



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Progress by innovation



**BRIDGE
FOR CITIES**
INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR
THE CITIES OF TOMORROW



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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION
Progress by innovation

Mayors Dialogue 1 – Accelerating industry decarbonization for inclusive and sustainable cities

November 2024
14-15 | 10:00 - 12:00

BRIDGE FOR CITIES

Mr. Ahmed Mekki, Minister of Industry, Trade and Economic Development, Egypt
 Mr. Shreeve Gopi, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labour, Mauritius
 Mr. Ali Al-Sayid, Minister of Industry, Trade and Economic Development, Egypt
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BRIDGE FOR CITIES EVENT

Innovative Solutions for the Cities of Tomorrow

9 to 11 October 2024 | Vienna International Centre, Austria

Partners:



1. Background

The 2024 edition of UNIDO’s flagship ‘Bridge for Cities’ event is dedicated to exploring the profound impact of urbanization on global development and fostering innovative solutions for sustainable urban futures. **By 2050, it is estimated that over two-thirds of the world's population will reside in urban areas**, representing a monumental shift in human habitation patterns. This urbanization trend not only necessitates the expansion and transformation of **existing cities** but also entails the construction of numerous **new cities** to accommodate the burgeoning population.

Amidst this urbanization wave, both challenges and opportunities abound. Existing cities grapple with issues such as overburdened infrastructure, traffic congestion, pollution, housing shortages, and social inequality. However, they also serve as hubs of innovation, culture, and economic activity, offering immense opportunities for social advancement, technological innovation, and sustainable development.

Simultaneously, the construction of new cities presents a blank canvas for innovative urban planning and design. These future cities have the potential to prioritize sustainability, resilience, inclusivity, and technological integration from their inception, paving the way for more livable and equitable urban environments.

The event will address a wide range of **challenges** and **solutions** associated with urbanization, focusing on cities along the Belt and Road and beyond. Moreover, the event will emphasize the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing among diverse stakeholders, including government authorities, international agencies, private sector, academia, and civil society organizations. By leveraging innovation and expertise, participants will explore actionable strategies to address urban challenges while

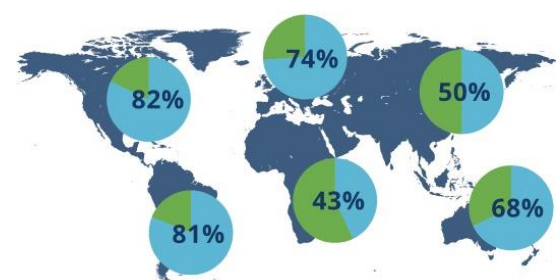
maximizing the opportunities presented by the urbanization wave.

At the core of the event lies the vibrant relationship between industry and cities. Industries concentrated in urban areas drive economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure development. However, this symbiosis has also led to environmental challenges, notably carbon emissions. By fostering collaboration and innovation, we can transform this relationship into a force for sustainability, mitigating emissions and creating greener, more resilient cities.

2. Rapid Urbanization: A Global Phenomenon

As we embark on our journey to understand the dynamics of urbanization and its impact on global development, it is imperative to acknowledge the diverse landscapes and contexts in which this phenomenon unfolds. From the bustling metropolises of Asia-Pacific to the historic cities of Europe and Central Asia, and the rapidly evolving urban centers of Africa, Arab region, and Latin America, each region presents its own set of challenges and opportunities.

Urbanization around the world



Source: UN-DESA World Urbanization Prospects 2018

- In **Africa**, urbanization is transforming existing cities and driving the development of new urban settlements. Established cities such as Lagos, Kinshasa, and Nairobi are experiencing rapid population growth, leading to challenges related to infrastructure, housing, and services. Meanwhile, numerous new cities and urban projects are being planned and



constructed across the continent to accommodate urban expansion and provide opportunities for economic development. For example, the Eko Atlantic City project in Nigeria and Kigali in Rwanda are among the ambitious urban developments aimed at addressing the growing urbanization challenges. Africa's urban population is projected to double by 2050, with over 50% of the population residing in urban areas.

