



Urban Age Conference

Developing Urban Futures. Addis Ababa, 2018

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Continuing population growth and urbanisation will add 2.5 billion more people to the world's cities by 2050, with nearly 90 per cent of the increase concentrated in Africa and Asia. Today, around 40 per cent of Africans are urban dwellers, about 500 million people. In the next few decades this number will swell to over 1.4 billion. Nigeria's cities alone will accommodate 189 million more people. Ethiopia is moving at great pace from a predominantly rural economy to an urban one, with Addis Ababa growing at an annual rate of about four per cent – twice the rate of Beijing or Jakarta.

Estimates suggest that two-thirds of the investments in urban infrastructure to 2050 have yet to be made and twelve million young people will enter the labour market every year. The scale and speed of change is putting significant pressure on national and municipal governments, while international investment – especially from China – and private entrepreneurship are shaping the economic and physical landscape on the ground. The decisions taken now will affect generations of city dwellers well into the 21st century, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the bulk of urban development is informal and unplanned.

Developing Urban Futures. Addis Ababa, 2018



Urban contrasts in Addis Ababa.

Jointly organised by LSE Cities at the London School of Economics and the Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft, “Developing Urban Futures” was the 17th Urban Age conference. The two-day event convened policymakers, urban experts and practitioners from cities in Africa and across the world. It focused on the development of cities in rapidly urbanising countries, asking questions about the economic foundations of urban change, and the role of metropolitan areas and national spaces in globalised economies. It investigated how current models of planning and governance can be leveraged to achieve greater integration between efficiency, productivity, accessibility and justice.

The conference served as a platform for debate on the development trajectories of key sub-Saharan African cities, including Lagos, Nairobi, Kampala, Accra, Dar es Salaam

and Cape Town alongside corresponding cases from the Indian subcontinent, South-east Asia, South America, Europe and North Africa. Addis Ababa was at the heart of the reflection as a demonstration of the national government’s unprecedented commitment to plan and transform the city through investments in infrastructure, housing and real estate, combined with policies that target the economic bases and spatial organisation of urbanisation, including industrialisation and relations with secondary cities.

The invitation-only event was attended by 300 participants, with over 60 speakers from 26 cities from across Africa and the world. To coincide with the [Developing Urban Futures](#) conference an [Urban Age newspaper](#) was published with new research and contributions from keynote speakers and international urban experts.

Cities are changing rapidly today for the same reason they have for over a thousand years – for people to meet and transact ideas and goods.

Ricky Burdett, Professor of Urban Studies, LSE,
and Director, LSE Cities

For the Urban Age Conference, Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft provided travel grants for five students and young professionals from Germany and Switzerland and five from Africa, all of them with an above-average pro-

ven interest and advanced understanding of urbanisation issues. In the following, the German and Swiss awardees of these scholarships give an account of the eight thematic sessions of the conference.

The dynamics of urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa are different from what we've seen elsewhere. The Urban Age began investigating the future of cities in 2005, but 18 months of research with local partners has been humbling.

Anna Herrhausen, Executive Director,
Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft



Anna Herrhausen (r.)
and Elisabeth Mansfeld (l.),
Alfred Herrhausen
Gesellschaft, with the
travel grant awardees from
Germany and Switzerland.

**Session I:
Africa's Core
Challenges**

Philippe Andreas
Bleuel, candidate in
M.Sc. Architecture,
ETHZ, Zürich

The first session of the Urban Age Conference in Addis Ababa kicked off by laying out the key issues Africa is confronted with in the face of rapid urbanisation. Understood as an opportunity, urbanisation holds the promise of creating cities that are socially inclusive, environmentally friendly and economically prosperous, if its processes are managed well. However, the economy seemed to take centre stage in the panel session, with social and environmental issues only touched upon sporadically.

In all keynote presentations, the nexus of urbanisation and GDP was highlighted. Across sub-Saharan Africa, though, economic development has not kept up with the pace of urbanisation. Urban development specialist Abebaw Alemayehu attributes this mismatch to the circumstance that "Africa is closed for business" due to an inadequacy of the continent's built infrastructure and low levels of industrialisation. Thus, the importance of investments emerged as crucial to the future wellbeing of Africa's cities. For sociologist Edgar Pieterse, Africa's slow economic development also stems from a global structural exclusion of the continent for business. To transcend current shortcomings, the main challenge persists in a) overcoming the current lack of access to resources by creating platforms through which cities are able to attract investments from the private sector, as African cities are unable to resolve their challenges on their own, a point echoed by former

mayor of Johannesburg, Mpho Parks Tau; b) developing alternative resource and finance frameworks and c) making sure the investment generated is of the right kind, which is not "impatient" and looking for quick returns.

