



Bridge for Cities 2025

Shaping Sustainable Cities with Technology and Innovation

16–18 October 2025

Xi'an International Convention and Exhibition Center | Xi'an, China

For more: <https://www.bridgeforcities.org/16-18-october-2025-xian/>

AGENDA

14-16 OCTOBER

Badge Collection for Registered Participants

Only participants who have registered in advance can receive a valid event badge, which allows them to enter the venue – Xi'an ICEC. **Registered participants shall collect their badge at the designated hotel: HUALUXE Xi'an Chanba (Address: No. 5167 Shibo Avenue, Baqiao District, Xi'an).**

The UCLG World Council members shall follow the instructions from the UCLG to collect their badge. The participants who will arrive in the late evening may collect their badge on the morning of the next day.

THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER

08:40 – 08:50	Group Photo of VIPs Outside Multifunctional Hall B, 1F
09:00 – 10:10	Joint Opening Ceremony of UNIDO's Bridge for Cities event and UCLG World Council meeting Multifunctional Hall B, 1F <i>Format: Keynote speeches</i> <i>Simultaneous interpretation: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian & Spanish</i> The 2025 edition of UNIDO's flagship Bridge for Cities event will explore the key role of technological advances and inclusive innovation in shaping sustainable cities. With the swift evolution of various state-of-the-art technologies, cities today have been enabled to transcend the conventional model of development to embrace a more intelligent, resilient, and livable future. Featuring knowledge sharing and international collaboration, Bridge for Cities 2025 aims to amplify the voices of cities and local communities, inspire replicable solutions, and foster solid partnerships. The event will be organized in conjunction with the World Council meeting of The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). At the joint Opening Ceremony, high-level speakers will share visionary insights in their keynote speeches, shedding light on the future direction of sustainable urbanization and setting the stage for the following thematic discussions. The





	<p>Opening will also feature the signing of a Joint Statement by UNIDO, UCLG and the City of Xi’an regarding cooperation for sustainable urban development.</p> <p>Master of Ceremonies: Mr. Xu Ketao, Deputy Mayor of Xi’an, China</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Lu Xiangdong, Vice President of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries • Mr. Jan Van Zanen, President of UCLG and Mayor of The Hague, Netherlands • Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director of the Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, UNIDO • Ms. Aydee Marqueza Marsiglia Bello, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, Colombia • Mr. Ye Niuping, Co-President of UCLG and Mayor of Xi’an, China
<p>10:10 – 10:30</p>	<p>Visit Exhibition Pavilions: Urban Governance and Industrial Innovation Corridor, 1F (<i>Open to all participants</i>)</p> <p>Participants will be invited to visit the exhibition pavilions featuring urban governance and industrial innovation for sustainable development. The exhibition will last throughout the event. Local governments, businesses, institutions, and international organizations are to showcase their continuous efforts in policy-making, technology innovation, and multilateral cooperation to foster clean, resilient, and inclusive cities worldwide. This is a collective demonstration of strong will and ability across sectors, nations, and regions to pursue a brighter urban future.</p>
<p>10:30 – 12:30</p>	<p>Financing the Urban Future Multifunctional Hall B, 1F (<i>Open to all participants</i>) <i>Format: Panel discussion</i> <i>Simultaneous interpretation: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian & Spanish</i></p> <p>Cities, as engines of the global economy, are facing complex challenges – from climate vulnerability and infrastructure deficits to social inequality. Financing the transition towards a sustainable urban future is consequential, yet current investment levels are far from enough to meet the demands. This financing gap hinders critical investments in renewable energy, circular economy, efficient transport, affordable housing, and climate adaptation, delaying progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Bridging this gap requires innovation and collaboration.</p> <p>This panel will convene development partners, financial institutions, international organizations, and city leaders to explore actionable pathways for mobilizing development finance and resources at scale. The discussion will feature success stories of development funds, urban project financing, and South-South and</p>



	<p>triangular cooperation. Panelists will also present experience and practical strategies in terms of blended finance, structured projects, digital tools, and SDG compliance. The session will aim to forge financing partnerships and to catalyze the capital flows necessary to build productive, inclusive, and climate-friendly cities for all.</p> <p>Moderated by Mr. Marco Kamiya, UNIDO Representative in Indonesia</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Yao Shenhong, Director, Division of Strategic Planning and South-South Cooperation, UNIDO• Mr. Albert Lladó Romero, Head of Policy, UCLG World Secretariat• Ms. Janet Lopez, Executive Director and Undersecretary, Mindanao Development Authority, The Philippines• Mr. Khalid Mehmood Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer, Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees, Government of Sindh Province, Pakistan• Mr. Xu Ciming, Secretary General of the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break Multifunctional Hall A, 2F
14:00 – 15:30	High-Level Plenary: Strategic Planning, Industrial Policies and Inclusive Innovation Driving Urban Sustainability Multifunctional Hall B, 1F (<i>Open to all participants</i>) <i>Format: Panel discussion</i> <i>Simultaneous interpretation: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian & Spanish</i>

