Proceedings from the Sixth OECD Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers

The Metropolitan Century: Policies for Resilient and Inclusive Cities
The OECD Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers builds on a long tradition of policy dialogue on urban development at the OECD. Established in 2007, the Roundtable aims to bridge the policy gaps in tackling climate change and spurring green growth, mobilising investment, creating jobs and ensuring sustainable, inclusive urban growth.


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Introduction

Resilient and inclusive cities are priorities in a world that is urbanising at an unprecedented rate

Leaders from 16 countries, 24 cities, and organisations working on the frontlines of urban policy convened in Mexico City on 16 October 2015 for the Sixth OECD Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers to discuss policies for resilient and inclusive cities.

Today, more than half of the world’s population lives in cities. By the end of the 21st century, nearly 85% of people will live in urban areas – increasing from less than 1 billion in 1950 to 9 billion by 2100.

The current wave of urbanisation has great potential to benefit city-dwellers, countries, and the planet at large – but it also comes with major socioeconomic and environmental challenges. Cities are motors of national growth, but urbanisation alone is not enough for economic development.

Public policies must adapt to meet the challenges of the metropolitan century. And policy makers at all levels of government have a role to play.
How can policy makers make decisions that will lead to more resilient and inclusive cities in the long run? Roundtable participants discussed four priorities for action:

- **Creating sustainable cities.** Countries and cities must look beyond traditional environmental policy to make cities more resilient.

- **Improving urban accessibility.** Ensuring smooth access to jobs, services and leisure opportunities is essential for reaping agglomeration benefits and improving the well-being of all citizens.

- **Building cities, not just houses.** Housing policy needs to be better connected to infrastructure investment and urban planning.

- **Modernising governance structures.** Cities’ administrative boundaries often fail to match today’s socio-economic realities. More effective instruments need to be put in place to co-ordinate policies at the metropolitan scale.

In the closing plenary, Roundtable participants discussed the role of urban policy in in view of COP21 and Habitat III. What policies can national and local leaders champion to ensure that tomorrow’s cities are resilient and inclusive for all urban dwellers? Importantly, how can they work together, on equal footing, to achieve common objectives?
Meeting the challenges of the Metropolitan Century

Miguel Angel Mancera
Mayor of Mexico City

Cities are the driver of change in the world. Mexico City is home to different cultures and aims to generate equal conditions for its citizens. In the territory of Valle de Mexico that covers 1500 km², services need to be provided to about 21 million people. Currently, more than 5 million vehicles are registered, which raises environmental concerns. Climate change is a reality and the planet cannot wait. Cities have to respond and have to become resilient and sustainable.

“Cities are the changing factor in the world. Beyond national governments, local governments have the direct responsibility and are in direct contact with the demands of the inhabitants of the planet.”

Angel Gurría
Secretary-General of the OECD

Understanding urbanisation and its governance is needed to achieve better policies. Most growth in urbanisation is nowadays occurring in developing regions. Since 2000, China alone has been urbanising the equivalent of almost one Australia per year! Thus, cities must be seen as integral partners to face and create solution for common challenges, like housing, transport, inequality and climate change. And national government have to rethink the range of policies that affect cities.

“The problem with urbanisation decisions is that they linger long in terms of their impact. Whatever we decide today is going to have an intergenerational impact.”
Housing should be addressed when discussing about productive, competitive and sustainable cities, as they are ultimately linked. Sustainable housing generates a higher quality of life, and the location of housing can limit segregation, positively affect climate change and residents’ mobility. Institutional co-ordination is key, especially to face infrastructural challenges like water supply that can have a huge impact on the general quality of life.

“We need to transition from a housing model to a city model.”
Governing cities for growth and inclusion

Public policies in metro areas need to be co-ordinated across administrative borders

A typical large metropolitan area in the OECD has around 2.5 million inhabitants and consists of approximately 90 independent municipalities. While borders between municipalities are administratively important, they hardly matter for the socio-economic interactions and connections of residents and businesses in metropolitan areas. Co-ordination between neighbouring municipalities and across levels of government operating within a metro area is thus critical.

