



**THE CITIES OF THE FUTURE,
THE FUTURE OF CITIES**
WHAT DOES TOMORROW HOLD FOR THE WORLD'S CITIES?

*Summary of report no. 594 (2010-2011) of 9 June 2011
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on the behalf of the Senate Forecasting Delegation*

Based on current trends:

-In 2025, the world will have **40 "cities"** with **10 to 40 million inhabitants**, including **35** in southern and emerging countries.

-The percentage of urban dwellers will grow from **50%** (today) to **65%**, representing an increase of **20,000 urbanites every 2 ½ hours!**

-The world's shanty town population will grow from **1 billion inhabitants (today)** to **1.5 billion**.

-Social, environmental and urban-planning problems will grow, the risks of **bottlenecking/stoppages** will increase.

This data, summarily presented, demonstrates the challenges before us.

The objective of this report is to place these challenges and issues at the heart of the political debate.

It is also to demonstrate that although confronted with formidable problems, **the world's cities are also rich in assets,**

solutions, innovations and considerable creative forces.

Therefore, their future remains open. But the time of cities is not that of political mandates, nor that of the consumption society.

The decisions made – or not – today will have an effect in **10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years.**

This strongly argues in favour of **the rehabilitation of long-term policy making**, the only pertinent policies in this domain.

The present report therefore studies 15 challenges today confronting cities or posed by the urban phenomenon; it then proposes 25 possible courses of action.

These 25 proposals are further considered and discussed in volumes 2 and 3.

Volume 2 presents 25 concrete analyses. The goal is not to complete an exhaustive analysis of the world's large cities, but rather to illustrate the difficulties, problems, solutions and orientations based on concrete cases.

Volume 3 presents a series of debates concerning all of these questions.

15 challenges for the future of the world's cities

1) The challenge of megacities

- An evolving urban concentration.
- Inevitable megacities requiring management.
- Spread-out cities (with their advantages and disadvantages: the cost of urban sprawl).
- Cities in clusters, in networks of medium- or large-sized cities.

2) The challenge of limits

- City and non-city: when borders disappear.
- Are intermediate areas degraded cities?
- Cities, rural areas and other zones.

3) The challenge of spatial plurality in the city

- The concentric model (city centres, inner and outer suburbs, outskirts).
- The alternatives: multinodal models.
- Specialized spaces or mixed-function areas.

4) The social challenge

- Social and spatial stratifications.
- Shanty towns: extension or eradication? ;
- The presuppositions of social mixing.
- The means of social mixing: proactive policies, legislative and regulatory measures, qualitative urban offers.

5) The environmental challenge

- If nothing changes...
- Ways and means to move toward the sustainable city.
- Concentration.
- Urban choices.

6) The challenge of urban planning and architecture

- Urban planning and architecture: dialectics between collective works and works of art; planning and creation; development and proliferation.
- A plea for the plurality of forms, models and structures.
- The creative worlds: a single world, a thousand urban cultures.

7) The challenge of "global cities"

- World-scale cities.
- The cities' relationship to the world.
- Globalization; regionalization of globalization; a plea for the plurality of cities.

8) The economic challenge

- The city: costs and benefits.
- Funding future evolutions: public financing / private financing.

- The city: plan and market; dialectics between the necessary planning and the free choices (and initiatives) of the urban players.

9) The challenge of activity and attractiveness

- Industry, services and commerce.
- Industry inside and outside the city.
- Services inside and outside the city.
- Commerce inside and outside the city.
- Scenarios: dissociating activity from housing / bringing activity and housing closer together.
- Relationships between the previous sets of issues and the nature of the activities (scale, industry/services, pollution, etc.).

10) The safety challenge

- Cities and insecurity; cleavages: criminality and hyper-protection.
- Cities and terrorism.
- Prevention, repression and protection of freedoms.

11) The cultural challenge

- The city, a cultural melting pot.
- Urban cultures.
- The city, a cultural phenomenon.

12) The challenge of city networks

- The growing number of users (or inhabitants) of several cities.
- The issue of transport within urban networks.
- Migrations (immigration, activities, tourism, etc.).

13) The digital challenge

- Real cities and virtual cities.
- Digital technologies, a factor of urban sprawl.
- Digital technologies, a factor of the "non-city".

14) The challenge of citizenship

- Which citizenship? (city inhabitants, city workers, city users).
- What participation for each type of user?
- The city as a melting pot, as a place of sharing.