Focusing on the role of individuals, Alcinda Honwana, Inter-Regional Adviser on Social Development Policy, UNDESA, highlighted the importance of re-introducing the youth into economic processes and creating stable work as a provision for self-worth and dignity, lifting them out of a state of "waithood": the prolonged or stalled transition into adulthood common among youths across Africa failing to make a living. Honwana called for policies mindful of the role of the youth in the making of our cities. "If cities are not the home for the youth, migrations processes will be exacerbated", added Joachim Fritz, head of governance and conflict at GIZ.

Another major challenge lies in Africa's infrastructure deficit preventing it from becoming economically competitive, as emphasised by Pieterse. M. P. Tau said policies need to provide mechanisms for transparency improving performance, goodwill and contributions from the public sector and civil societies, and raised the ultimate challenge African cities need to confront: "Who makes the decision where money will be invested in?"

If we don't find a democratic way to include the majority of citizens into decision-making, we won't be able to make Africa's cities more liveable.

Alcinda Honwana, Inter-Regional Adviser on
Social Development Policy, UNDESA

*City fragility is as important
as state fragility.*

Joachim Fritz, Head of Department
Governance and Conflict, GIZ, quoting the
OECD's State Fragility Report

Session II:
Urban Growth,
Productivity &
Innovation

Rebecca Keuss,
candidate in M.Sc.
Urban Design,
HafenCity
University,
Hamburg

For this panel, entrepreneurs, researchers of informal economies, and economists in and from Africa came together to shed more light on Africa's economic situations, potentials and challenges in the face of rapid urban growth. J. Vernon Henderson, Professor of Economic Geography, LSE, began with an introductory presentation on the economic status quo of a number of African cities. In economic terms, he wondered how cities in Africa can become more competitive on global markets and called for "economic diversity", knowing that vicinity is a crucial aspect of productivity. If one can exchange ideas, resources and knowledge without having to go through great efforts within one physical space, the economy of a city will rise. Sylabs, founded by Abdellah Mallek in Algiers, represents such an example as it embodies a space of inclusion that is accessible and in a central location, creating valuable synergies that are also beneficial for the local economy. Investing in transport and densification or "building high", as Henderson said, should therefore be an important element of

future African urban development. At the heart of this conclusion lies the logic that needs are fundamental for everything: If a city can meet the needs of its inhabitants, it will pave the ground for more productivity and innovation, even in times of rapid urban growth. As of now, it is mostly the informal sector that caters to the needs of African urbanites. Kate Meagher, Associate Professor in Development Studies, LSE, urged the participants not to disrupt existing economies but rather to collaborate and upgrade them in order to feed the market with meaningful work and workers. "The jobless are still there with their skills", she says, so why dismiss them and begin anew simply because they may not fit formal norms?

This kind of thinking creates a disconnect between policy makers and urban realities, observed Emanuel Admassu, Founding Partner, AD-WO, and Assistant Professor, Rhode Island School of Design, in his research on African markets, in particular in Merkato in Addis Ababa and Kariakoo in Dar Es Salaam.

African markets are the best way to understand where cities will go – if you want to see where Addis Ababa will be in 10 years, go to Merkato. Merkato, one of Africa's largest markets, is the exchange place between rural and urban, between formal and informal.

Emanuel Admassu, Founding Partner,
AD-WO, and Assistant Professor,
Rhode Island School of Design



Brenda Katwesigye, Founder and CEO, Wazi Vision, Kampala asked: “What built America? People like Carnegie and Rockefeller. Now, what builds Africa?” Her response: Entrepreneurship. Karuri Sebina, Associate at South African Cities Network, seemed to agree here when she said: “Before we deal with foreigners in Africa, we should sort out our own economies, right?” Irene Sun, Author and Associate Partner, McKinsey & Company, provided insights from the role of China in Africa, focusing less on China’s infrastructural projects that are so visible all over the continent and more on the private investments that China is making in the manufacturing sector.

