



YOUNG  
LEADERS

# **WORLD CITIES SUMMIT**

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# **YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM**

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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**

9 JUNE 2015  
NEW YORK CITY  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thinking big, reaching wide, working smart – these were the three main areas of priority for cities that were discussed at the 2nd World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium in New York City, New York, USA in June 2015.

There were 37 young leaders coming from 23 cities in 16 countries, and 2 international organisations comprising government officials and leaders from corporations, international organisations, academia, think-tanks and civil society organisations. They came together as part of a growing community of change-makers to shape the global urban agenda. The Young Leaders deliberated on three key issues – connectivity, social sustainability and smart cities, which were in line with the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum theme of “Innovative Cities of Opportunity”.

To think big is to seek to bridge the gap in mindset and aspiration in city development between the local and the global spheres. First, there is increasing awareness that cities need to go beyond their natural tendencies to focus more on the immediate and local concerns by incorporating global considerations. Increasingly, it is becoming impossible to ignore the role that all cities must play in tackling global challenges such as climate change and terrorism. Looking outward and further ahead will help cities be better prepared to address emerging threats to their longer-term viability, such as the rising mobility of capital and labour.



Reaching out to the community is the key to social sustainability and resilience. In this growing area of concern for cities, the agenda has moved from managing the physical environment to addressing the human aspects of reducing inequality and enhancing quality of life, as well as increasing access to economic opportunity. Here, the most pressing need is providing affordable housing as the most basic big-ticket item towards nurturing a more socially cohesive community, and ensuring that affordable funds are available for sustainability.

Working smart will have to be the main mode of operation for the smart cities of

the future. Cities must work better with the private sector on innovations and initiatives in adopting new technology. The people will need to be engaged more effectively through digital communication to make the smart city work; and governance will also have to re-invent itself to keep up with the fast pace of changes.

Into its second year, the Symposium opened with two calls for collaboration on projects studying financing models by cities and integrating social protection and labour policies with urban planning. These involve the Centre for Liveable Cities, and WCS Young Leaders from the Cities Development Initiative for Asia and The World Bank.

The World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium is an annual by-invitation-only event for leaders from both public and private sectors related to urban development and governance. The symposium is a highlight of the biennial World Cities Summit, co-organised by Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities and Urban Redevelopment Authority.

# CONNECTIVITY: INTEGRATING INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC PRIORITIES

International connectivity helps make cities more successful through, among other things, the sharing of business opportunities and best practices. However, cities can also get preoccupied with domestic politics, and perhaps some might say city leaders should focus on setting their home in order before venturing out. Yet, city leaders who want to have an internationalisation strategy must integrate internationalisation and domestic priorities.

Singapore, a global city state, began by engaging the United Nations in 1970, less than 5 years after independence to draw up its first concept plan, transforming it from a forested area to the global city state and metropolis it is today. Now, the focus is on planning ahead, envisioning worst and best case scenarios, and developing solutions which will inevitably involve both local and international scans for ideas.

New York City, home to the largest diplomatic community in the world, is enlarging the scope of its Office of International Affairs to look beyond in-city protocol issues and promote NYC's goals of creating a just and equitable society with its global partners, and participating in global discussions on climate change, gender equity, migration, and religious tolerance. The Office also fosters inclusivity by giving each resident including migrants, an access card to city services.

It is natural to want to prioritise domestic policies, and then integrate international concerns. This is so, especially, given the level of disconnect in some places such as the United States, where less than half of US citizens have a passport. When citizens care first about local concerns such as potholes and air quality, city leaders look around for best practices and alternative solutions, and localising global agendas such as climate change and pollution for their residents' support. Local priorities such as access to jobs and education also have a global dimension as these can be carried out through attracting foreign direct investments.

Cities that appreciate the value of internationalisation are going far out to extend their partnerships for connectivity. Adelaide in Australia, has five sister cities, including Qingdao in China — a vastly different culture — which itself has 26 sister cities. Having sister cities is just one partnership model and more of such connectivity will be crucial in fostering the capacity to respond to global challenges.

**“I wonder if this question of international connectivity is a Singaporean framing because you cannot leave the city without going international. Would the conversation be materially different if we talked about connectivity, sharing in meaningful ways and would that change how we approach this?”**

—Michael Berkowitz, President, 100 Resilient Cities



## THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- The world is now so inter-connected that cities have no choice but to work on enhancing their inter-city and international connectivity. The biggest global challenges cannot be tackled if cities stay in their own small worlds.
- Cities first have to meet basic needs such as having enough jobs, but they must also show city residents why they need to buy-in to the global agenda.
- Cities need to look outward, also to respond to mega-trends such as capital and labour becoming more mobile, with businesses moving more online and young people choosing to relocate for liveability first, before considering employment.

