



**GDN 13th Annual Global Development Conference**  
**Urbanization and Development: Delving Deeper into the Nexus**  
Central European University  
16-18 June, 2012

The Global Development Network is very pleased to announce its 13th Annual Global Development Conference on Urbanization and Development which will be held in Budapest, Hungary on 16-18 June, 2012, in partnership with Central European University (CEU). About 350 participants are expected to attend the conference from all over the world.

The world is facing unprecedented levels of urbanization. Since 2007, and for the first time in human history, more than 50 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2030, various projections seem to agree that this will increase to almost 60 percent of total population, and to about 80 percent by 2050. With urban areas becoming the source of livelihoods for a majority of the population around the globe, a huge toll on resources is undertaken. Planning of urban areas, and their impact on the environment become extremely important issues of consideration. Development, in other words, becomes synonymous to Urbanization.

The future of the world will surely be urban and this is likely to be a good thing. Per capita incomes are five times higher and infant mortality rates are two thirds lower in those nations that are more than 50 percent urbanized relative to those countries that are less than fifty percent urbanized. While this correlation does not imply causality, it is almost impossible to imagine the world's poorer countries becoming rich countries unless they too become largely urbanized. Urban concentration has historically enabled the flows of knowledge, the division of labor, the movement of goods and the combination of labor and capital that help transform poor places into prosperous ones.

But urbanization also creates enormous challenges, including contagious disease, congestion and crime, that often seem to be far beyond the capacities of many governments. Mega-cities (but also small ones) throughout the world struggle with providing decent living space, clean water and other amenities for their rapidly growing number of residents. These urban problems do not just harm the current residents of the cities, they stop also others from coming to cities and enjoying the economic benefits that can come from agglomeration. Making cities more livable is not just about quality of life, it is also about economic development.

Against this background, the Budapest Conference will focus on the overall important nexus between urbanization and development by adopting a truly holistic as well as interdisciplinary approach, i.e. by trying to examine how urbanization as a whole affects development as a whole, thus moving beyond approaches focusing only on the economic aspects of the

urbanization process. At the same time, a fresh look at the development mantra that cities are the engines of growth is essential in order to delve deeper into the role of local elites and how they may shape the character of a city (and thus its developmental or non-developmental focus), the integration of the ethnic minorities in the urbanization process, and the overall nexus between urbanization and poverty (since it is also this link that currently places the urbanization issue in the international development agenda). Furthermore, a series of negative externalities arising from the urbanization process in various regions across the world, such as crime, congestion and contagious disease will also be covered in the conference, and a particular effort will be made to shed more light on the overall relationship between migration and urbanization. The role of technology infusion in making cities smart places to live will also be examined. Finally, the conference will allow for useful policy lessons to be derived on the basis of success as well as failure stories in developing and transition countries and around the globe in this important area. In this context the overall enabling policy environment in the urbanization process will be considered.

Since its inception in 1999, GDN has organized conferences in almost every region of the world. This strategy has provided the opportunity for exchange of ideas on the most pressing development challenges with internationally renowned researchers, heads of government, representatives of national and international organizations and sponsors of research. By bringing together both researchers and policymakers, we provide the first step in facilitating greater dialogue between local policymakers and the local research we support. GDN conferences are also unique - not just in the sheer numbers of people who attend but in the range of issues they discuss, and the regions they represent.

**Topics to be covered at the Conference will include (but not limited to):**

- Cities as Engines of Growth
- Agglomeration Economies and Urbanization
- Urban Externalities: Congestion, Contagious Disease and Crime
- Urbanization and Poverty
- Innovation, Technology Infusion and Smart Cities
- Migration and Urbanization
- Ethnic Minorities and the Urbanization Process
- The Enabling Policy Environment: Housing, Transportation and Other Public Infrastructure
- Urban Governance
- Financing Urban Infrastructure

**Confirmed Plenary Speakers** (in alphabetical order):

- Isher Ahluwalia (ICRIER)
- Robert Buckley (New School for Social Research)
- Teresa Caldeira (University of California, Berkeley)
- Susan Fainstein (Harvard University)
- J. Vernon Henderson (Brown University)
- Matthew Kahn (University of California, Los Angeles)
- Ravi Kanbur (Cornell University)
- Christine Kessides (World Bank Institute)
- Eduardo Lora (Inter-American Development Bank)
- Mario Pezzini (OECD Development Centre)
- Thomas Sevcik (Arthesia)
- Simon Snoxell (Canadian International Development Agency)
- Carlos Vainer (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro)
- Anthony Venables (Oxford University)

**Keynote Speaker:** Saskia Sassen, Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology,  
Columbia University

**Conference Program Committee** (names in alphabetical order)

Isher Ahluwalia (GDN Board of Directors & ICRIER)  
Abhijit Banerjee (GDN Board of Directors & MIT)  
Gerardo della Paolera (GDN President)  
Edward Glaeser (Harvard University)  
Ravi Kanbur (GDN Board of Directors & Cornell University)  
Gábor Kézdi (Central European University)  
George Mavrotas (GDN Chief Economist & Conf. Director)  
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L. Alan Winters (Chairman, GDN Board of Directors & University of Sussex)

**Local Organizing Committee – CEU** (names in alphabetical order)

Richard Fisk (External Relations Office, CEU)  
Márta Jombach (Department of Economics, CEU)  
Gábor Kézdi (Head of Department of Economics, CEU)  
Gyöngyi Kiss (External Relations Office, CEU)  
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Veronika Orosz (Department of Economics, CEU)  
Ildikó Rüll (Communications Office, CEU)

Further conference updates will be provided on the GDN website on a regular basis. Please note that this is not a Call for Papers. For any queries please contact Ms. Niharika Verma, GDN Conference Assistant, Email: [nverma@gdn.int](mailto:nverma@gdn.int)