While these developments bring new technologies and ideas, China’s so-called Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have thus far detracted rather than added value to Africa’s economies, Philipp Misselwitz, Chair, International Urbanism and Design, Habitat Unit, TU Berlin, clarified. Consequently, cities in Africa must carefully deliberate whether such economic enclaves are viable solutions that are capable of being interconnected with – and not disconnected from – existing cities. Meagher importantly reminded the audience: “China has a clear plan for Africa. It is critical that Africa has a clear plan for China.”

A risk of Special Economic Zone-led industrialisation is that school leavers are aiming for low-value jobs. This approach doesn’t leverage their creativity or create meaningful work in Africa’s cities.

Kate Meagher, LSE Cities



**Session III:
Planning
Fundamentals**

Tjark Gall,
candidate M.Sc.
in Architecture,
Technical University
of Brunswick

In the third session, a variety of planners, politicians and academics came together to discuss global urban challenges, and what fundamental planning approaches and policies can assist in tackling them.

Jean-Louis Missika, the Deputy Mayor of Paris, France, started with a brief overview of Paris' planning challenges and the developments which influenced its urban development. He focused on the negative impact of the ring road, which today, still acts as a historical and psychological barrier. Additionally, Missika provided a quick overview of different plans and developments which largely influenced Paris.

Furthermore, he mentioned the strong inequality between East and West, with significant differences between the incomes of its residents. In order to reduce these differences,

he presented three strategies which they are using: 1) Raising the share of social housing by mixing social and private housing; 2) Giving incentives to create private projects of general interest; 3) Creating commons for all.

Alejandro Echeverri, Director of the URBAM Center for Urban and Environmental Studies of the Universidad EAFIT, Medellín, provided some insights from another context, where violence was and still is one of the most defining challenges. Despite (and due to) the violence, strong patterns of social segregation exist, which are in the case of Medellín further strengthened by the topography of its environment. He emphasised that politics need to change and create more opportunities. Additionally, there need to be more transparency, partnership, and a stronger focus on the capacity of the people.

In Paris we are abandoning concrete. Addis Ababa seems to be going in the opposite direction despite having a rich local understanding of using sustainable building materials.

Jean-Louis Missika

Another and quite different perspective was provided by Hyungmin Pai, Professor of Architecture at the University of Seoul. A different challenge is arising due to Seoul's demographic characteristics. The population is large at about 10 million, slightly shrinking, and, most importantly, growing old. This development asks for different plans and requires shifting the focus.

Bringing the focus back to the location of the conference, Fasil Gioghis, the Chair of Conservation of Urban & Architectural Heritage from the EiABC, Addis Ababa University, focused on how Addis Ababa is struggling to preserve the vibrancy of its multi-layered street life. He started with Addis Ababa's multi-centricity with the former camps, and everything built on hills, with its three central nodes of the palace, market (Merkato), and railway station. He also talked about Addis Ababa's grand housing project which started in 2005 and was by far the biggest so far. It included the renewal of slum areas, densification against the horizontal expansion, and lead to the creation of hundreds of jobs. However, Giorghis wants to put a stronger emphasis on heritage and conserving the remaining history, which not only includes the preservation of architecture but also of the multi-layered inclusive buildings which are particular to Addis Ababa.

Christian Benimana, the Principal and Managing Director of the MASS Design Group and Director, African Design Centre in Kigali, also started with a historical perspective on Kigali. The city, founded in 1907, was completely changed and destroyed through the 1994 genocide. Despite the dark history, since then Rwanda quintupled its GDP in 25 years and aims at becoming a middle-income country by 2050, and even more attractive for public and private investors as it is already today. To achieve that, the City of Kigali developed a masterplan and Vision 2050, which is constituted of a political, social, and economic agenda. The masterplan is supplemented by a variety of smaller scale ambitions. These include car-free days, expanding pedestrian access, and creating a clean city. The main goal is to change the perspective of what an African city is. The political dimension mainly focuses on further restoring the country's and capital's credibility and make Kigali act as a manifestation of the country's identity: "Kigali is more than the genocide" and "can be a better place for the world".

Rwanda is Africa's most densely populated country. Densification and retrofitting infrastructure where people live in Kigali is the only choice.

