

# **The Amsterdam Declaration**

## **The right to use the bicycle**

We, the participants at the World Cycle Conference Vélo Mondial 2000, assembled in Amsterdam in June 2000, proclaim that people (including children) should have the right to use bicycles when they want to. We declare that the use of bicycles requires greater acceptance and promotion by all relevant organisations and governments world-wide and call for action.

## **Advantages**

Cycle use has many advantages, for the individual as well as for society and the environment.

- Cycling, as an individual mode of transport, offers quick and efficient door-to-door transport:
  - bicycles are instantly available, and relatively cheap to run;
  - cyclists enjoy reliable travel times, and do not suffer from traffic congestion.
  - the bicycle offers privacy, independence and freedom; cycling emancipates.
  - cycling, by its exercise nature, improves physical and mental health.
- In today's changing society the bicycle offers a flexible means of transport:
  - cycle traffic keeps cities moving, and prevents or reduces congestion;
  - cycling enlarges peoples activity radius, be they young or old, rich or poor, male or female;
  - cycle use saves space, and cycle provision is cost-efficient.
  - cycle use saves time and promotes the development of local economies.
  - greater cycle use means better accessibility to job opportunities, increased job creation and better public health.
- Cycling improves people's living space and the vitality of our cities:
  - cycling is silent, clean, and sustainable;
  - cycling does not threaten nature or landscapes;
  - cyclists are a negligible threat to others;
  - cycle use places no demands on fossil fuel reserves.

## **Opportunities and potential**

New technology is bringing the whole world into many peoples living rooms. The global village exists, but most of it is virtual. Most activities of people still involve them leaving their home.

Distance seems to be no impediment to where one can travel. Nevertheless, across the world, most people's trips are short. A large majority of trips take place within their own city or village: between 60% and 90% of journeys are less than 6 or 7 kilometres. In many cities and villages, walking and cycling are the most-used means of transport. This is true now and we expect it to remain so for a long time to come.

There are many places where the share of cycling in local transport can be increased further.

- Compared with walking, cycling considerably increases the area people can cover, their capacity for load carrying, and also gain time for other activities.
- Of all car journeys, around half are shorter than 7,5 km. – half an hour's cycling. Cycling is a realistic alternative to approximately half of these short car trips.

Within big cities and on inter-urban routes, bicycles can enlarge the potential of public transport.

- For individuals, by providing an efficient access and egress to public transport.
- For public transport operators, by recognising bicycles as a *feeder*, thus increasing the catchment area of stations and stops.

In situations where car parking close to the origin and destination of trips is limited, bicycles offer easy onward transport to and from the parking places.

### **Conditions**

Circumstances in the various countries can vary considerably. However, if the potential of the bicycle is to be realised, a number of universal conditions have to be met to ensure attractive and safe bicycle use:

- A basic condition in many countries is better availability of reliable, safe and affordable bicycles.
- Making cycle use more attractive requires space and provision, for both moving and parked cycles.
- It is desirable that barriers to smooth-flowing cycle traffic be removed and it is necessary to remove the threat from motorised traffic.
- In situations with motorised traffic increasing it is essential to protect the remaining cyclists.

It is also important to ensure a place for cyclists in the whole traffic and transport system.

- This requires attention from city and country planners to ensure that most trips can take place within the area a cyclist can cover. Therefore it is necessary to avoid low densities and stimulate mixed land use in urban areas.
- This demands transport plans in which the bicycle is regarded as equal in value and functionality to other modes of transport.
- This requires such design of infrastructure that confrontations between cyclists and faster road-users are avoided wherever possible. Depending on the situation, this implies separating the different types of traffic and/or regulating the speed of motorised traffic.
- Education of all road users and enforcement of traffic laws are the final elements of a cycle-friendly transport policy.
- Special attention is needed to provide possibilities for independent mobility by bicycle to children.

### **Call to action**

We the participants at Vélo Mondial 2000 call upon elected representatives and officials of governments at all levels, cycle related industries, and upon national and international organisations to:

- recognise the right to cycle for all parts of the population including children;
- recognise the potential of cycle traffic in both policies and projects;
- fulfil the conditions for making cycle use more attractive;
- make budgets available to fund cycle-friendly projects;
- address cycling issues;
- establish strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

We request that governments and institutions draw up a Cycling Master Plan (CMP) before the end of August 2003. These CMP's would contain targets to be reached by the year 2010. These targets must be both ambitious and realistic, and be measurable and be monitored. Furthermore, the CMP's would:

- define policies to increase cycle use, and take account of the conditions as above;
- stimulate local and regional authorities and other relevant organisations;

- define the roles and responsibilities of those involved;
- provide support and funding for the policies and programmes.

The participants call upon international organisations and upon governments for the creation of a platform for international benchmarking and exchange of knowledge on cycle traffic. We also request that the potential benefits of cycling are clearly stated when drafting international treaties on quality of life, the environment, public health and poverty eradication such as Kyoto and Habitat II.

For our part, the Velo-Mondial delegates and the organisations that they represent, will actively publicise this call to action and promote its realisation. We commit to contribute our knowledge, experience and networks to help secure the demands in the call to action.

We will make available their experiences to provide the content for catalogues on current cycle policy and the situation on the streets. As much as possible they will monitor the extent to which plans and good intentions result in action and ultimately in more cycle use. They will assess the interim results at the next World Cycle Conference.

### **Your response to this call**

We challenge the addressed organisations to inform us on their response to this call for action. Therefore a special web site will be established. An announcement will be made within 4 weeks on the Vélo Mondial 2000 web site.([www.velomondial2000.nl](http://www.velomondial2000.nl)) We warmly welcome your report.

Vélo Mondial 2000, Amsterdam 22 June 2000