The High-Level Plenary is an exemplary forum that convenes ministerial and senior representatives to showcase development experience and country-level interventions for sustainable urbanization. It serves as a multilateral platform for international dialogue and cooperation to build livable and vibrant cities worldwide. For this year, the segment will explore how **strategic planning, industrial policies, and inclusive innovation** can promote urban transformation towards sustainability.

Discussions will spotlight integrated approaches to urban design and construction that reduce environmental footprints while enhancing economic productivity. The role of industrial policies will be highlighted in fostering green industry, circular economy, and strengthened local value chains, which are critical to decarbonize cities, raise business competitiveness, and create future-proof jobs. Another focus is inclusive innovation, emphasizing how endeavors in affordable housing, digitalization, participatory governance, and grassroots entrepreneurship, among other domains, can improve social inclusion. The plenary will further explore actionable pathways for public-private collaboration, financing mechanisms, and policy harmonization across sectors, with the aim of reinforcing cities as engines of



	<p>sustainable growth.</p> <p>Video message by Mr. Gerd Müller, Director General of UNIDO</p> <p>Moderated by Mr. Cristiano Pasini, Director and UNIDO Representative in India</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Aydee Marqueza Marsiglia Bello, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, Colombia • Ms. Naglaa Mohamed El Adly, Permanent Undersecretary, Ministry of Local Development, Egypt • Ms. Janet Lopez, Executive Director and Undersecretary, Mindanao Development Authority, The Philippines • Mr. Pagnarith Srun, Deputy Director General, General Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation, Cambodia • Ms. Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG • Mr. Liu Kai, Deputy Secretary General of Xi'an Municipal People's Government, China
<p>15:30 – 16:00</p>	<p>Tea Break</p>
<p>16:00 – 18:00</p>	<p>Side Event – Business Innovation and Investment for Urban Transformation <i>In partnership with the University of Strathclyde Institute for Future Cities</i></p> <p>Room 104A, 1F (<i>*Open session with limited seating capacity</i>)</p> <p><i>Format: Panel discussion</i></p> <p><i>Simultaneous interpretation: Chinese & English</i></p> <p>Business innovation and investment offer important channels for delivering and disseminating positive transformation of cities at scale. They generate fast change, with the capability to push the boundary of technology, raise large-scale finance, and promote active knowledge exchange. The business sector has an important role to play in South-South and triangular cooperation, which has become a vital modality of international development.</p> <p>This side event will discuss key questions regarding business innovation and investment: What do business organizations want from cities? How do they assess cities as candidates for innovation and investment? How can people maximize the socio-economic benefits for cities of commercially driven innovation and investment? How can such transformations be designed and planned holistically? How can business entities, cities, and international development actors work in partnership to ensure alignment and balance between commercial and public policy goals to generate win-wins?</p>





	<p>The side event will convene business sector representatives that are delivering innovation and positive socio-economic impact for cities – through investing in cities, providing and innovating urban infrastructure and services, and having major urban centers of production and employment. Representatives from academia and international agencies will also join to ignite the discussion.</p> <p>Moderated by Mr. Richard Bellingham, Director of the Institute for Future Cities, University of Strathclyde</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Pradeep Paulose, Programme Officer, Division of Strategic Planning and South-South Cooperation, UNIDO • Mr. Joshua Mathias Gallo, Municipal Finance Expert, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO • Mr. Sebastian Markart, Project Director, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) • Mr. Cui Meng, European Regional President, LONGi Green Energy Technology Co., Ltd. • Ms. Cai Jingmei, Vice President, Lonten Semiconductor Co., Ltd. • Mr. Xie Yongkang, Deputy General Manager, Shaanxi Blower (Group) Co., Ltd. • Ms. Jia Meng, Director and Chief Planner, Research and Innovation Center, China Architecture Design and Research Group
<p>18:00 – 19:00</p>	<p>Dinner Break Multifunctional Hall A, 2F</p>
<p>20:00 – 21:10</p>	<p>Cultural Performance: Grand Welcome Ceremony of Tang Dynasty Xi'an City Wall</p> <p>The Xi'an City Wall, surrounding the heart of the ancient metropolis, is a magnificent urban defense project from the past that now serves as an iconic cultural landmark of Xi'an and a recreational space for citizens and tourists. The grand cultural performance in front of the city wall will convey warm welcomes from the city, in the traditional Tang Dynasty style, to the participating guests from across the globe, offering a great opportunity to look into the time-honored beauty of Xi'an.</p>

FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER

<p>09:00 – 10:00</p>	<p>Mayors Dialogue I: Climate and Industrial Innovation for Livable Cities In partnership with UCLG Multifunctional Hall B, 1F (<i>Open to all participants</i>) <i>Format: Panel discussion</i> <i>Simultaneous interpretation: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian & Spanish</i></p>
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As a centerpiece of the event, the Mayors Dialogue provides an open forum for city leaders from across the globe to share success stories, discuss innovative local solutions, and foster city-to-city partnerships for a sustainable urban future. The Mayors Dialogue I will concentrate on **climate action** and **industrial innovation** in cities that aspire to **transition to sustainable growth and create lasting prosperity shared by all residents**.

Rapid urbanization and industrialization in an unsustainable way have caught cities in problems. Intense greenhouse gas emission, low resource efficiency, insufficient waste management, traffic congestion, pollution, and unemployment are urging human beings to rethink how cities should be planned and developed. Numbers of options are on the table – renewable and clean energy, e-mobility, circular economy, low-carbon infrastructure, proper waste disposal, pedestrian-friendly urban planning, and more.

The dialogue will explore concrete strategies where green transition and industrial transformation converge and complement each other to foster a more livable urban future. The exchange will highlight collaborative governance that aligns municipal policies, the private sector investment, and community engagement to decarbonize cities and industries while generating economic competitiveness and quality jobs.

Moderated by **Ms. Olga Rataj**, Industrial Development Officer, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO

Speakers:

- **Mr. Ye Niuping**, Mayor of Xi'an, China and Co-President of UCLG
- **Mr. Uğur Ibrahim Altay**, Mayor of Konya, Türkiye and Executive President of UCLG
- **Mr. Ahmed bin Mohsen Al-Ghassani**, Chairman (Mayor) of Dhofar Municipality, Oman
- **Mr. Cyril Xaba**, Mayor of Durban-eThekweni, South Africa
- **Ms. Paola Pabón**, Prefect of Pichincha Province, Ecuador
- **Mr. Carlos Martínez**, Mayor of Soria, Spain
- **Mr. Alireza Zakani**, Mayor of Tehran, Iran

10:00 – 11:00

Mayors Dialogue II: People-Centered Urban Development in a Digital Era | In partnership with UCLG

Multifunctional Hall B, 1F (*Open to all participants*)

Format: Panel discussion

Simultaneous interpretation: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian & Spanish

As a centerpiece of the event, the Mayors Dialogue provides an open forum for city leaders from across the globe to share success stories, discuss innovative local solutions, and foster city-to-city partnerships for a sustainable urban future. The Mayors Dialogue II will focus on the power of **digitalization and cutting-edge**



technologies, the approach of **putting people first**, and how to **foster people-centered urbanization in a digital era**.

Digital transformation, driven by high tech like artificial intelligence, brings immense opportunities to boost productivity, empower urban governance, and enhance citizen engagement. Meanwhile, inclusion programs are needed to bridge digital divides to improve social equity, leaving no one behind. This reflects the broader requirement of the people-centered approach, which emphasizes shared progress, participatory governance, poverty reduction, affordable housing, quality education, decent jobs, and livable environment.

This dialogue will delve into innovative solutions that harness technologies and policies to not only empower businesses and governance but more importantly, to create an enabling environment for all the citizens and tighten social fabrics of cities. The discussion aims to foster consensus and partnerships and inspire future actions to build inclusive cities of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Moderated by **Mr. Adnan Seric**, Head of Innovation Lab, UNIDO

Speakers:

- **Mr. Jan Van Zanen**, Mayor of The Hague, Netherlands and President of UCLG
- **Mr. Luis Barcala**, Mayor of Alicante, Spain
- **Mr. Mesfine Menza Mamo**, Mayor of Arba Minch, Ethiopia
- **Mr. Cristian Zamora**, Mayor of Cuenca, Ecuador
- **Ms. Luisa Salgueiro**, Mayor of Matosinhos, Portugal and President of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP)
- **Mr. Harkirat Singh**, Deputy Mayor of Brampton, Canada