Christian Benimana, Principal and Managing Director, MASS Design Group and Director, African Design Centre, Kigali

Session IV: Delivering Housing for all

Hendrik von
Schlieben,
Carlo-Schmid-
Intern at the Cities
Alliance, Brussels

The “Delivering housing for all” session brought an extraordinary diversity of perspectives and contexts to the discussion table. Departing from the notion that housing needs to be affordable (cost + access to finance), adequate (security of tenure + access to basic services) and viable, panelists introduced a variety of strategies and pathways towards achieving this common goal.

With his initial input, Gautam Bhan, Lead Academics and Research at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in Bangalore, made it clear that in his opinion approaches to housing should not primarily focus on built environment, but on social environment, i.e. peoples' lives. In this respect, Bhan took a stand for recognising self-built environments as a form of planning, then reminded the audience that people make housing decisions based on jobs rather than housing quality and that opportunities for viability break with separation. For him, these insights are the basis for altering currently dominant governance paradigms.

Jose Castillo, architect and principal at a911 in Mexico City, gave a brief overview on the city's housing history, which after an era of modernisation and then neoliberalism he now sees culminating – in a move from massive to quality housing. He cautioned against the prevalent depiction of a formal-informal divide as a

zero-sum game and against massive housing projects which have often led in Mexico to debt traps, long distances to jobs, and have only benefited a narrow group of people on the real estate market. Ricky Burdett, Director of LSE Cities and Urban Age, called this a serious disconnect between planning and housing.

Taking stock of existing housing policies across African countries and building on Castillo's input, the co-chairs Ricky Burdett and Tau Tavengwa, Co-Founder and Editor of Cytscapes Magazine, suggested that true affordability poses a continuous challenge and yet-to-be-achieved objective, with insufficient action at scale. For them, this translates into massive but small-scale. They argued for looking at and empowering household pragmatism and entrepreneurial flair with flexible small-scale landlordism (e.g. backyard rental and home-based entrepreneurship).

Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu, Architect and Urban Planner at Addis Ababa University, depicted the current housing situation and needs in Addis, advocating for housing for all, by all. This contrasts with the three dominant types of housing development, which are renewal in the city centre, upgrading in the intermediate areas and new housing with different schemes at the peripheries (20-80, 40-60).

Cities are built the way they are financed.

Kecia Rust

100,000 housing units are built annually in Nigeria (mostly in Lagos); 700,000 required. People are responding the only way they can; we shouldn't criminalise that.

Taibat Lawanson, Associate Professor of
Urban Planning, University of Lagos



Jose Castillo, Architect, Founder Arquitectura 911sc, Mexico City, discussing „Delivering housing for all“.

Housing in Singapore is in many respects unique, with over 90 % of the population living in high-rise building and 82 % in public housing, says Belinda Yuen, Professorial Fellow and Research Director, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Design.

Undergoing a great housing challenge in the 1990s, public authorities sought after a new and holistic living concept that would foster identity via liveable design. Housing projects were then designed following the principle “Live, work, play, learn”. Housing is also integrated and connected to Singapore’s wider transport system. For Singapore, key success factors are setting a vision, establishing a conducive institutional, legal and financial framework, promoting long-term planning and analysing the needs of the population.

Karachi faces an annual housing demand of 350,000 units and great difficulties in acquiring land. Arif Hasan, Director of the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi, stressed the importance of security of tenure and the need for area-contextualised housing policies.

Joseph Muturi from SDI Kenya advocated for an in-situ, incremental upgrading approach in Nairobi, taking the example of the World Bank’s relocation project along the Kibera railway. SDI collaborates with communities to mobilise against what Muturi calls the poverty penalty of high-cost-low-quality housing.

In stark contrast to Nigeria’s current focus on aspirational development projects and gentrification, Professor Taibat Lawanson from the University of Lagos stressed the need to contextualise housing policies, conceptualise housing as a social rather than economic objective, and to establish accordingly flexible planning mechanisms.

The debate in Addis Ababa is mostly between expert-driven formal planning and user-driven informal planning. Both are important.

Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu, Architect and Urban Planner, EiABC, Addis Ababa University



Joseph Muturi, Belinda Yuen, Kecia Rust, Gautam Bhan (left to right).

Session V:
Transport
Transitions and
Technology

Naomi Alcaide,
Junior Researcher,
Federal Association
for Housing and
Urban Develop-
ment, Berlin

When it comes to discussing urban development transportation is often one of the first factors mentioned. Therefore, challenges and opportunities evolving around the notion of sustainable mobility have been part of several of the previous sessions – as there exists a broad consensus on the importance of transportation for sustainable housing schemes, access to economic development and growth. The session on “Transit Futures and Infrastructure”, however, went beyond the acknowledgement of public transport being a key factor for inclusive and sustainable urban development.

