

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global Leaders Join Forces at Zero Emissions Summit During Climate Week NYC

Day-long event featured expert-led panels to promote citizen climate action and international impact

New York, NY (September 26, 2017): [Sustainable Westchester](#), a non-profit consortium of 41 Westchester County local governments, co-hosted the Zero Emissions Summit on the Citizen's Role for Mitigating Climate Change on September 21, 2017 at the Scandinavia House in Manhattan. The summit coincided with the UN General Assembly and provided a platform for international business, government, and civil society leaders to highlight and continue the momentum of driving global climate action forward.

The Zero Emissions Summit took place during Climate Week NYC, launched in 2009 as a collaborative space for climate-related events in support of the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Co-organizers of the Zero Emissions Summit included Sustainable Westchester Inc., Scandinavia House, and Global Crisis Information Network, Inc., with the support of the UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC), Stormwarning Association, the Climate Leadership Council in Finland and the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability in Brussels.

Based on recent studies conducted in Finland, which has a long tradition of promoting sustainable development through interaction and broad-based participation, the choices of citizens are crucial in achieving at least half of the necessary emission reductions. "Global warming has exceeded 1.1 C or 1.3 if the Arctic areas are taken into account," said Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization. "Economic losses have increased 50-fold since the 1950's. The recent hurricanes have broken single event records and the trend continues."

Opening remarks were given by Chris Burdick, town supervisor for Bedford, N.Y. and chairman of the board for Sustainable Westchester, and Tapio Kanninen, president of co-host Global Crisis Information Network, Inc. "Citizen involvement is at the very heart of developing solutions and moving the needle. Every decision that citizens make matters," said Burdick.

President Saul Niinistö of the Republic of Finland said, "Building a sustainable future is more important than ever. As individuals, we can and must make a difference." During his keynote speech, President Niinistö stated that experts have calculated that if 100 million citizens reduced their carbon footprint by half, the emission

reductions could potentially amount to one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. If these citizens also offset unavoidable emissions, the monetary value could be \$500 million per year.

Keynote speaker Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and a leading force in the zero emissions movement, emphasized the urgent need to follow through on implementation of the Paris Agreement as being critical to sound environmental and economic policy.

Individuals looking to reduce their carbon footprint and achieve the biggest impact can do so by changing their consumption patterns. Choices include: how we live, how we travel, what we eat, and purchasing sustainable products and services. Sustainable Westchester has been committed to creating action locally. The non-profit and its electric vehicle consultant, Earthkind Energy, recently partnered with BMW of North America, LLC and Nissan to offer a special discount incentive on new electric vehicles. Other initiatives have included The Mid-Hudson Street Light Consortium to create a more affordable pathway to LED street light conversion, and the launch of New York state's first community choice aggregation program, [Westchester Power](#).

For a full list of speakers and topics discussed, visit the summit [website](#).

About Sustainable Westchester

[Sustainable Westchester](#) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit consortium of forty-one (41) Westchester County local governments, representing 800,000 county residents. It was formed to improve the health and welfare of communities in New York State by coordinating and implementing energy efficiency, conservation, and sustainability efforts by and among residents and local governments in Westchester County, New York. The action group is designed to turn environmental challenges into opportunities to create more healthy, vibrant and attractive communities, now and in the future. For more information, visit www.sustainablewestchester.org.

About Global Crisis Information Network

[Global Crisis Information Network \(GCINET\)](#) is a non-profit organization based in the United States but with Finnish roots. Our mission is to make sense of the complex issue of climate change, and to let the public know how serious an issue climate change is. Our goal is to present the current facts on climate change simply, and to imagine what the world might look like one day if we do not act on climate change soon. We also hope to encourage the public to find innovative solutions to our global crisis. For more information, visit www.globalcrisisnow.org.



front row (L.-R.): Bill Peduto, mayor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Jennifer MacIntyre, ambassador for climate change, Canada; Martin Chungong, secretary general, Inter-Parliamentary Union; **back row (L.-R.):** Jouni Keronen, executive director, Climate Leadership Council of Finland; Bryan Buggey, director, strategic initiatives & sector development, Vancouver Economic Commission; Chris Burdick, town supervisor for Bedford, NY, chairman of the board for Sustainable Westchester.