15) The democratic challenge

- Democracy at the municipal level.
- Direct democracy within the municipality and indirect democracy within the urban area.
- Democracy on the scale of the greater urban area (reaching beyond the city and its suburbs).
- State governance.
- Coalition and contractual governance.

25 proposals for the future of our cities

1. If certain preconditions are met, **a dense city presents a more positive "carbon balance" than a spread-out city.**

2. The development of metropolises, megacities, "gigalopolises" and "urban blankets" greatly complicates the solving of human, urban and environmental problems. **Other forms of regional development and other forms of urban organization in the form of city networks are clearly preferable and necessary.**

3. **It is necessary to control urban development** considering the importance of maintaining lands allocated to other usages, primarily **agriculture.**

4. **Megacities and large cities will evidently remain essential features of the 21st-century urban landscape.** Thus, the importance of developing **polycentricity** and moving toward **multipolar cities.**

5. With regard to shanty towns and **makeshift housing districts**, eradication is not the answer. The solutions call for networks, housing developments/improvements, public services and democracy. In short, **transforming these neighbourhoods so as to make them more human and liveable** and little by little just like any other neighbourhood.

6. **The necessity, particularly for urban areas, of an intrinsic environmental approach:** transport, construction materials, salvaging, recycling, etc.

7. Housing design and construction techniques are decisive for saving energy. **The main problem concerns**

the financial engineering allowing for the long- and medium-term injection of very significant credit to fund the considerable long-term economies engendered by these transformations.

8. **Social mixing is everywhere desirable. It makes for a city of sharing, a city of urbanity.**

9. **Social mixing must go hand in hand with functional mixing and vice versa.**

10. Housing quality – no matter the location or the type of housing – is a determining factor for social mixing and the inhabitants' well-being. **Social housing must be sustainable, quality housing.**

11. Everywhere, **modern means of public transport (tramways, underground rail systems) are the only human, ecological and urban alternatives** to bottlenecking/stoppages engendered by auto-centric city centres. We must lend optimal **structure** to the use of automobiles and other means of transport.

12. The same is true with regard to logistics. **The supplying of large cities now necessitates "chains"**, linking together several complementary and coordinated means of supplying and accessing various sectors of the urban area and the city centre.

13. **The globalization of urban forms is a large scale phenomenon. This globalization must not entail a standardization.**

14. It is therefore essential to **promote, beyond this globalization, the urban, architectural and therefore cultural diversity** of the world's cities.

15. **Transitions between the city and the "non-city" represent a major issue.** Only functional mixing will allow for the recovery of areas dedicated to a single function (housing, commerce, activity).

16. Even if commendable in intention, **zoning very often results in segregation.**

17. **The control of property/land is key to the future of cities and presupposes a powerful public authority** carrying forward a development project.

18. **Bodies for the democratic governance of urban agglomerations** responsible for the entire urban area are everywhere essential.

19. The question of democratic governance also concerns the entire area in which people live, work and are active, **beyond the limits of the greater urban area.** The inhabitants of small and medium-sized cities located within the same catchment area of a greater urban area constitute, along with the residents of this urban area, a coherent, communal entity.

20. In megacities, metropolises and greater urban areas, **governance must be both global and sector-based**, one fundamental question concerning the **relationship between** urban-area authorities and local authorities (municipalities, arrondissements, neighbourhoods, etc.).

21. **Pertinent urban policies for metropolises and megacities are the fruit of coordinative efforts between local public players**, made responsible and invested with real prerogatives, and national public players.

22. Cities are the fruit of decisions made by public authorities and initiatives

undertaken by innumerable private players. **It is futile to set the "interventionist city" against the "proliferation city".** However, a proper relationship between public and private players is essential.

23. **The question of financing is essential.** The future of the world's cities as here described will require considerable financial means, which assumes the implementation of significant **adjustments** at various levels.

24. The funding of urban evolutions associated with both public authorities and private players, **their cooperation and their complementarity are necessary.** However, the public authorities' recourse to private funds must not entail heavy **debts** that would transfer investment costs to **future generations** and would surely prove **contrary to the tenets of sustainable development.**

25. The issue of means is clearly fundamental. Urban policies must become a global issue, to the same extent as the interrelated issues of food, health and ecology. **It is therefore proposed that the United Nations provide itself with an operational agency dedicated to cities and urban problems, extending beyond today's UN-Habitat and benefitting from significant means.**