Jean-Louis Missika, deputy mayor of Paris, took the audience on a narrative tour to Paris, where ideas such as one of the world’s first bike sharing systems, a digital taxi App and parking lots for electric bicycles have become part of Parisian daily life. While the implementation and high user rates would already look like a success story to most, Missika shed light on numerous challenges these innovations have brought up – such as the disparity between their accessibility in the city center and more peripheral areas or the fact that the popularity of shared bikes in the inner city has become an annoyance for pedestrians. In other places, such as Nigeria, experiences also

call for close monitoring and careful evaluation: experience with a local digital taxi app there has proven to lead to little job creation, no significant rise in incomes, continuous precarious working standards of long hours and high turnover.

To oppose the contrast between inner city and peripheral residential areas, the consensus seemed to be that the municipalities must engage with local strategies that create inclusive, low-cost transportation in all places needed, instead of centralized elite solutions that leave out those most dependent on public transportation. Finding a compromise between the upgrading of informal transportation – or rather “popular transportation” as Jaqueline Kopp, Research Scholar, Center for Sustainable Urban Development, Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, described it – and effectively changing urban transportation to keep up with the demand of a growing population is a tightrope walk that even the city of Addis Ababa has experienced recently. As the deputy mayor of Addis Ababa, Solomon Kidane, reported, few minibus drivers (only 100 of about 7000) have taken advantage of the offered opportunity to join or form a minibus company under municipal regulations and rights.

In Lagos, the roads are full of cars while the waterways are empty. We are developing water infrastructure and ferries to unload some of the pressure.

Ladi Lawanson, Honourable Commissioner
for Transportation, Lagos State Government

We have enough public transport in Africa’s cities – it is just very poorly distributed.

Justin Coetzee, Founder,
GoMetro and flxrides.com

Session VI:
Ethiopia's Urban
Transformation

Philippe Andreas
Bleuel, candidate in
M.Sc. Architecture,
ETHZ, Zürich

Ethiopia's economy counts as the fastest growing economy on the African continent today. Equally impressive are its rates of urbanisation. Against this backdrop it is promising to have brought together policy makers, urban practitioners and academics from Ethiopia and elsewhere to reflect on whether current modes of engagement with these fundamental transformations are effective.

Wishing to halt environmental degradation caused by rapid urbanisation, the government of Ethiopia is pursuing a cluster-based development approach aimed at containing current urban settlements, their densification and counterbalancing the capital's primacy. Underpinning this strategy is a strong focus on economic development, focused on strengthening the relationships to the cities' hinterlands.

After Tazer Gebereegziabeher, Ethiopian State Minister of Urban Development and Construction, outlined Ethiopia's national urban strategy, the panel shifted toward Addis Ababa as a case study, whose master plan was vigorously debated. One area of debate centered on the poli-

tics around Addis Ababa's master plan whose track record at successful implementation was questioned. While Dereje Fakadu, the city's planning commissioner, wished to increase the low levels of citizen participation, Tazer Gebereegziabeher stated that how plans are being politicised leading to an ever-lasting source of conflict between the promises of short election cycles and urban policies aimed at long-term sustainable development.

Betelehem Demissie Shibeshi, who helped craft the current master plan as Addis Ababa's Spatial Plan Preparation Director, drew attention to the effects of planning becoming an object of election promises: Institutional memory and continuity, he stated, were not consistent in the city's executive, so the Planning Commission is faced with starting anew with each new mayor, rendering implementation very difficult. Architect and radio host Maheder Gebremedhin felt that the lack of a shared vision was one of the biggest challenges facing the current planning culture, and he noted how little the actual plan is being discussed in public.

We never had the electricity to run the light rail transit at capacity.

Solomon Kidane, Deputy Mayor of Addis Ababa,
on why including all parties involved in city
planning is so important.

Dereje Fakadu outlined the plan's priorities, mainly targeted at increasing the city's green area coverage, job creation and mass transit systems, the development of Addis Ababa's polycentricity, as well as improving and expanding affordable and standard housing. Betelehem Demissie Shibeshi talked about the poor conditions that current housing projects are in, in spite of the plan. In a more hopeful note, she remarked: "The plan is not perfect, but at least there is one" – allowing for incremental improvement.

