



Context

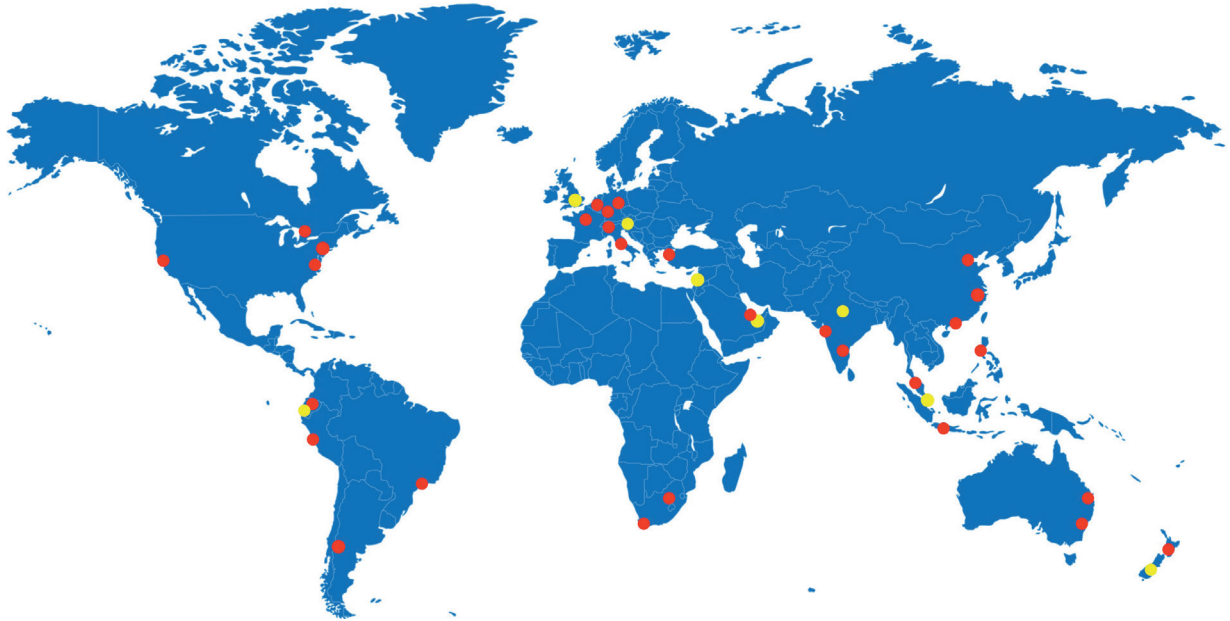


Cities are often places of great energy and optimism. They are where most of us choose to live work and interact with others. As a result, **cities are where innovation happens, where ideas are formed from which economic growth largely stems**. Although wrestling with difficult challenges, sometimes individually but more often collectively, cities are able to address some of the most significant challenges facing society today. City councils around the world are reducing air pollution, banning diesel cars, introducing smoking bans, bicycle rental schemes and even imposing sugar taxes in order to help citizens make better lifestyle choices. Often nimbler than nation states, cities such as Paris, London, Mexico City, Aspen and Copenhagen are becoming test-beds for innovation that is then shared from one to another. There is much to be done and many city leaders are working on the challenges.

However, as a steadily rising global population approaches 70% urbanization, the problems are now accelerating. City leaders today have to react quickly to accommodate vast influxes of people. There are many priorities; the provision of basic services - housing, water, sanitation, schools and hospitals; the establishment and maintenance of effective transport and technology infrastructures; the delivery of fair and effective policing; and the creation of an attractive business environment. The list is considerable. Now, perhaps more than ever, city leaders are seeking to better understand, share and explore options and future directions. No two cities are the same, so there is no universal blueprint on how best to design, manage and support urban growth. But experiences can be shared, lessons learned, models debated and new perspectives discussed.

The Future Agenda team facilitated twelve high-level discussions in different cities around the world to explore this topic. This document provides an analysis of these and associated discussions and aims to provide context, highlight issues and provide insights around some of the key opportunities for positive change.

The Future Agenda



The Future Agenda programme explores the key issues facing society globally over the next 10 years. Its aim is to use workshops and discussion forums to identify ways in which systems will function, consumers will behave and governments will regulate over the next decade. It was created by Growth Agenda to give all organisations, large or small, the opportunity to access insights that will help them decide on future strategy.

In addition to discussions on the Future of Cities, during 2015/16 120 other workshops were held in 45 locations to explore more than 20 critical issues facing society. These included the future of data, the future of health and healthcare, the future of transport and of work. These workshops helped to support, enrich and challenge initial perspectives given by leading experts to the Future Agenda programme. In turn the insights from these sessions were published and shared widely. As a result, we have received further feedback from those outside the workshop

process that has provided even greater depth for the analysis which can be found in our final 'Future Agenda: The World in 2025' reports.¹

In order to gain as diverse a view as possible about the future of cities, workshops were not only held in established urban centres such as Singapore, Dubai, Delhi, Mumbai, London and Toronto but also we visited less high profile locations including Beirut, now a destination for many of the 2m refugees from neighbouring countries; Christchurch, still recovering from a devastating earthquake in 2011; and Guayaquil, the fast-growing Pacific port-city in Ecuador. The resulting discussions between informed individuals from across academia, business, government and NGOs brought together leading views on how urban development may need to change and adapt for the future.

Summary Insights

Although some points were specific to individual locations, a number of issues were shared across all the discussions. We also heard different views on how the future development of the urban environment should take place.