**“There are global challenges we are facing today that will affect us where we are not so much in control as long as we are not united...(such as) the war on terror, conflict and climate change... With the sustainable development goals, now we have a goal on sustainable cities and human settlements. It would be such a loss if city leaders and city dwellers do not take advantage of that and proactively make it what they want it to be... Simply localise the global agenda!”**

—Dr Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Habitat



# SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: NARROWING INEQUALITY FOR URBAN RESILIENCE

As the economies and wealth of cities grow, the gap between the rich and the poor becomes wider. Sometimes, this divergence pushes back strategies for growth and development. At other times, cities can over-compensate through welfare subsidies or by being populist. Housing, education, wealth distribution and upward mobility are some key considerations, amid the calls for strategies to make growth and development more relevant and attractive for all.

In a recently concluded UN Economic Commission for Europe study, it was demonstrated that the very cities driving the global economy have the most challenge in supplying affordable housing. Despite being the command points of the global economy, a failure in the housing market and labour markets could substantially cost growth and the well-being of the economy as a lack of access to housing may destroy the integrated housing and employment mix required for global competitiveness.

Long-term sustainability is the only viable way forward, as demonstrated in places such as Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates, with its 2030 vision that includes measures such as mandating sustainability provisions for new urban developments, and mitigating the stress on infrastructure from the projected growth in residents from 1.4 million to 2.5 million by 2030. The government has localised the climate change agenda and mandated Estidama (sustainability) requirements in all new developments, reducing energy consumption by as much as 64%.

Resilience applies to more than recovering from the destruction caused by hurricanes or acts of terrorism. Cities that do not diversify, or rely on a single industry are at risk. Resilient cities typically make decisions taking into account risk, future scenarios, inclusivity for real representation and integrated working across silos and different levels of governance.

New Orleans is grappling with a few issues such as flood and storm planning, public health like obesity, and murder and violence. These appear unrelated at first, but tended to be concentrated at a certain geographic area. Solutions could arise from integrated thinking, such as creating better green spaces to absorb the rains, bring people out to the parks for improved health, and thereby reduce the incidence of crime due to there being more public human traffic.

Cycling and bike-sharing is a classic example of integrated thinking and solutions that creates benefits like better public health, social equity, reduced pollution and infrastructure strain.

**“There’s a long history of planning and of more or less severe interventions across cities where the planning tends to be purely physical and hence unsuccessful because it misses how life works, and the integration of many aspects of life.”**

–Luis Bettencourt, Professor, Santa Fe Institute



## THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- The high rate of urbanisation in places like Indonesia and China demands much more affordable housing to be built. Otherwise, the quality of life will suffer, with the risk of urban sprawl and environmental issues.
- Building infrastructure may bring visible improvements more quickly, but only people-centred initiatives are sustainable, especially to foster intangible outcomes including a sense of belonging and upward social mobility. This requires city authorities to trust people and to take time to listen to their needs.
- Affordable financing is crucial as cities build up infrastructure for its people. Sustainable infrastructure encompasses affordability — if the people cannot afford its use and subsidies are required, then the infrastructure will become a running cost to the city which is then not sustainable.

**“Whoever innovates in finance, will win the next battle. Governments are not spending enough and they are not spending enough because they are not getting enough. One possible solution is the innovation in financial markets.”**

–Pang Yee Ean, CEO,  
Surbana International Consultants Pte Ltd



# SMART CITIES: TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

A lot has been espoused about smart cities. In the process of developing a smart city, continuous innovation will be called for, and the resulting challenges include capturing and managing knowledge, and scaling up the new initiatives that are being implemented. Transformative innovation, a model developed at the Santa Fe Institute, USA, to study cities as places of innovative opportunities, sees individuals as being the fundamental quantum of innovation, that cannot function without the right environment for their innovation to scale up, take physical form and perfect the lives of others — and this is the space that governments and corporations can fill. The more creative professions tend to reside in more international and metropolitan cities, and governments would do well to cultivate this group to foster more innovation.

The private sector is at the forefront of innovation while the public sector can provide a scale of development and incentives to catalyse the use of smart technologies. One example of the private sector taking the lead is Palava, a greenfield city, near Mumbai, India. In building a greenfield city, developers cannot avoid governance and regulation issues at the same time that they can innovate. With a smaller scale of development to manage compared to city governments, they can exercise more flexibility and innovation such as card-based, cashless transactions (hence, reducing corruption), and creating walkable communities

in a brownfield and densely populated city like Mumbai, by planning jobs and amenities nearby. While some question the interest of the private sector to provide affordable housing, market economics, corporate reputation, quality and price competitiveness are factors that balance the profit and social good mix.

A city is not smart on its own, but what is smart, are the possibilities it generates for its residents. The community can be engaged in data collection, and rallied to support new smart city initiatives. Initiatives such as IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge have helped disadvantaged communities enhance their quality of life, from boosting citizen communication in Porto Alegre, Brazil to water management in Tshwane, South Africa. Social media and digital communication, increasingly, will play bigger roles in city development, through promoting consultation and participation.

