



**MAYORS  
FORUM**

# **WORLD CITIES SUMMIT**

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# **REPORT**

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A silhouette of a city skyline featuring various landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, a Ferris wheel, and the Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay.

**LIVEABLE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES:  
INNOVATIVE CITIES OF OPPORTUNITY**

8 – 10 JUNE 2015  
NEW YORK CITY  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Innovation and opportunity were the keywords when the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum convened for the sixth time in New York City, New York, in the United States in June 2015. Having always had to work with limited resources and seemingly limitless challenges, the 65 mayors and city leaders at the forum were committed — more than ever — to taking a longer-term view in planning for a more sustainable and resilient future. They were also united in wanting to adopt a more collaborative approach with the private sector and the people, to enhance the quality of life in their cities. The discussions over two days focused on four main themes: Housing and economic development, transport and mobility, sustainability and resilience, and education and competitiveness.

Whereas in some cities, providing basic housing, as well as access to water and sanitation, is still an issue and adds to the strain on infrastructure, elsewhere the new challenges are keeping housing affordable and coping with a changing demographic as immigration rises. To steer and implement the needed advancements in housing, the mayors would have been encouraged by the Forum's reminders of the powers that are actually within their authority, such as local land-use regulations and financing.

The need for more inclusive city development was seen as a given, with cities having the duty to pave the way to better access to opportunity. This includes making quality education more easily available, improving transport mobility, using "smart city" techniques and trying



new approaches that will allow for smoother city developments. Collaboration is clearly the way forward, and private sector corporations are key partners, especially in exploiting new technology to create and maintain the required systems and infrastructure for sustainability and competitiveness. Of course, no aspirations can be achieved without the active participation of a more engaged and demanding people, who can now be reached in wide, instantaneous engagement through social media.

Sustainability is a priority area, extending beyond recycling waste or adjusting behaviours because of climate change, to cover also other aspects such as

addressing the preservation of heritage and reducing inequality. Resilience was another shared concern, encompassing much broader issues than just being ready for the next storm or earthquake. One increasingly important aspect is social resilience, which includes fostering social cohesion, and recognising and respecting differences in society. This will be vital to the garnering of positive community responses in times of crisis.

A nine-point Mayors' Declaration issued at the end of the meeting expressed the shared goals of the mayors to work together towards building more sustainable, liveable cities. It also affirmed, once again, the value of sharing experiences and ideas

about city leadership and management through platforms such as the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum.

The World Cities Summit Mayors Forum is an annual by-invitation-only event for mayors and city leaders. Together with the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, it is a key highlight of the biennial World Cities Summit, co-organised by Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities and Urban Redevelopment Authority.

# THEMATIC DISCUSSION 1:

## HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the context of liveable cities, having access to housing is deeply connected to inclusive economic development. All cities are affected to some degree. The spectrum of city situations spans from having not enough growth and economic development — such as with a backlog of basic housing for occupants of informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa — to too much development causing sky-rocketing house prices in increasingly congested cities — such as Beirut, Lebanon. Even a city like New York City, one of the United States' wealthiest cities, has one in five families living in poverty, and in light of that, it has launched its most ambitious social housing plan in a decade.

For many cities, a key challenge comes from being victims of their own success, and thus having to deal with unanticipated accelerated growth, that brings with it many new demands. Rising gentrification means that new residents from outside these cities — often well-to-do foreigners — are displacing original residents, especially the younger ones, who are it a challenge to afford a living in the city. Providing affordable housing is integral to equitable economic development. Promoting entrepreneurship and improving access to opportunity for employment can also empower disadvantaged segments of the population to build shared prosperity.

Thus, liveable cities need to employ diverse tools to support the integration of affordable housing, revitalise neighbourhoods, improve the quality of life, and diversify local economies to boost economic growth in the context of globalisation. As a case study of good asset management, Singapore is able to maintain public housing for the vast majority of the population by focusing on various aspects of an ecosystem that includes an effective financing system for home ownership, constant township renewal, and implementing unusual social policies such as an ethnic quota system for public housing. Another example is Suzhou, China, with a modern approach to housing provision that includes measures such as consolidating and repackaging housing subsidies to enhance affordability.

