Sustainable Cities: Empowering People, Enabling Prosperity and Protecting the Planet

A Special Symposium of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network on Cities and the Sustainable Development Agenda

In September 2015 the world’s governments will agree upon a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals revolve around three themes: empowering people, eradicating poverty and protecting human dignity; shared prosperity and decent, fair jobs for all; protecting the planet and tackling climate change. These 15-year goals will help guide the public’s understanding of complex sustainable development challenges, inspire public and private action, promote integrated thinking, and foster accountability. SDG 11 will help establish a new agenda of global action to ‘Make cities and human settlements, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’.

Urbanization will be a defining trend over the next several decades. Today, 50% of the world’s 7 billion people live in cities, and, by 2050, this is expected to rise to around 70%. Cities are currently home to extreme deprivation and environmental degradation with around one billion people living in slums. At the same time, roughly 75% of global economic activity is urban, and as the urban population grows, so will the urban share of global GDP and investments.

This special symposium will bring together local government leaders and leading urban development practitioners to consider how cities, urban areas and regions can drive the implementation of the new sustainable development agenda and forge a roadmap for their realization. Mayors and other participants will consider the challenges of social inclusion, economic development and environmental preservation including cities’ carbon commitments. They will reflect upon deeper partnerships with national governments and citizens, governance arrangements and a new financial architecture that will empower cities to accelerate the SDG implementation process.

Taking place just 2 months before Heads of State and Government gather in New York to approve the SDGs and 4 months before the climate negotiations in Paris, this event will provide a crucial opportunity for city leaders to take leadership of making clear, quantifiable commitments which demonstrate their dedication to a fairer, more sustainable world.
1. Agenda:

**Date & Time:** Wednesday 22\textsuperscript{nd} July 2014, 9am – 5.30pm, followed by reception.  
**Venue:** Casina Pio IV, The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, The Vatican, Rome

**9.00am: Welcome** - Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

**9.30am: Framing** – ‘Cities and the SDGs’ – Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of SDSN

**9.45am: Special Address**
- ‘Rome's commitment on climate change: addressing a scientific and moral issue’ - Ignazio Marino, Mayor of Rome, Italy
- ‘OneNYC: A plan for Sustainable Development’ - Bill De Blasio, Mayor of NYC, USA*

10.15am: Coffee break

**Session 1: 10.30am: Climate change, deep decarbonisation and resilient zero-emission cities,** chaired by Professor Laurence Tubiana, Special Representative to the French Government on the 2015 Climate Conference
- Park Won-soon, Mayor of Seoul, Korea & President of ICLEI (via videoconference)
- Jerry Brown, Governor of California, USA
- Christian Gaebler, Permanent State Secretary of Germany
- Gustavo Petro, Mayor of Bogota, Colombia
- Honorable Mr Kagiso Thutlwe, Mayor of Gaborone, Botswana

**Session 2: 11:45pm: Urban inequality, human development & social inclusion,** chaired by Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN Habitat
- Cardinal Francesco Montenegro
- Alfred Vanderpuije, Mayor of Accra, Ghana
- Karin Wanngård, Mayor of Stockholm, Sweden
- Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San Jose, USA
- Aníbal Gaviria Correa, Mayor of Medellín, Colombia
- Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda, Mayor of Libreville, Gabon

13.00: Lunch

**Session 3: 14.00: Inclusive Economic development,** chaired by Aromar Revi, Director of the Indian Institute for Human Settlements and Co-Chair of SDSN’s thematic group on sustainable cities
- Gregor Robertson, Mayor of Vancouver, Canada
- Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey & President of UCLG*
- Parks Tau, Mayor of Johannesburg, South Africa
- Pak Mustajab Suyuto, Mayor of Bojonegoro regency, Indonesia
• Aliou Sall, Mayor of Guédiawaye-Dakar and President, National Association of Mayors of Senegal

15.15: Coffee

Session 4: 15.30: Governance & Financing, chaired by Vuk Jeremic, former President of the UN General Assembly
• Edwin Lee, Mayor of San Francisco, USA
• Angela Brown-Burke, Mayor of Kingston, Jamaica
• Jose Fortunati, Mayor of Porto Alegre, Brazil
• Mitch Landrieu, Mayor of New Orleans, USA

17.00: Votes of Thanks & Close – Professor Jeffrey Sachs

17.30: Reception with a Concert from the Youth Orchestra of the Santa Cecilia College of Music, to be hosted in the Casina Pio IV courtyard

* Speakers are to be confirmed
2. Detailed Session Descriptions

Session 1: 10.30am: Climate change, Deep decarbonisation and resilient zero-emission cities

Cities represent the single biggest opportunity for the world to meaningfully tackle climate change, as they are responsible for more than 70 percent of global CO₂ emissions. They also host the largest concentration of populations, infrastructure and enterprises at risk to climate impact. If climate adaptation limits are breached, many will be the largest stranded assets in the world economy.