Local architect Rachel Shawl outlined an even greater challenge: How do we retain and integrate our values, culture, heritage and identity in the whirlwind of recent fast urbanisation? How do we build a liveable city whose spatial qualities allow for multi-faceted livelihood production? In her remarks she highlighted the need for specific, on-the-ground interventions and called on every city dweller to reflect on how they engage in urban life. If one thing emerged from this session, it is that in order to make a city work, a commonly shared goal everyone is striving toward is indispensable.

Leadership is critical to creating productive, inclusive and sustainable cities. Ethiopia's urbanisation drivers: agro processing; mega projects, infrastructure, universities & tourism.

Tazer Gebereegziabeher, State Minister
at Ministry of Urban Development and
Construction, Government of Ethiopia

**Session VII:
Financing Urban
Futures**

Rebecca Keuss,
candidate in M.Sc.
Urban Design,
HafenCity
University,
Hamburg

Taking the cue from Bertrand Renaud's quote "cities are built the way they are financed", as mentioned in the panel on housing (Panel IV), this panel was dedicated to shedding more light on the financial powers that drive urban development in cities in Africa. The panel was led by Ricky Burdett (LSE) and Astrid Haas (IGC) who began the session with a provocative statement: "People don't like to pay taxes but they want the services". Participants from Nigeria, Uganda, Cameroon, Switzerland, Ethiopia, and South Africa shared their stories on how they deal with the delicate matter of generating public finances.

The Government of Nigeria collects their finances from a variety of sources. Babatunde Fasola, Minister of Power, Housing and Works, spoke, for instance, about the informal sector where "developmental businesses" in basic services like electricity and water create public income. Nigeria also works with "tax credit advances", targeting income taxes of companies when they are willing to install public infrastructures. In this manner, a number of large infrastructure projects were made possible. In Uganda, a slightly different strategy is

in place. Jennifer Semakula-Musisi, Kampala Capital City Authority, told the audience how their efforts have made Kampala's inhabitants, in a way, want to pay taxes, seeing that their payments actually pay off. For this approach to work out, re-establishing trust in finance among the population was crucial. So, at the beginning, governance was rebooted and a new team put in place, moving "from dysfunctional to a functional system", as Semakula-Musisi said.

Since greater trust in the public sector also attracts more investors, Kampala's revenues have steadily been rising ever since. The Kampala's story seems to be exceptional. More often, tax collection resembles what is the case in Cameroon. As Nyah Zebong, Project Leader, African Property Tax Initiative, International Centre for Tax and Development, Yaoundé, Cameroon, showed, it is difficult to identify tax payers or to enforce payment and a lot of money is being spent on tax collection, creating an imbalance on what amount of taxes is being collected and spent. High levels of corruption and little space for public engagement are additional handicaps.

Redevelopment needs to be based on the social fabric that is already there.

Tsedeke Yihunie Woldu,
Founder, Flintstones Engineering



*Jennifer Semakula-Musisi,
Executive Director,
Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda.*

So, what to do? Property taxes are increased as a potential lucrative tax source, though, it is highly questionable whether this can be considered a sustainable solution on the long run. As the first city in Africa, the mayor of Johannesburg, Mpho Parks Tau, reports, that Johannesburg has entered the path of financing urban development projects through green municipal bonds. He believes that “needs are so big, African cities can’t go without borrowing.”

How cities can generate finances from other sources than tax collection was discussed in the second half of the panel, stirring heated debates as opinions drift apart, creating a discursive arena that boiled down to the disconnect between African challenges and Western responses. Samih Sawiris, Orascom Development Holding GA, proposed a number of financial strategies that allegedly would increase any city’s revenue:

1) Raising taxes by 5% or more for the rich as it would not make a difference to them but ensure that it is delicately communicated; 2) Making land more valuable by densifying without relocating so-called “slums” through the construction of six-storey buildings.

This would also lead to a security of tenure through formalization. Those working in urban development in African cities argued heavily against this strategy. Perhaps Sawiri’s approach could become viable “in an ideal world”, as Semakula-Musisi expressed. She also stated that in her view, Sawiri’s plan is not realistic.

Haas summarised the panel: African cities need finance and it is there, somewhere just around the corner. It then needs to be unleashed, for example in land or property, but one needs to be careful as the solution is also part of the threat. In the end, cities in Africa need to unleash their finances to improve livelihoods but not at the expense of people.