- In the **Arab** region, urbanization is reshaping existing cities and driving the development of new urban centers. Cities like Dubai, Riyadh, and Cairo are experiencing rapid growth, fueled by factors such as population growth, economic development, and urban planning initiatives. Additionally, several new urban projects and smart cities are being planned and constructed to accommodate the expanding urban population and promote sustainable development. For example, NEOM in Saudi Arabia and Masdar City in the United Arab Emirates are ambitious projects aimed at creating sustainable and innovative urban environments. With urbanization rates expected to continue rising in the region, there is a growing need for investment in infrastructure, housing, and services to ensure the well-being and prosperity of urban residents. According to the Arab Urban Development Institute, urbanization rates in the Arab region are expected to reach 68% by 2050, with cities accommodating over 400 million people.
- In the **Asia-Pacific** region, urbanization is a dynamic process encompassing the growth of existing megacities and the development of new urban centers. Established cities such as Tokyo, Shanghai, and Mumbai continue to expand, accommodating millions of residents and contributing significantly to economic growth. Additionally, numerous new cities

are being planned and constructed to accommodate the influx of people migrating from rural areas to urban centers. For instance, the Chinese government's urbanization plan includes the development of several new cities, such as Xiong'an New Area and Shenzhen's Qianhai-Shekou Free Trade Zone. By 2050, it is estimated that nearly 70% of the cities that will exist have not yet been built, highlighting the immense scale of urbanization yet to unfold in the region. According to the Asian Development Bank, urbanization rates in the Asia-Pacific region are expected to reach 64% by 2050, with cities accommodating over 3 billion people.

- In **Europe and Central Asia**, urbanization is reshaping existing cities while also fostering the development of new urban centers. Cities like London, Paris, and Istanbul stand as iconic examples of established urban hubs with rich histories and cultural significance. Meanwhile, new cities and urban areas are emerging to accommodate population growth and economic development. For instance, Alatau in Kazakhstan and New Tashkent in Uzbekistan are among the new urban developments aimed at fostering innovation and economic growth. According to the World Bank, the urban population in Europe and Central Asia is projected to increase from 59% in 2018 to 67% by 2050, highlighting the ongoing urbanization trend in the region.
- In **Latin America**, urbanization is a well-established trend that continues to shape existing cities and foster the development of new urban areas. Cities like São Paulo, Mexico City, and Buenos Aires are among the largest and most populous urban centers in the region, serving as economic, cultural, and political hubs. Meanwhile, new cities and urban projects are emerging to address urbanization



challenges and provide opportunities for economic growth. For instance, the Ciudad de la Innovación project in Mexico and the Porto Maravilha redevelopment project in Brazil are aimed at revitalizing urban areas and promoting sustainable development. Latin America is one of the most urbanized regions globally, with approximately 81% of the population residing in urban areas. The urban population in Latin America is projected to continue growing, reaching over 89% by 2050.

Sustainable industrialization fostering sustainable cities

The importance of cities and the mutual interdependence between sustainable urban and industrial development cannot be overstated. For decades, cities have been the engine of national and global economic growth. They contribute more than 80 per cent of global GDP and display higher levels of productivity than those of rural areas. Industrialization today would be unthinkable without the “agglomeration economies” cities provide, neither without their creative potential as hubs of innovation, nor without them being the sites of production and hosts of industrial parks.

Yet cities are also a major source of global problems. They are the biggest source of pollution in the world, contributing 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. A lot of the negative environmental impact of industrial activities is still generated in cities, where it heavily affects citizens in the form of air, water and soil pollution.

