIM Session at the Hamburg stand on 12 March 2019:

"Planetary Boundaries and the Future of Inner-City Urban Development"

Panel Discussion with [redacted] (Hamburg, CEO HafenCity Hamburg GmbH), [redacted] (Stockholm, 2007 to 2018 CEO Stockholm Business Region incl. Visit Stockholm and Invest Stockholm), [redacted] (Amsterdam, Director Marketing Real Estate and Task force Housing) moderated by [redacted] (The Business of Cities)

Objective

The session aimed at stimulating the debate on sustainable urbanism that tends to be strongly normative. Waterfront projects are testbeds of city making, active in areas that go beyond brownfield regeneration and flood protection. They often act as integrators of sectors and scales that are all relevant for mitigation and adaptation to diverse environmental risks and many are forerunners in developing a resilient built environment. The session included a short input (slides attached to this brief) by Hamburg, Amsterdam and Stockholm and a discussion wrapped up by the moderator.

Hamburg

HafenCity has set sustainability standards, focusing on mobility and buildings. The city agency currently rolls out a quarter-based car sharing project that radically strengthens the offer of shared mobility complemented with an excellent public transportation system and e-mobility standards. This requirement is integrated in a site-specific ecolabel for buildings which HafenCity implemented for the first time in Germany and is now mandatory for project developers in the area. The new district is supplied with waste-heat from a nearby copper plant and nature based solutions not only reduce flooding, they also stimulate biodiversity and well-being.

Amsterdam

Flooding and flood protection is a persistent challenge for the metropolitan region of Amsterdam. In addition to building dykes, the considerations regarding sustainability reach into water-robust construction and greening of roofs and facades. Climate change mitigation measures include shifting to a more polycentric city development model, strong public transportation and renewable energy sources. A key message of [redacted] was that a sustainability transition can only work with a demand-oriented approach in an integrated Europe.

Stockholm

Taking measures against flooding requires considering both sea level rise and rainwater, especially when the city lies in a catchment area like Stockholm. The city center is undergoing major interventions and restructuring that deal with flooding and improving public space. Green infrastructure is also a key feature of a regeneration area around the port and ferry terminals, within walking distance from central Stockholm.

Conclusion

Opening up the discussion at MIPIM 2019 for a deeper and broader view of sustainability in urban development has been a starting point. Three cities provided an overview that shows their elaborate practice in flood resilience and the key contributions of spatial development, energy supply and public space. The experience of all three cities highlighted the importance of mechanisms to achieve a high level of sustainability co-ordination between public, private and civic sectors across several cycles. In conclusion, the need for more sustainable solutions is high and the discussion next time should focus on a more specific challenge or on the specifics of sustainable urban development for waterfront projects.