

WORLD CITIES SUMMIT

8th MAYORS FORUM REPORT



Liveable & Sustainable Cities:
Embracing the Future through Innovation and Collaboration

17-19 MAY 2017 SUZHOU CITY, JIANGSU PROVINCE, CHINA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 8th edition of the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum was held from 17 - 19 May 2017, in Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province

Innovation and collaboration took the spotlight when the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum convened for the eighth time in Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province, in China in May 2017. Having always had to work with limited resources and seemingly limitless challenges, cities need to work smarter and more closely together than ever before, for a more sustainable and resilient future. More than 60 mayors and city leaders from 54 cities at the forum made a declaration to work towards the shared vision of creating liveable, inclusive, harmonious, resilient, safe and sustainable cities through innovation and collaboration.

The declaration noted that the mayors and city leaders will practise dynamic urban governance and long-term, integrated master planning as key principles to direct the development of cities and implementation of plans. They

will also collaborate with stakeholders to curate and leverage cities' built heritage and cultural assets such as those in culturally-rich cities from ancient ones like Alexandria and Xi'an to more modern ones like Bilbao to benefit the economy and quality of life in the city. Initiatives will be co-developed between city leaders and the community to improve the resilience to the shocks and stressors of cities' built, natural and social environments. Finally, systemic innovation and flexible adaptation will be pursued, to balance economic growth and liveability.

The forum explored the possibilities underlying the tradeoffs arising from urban planning, preservation of culture, and balancing growth with its impact to cities. In particular, a consensus formed around the idea that a stronger sense of culture and identity could provide more confidence for cities to venture forth

and to try out new ideas. More scope for advancement could also emerge from "the paradox of planning", where more planning need not mean restricting room for action but might instead add capacity to become more flexible and to welcome even more participatory and consultative processes. As the Forum's Chairman - Singapore's Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong - said: "More planning need not hold back ground-up involvement. In fact, it can facilitate better ground-up involvement."

To treasure what is precious from the old while surging ahead with the new, cities can tap the potential of the modern - in technology and youth. Technology applied well can help rejuvenate heritage and project culture to fresh audiences, while the millennial generation of city residents, if engaged to stay and participate, is where the future resides,

through their contributions to innovation and collaboration.

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. This report was authored by Koh Buck Song of the Centre for Liveable Cities.



Skyline of Jinji Lake Central Business District
© Department of Publicity of Suzhou Industrial Park



Aerial view of Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province

Cities everywhere are grappling with the challenges of rapid urbanisation, with over 80 per cent of global economic activity now concentrated in cities. Well-managed urbanisation can help lower poverty and spur greater prosperity. Managing growth also means keeping sight of longer-term challenges such as climate change when, for example, road vehicles globally are expected to double to 2 billion by 2050. Urgent responses are called for, including adapting to the shift to shared mobility, as well as investing more in sustainable and inclusive forms of mobility.

Dynamic urban governance and integrated master planning are key principles that cities can use to make progress and advance in the face of new demands. But where a higher authority such as the federal government

is not active, mayors need to step up to address critical issues, such as in Denver, Colorado in the USA, where traffic congestion became so bad that city authorities were moved to act and set up FasTracks, the US' largest public-private transport network under construction to date.

Governance thrives when there is good two-way communication, and here, the smartphone appears to be playing a growing role as a technological enabler, such as in Seoul, Korea, where citizens routinely use their phones to express preferences for city planning initiatives. This is also at play in cases such as that of the mayor of Fukuoka, Japan, who used personal SMS messages to assure residents of recovery efforts from a major road sinkhole, to fulfil the duty of leadership to provide security by addressing the anxieties of citizens quickly and appropriately.



Gathering of leaders at the 8th World Cities Summit Mayors Forum

The key discussion takeaways:

- The capacity for city leadership must be developed and honed at all levels, from the mayor to neighbourhood communities, and across all jurisdictions.
- City planning has to balance many mechanisms including the institutional frameworks for participatory decision-making and budgeting, and public-private sector partnerships.
- An international network like a “league of cities” would enable cities to share more insights on planning and governance with one another, and develop collaboration opportunities.



Economic growth may be uneven, but development can still be inclusive. If planning takes a long-term view, is integrated and evidence-based, urban environments can be productive, green and highly liveable. Singapore, for example, is a model.

- VICTORIA KWAKWA

Regional Vice President (East Asia and the Pacific), The World Bank Group



Urban challenges are becoming more complex and involve more stakeholders, so it is very crucial to secure deeper and more extensive participation of citizens.

- KIM CHANG-BEOM

Ambassador for International Relations, Seoul

CURATING THE CITY: HERITAGE AND CULTURE



Humble Administrator's Garden; Suzhou, Jiangsu Province

As cities develop and expand their economic districts and industrial sectors, the cultural soul of the city can often be compromised or – worse still – forgotten. This would be a pity, when the heritage and culture of cities give them a unique identity and authenticity that can be translated into tangible economic benefits. For example, culture is the main draw for six out of 10 visitors to Bilbao, Spain, helping to regenerate areas in decline and spurring economic growth (the Guggenheim Museum



The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

is estimated to have already earned 52 times its initial investment).

Culture is wrongly viewed as “baggage” in some quarters, when there are definitely roles for all segments of society, including young people, to contribute to the creation and preservation of culture.

Technology is also seen as being at odds with heritage, but there is actually much potential for it to augment culture and engage people better. Heritage and culture are also key in providing city-dwellers with a sense of identity and pride in today's globalised world. Technology can equip cities to preserve what is best in their culture and also to move ahead at the same time.

