



a worldwide series of conferences
on the future of cities

organised by the LSE Cities Programme and the
Alfred Herrhausen Society for International Dialogue

Press Release No 1

International experts gather in New York to investigate the contemporary city

Over 100 experts will meet in New York on 25 and 26 February in the first of a series of world-wide conferences to understand the problems of the city in the 21st century. As the world enters a new 'Urban Age', with over 50% of its population living in cities, new urban forms are emerging with cities of over 20 million people – the size of London and New York combined.

The London School of Economics and the Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society have joined forces to organise a sustained investigation – the 'Urban Age' - in how cities are changing and what policymakers need to do to improve the quality of life for the millions of urban dwellers around the globe. This is why, over the next two years, the Urban Age conferences will take place in New York, Shanghai, London, Johannesburg, Mexico City and Berlin.

While cities offer the promise of employment, social interaction and shelter, they quickly become concentrations of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. The Urban Age conferences will address these issues, focussing on the links between the physical form of the city – its buildings, streets, houses, transport routes and amenities– and their social, economic and political impacts.

The New York Urban Age conference brings together some of the world's leading urban thinkers, policymakers and practitioners to compare experiences and debate the key themes of urban change. The core questions being addressed at the two-day conference are:

- Do jobs build cities or cities build jobs?
- Does travelling less make urban living better? And, if so, who pays?
- In a post 9/11 world, how do we create cities that make us feel safe in a crowd?
- The housing crisis is making cities unaffordable. Are we squeezing the middle out?

The New York Urban Age conference provides a platform to compare the social and economic profiles of two world cities – London and New York – with similar populations and different physical shapes, both facing a period of projected demographic and economic growth, both competing for the 2012 Olympics, and both offering models for urban development across the globe.

Key speakers include:

- Rem Koolhaas, Pritzker-winning architect, writer and urbanist, responsible for provocative and ground-breaking schemes in USA, Europe and Asia
- Saskia Sassen, one of the world's leading experts on the impact of globalisation on the economy of cities
- Shaun Donovan, New York City's Housing Commissioner, responsible for the Mayor Bloomberg's policy for integrated housing projects across the city
- Anthony Williams, Mayor of Washington DC, President of the National League of Cities in the USA and driving force behind Washington's proactive urban regeneration programmes
- Gerard Frug, Professor of Law at Harvard University, who is a specialist on local government and how cities manage complex democratic and legal systems.

A full programme of the closed-door event is available at www.urban-age.net.

The New York Urban Age conference partners are the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Programme and the Minerva LSE Research Group.

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