**“Richer, double-income families are leaving the city... and replaced by poorer citizens, mostly immigrants... so we’re struggling with the question: Should we invest more in affordable housing? Because we are fueling a process that is not good for the city.”**

–Bart De Wever, Mayor, Antwerp, Belgium



### THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- City authorities must play a more proactive role in land, housing and labour markets, to meet the growing challenges of providing housing and economic development. Even if national governments retain overall authority over housing policy, city authorities need to recognise that they do have local powers. They could consider using tools such as land-use regulation to require private sector developers to provide affordable housing in return for being allowed to build at higher density. Other initiatives to consider include new ways of pooling capital to allow for more people to afford new homes.
- Housing is integral to social inclusion, and should be seen as a process, not a product. Housing policies should not be tailored for the market only, but should always be for the people, to meet their changing life-cycle needs. The focus needs to be on building a sustainable housing system rather than just a housing market, and on planning for and nurturing active communities which will contribute to a more liveable and productive environment.
- Better long-term planning can boost housing affordability by creating a more malleable land-use system to meet future challenges, to connect better with the surrounding infrastructure and reduce travel and other costs, and thus, making city living more affordable overall.

**“We have to figure out how people across the housing market can live in integrated spaces. It’s about getting people to live and work together.”**

–Patricia de Lille, Executive Mayor, Cape Town, South Africa



# THEMATIC DISCUSSION 2:

## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

A strong transportation network is the lifeblood of any city, with the power to be the largest impediment to its growth or the key to greater densification that is sustainable, and hence, the principal expeditor of its success. Consequently, innovations in the transport system can have wide social impact, including even addressing inequality by providing better access to centres of commerce, and positioning untapped neighbourhoods for local development and employment. Partnerships with the private sector will be a primary driver, to create the necessary new infrastructure and systems.

Building infrastructure for subways is no longer a key force in shaping the city's development agenda. In fact, subway development has, in some ways, been decoupled from urban transport development by initiatives to improve bus services and schedules, and to revitalise "older technology" such as enhanced water-taxis along the River Nile in Giza, Egypt. More importantly, innovations and investments in places such as Rome, Italy, and Fortaleza, Brazil, are using technology to enhance taxi services, to introduce hybrid vehicles, and to transform car-pooling and bicycle-sharing as lower-cost alternative transport modes.

New technology is also being applied to monitor city transport data to facilitate better mobility in places such as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Such features of "smart cities" are set to revolutionise the way that transport systems can be managed centrally in cities.

Along with better planning, innovation and more technology, social change will be another key factor in enhancing transport mobility. City leaders need to embark on new partnerships with citizen groups to shift current norms and shape general behaviour towards a new sharing culture. More sharing in vehicular usage will revamp the way cars, bicycles and other vehicles are used, and should eventually lead to a reduction in the number of cars on the road. This will catalyse spatial change in cities, reshape the transportation networks, and ultimately boost the quality of life in the city.

**"Having a car is (still) making a statement like: 'I have arrived'... We have to look at trying to get a good transport system going, but there is also the need to change the mindset of the populace, so that they don't become car-centric."**

–Haji Abang Abdul Wahap bin Haji Abang Julai,  
Commissioner, Kuching North, Malaysia



### THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- City development has outpaced the ability to build traditional subway infrastructure, so cities have to become more flexible and innovative in adapting to new modes of mobility and accepting adjustments such as retrofitting, if needed.
- City authorities need to have bold leadership and the political courage to shape and channel transport demand, to implement measures such as keeping motorised vehicles out of certain areas of the city at certain times, and charging for road usage, so as to enhance overall mobility.
- Having a good city mobility masterplan would help significantly to put the key pieces of an effective overall transport system into place, and to ensure that they fit well together to achieve the best possible economic, social and environmental outcomes. Smart mobility will also benefit from more research into applicable innovations and their implementation.

**"We have followed with interest the Singapore model of electronic road pricing... and it is an absolute game-changer to actually deal with how you pay for road usage."**

–Len Brown, Mayor, Auckland, New Zealand



# THEMATIC DISCUSSION 3:

## SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Being prepared to cope in the event of natural disasters has always been the basic requirement for cities to maintain physical resilience, but the scope of what it means for a city to be resilient is being broadened all the time. Climate change, population shifts, strained infrastructure, and the evolving global economy also pose challenges to every city's success. The future of many cities will largely depend on how their leaders and citizens respond to these challenges by developing initiatives that conserve energy, reduce waste, increase the resilience of the built environment and of the community, prepare for rising population density and promote economic sustainability.