Local and regional governments have been at the forefront of climate mitigation and adaptation for over a decade. Yet, they are constrained by fiscal, financial and regulatory conditions and limited institutional capacities. Compact resource efficient cities with resilient communities, physical and social infrastructure are central to transformative low-carbon national development pathways.

• How can cities and regions make the zero-emission transition? How quickly can this be enabled and what policy, technology and financing mechanisms can enable this?
• How can urban-centric SDGs (including SDG 11) actions enable city deep-decarbonisation? In which sectors and policy areas (e.g. buildings, transportation, and industries) can realistic commitments be made for 2015-30?
• What policy and regulatory measures can cities put into place to facilitate integrated planning, building and infrastructure codes to enable deep decarbonisation?
• How can cities and urban areas facilitate universal energy access and address energy poverty and transition issues, especially in LDCs?
• How can cities facilitate technological and institutional innovation that converges green infrastructure and buildings with employment generation and improved quality of life?
• How can cities and regions adapt to and become more resilient to climate-related risks, especially by reducing vulnerability and exposure of the poor?

Session 2: 12.00pm: Urban inequality, human development & social inclusion

Rising inequality in the cities of the global South, and pockets of enduring poverty in cities, speak of a failure of social and economic inclusion. Key elements of the SDGs are the eradication of extreme (urban) poverty leaving no one behind, and a focus on reducing inequalities of opportunity and wealth. A key precursor to this is human development and the universal provision of quality education and secure health care services. Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is a key element of this process.

With slum upgradation, affordable housing and basic service provision key targets of SDG 11, local governments will need to address the physical, social and institutional barriers that hinder the inclusion and progress of their weakest and most vulnerable populations. They
also need to promote and enhance the protection and conservation of their natural and cultural heritage.

- How can cities secure inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all?
- How can cities secure health care services and well-being for 5 billion urban residents?
- How can the safety and security of vulnerable groups be ensured in cities?
- How can greater gender equality and reduction in social, economic and political inequality be achieved in cities?
- How can cities protect and conserve their natural and cultural heritage?

**Session 3: 14.00: Inclusive Economic development**

Roughly three-quarters of global economic activity is urban. Cities are responsible for the bulk of production and consumption, and are the primary engines of economic growth and development. As the urban population grows, so will the urban share of global economic output and investments. By getting urban development right, cities can create jobs and offer better livelihoods; end urban poverty; enable access to housing and basic services, promote the decoupling of living standards and economic growth from environmental resource use; protect local and regional ecosystems; reduce both urban and rural poverty; and drastically reduce pollution. Sound sustainable urban and regional development will accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs.

- How can cities enable the creation of over 500 million new jobs, decent work for all and help eradicate extreme poverty in urban and linked rural areas across the world?
- How can cities and regions enable inclusive economic development, shared prosperity and sustainable lifestyles for all their citizens?
- How can cities build resilient infrastructure; promote inclusive, sustainable industrialization and service sector development and promote innovation?
- How can cities enable universal access to safe and affordable housing, green and public spaces and provide basic services (including water, sanitation, energy, sustainable transport and telecommunication) to over 2 billion people?
- What nature of fiscal, financial, legal, regulatory and institutional capacity would local and regional governments need to deliver these SDGs?

**Session 4: 15.30: Governance & Financing**

Transitioning to sustainable development pathways as envisioned by the SDG agenda requires a transformation of governance and institutional structures, fiscal flows and policy instruments. Localizing the post-2015 development agenda to enable SDG implementation in cities, implies the empowerment of local and regional governments with the authority, capacity and resources to effectively lead, with the support of the national governments. This can only be operationalized by building local awareness and ownership with and across: governments, civil society, the private sector, media, universities and knowledge institutions.
City and regional governments are typically responsible for substantial revenues, expenditures and investments but, because fiscal arrangements are rarely commensurate with their needs and responsibilities, urban areas often underperform in generating growth and securing sustainable development. Commitment to an enabling legal, fiscal and institutional environment, strengthening capacities, and developing appropriate policies and mechanisms, including local taxation, revenue collection, expenditure and asset management, fiscal transfers, land-based financing, sectoral finance and debt issuance and management, PPPs, domestic and international borrowing and bond markets would help accelerate SDG delivery.

- How can a partnership be developed between national and local governments to deliver the urban and related SDGs?
- How can local and regional governments be empowered with the political and legal authority to deliver the SDGs in cities?
- How can the fiscal, financial and institutional capacities of city and regional governments be strengthened to accelerate SDG delivery?
- How can appropriate cross-scalar monitoring mechanisms be built to track progress on SDG implementation?
- How can awareness, knowledge generation and education around the SDGs be built across key city and regional stakeholders?