

## Ban Ki Moon hopes biking culture will continue to grow



UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said he hopes biking culture continues to grow in cities as it is not only a low-carbon transport method, but also beneficial for people's health. The secretary general spoke in New York before he kicked off a cycling ride by UN ambassadors and officials from UN, Development Banks and NGO's. The ride has been organized by Dutch UN ambassador Herman Schaper in preparation of the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), June 20-22. The Secretary-General said to be proud to promote cycling. "Last year, in a speech on health, I mentioned that bikes are great for our bodies and for our planet. The next day, a blog called me 'the world's newest biking advocate' I like that title." "Bicycles are important, but they are just part of a bigger picture: our global efforts to achieve truly sustainable development. This is especially important for cities," he added. Referring to Rio+20, the secretary general said the conference will provide an opportunity for countries to agree on cleaner and greener approaches to development, including sustainable transport. Ban Ki Moon gave the go ahead of the ride by ringing a bell offered by the Dutch Cycling Embassy.

About 40 UN ambassadors took part in the event. Other speakers were the executive coordinator for Rio+20, [Brice Lalonde](#), who spoke about a "Velorevolution", [Alessandro Pio](#), director Asian Development Bank on behalf of 7 multilateral banks and on behalf of the network SLoCaT, [Yamina Djacta](#), deputy director of UN Habitat's New York office and [Janette Sadik-Khan](#), transport commissioner of New York city.



The bike ride has been preceded by the first meeting of a working group that will produce a transport program for Ban Ki Moon's 5 year Action Plan on sustainable development. Assistant secretary general Steltzer gave instructions regarding the purpose of the program and institutional arrangements between the UN and governments, NGO's and the private sector. He also asked which persons could compose a high level panel to advise and support the secretary general. The Dutch Cycling Embassy participates in the working group that will deliver a report in November. Transport is now a main issue of the UN agenda with the emphasis on urban transport. The multilateral banks offer to direct 15-20 billion dollar per year to urban transport. The Dutch Cycling Embassy contributes to the Rio+20 conference in cooperation with Secretary of State for the Environment Joop Atsma. Roelof Wittink will present the results of a study done with the host city Rio de Janeiro on the impact of cycling scenario's on sustainable development in Rio. The Dutch Secretary of State for Development Cooperation Ben Knapen recently added transport and urbanisation to the Dutch foreign policy.