Cities are closest to the issues and opportunities of sustainability — for example, pollution is mostly created, and will be felt most, by the people in cities. Hence, cities need integrated and responsive systems to implement measures such as waste reduction and to promote the use of renewable energy, or to introduce more green vehicles, such as in places like Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates.

Cities also need someone — perhaps mayors themselves — to play the role of “Chief Resilience Officer”, to meet the most devastating risks such as pandemics. But the portfolio of mayors also extends to many intangible aspects, including the conservation of heritage landmarks and places of emotional attachment, so as to strengthen the unique identity of the city, and to some extent, improve its liveability.

To do this, governments need the help of the private sector and the people, especially when the task is as big as reducing pervasive crime and violence in cities such as Medellin, Colombia. The power of the people is a tremendous resource, as seen in cities such as Bandung, Indonesia, where social resilience is boosted by community movements that are inspired by a spirit of community voluntarism, and mobilised through social media.

**“On social cohesion, Bangkok is one of those places where the temple, mosque and church are situated next to each other... we have adopted a strategy to recognise the identity, characteristics and culture of each community.”**

—Dr Vallop Suwandee, Chairman of Advisors to Governor of Bangkok, Thailand



### THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- A sustainable city can be seen as a growing, liveable city that is vibrant and attracts talented people. A resilient city is one that can stay this way. This means having to deal with problems — whether it is natural, like earthquakes, or man-made, like crime — while being innovative in generating opportunities, including creating jobs and attracting investment.
- Citizen involvement is a key factor in sustainability, whether it is in changing certain behaviours such as reducing waste, as well as in building resilience by involving and energising community groups. Increasingly, digital communication is essential to facilitate this greater collaboration with the people.
- The notion of resilience should be expanded to also cover social resilience. Maintaining social cohesion is vital, by respecting and recognising individual differences and choice, and involving more citizen participation.

**“The strength of the Bandung people is voluntarism, so we work to take this to the next level... and so, we create a movement and a resilient culture.”**

—Ridwan Kamil, Mayor, Bandung, Indonesia



# THEMATIC DISCUSSION 4:

## EDUCATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

A key piece in combating income inequality within cities is to address the growing skills gap that prevents large portions of the urban population from accessing careers that offer good opportunities for advancement. Identifying the skills that employers need today and predicting future workforce demands can help city leaders develop strategies to strengthen the city's workforce and foster the growth of promising industry sectors.

Education is undeniably the key foundation for competitiveness, and it offers much potential for growth. Cities can play key roles in preparing the workforce for the future, especially against rapid technological change and globalisation, which brings about rapid movement of capital, as well as the "creative destruction" of old industry sectors and functions, and the creation of new ones. At the same time, aspiring citizens in a digital age are vocal in their expectation of cities to deliver the opportunities, amidst constraints such as an ageing population. All these inter-connected challenges call for coordinated measures like a "national movement" in places such as Singapore, where the

government works with educational institutions, companies and employers, trade unions and training providers to boost skills training.

Education is also about empowerment, especially in less developed cities with low basic literacy, where the total environment for education lacks even the basic requirements of public safety and security. Hence the urgent need for more available, accessible and affordable education. Tackling challenges such as rising youth unemployment might require more direct action such as personal calls to employers from the mayor himself, like in Auckland, New Zealand. Other ways to boost employability include partnering with the community in mentorship schemes for the youth, such as is done in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. These measures can help address trends such as the rising rate of university dropouts, so as to build a workforce that is better able to meet the needs of the future global economy.