Cities can capitalise on their rich cultural assets to position themselves as centres of arts and culture, curating and leveraging their built heritage and cultural assets to the cities' advantage, in terms of economic benefits and quality of life. These assets are best showcased in collaboration with stakeholders, and with the active participation of the people.

The key discussion takeaways:

- Heritage and culture are crucial to the development of all cities, as a resource from which many benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, can be derived.
- Promoting culture can help mitigate the substantial risk of today's generation of youth – especially those who are disenfranchised in less well-resourced cities – who feel disconnected from their heritage.
- Cultural capital builds on trust and social capital, which can also be nurtured by promoting activities beyond heritage and culture, such as volunteerism and philanthropy.

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Culture is essential to preserve the identity of the city, because it is a sector of opportunity for the economy and culture itself has important value to improve social cohesion.

– XABIER OCHANDIANO MARTINEZ

Councilor for Economic Development, Trade and Employment, Bilbao

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Many people think conservation goes against economic growth, but I think that is wrong. We have to connect conservation with economic regeneration. We believe that the city is for the people.

– MAIMUNAH MOHD SHARIF

Municipal President, Municipal Council of Seberang Perai, Penang

THE TENACITY OF A CITY: A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT



Aerial view of Auckland city

The strength of a city depends on maintaining a city environment that can be self-sustaining and able to withstand, and recover from, shocks. Challenges such as climate change, economic pressures, population shifts and influx of migrants can stretch a city, its people and infrastructure too far, at the expense of the natural environment.

No threat is bigger than climate change, requiring cities to act now to deal with future flooding and rising sea levels. These are addressed in detail in initiatives such as the Auckland Plan, a historic first for the new Auckland Supercity. This plan guides future development over the next 30 years, tackling issues in areas including transport and congestion, housing, jobs and skills, and protecting the environment.

The future of many cities will largely depend on how their leaders and citizens respond to challenges by developing initiatives that can reduce stress and foster greater resilience of the built and natural environment, the city government, and the community. The Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city takes a comprehensive approach

with a Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Framework that is a world-first. These 22 quantitative KPIs are designed from the perspective of promoting a healthy ecological environment, social harmony and progress, a dynamic and efficient economy, and integrated regional coordination.

The key discussion takeaways:

- It is vital first to know the people's needs and then to find the resources to implement city plans to meet those needs. Community stakeholders and users should be included in determining, for example, the uses of technology – what the people need, and, even more importantly, what they do not need.
- Unless a city plan is seen by citizens to be for everybody, it cannot work. To avoid lapsing into unequal distribution of benefits, a favourable political environment should be maintained by first earning the trust of the people.
- Heritage and culture should be protected before planning new areas. For example, to temper the pace of urbanisation, China is paying more attention to small and medium-sized cities and their local characteristics in various aspects including food, beverage and crafts.

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The most important thing in city development is that the city leadership has to have the strong will to ask enterprises to cooperate.

- BARRY CHANG

Council Member and Former Mayor of Cupertino, California

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Thanks to the active participation of local business circles, we can confirm that the decoupling of economic growth from energy consumption is underway.

- TSUYOSHI YAMAMOTO

Special Advisor to the Governor on International Affairs, Tokyo

ENGINES OF GROWTH: BALANCING LIVEABILITY WITH GROWTH



Aerial view of Het Eilandje in Antwerp city

Growing and staying liveable can often seem to be at odds. Income inequality, skills mismatch, business model disruption and their associated consequences are challenges that many cities seek to mitigate. The key is in how cities innovate and adapt their economies, including the nature of their industries, to remain competitive and attractive to both local residents and global talents.

In an increasingly uncertain world, the big question is whether whole new mental models are needed for policy-makers to embrace fresh ways of doing business that are compatible with liveability. Responsive new strategies may allow the city's workforce to re-equip themselves, adapt to embrace disruption, and absorb the growth potential offered by new economic sectors such as those that involve smart logistics and the Internet of things.

Whilst building the industry sectors that form the pillars of the economy, it is crucial that factors affecting the city's liveability are considered as well, to ensure a balance

with economic growth. Ultimately, this means taking into account all the key factors that add to quality of life for the people, and to the sustainability of the environment.

The key discussion takeaways:

- A key part of the growth strategy for any city is to “cherish the crown jewels” – what has made a city strong in the past – like the port of Antwerp for Belgium’s diamond industry.
- Even as cities allocate space for amenities and activities that make a place liveable, they must also set aside room for growth by investing in land uses such as housing for clusters of innovation for industry.
- Cities must do enough to retain their millennial, digital-native residents. Growing cities need talent, but not if the young cannot afford to live there. This is the challenge in places such as cities in California, USA, coping with high property prices near the innovation hub of Silicon Valley.



Every city should get on the train towards the new economy with digital technology if you want to grow and stay liveable. If you miss the train, you will probably see your old business models crumble very quickly.

- BART DE WEVER
Mayor of Antwerp



The problem is how to convince people to change their way of life in adopting technology, using public transport and other areas. Civil society has a big role to play.

- KHALID EL FATAOUI
Vice Mayor of Marrakech



WE THANK THE FOLLOWING MAYORS AND CITY LEADERS FOR THEIR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WORLD CITIES SUMMIT MAYORS FORUM 2017

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The biennial World Cities Summit (WCS) is an exclusive 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), key highlights of the summit include the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum, the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, and the World Cities Summit Young Leaders Symposium. The next edition of the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum will be held from 8 to 12 July 2018 in Singapore. For more information, please visit: www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg

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