Slums are on valuable land and often single storey. In Senegal we built on freed up land for rentable buildings and housed everyone on the same land. Addis Ababa could do the same, as could many other cities.

Samih Sawiris, Chairman of
Orascom Development Holding GA

**Session VIII:
The Inclusive City**

Naomi Alcaide

Discussing the “Inclusive City” cannot be done without considering all the topics of the previous sessions. Inclusivity must be integrated into planning of transport, housing, urban finance and every other process that seeks to change the city. In this session, both practitioners and politicians from different parts of the world presented their approach to making cities not only for but with the people as has been briefly touched upon in the previous section on accountability. In different political contexts, however, the interpretation of what inclusion means for the planning practice differs widely.

One approach presented in this session is inclusion through design – creating spaces that break down barriers instead of building concrete walls that raise barriers. Rahul Mehrotra, Principal, RMA Architects, Mumbai and Professor of Urban Design and Planning, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, illustrated vividly how even luxurious seemingly unfitting weekend homes can be created in a way that they grow into suburban villages and turn into part-time communal spaces despite the large socioeconomic gap of its users. Another perspective has been presented by Omar Nagati, practicing architect and urban planner, and the co-founder of CLUSTER, who talked about observing how public space was used under the exceptional circumstances of the Arab Spring in 2011 – attempting to learn how public space

would be used without the regular rules and conventions in place. The importance of these observations stems from the fact that in Cairo, as in many other cities, the interpretation of public space is a grey zone and usages are continuously debated and negotiated between different spheres. The participative approach towards urban inclusion refers to a rather direct, democratic involvement of those affected by changes – thinking and designing with the people instead of for them. Both the (deputy) mayors of Leipzig, Germany, Ulrich Hörning, and Tirana, Albania, Erion Veliaj, presented how they implemented participation designs that would engage with the city’s citizens in order to shape the decision making process and create results supported and understood by a wider public.

Summarizing the take-aways of this session, it was evident that both the inclusion through top-down design and the bottom-up more deliberative interaction with citizens have produced convincing results. Nevertheless, the majority of cities in less developed countries seems to have little resources and/or knowledge in a deliberative dialogue with its citizens in lieu of pressing issues that need almost immediate attention and efficient solutions. For future developments, however, it may be useful to gradually integrate participatory methods in order to create cities that meet the needs of the future and that their citizen identify with.

Good public spaces come with a sense of belonging.

Erion Veliaj, Mayor of Tirana, Albania

Integrated development is central to responding to social demand in inclusive ways. The road ahead? More schools, more jobs, more amenities, free space through densification and digitalisation.

Ulrich Hoerning, Deputy Mayor of Leipzig, Germany

Outlook

In the past 15 years and now with the 17th Urban Age conference, Urban Age has studied the spatial and social dynamics of over 40 cities in the developed and developing world and collaborated with over 50 academic institutions and municipal authorities. Urban Age conferences have been attended by over 6,500 speakers and participants from urban design, policy making, research and practice.

The Urban Age Programme has grown into an international institution, providing insights and offering advice to decision makers. Building on this track record, the Urban Age Programme now takes a step further and applies the knowledge to specific pilot cases and advises on solutions by way of selected **“Urban Age Task Forces”**.

The first of these Task Forces, created jointly with the city government of Addis Ababa, will be structured around key aspects of new urban governance, combined with a focus on the substantive issue of compact growth and density within Addis Ababa. It will bring together Urban Age and other experts in order to work with the city government to provide capa-

city building and client side advisory. The task force is expected to be in operation between June 2019 and December 2020.

In Germany, Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft hosted the second **Urban Age Africa Roundtable** in March 2019. Here, German-African cooperation frameworks were deliberated with a particular focus on the urban dimension. In parallel workshops, regional and urban experts from sub-Saharan Africa and international researchers and advisors from the fields of urban and economic development, foreign policy and development cooperation shared experiences and insights around the topics of urban job creation, financing infrastructure, and integrated governance. An explicit aim of an exchange like this is to demonstrate the significance of the urban dimension for international development policy and practice. A detailed exploration of how sustainable urbanization could be achieved in sub-Saharan Africa is also available in Prof. Edgar Pieterse’s working paper **“The Potential for Sustainable Urbanisation in Africa”** which he published in collaboration with Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft.

Cities

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