**"The young people of the world need our help... to place youth unemployment on the global agenda for human development."**

–Ibone Bengoetxea, First Deputy Mayor,  
Bilbao, Spain



### THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- Skills development must be ongoing, far-sighted and active, to stay relevant to the demands of a fast-changing marketplace. Cities must keep an eye on the driving forces and emerging threats and opportunities on the global horizon, to address the skills mismatch between what the economy needs and what the workforce has.
- Cities need to take a holistic approach to enhance what they have in education, from investing in early childhood to narrowing the digital divide among seniors, and facilitating the closer collaboration of all parties including employers, job-seekers and educators.
- The new economy of ideas and innovation offers an opportunity for cities to build their economic resilience by growing new industrial sectors, and building up the middle class through access to educational and training opportunities. With the accumulation of skills and knowledge in the new industrial sectors, the local human resource will grow and contribute to further economic development.

**"Every time there is a shift from one form of production to another... it is the role of government to try and smooth that transition, and to protect those most vulnerable to the costs associated with it. Cities are uniquely positioned to do that. Cities have always been about ideas, innovation, trade and agglomeration of ideas and energy."**

–Anthony Shorris, First Deputy Mayor,  
New York City, USA





# CONCLUSION

The 65 mayors and city leaders who gathered in New York for the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum 2015 debated the critical imperatives for the world's rising urban populations with great energy and wisdom. They exchanged many anecdotes on spontaneous innovations, well planned interventions, and surprising successes. A great spirit of partnership prevailed.

More than anything, the mayors' comments and subsequent conclusions expressed in their joint declaration were underscored by 3 critical points:

- We live in a time for urban innovation. Disruptors like transport technologies, big data, the sharing economy, the internet of things, social networks, and new life style choices can be aids to urbanisation and city success if they are leveraged by city leaders for the common good.

- Helping people to thrive and overcome disadvantage is a route not just to prosperity and fairness, but also to city resilience. People who have more access to resources are more resilient and less vulnerable.
- Transforming transport into adaptive multi-modal systems that can incrementally expand and integrate cycling, walking, and car-pooling, with other more structured modes is essential to make the city work, and to support the new social and economic geographies of growing cities.

The dialogue, trust, and partnership between city leaders and citizens form the fundamental bond upon which city success rests. Nourishing and renewing that partnership with effective programmes and policies, responsiveness and reliability, and with innovation and initiative is the agenda that mayors, the world over, share and esteem.

View the WCS Mayors Forum 2015 programme at: <http://www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg/mayorsforum/programme-outline>



# 6TH WORLD CITIES SUMMIT

## MAYORS FORUM DECLARATION

The World Cities Summit Mayors Forum is a key highlight of the World Cities Summit. Cities face many common challenges, a number of which may be complex and urgent. But what gives confidence and optimism for the future is the way in which these challenges are openly discussed, and practical and innovative solutions shared, at platforms such as the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum and networks that are created as a result of such platforms.

The annual forum has grown since 2010. At the 2014 session, 128 mayors and city leaders expressed support for a standalone UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on sustainable cities and human settlements. Cities are now at the forefront in addressing challenges such as climate change, poverty, threats to biodiversity, and the sustainability of our planet. Through integrated planning and development, as well as dynamic urban governance, we can achieve the four tenets of a good city: liveability, sustainability, vibrancy, and high quality of life, key objectives which are espoused by the prestigious Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize.

We, the Mayors and leaders representing 59 cities convened at the 6th World Cities Summit Mayors Forum in New York City, together with our partners, endeavour to promote equitable, liveable and sustainable cities by:

1. Undertaking long-term planning of our cities and ensuring sustainable implementation, so as to make good, effective use of finite resources;
2. Supporting a culture of integrity in urban governance, to engender public trust and equity in the development of our cities;
3. Promoting an inclusive, equitable economy that offers the opportunity for all our people to live and work with dignity and security;
4. Working towards providing affordable homes for all, in order to give city-dwellers a stake in the prosperity and stability of their cities;
5. Planning and building accessible and sustainable transport networks, as a city's transport network can either impede its growth, or accelerate its development;
6. Building resilience in our cities through systems and frameworks, to deal with chronic stresses and acute shocks such as infrastructure strain, climate change, natural calamity, and civil strife;
7. Promoting institutional capacity building, skills development and future sensing, to sustain competitiveness in cities;
8. Working with communities, stakeholders and the private sector to build cities that are fair and inclusive, as participation promotes a sense of ownership, giving residents a sense of pride and a stake in the city's future; and
9. Sharing our ideas, experiences, and solutions with fellow mayors and city leaders and continuously learn from one another.