Excessive administrative fragmentation can lower productivity, reduce growth and create social divisions if no mechanisms for policy co-ordination exist. Metropolitan authorities can help overcome co-ordination problems created by administrative fragmentation. Dedicated metropolitan authorities exist in approximately 60% of all OECD metropolitan areas as a tool to alleviate the co-ordination problem between municipalities. Where they exist, productivity levels are higher, the public is more satisfied with the public transport system, and rates of air pollution and urban sprawl are lower.

Even though metropolitan authorities have become common across the OECD, there remains great diversity among them. While all play a co-ordinating role between municipal governments, their tasks and responsibilities vary. Nevertheless, the three most common fields of work of metropolitan authorities are regional development, transport and spatial planning.
Key messages from the discussion: Making metropolitan governance work

• We need metropolitan solutions to tackle metropolitan challenges. Looking ahead, the vast majority of new city dwellers will live in four countries: China, India, Nigeria and the United States. And as cities grow, they face several major challenges: increased land consumption by new residents, climate change, inequality, and fiscal challenges, due to a mismatch between responsibilities and available resources. At the same time, global trends, like the ongoing migration to cities or enduring social inequalities and exclusion, render policy making in metropolitan areas increasingly complex. Co-operation at metropolitan scale can be a key part of the solution to meeting these challenges.

• We can no longer afford to think, work and act in siloes. There is a need to integrate policies across sectors (such as transport, land use, housing, environment, ICT) as well as between the physical and human dimensions of development in order to create opportunities for the residents and ensure a higher quality of life. Focusing on people-centred urbanisation is critical, and can be achieved by engaging citizens in the design of their future communities.

• Creating metropolitan authorities is no easy task. While the laws creating new authorities need to be better enforced in some countries, governance structures also need the flexibility to match the specific needs of a given metropolitan area. There is no “best” form of metropolitan co-operation: voluntary co-operative arrangements, while useful in some respects, also have important limits, just as there are pros and cons to imposing metropolitan co-operation agreements.

“Birmingham has a long history of racial segregation, and inclusiveness is crucial in light of this history.”
Lisa Cooper, Director of Economic Development, Birmingham, United States

“While migration is a driver of economic progress it also creates challenges that need to be managed by a national framework to prevent the emergences of completely deserted areas.”
Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria

“Development plans should not only consider economic outcomes, but also the many factors that influence human well-being.”
Luis Alberto Mella Gajardo, Mayor of Quillota, Chile
• What makes metropolitan co-operation work? Among the “success factors” identified by mayors and ministers for effective metropolitan co-operation are an emphasis on pragmatism in cooperation, a need to focus on the entire metropolitan area, and the importance of tailoring governance arrangements to local conditions. To make multi-level governance work, national and local actors need to show humility and a willingness to compromise. Every stakeholder must feel involved and have the opportunity to benefit from the cooperation.

“Good transport connections are critical for successful metropolitan areas.”

Sjaak van der Tak, Mayor of Westland, Metropolitan Region Rotterdam-The Hague, The Netherlands

• Metropolitan co-operation also requires appropriate fiscal arrangements and an enabling environment. In order to work effectively, local governments need a national framework to give them appropriate competencies and financial resources to meet their responsibilities. However, in many cases, the enabling environment is not appropriate for the actual responsibilities of sub-national governments. Financing arrangements need to be found that benefit the entire metropolitan area, instead of only the core of the region.

“A sustainable and resilient city is one that meets the needs of nature and people. The good news is that by thinking properly, and learning from the best examples internationally, we can apply the best environmental principles in a way that supports green, prosperous and socially inclusive cities – and it is those cities that will be resilient in the face of future challenges, whether environmental, economic, or social.”

David Miller, President of WWF-Canada and former Mayor of Toronto, Canada

• It’s time to “just do it.” Given the urgency and complexity of the challenges facing cities, effective collaboration among different stakeholders is needed.
Beyond transport: Achieving urban accessibility

Accessibility is crucial for the prosperity of cities and the well-being of their citizens

Higher densities and the concentration of firms, workers and people offer cities important opportunities for social and economic development. But to reap those benefits, cities need adequate transport infrastructure and policies that ensure access to jobs, services and consumption opportunities.