Common Challenges	Managing Migration	Countering Inequality	Sustainable Scaling
Shared Ambitions	Healthy Cities	Accessible Cities	Intelligent Cities
Emerging Concerns	Safe Cities	Resilient Cities	Collaborative Co-opetition

There are three common challenges:

Managing Migration:

- The facilitation of internal and international migration to cities is set to be one of the defining shifts of the 21st century.

Countering Inequality:

- Providing equitable access to all elements of urban life including transport, sanitation, healthcare, education and work to facilitate economic growth and cement social stability.

Sustainable Scaling:

- Ensuring the sustainable development of infrastructure, the reduction of pollution and the creation of a safe, healthy environment in a time of accelerated urban expansion.

Equally, in many cities there are a number of shared future ambitions:

Healthy Cities:

- To reduce pollution - especially air pollution - improve access to clean water, sanitation and healthcare so that fewer die from preventable causes.

Accessible Cities:

- To plan cities that provide better public transport services and to create more walkable areas which are accessible for all.

Intelligent Cities:

- To use data, connectivity and analytics more effectively to make buildings, infrastructure and citizens smarter and cities more efficient.

In addition, three emerging concerns are being debated in a number of locations:

Safe Cities:

- Whether it is to prevent terrorism, defend against infrastructure-focused cyber-attacks or deal with increased crime, the need for citizens to feel safe is becoming more pervasive.

Resilient Cities:

- The imperative to reconfigure infrastructures that are able to withstand the likely impact of climate change and the increasing number of natural disasters is a growing concern. Adaptation is currently the priority over longer-term mitigation.

Collaborative Co-opetition:

- Managing partnership and competition to establish the right balance between sharing experience, insights and ideas for the future while recognizing increasing economic competition between locations.

Preface

These days the number of mega-cities (those with populations over 10m) is growing across the globe. By 2030 there will be around 40 and 9% of us will live in one.² The established conurbations of the 20th century such as New York, London and Tokyo have already been joined by New Delhi, Istanbul, Mumbai, Shanghai and Sao Paulo and by 2050 we will probably add Karachi, Lagos, Jakarta and Dubai to name but a few. Expect their success or failure to become a key area of government and regulatory focus.

Cities grow because they are a focus for opportunity. As dynamic centres of commerce, cultural eclecticism and knowledge, they are magnets for all walks of life, frequently attracting the best minds, the ambitious, the brave, the optimistic but also the desperate.

Often cities have gained status in their respective regions as safe havens for those escaping persecution and war, or among those simply seeking a new and better life. The eclectic mix of cultures that results is in part responsible for the consequent plethora of transformational ideas, novel technologies, and new ways of doing business, from London to New York, Istanbul to Hong Kong. Despite the media focus on international migration as a driver for change in the last forty years; large scale, internal, rural-urban relocation has also been a powerful engine behind the growth of many cities, particularly across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

But urban population growth is bringing new challenges even as we try and cope with the more traditional concerns around jobs and education. Increasing migration has driven change in living patterns, living spaces and home-ownership models as growing demand and limited supply makes housing prohibitively expensive. It's not just

the sheer numbers of people needing a home that drives up land and property values, sometimes regulation designed for different times, such as limits on the height and density of buildings, or constraints on development, can also inflate prices and force workers towards cheaper, but often less productive, locations. Changing these regulatory conditions could make a material difference not only to economies but also to general wellbeing. One study, for example, suggests that in America alone, lifting all the barriers to urban growth could raise the country's GDP by between 6.5% and 13.5%, or by between \$1trillion and \$2trillion.³ It is difficult to think of many other single policy initiatives that would yield anything similar.

While many benefit from the productivity of cities and the 85% of global GDP that they currently generate, a third of the world's urban population live in unplanned ghettos, townships and favelas. Cities are often polluted, pricey, over-congested and housing everyone is an increasingly major headache – both in the West just as much as everywhere else. London's most populous borough, Islington, has a peak population density of 13,890/km². This may seem cramped but, when compared to Kamathipura in Mumbai, where there are over 120,000 people per square km, it looks decidedly spacious.

Further, as city populations and densities grow, so too does the pressure on ageing urban infrastructures and the environment. More people in cities means greater need for localised travel, for example. Overstretched transport systems need to be updated in an efficient and sustainable manner. Simply allowing an increasing number of vehicles in confined spaces has meant that air pollution has become a significant health issue across the globe from London and Los Angeles to Delhi and Beijing.

The prospect of flooding is also causing concern. The majority of major cities are built on the coast, or on a river, so rising ocean temperatures caused by climate change are an increasing threat to infrastructure. All of this before we even start thinking about jobs, education and healthcare.

It is clear that many cities are under growing pressure. How can we ensure they evolve in a way that enhances the quality of life for those who live in them? How will we provide for a more socially balanced society? How can we make cities resilient to the challenges of climate change? Is there a better approach to efficient and more collaborative living? And in what ways can cities best embrace innovation and new technologies such as smart data, to help meet the challenges?

Over the past decade or so, we have seen a burgeoning of interest in the challenge and opportunity from city design and development. Many universities, numerous governments, multiple consultancies and a good number of leading multinationals all have research programmes, innovation centres and investment strategies focused on the topic. Indeed, we know of over 500 recent reports covering a wide range of urban issues, and there will be many more.

Most agree that **the problems, albeit differently constituted, are clear, but the complexity of urban development defies simple solutions.** Given this, the Future Agenda Future of Cities discussions were robust, challenging and lengthy.⁴

This document provides an overview of what we heard. It has three objectives:

1. To reflect the views of informed people from many locations on the future of cities
2. To link these thoughts to the research that has already been carried out; and
3. To prompt further debate on some gaps and issues that seem as yet unresolved.

We hope that it is a useful contribution for all those interested in designing cities for the future and helps to bring together a broader range of global views.