11:00 – 11:15

Tea Break

11:15 – 12:30

Side Event – Cities as Engines of Digital Industrial Transformation | UNIDO’s City Mission Studio in partnership with Global Digital Economy Cities Alliance & UNITAR Global SDGs and Leadership Development Center

Room 104A, 1F (*Open session with limited seating capacity)

Format: Thematic showcase + Fireside chat + Interactive workshop

Simultaneous interpretation: Chinese & English

Background:

Cities are the beating heart of the global economy. They host factories, industrial parks, SMEs, logistics hubs, and infrastructure that drive national competitiveness. They are also places where new industries take shape – from sustainable manufacturing to digital trade. With two-thirds of the world’s population expected to live in cities by 2050, local administrations are increasingly responsible not only for providing services but also for creating jobs, attracting investment, fostering new economic ecosystems, and preparing for the industries of tomorrow.



This shift places cities at the center of industrial transformation. To support them, UNIDO is introducing **Cities as Engines of Digital Industrial Transformation**. This initiative positions cities as hubs of green and digital growth while strengthening their ability to deliver tangible benefits for citizens and businesses alike. At the core of this initiative is the **City Mission Studio (CMS)**, a new technical cooperation programme that establishes delivery units embedded directly in city administrations. Each unit acts as a center of excellence for urban-industrial transformation. UNIDO assists cities in setting up these units, provides expertise, tools, and training, and connects them with industry, innovators, and finance. The city itself anchors the unit within its administration, ensuring legitimacy and ownership.

How CMS Operates:

The City Mission Studio is designed to be flexible. It works through **thematic tracks**, each focused on a key dimension of the urban-industrial agenda. A track is not a pre-defined project, but rather a framework through which missions can be co-developed with cities. These tracks will cover areas such as **digital competitiveness, circular economy, supply chain resilience, or green industry development**. Each adapts to the priorities of participating cities and their partners, ensuring that solutions are relevant and scalable.

UNIDO-DEC40 Partnership:

The first track to be launched will focus on **digital transformation** and will be developed in partnership with the **Global Digital Economy Cities Alliance (DEC40)** and its secretariat hosted by UNITAR Global SDGs and Leadership Development Center. DEC40 brings together a network of cities committed to digital innovation, while UNIDO provides the mandate and expertise to connect digitalization directly to industrial development. At Bridge for Cities 2025, UNIDO and DEC40 will explore the intent to collaborate on the digital track and invite cities to express interest in becoming early pilots.

Agenda & Speakers:

- **Opening & Vision (15 min)**
 - **Mr. Adnan Seric**, Head of Innovation Lab, UNIDO
 - **Ms. Gao Ling**, Co-Founder of DEC40 and Executive Director of UNITAR Global SDGs and Leadership Development Center
- **Keynote Presentation (15 min)**
 - **Ms. You Jing**, Secretary General of DEC40 and Director of the Foreign Exchange and Cooperation Division, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology, China
 - **Mr. Sun Wei**, Deputy Director of Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Data, China
- **Fireside Chat: City-level challenges and pathways (15 min)**
 - **Mr. Gavril Kirillin**, Minister for External Relations and Peoples' Affairs of the

	<p>Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russian Federation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mr. Puvendra Akkiah, Senior Manager – Integrated Planning, Durban-eThekweni Municipality, South Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive Co-Design Workshop (25 min) Participants will split into Chinese- and English-speaking groups with facilitators. Each group works through a CityTech Mission Canvas, focusing on technology-enabled solutions to urban-industrial challenges. CityTech Mission Canvas Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Urban-Industrial Challenge – a concrete pain point. (e.g. supply-chain inefficiency, high energy use, weak SME digitalization) ➤ Technology & Innovation Levers – which digital tools or approaches could help? (e.g. IoT, AI, blockchain, digital twins) ➤ Local Enablers – what existing assets can the city mobilize? (e.g. tech hubs, industrial zones, universities, policies) ➤ Mission Opportunity – one actionable idea linking your city with UNIDO, DEC40, and partners. (e.g. “Smart Circular Industrial Parks Mission” or “AI for Urban Logistics Efficiency”) ➤ Expected Impact – what tangible results could emerge in 12–18 months? • Outlook & Next Steps (5 min)
<p>12:30 – 14:00</p>	<p>Lunch Break Multifunctional Hall A, 2F</p>
<p>14:00 – 16:00</p>	<p>Side Event – Urban Decarbonization Lab: Build Your Own Project Concept at the City-Industry-Climate Nexus UNIDO’s Sustainable Cities Programme Room 104A, 1F (*Open session with limited seating capacity) <i>Format: Thematic showcase + Interactive workshop</i> <i>Simultaneous interpretation: Chinese & English</i></p> <p>Background: UNIDO supports countries in achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID). As the global urban population grows, especially in the Global South, cities have become not only the engines of economic activity but also critical focal points of industrial emissions, infrastructure demand, and resource consumption.</p> <p>Industrial activity, both formal and informal, is deeply embedded in urban systems. From energy use in small manufacturing firms to material flows in construction and waste systems, the climate-city-industry nexus is central to shaping sustainable futures.</p> <p>This side event will showcase UNIDO’s evolving service offering for cities and demonstrate its unique role in enabling industrial decarbonization in urban contexts. Participants will be actively engaged in designing project proposals for their cities, guided by structured modules that reflect UNIDO’s technical cooperation</p>