**“We have to realise that cities are going to transform more in the next 20 years than they have in the last 2,000 years and we need to think about how that integrates into our decision making. We can't extrapolate what has happened over the last 10 years to the next 10 years.”**

—Stephen Yarwood, Urban Futurist, city 2050

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## THE KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

- Cities can act more like the private sector in putting into place the people and technology needed to move on to the next level of becoming smart cities. This also means having an effective community feedback loop, to stay close to understanding what the people really want, rather than working with just top-down, pre-set ideas, and knowing how to work with open data for sentiment analysis, the same way the private sector is already.
- Smart cities need smart people. Because a lot of technology is already available and easy to use, as an analogy, perhaps what smart cities need to provide essentially is wireless network, or the basic infrastructure that works, and then to allow and to facilitate the private sector and the people to do apply, create and innovate. It is also important to create a set of standards that can be applied across cities and platforms.
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can be applied in creating shared and open standards so that more technology solutions can be further developed within an ecosystem. Beyond that, governments need to take up active roles to integrate various PPP initiatives in order to realise actual deliverables that will enhance the quality of life of residents.

**“In this country, over the last 10 years when we have struggled to find finance for road maintenance — not construction — \$500 billion of private capital has gone towards cellular infrastructure as monthly subscriptions to firms who provide and create value of these services. More of such firms will emerge and these will resemble Uber more than the enterprise scale businesses of smart cities we are talking about — this will throw our planning and governance models out the window.”**

—Anthony Townsend, Senior Research Scientist, NYU Rudin Center for Transportation

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# PRESENTING AT THE WORLD CITIES SUMMIT MAYORS FORUM 2015

The World Cities Summit Young Leaders are a select group of change-makers from diverse areas in both the public and private sectors who are shaping the global urban agenda. They play a crucial role as the decisions that city leaders make today will impact the rapidly growing urban population in existing and emerging cities.

Going beyond their own discussions at the World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium, four Young Leaders summarised the proceedings of the symposium and presented their take on the sub-themes of the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum. The opportunity to present to the mayors and city leaders also allowed for a greater diversity in views to be incorporated at the exclusive mayoral gathering.

## Housing and Economic Development

Every city should have a well-developed public or social housing programme. Affordable housing is not just tied to economics, but it is also tied to politics. Without affordable housing, there will be issues of societal instability. Hence, it is important for all city leaders to develop affordable housing programmes. Beyond affordability, housing is not just about numbers as an often overlooked issue is the desirability of the housing provided. Desirable housing encompasses factors beyond the physical aspects of the house to include proximity to jobs, access to social infrastructure, a continuous upkeep of infrastructure, as well as relevant policies to support these factors.

–Cheng Hsing Yao, Managing Director, GuocoLand Singapore Pte Ltd

## Transportation and Mobility

Innovation and entrepreneurship will transform transport in our cities. Lyft Line, a car sharing programme, accounted for 50% of lift trips in San Francisco and 30% in NYC, introducing the most successful car sharing programme in these two cities overnight. Barclays predicts a 50% decline in car sales by 2040, and Ford recently announced they would place 1,000 shared Ford cars in London. According to PwC, the shared economy will grow tenfold by 2025 to a \$345 billion industry. Hence, it is important for mayors and policymakers to take cognizance of these trends and be enablers through appropriate public policies, such that more jobs can be created, and improved efficiency and quality of life can be achieved.

–Clayton Lane, Deputy Director, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities



# PRESENTING AT THE WORLD CITIES SUMMIT MAYORS FORUM 2015

## Sustainability and Resilience

It is important to focus on people and to expand the definition of resilience to include social and economic resilience rather than just the physical resilience of infrastructure. This would have an impact on policies such as housing for people in informal settlements, as they tend to be most vulnerable when disasters strike. A whole-of-government approach is crucial to build up resilience — to ensure that in all the phases of disaster preparedness that involve different levels of government (local, state, federal) and various agencies, the processes are integrated. It is important to have coordination mechanisms, frameworks, standards and focal points within the government so that when there are multiple solution providers, they work in a consolidated and concerted way without drowning cities with multiple entities helping different parts of the cities in silos.

–Hazem Galal, Partner, Cities & Local Government Sector  
Global Leader, PricewaterhouseCoopers Co. Ltd.

## Education and Competitiveness

Cities will become the hubs for future learning. A possible scenario in the future is that of post-manufacturing mass unemployment. Coupled with developments such as self-driving vehicles, machine led learning and artificial intelligence, all these present educational opportunities. What if the city becomes its own education system? People are hugely flexible assets in the city. If you look at Singapore, a common narrative is that the only asset it had was its people. Now they are looking to leapfrog into the economy of innovation. What if citizens could become amplifiers of learning? If 15,000 volunteer citizens trained 10 colleagues, you would get 150,000 trained people. The resilience of the city will come from the resilience of the people and their grit and determination to learn.

–Dorjee Sun, Director, Home Group

View the WCS Young Leaders Symposium 2015 programme here: <http://www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg/about-young-leaders>



# WE THANK THE FOLLOWING YOUNG LEADERS FOR THEIR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WORLD CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM 2015

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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.worldcitiessummit.com.sg](http://www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg)**

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