Global sustainability will therefore not be possible without ensuring the sustainability of cities and by addressing the urbanization- industrialization nexus in all its dimensions. When cities are leveraging their comparative advantages and they are putting in place proper enabling policies to support inclusive and sustainable industrial development, a series of positive spillovers can be observed in a variety of economic aspects, including GDP growth rates, job creation and inflow of FDIs among others.

Sustainable industrialization is key to fostering sustainable cities, aligning closely with SDG 9's focus on resilient infrastructure and sustainable industrialization, and SDG 11's goal of creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban environments. As we approach the upcoming UN Summit of the Future, there is an urgent need to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. UNIDO has a long history of promoting the implementation of technical cooperation projects at various levels, including at the national, regional and city levels, thereby contributing to achieving both SDGs and building a more sustainable future. The Organization's work in the area of innovation and industry 4.0 allows addressing cities as hubs of innovation. Its work on circular economy addresses the sustainability challenges of cities. Finally, its work on sustainable energy includes a sustainable cities programme which extends to several countries on different continents and covers issues such as new energy vehicles, urban waste management, etc.



3. Focus Areas for the Urban Future: Innovations and Solutions

Through a variety of engaging activities and thought-provoking sessions, participants will delve into various aspects of urban sustainability and the future of urbanization.

- **Transitioning to low-carbon solutions and safeguarding the climate in urban areas**

Cities are responsible for a significant share of global greenhouse gas emissions, making the transition to low-carbon solutions imperative for climate mitigation and adaptation. The event will explore innovative approaches to urban planning, renewable energy deployment, and sustainable infrastructure development to decarbonize cities and mitigate the impacts of climate change. By promoting energy-efficient buildings, sustainable transportation modes, and green spaces, cities can reduce their carbon footprint while enhancing quality of life for residents.

- **Enhancing transportation systems and mobility**

Efficient transportation systems are vital for enabling access to economic opportunities, education, and healthcare, while reducing congestion and pollution. The event will examine strategies for promoting sustainable transportation modes such as public transit, cycling, and walking, as well as integrating smart technologies to optimize mobility. By investing in mass transit systems, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and shared mobility services, cities can improve accessibility, reduce emissions, and enhance urban livability.

- **Combating poverty and leveraging industrialization's role**

Urbanization presents both opportunities and challenges for poverty reduction and inclusive development. The event will explore the role of industrialization in creating employment opportunities, fostering innovation, and

driving economic growth in urban areas. By promoting sustainable industrial practices, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and investing in skills development, cities can generate inclusive economic growth and reduce poverty rates.

- **Ensuring efficient water management, sanitation, and waste disposal**

Access to clean water, sanitation, and waste management services is essential for public health, environmental sustainability, and economic development in urban areas. The event will examine strategies for improving water supply infrastructure, enhancing wastewater treatment systems, and promoting sustainable solid waste management practices. By investing in water conservation measures, decentralized sanitation solutions, and recycling initiatives, cities can ensure the efficient use of resources and minimize environmental pollution.

- **Improving governance and the application of artificial intelligence (AI)**

Effective governance is essential for addressing the complex challenges of urbanization and ensuring the delivery of quality public services to residents. The event will explore the role of AI technologies in enhancing urban governance, improving decision-making processes, and increasing the efficiency of service delivery. By leveraging data analytics, predictive modeling, and citizen engagement platforms, cities can enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in governance. Moreover, it will emphasize the importance of participatory approaches, institutional capacity-building, and regulatory frameworks in fostering inclusive and sustainable urban development.



4. Event Structure

Date	AM	PM
9 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening Ceremony• Ministerial Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future 2050: Towards Smart, Inclusive, and Vibrant Cities• Building Tomorrow: New Cities Shaping the Urban Future• Reception hosted by the Mayor of Vienna
10 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayors Dialogue 1• Walking the Talk: UNIDO Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayors Dialogue 2• Financing Roundtable• Reception with closing remarks
11 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field Trips	
9 to 11 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exhibition featuring urban innovations• Cultural performances and movies	



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