Mr Desmond Lee,  
Singapore's Minister of State  
for National Development  
and Chairman of the 6th World Cities  
Summit Mayors Forum 2015

The Honourable Bill de Blasio,  
Mayor of New York City and  
Host of the 6th World Cities  
Summit Mayors Forum 2015

and participating cities of  
the 6th World Cities Summit  
Mayors Forum 2015



## WE THANK THE FOLLOWING MAYORS AND CITY LEADERS FOR THEIR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WORLD CITIES SUMMIT MAYORS FORUM 2015

**Falah Al Ahbabi**  
General Manager of Abu Dhabi  
Urban Planning Council,  
UAE

**Khalid Taher**  
Mayor of Al-Madinah  
Al-Munawwarah,  
Saudi Arabia

**Akel Biltaji**  
Mayor of Amman, Jordan

**Atty Edgardo D. Pamintuan**  
Mayor of Angeles City,  
Philippines

**Bart De Wever**  
Mayor of Antwerp,  
Belgium

**Len Brown**  
Mayor of Auckland,  
New Zealand

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Mayor of Bacolod,  
Philippines

**Ridwan Kamil**  
Mayor of Bandung,  
Indonesia

**Dr Vallop Suwandee**  
Chairman of Advisors to  
Governor of Bangkok,  
Thailand

**Dr Bihal Hamad**  
Mayor of Beirut, Lebanon

**Alok Sharma**  
Mayor of Bhopal, India

**Dr Tejaswi S Naik**  
Commissioner of Bhopal,  
India

**Ibon Areso**  
Mayor of Bilbao, Spain

**Ibone Bengoetxea**  
First Deputy Mayor of Bilbao,  
Spain

**Sorin Oprescu**  
Mayor of Bucharest,  
Romania

**Oscar Malapitan**  
Mayor of Caloocan,  
Philippines

**Luis Macario E. Asistio III**  
Vice Mayor of Caloocan,  
Philippines

**Patricia de Lille**  
Executive Mayor of Cape Town,  
South Africa

**Hussain Lootah**  
Director-General of  
Dubai Municipality,  
UAE

**Dr Roberto Cláudio**  
Mayor of Fortaleza,  
Brazil

**Takashima Soichiro**  
Mayor of Fukuoka City,  
Japan

**Dr Khalid El Adli**  
Governor of Giza, Egypt

**Jaime Nebot**  
Mayor of Guayaquil,  
Ecuador

**Doan Viet Hung**  
Chairman of Hai Duong City,  
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Director-General of  
Incheon Metropolitan City,  
Korea

**Ilsur Metshin**  
Mayor of Kazan, Russia

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Haji Abang Julai**  
Mayor of Kuching North,  
Malaysia

**Dato James Chan Khay Syn**  
Mayor of Kuching South,  
Malaysia

**Dr Osama Albar**  
Mayor of Makkah,  
Saudi Arabia

**Anibal Gaviria**  
Mayor of Medellín,  
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**Francis Tolentino**  
Chairman of Metropolitan  
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**Atty Jaime Fresnedi**  
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Mayor of San Simon,  
Philippines

**Javier Gonzales**  
Mayor of Santa Fe,  
USA

**Donald Atchison**  
Mayor of Saskatoon,  
Canada

**Datuk Tiong Thai King**  
Mayor of Sibul, Malaysia

**Desmond Lee**  
Minister of State for  
National Development,  
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**Ranawaka Arachchige Don  
Janaka Ranawaka**  
Mayor of Sri Jayawardenapura  
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**Nie Zhongqiu**  
Vice Mayor of Xi'an,  
China

**Ken Akaoka**  
Deputy Director General of  
International Affairs  
Bureau of Yokohama,  
Japan



The biennial World Cities Summit (WCS) is an exclusive and premier platform for government leaders and industry experts to address liveable and sustainable city challenges, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships. Jointly organised by Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC), and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the key highlights of the summit include the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum, and the World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium.

The next edition of the World Cities Summit will be held from 10 to 14 July 2016 in Singapore.

**[www.worldcitysummit.com.sg](http://www.worldcitysummit.com.sg)**

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