Dependency on private transport modes generates pollution, CO₂ emissions and congestion levels that are higher than what would result from more balanced modal shares. This brings significant health risks to transport users and the population as a whole, and hinders economic activities.

Master planning must become a dynamic process, and the role of national and municipal governments needs to change from regulating and approving institutions to bodies that enable and collaborate with citizens to respond to their needs.
Key messages from the discussion:
Not just mobility! Providing citizens with accessibility to jobs, services and social interactions

• **Mobility is an instrument and with good planning better access can be achieved with even less mobility.** In large conurbations, a configuration based on compact, networked cities may performs better. The provision of good access to citizens must consider all citizens, independent of their income and including the elderly and those with mobility impairments.

• **Transport is more than infrastructure.** Major infrastructure investments are still required in many urban regions, especially when these are growing. Infrastructure investments often face financial constraints, which call for innovative funding solutions. Continuous urbanisation increases the pressure on cities’ infrastructure – but at the same time financial resources tighten. Alternative funds for capital and operating costs can include co-funding by private parties for specific components, as well as land-value capture for projects that have a strong impact on accessibility levels. But transport is also about operating efficiency, cost control while providing good service and about good governance structures.

“Since 1996, after the amendment of law, focus is on access to public transport for all, including disabled/handicapped people. To provide access to cities, handicapped persons don’t pay a fee.”

María Eugenia Rivera Araya, Municipal Council President, San José, Costa Rica

"It is essential to promote compact cities connected by transport networks to improve accessibility. The Olympic Games of Tokyo in 2020 will be a major milestone."

Akira Oshida, Advisor, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan

"Because affordable fees have to be the premise, we seek creative ways to lower costs through improved efficiency in public transport."

Victor Manuel Alejandro Martinez Ruiz, Advisor, Guatemala City, Guatemala
• Coherent land-use and transport planning is essential. Transport and housing are complementary goods. People are often faced with having to sacrifice better quality of one to gain better quality of the other. People do not necessarily live where they work, which results in long commutes.

• Information technologies offer great potential for improving access. Real-time, on-demand information for mobility, location and occupation of vehicles allows shared mobility solutions, which lead to strong reductions of emissions and congestion while offering high levels of quality for all those served. The availability of large volumes of mobility data, acquired at very low costs, can be a high-value instrument for better transport planning. In some cases, technologies can reduce the need for mobility by facilitating transactions through the movement of information instead of the movement of people.

“It is even more important to focus on transit-oriented jobs than on transit-oriented housing.”

Rohit Aggarwala, Co-chair of the Fourth Regional Plan for the New York metropolitan area, Regional Plan Association, United States

“Transport for London is using mobile phone data to help understand how people move through the city. Using the technology we have at the moment can help us build the cities of the future.”

Matthew Yates, Head of Transport, Planning and Projects, Transport for London, United Kingdom
Increasing urbanisation will create demand for infrastructure equivalent to what was built during the last 4000 years. This will have significant implications for climate change, energy consumption, air quality, water availability and quality, land use, and waste management.

Creating sustainable cities is now a global agenda. One of the 17 goals in the New Sustainable Development Agenda, adopted in New York in September 2015, aims explicitly to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; moreover, 11 of the 17 goals and 30% of the SDG targets are related to cities. The Habitat III Conference in 2016 will discuss how to achieve urban sustainability in the “New Urban Agenda”. Finally, within the COP21, the global climate negotiation platform, the role of cities in addressing climate change has been increasingly recognised.

Effective climate action requires looking beyond traditional climate policy. Cities have a unique ability to address global climate change challenges. Choices made in cities today about long-lived urban infrastructure will affect the extent and impact of climate change, the ability to achieve emission reductions and the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances.

National urban policies are needed to support climate action at the city level. Supportive national and regional policies are required to ensure that city-level initiatives have sufficient resources and potential to effect meaningful change. At the same time, national support can help cities by establishing environmental policy frameworks and minimum standards, and providing required resources and technical information. Identifying and correcting national policies that conflict with or prevent local climate action is another important way in which national governments can help foster local climate initiatives.

