

Sustainable Urban Growth

Addressing the challenges of
urbanization in the 21st century



University of Zurich, September 8, 2015

Content

The purpose of this conference

Remembering History

Beyond Urban Design and Planning

Understanding Rural-Urban Linkages

Expected Outcome of the Conference

The purpose of this conference

Urbanisation plays key role in the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- Transforming consumption & production patterns in rural *and* urban areas
- Sustainable development is dynamic & contextual ≠ One size fits all standards (Rio Declaration Principle 9)
- Sustainability as 'FuturAbility':
We have to create future for outsiders

We need scalable solutions

- > Global partnership with private sector



Remembering History

Urbanisation in 19th century in Europe: Authoritarian regimes with low tax revenues facing the social, health and environmental challenges of urban growth and economic inequality > public-private investment in social security, education, infrastructure, health, agriculture,..... *but still encouraging migration due to lack of jobs*

US Urbanisation in 19th/early 20th century largely a product of migration from Europe and elsewhere > bottom up, self-organizing arrival cities

US in the 21st century: Between vibrant green cities and shrinking cities > *Decisive Factor: a prosperous and innovative private sector* with an interest in sustainable and inclusive change to enable/help fund urban renewal

Beyond Urban Design and Planning

Panels: experts from industry, government, civil society and academia > *urban growth in context*

Jane Jacobs: cities are a *means to an end* for the local people living in them and *these ends change over time*



- **Collective action to invest in infrastructure:**
Smart cities where and for whom? (rich incumbents in centres versus poor migrants in suburbs?)
- Analogy to 19th century: Global migration to **arrival cities** in the developing world: public sector often lacks means and competence > **need for PPPs**

Understanding Rural-Urban Linkages

Jane Jacobs: economic history of rural settlements is mostly linked to nearby cities that also depend on them

Idea of Charter Cities (**Paul Romer**): Rules facilitating, investment, endogenous growth and scalable innovation > education/jobs



Hinterland crucial: less legacy problems

Catch-up Growth (driven by primate cities) necessary to cope with rural migration / enable agricultural innovation & rural restoration (e.g. reforestation)

➤ **Integration of rural & urban studies** / taking into account that **innovation happens outside centers**

Expected outcome of the conference

Clarifying **the meaning and potential of 'smart cities'** and its material (infrastructure) and immaterial constraints (data protection) > **Keynotes**

Identifying potential for **public-private partnerships** that enable sustainable urban growth in Asia, Europe and Africa – based on historical learning

Highlighting importance of flexible rules & innovation (doing more with less) to cope with global challenges of **population growth & affluence** in cities

Proposing context-based sustainable urban growth **policies** in the context of SDGs (joint publication)