levers: **policy, finance, and technology**. Cross-cutting dimensions such as **knowledge** and **digitalization** will inform the discussion across modules.

Objectives:

- Present UNIDO’s systemic approach to urban-industrial decarbonization
- Provide participants with practical insight into the different sectors and intervention levers through interactive, hands-on modules
- Support participants in identifying challenges, prioritizing interventions, and assembling project concepts tailored to their cities
- Demonstrate the breadth of UNIDO’s technical expertise while fostering a shared understanding of how cities can engage with the organization’s service offering

Agenda:

- **Welcome & Icebreaker (10 min)**
- **UNIDO Framing Presentation: Why industrial decarbonization matters in cities (15 min)**
- **UNIDO Service Offering for Cities: Overview presentation with case study (15 min)**
- **Build Your Own Project Concept – Interactive Modules (65 min)**
This interactive segment forms the core of the event. Participants will work through structured modules that mirror UNIDO’s technical cooperation levers. Each module will follow a similar run of show:
 - Presentation of challenge
 - Priority ranking poll
 - Menu of interventions (Policy, finance & technology)
 - Audience engagement: “Orders” + discussion
 - Brief case illustration
- **Synthesis & Reflection (10 min)**
- **Wrap-up and Next Steps (5 min)**

Speakers & Facilitators:

- **Ms. Olga Rataj**, Industrial Development Officer, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO
- **Mr. Joshua Mathias Gallo**, Municipal Finance Expert, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO
- **Ms. Bianca Nina Filasto**, Project Associate, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO
- **Ms. Shukrona Shukurova**, Project Assistant, Energy Systems and Industrial Decarbonization Unit, UNIDO
- **Mr. Richard Bellingham**, Director of the Institute for Future Cities, University of Strathclyde

16:00 – 18:30

Break



18:30 – 20:30

Award Ceremony and Official Reception

Multifunctional Hall, 3F

This segment wraps up the two-day in-door activities of the event. It starts with an award ceremony, where UNIDO will present its **Bridge for Cities Awards** (Honorary Award & Urban Innovation Award) to the winner city and businesses. The awardees demonstrate exemplary SDG implementation and inclusive innovations that offer models for replication and inspiration globally.

The Bridge for Cities Awards, as a UNIDO initiative under the framework of Bridge for Cities, are designed to recognize and celebrate outstanding urban stakeholders that contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Award Ceremony will be held in conjunction with an **official reception**, which provides engaging **cultural performances** and a **networking space** for participants to exchange ideas and strengthen partnerships for urban sustainability.

Speakers:

- **Mr. Ye Niuping**, Co-President of UCLG and Mayor of Xi'an, China
- **Ms. Fatou Haidara**, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director of the Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, UNIDO

Bridge for Cities Urban Innovation Awards winners:

- **BYD Automobile Co., Ltd.**
- **Lonten Semiconductor Co., Ltd.**
- **Shaanxi Blower (Group) Co., Ltd.**
- **LONGi Green Energy Technology Co., Ltd.**

Bridge for Cities Honorary Award winner:

- **City of Xi'an**, China

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SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

All Day

City Visits: Sustainable Urban Development in Action

Xi'an, which used to be known as *Chang'an* – meaning “Everlasting Peace”, was a former capital city of China during such historical periods as the Tang Dynasty and was the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. Today, it has been modernized into a vibrant metropolis of innovation and sustainable development, while many of its cultural legacies are well preserved.

The City Visits will showcase Xi'an's core advantages in **cultural heritage preservation, international connectivity, scientific and technological innovation,**





and **green development**. Participants will enjoy guided tours to various selected sites, such as cultural landmarks, transportation hubs, science and technology centers, key enterprises, and ecological conservation projects. Through group-based city visits, participants will better understand Xi'an's approach of "high-quality development."