“National governments cannot go to Habitat III in Quito on their own. Surely, a Summit on human settlements and sustainable urban development should include cities and their governments as main stakeholders.”

Gino van Begin, Secretary-General, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)
Key messages from the discussion:
Sustainability is more than an environmental agenda

Sustainability is a social, economic and environmental agenda. All three elements must be tackled at the same time at all levels of government.

- **Focus on the three key elements to achieving low-carbon, productive societies:** sustainable urban mobility, spatial development patterns and co-ordinated urban investments.

- **Transition from smart city strategies to smart citizen strategies.** Leaders should empower citizens to participate in the vision and the implementation of the future of the cities.

- **Continue to improve statistical data at city level** to design and implement evidence-based policies and monitor and report on their outcomes. An initial next step is to make that data available.

- **Move beyond the traditional emphasis on income-related indicators** to focus on multi-dimensional measures of citizen well-being.

- **Focus on financing.** One of the key challenges is to co-ordinate action and investment. This requires not just better inter-governmental co-ordination, but an alignment of all actors, including the private sector, citizens and civil society.

- **Institutionalise dialogue and partnerships** across administrative boundaries, levels of government, and with citizens, the private sector, and civil society.

- **Put city leaders on equal footing with national governments in global dialogues.** As we approach COP21 and Habitat III, countries should enter into a dialogue with cities regarding how to achieve shared goals, and what is needed from a city perspective.

“We need to get the scientific evidence in front of the right people.”

Ani Dasgupta, Global Director, World Resources Institute Ross Center for Sustaibale Cities

“Mayors rarely have full power on the issues they need to solve, because national and regional governance is often so complex. By focusing on building resilience, we’ve witnessed Mayors empower themselves and their communities to activate networks and solutions to an interconnected set of problems, with promising results for cities.”

Michael Berkowitz, President, 100 Resilient Cities, Rockefeller Foundation
“In responding to these disasters, it is important to think about anonymity. People in cities do not know each other closely, but we need to find solution how we can take care of each other in case of emergencies. [...] The relationships between people are critical for being prepared for natural disasters.”

Kizo Hisamoto; Mayor of Kobe, Japan

“Collaboration with citizens, local communities and private sector is important for a sustainable city, where people can enjoy quality of life.”

Toshihiko Ota, Mayor of Toyota City, Japan

“Key to smart solutions is to build a smart platform for cities to easily collect and analyse big data and distribute solutions more effectively and efficiently to its residents.”

Jinsook Kim, Director General for Architecture Policy, Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport, Korea
Globally, it is estimated that around 330 million urban households live in substandard housing or are overburdened by housing costs. Over the next decades, this total is expected to increase. The affordability gap can manifest itself in different ways: overcrowding, housing of poor quality or in suboptimal locations, inadequate access to services, or insecure tenure.

Housing location and design help shape a city’s spatial development and environmental footprint. Why? Because they are both key factors in determining how people move around the city. Decisions about where to build new housing can affect individuals’ daily travel time and travel mode – that is, whether residents are more likely to travel by private car, public transport, bike or walk.

Access to quality housing can affect health and education outcomes, as well as individual well-being. Housing policies can often – intentionally or not – affect the composition and liveability of neighbourhoods. The location and quality of social and low-income housing can influence social and intergenerational mobility, crime levels and overall well-being.

Contradictory policies affecting housing can occur across levels of government. National governments often implement demand-side incentives, like tax breaks, to encourage housing consumption, while local land-use regulations restrict the supply of new housing construction, often with the unstated aim of protecting the economic interests of incumbent property owners. Contradictions can also occur across policy sectors, for instance, when housing and transport investments are not aligned.
“We have to plan cities, but planning mostly fails because there is always something missing: funding!”

Jesús Alberto Cano Velez, Director General, Federal Mortgage Corporation, Mexico

“There is a lack of planning for transit-oriented development.”

Tanya Müller, Minister of Environment of the Federal District, Mexico
Key messages from the discussion:
Housing and urban development are inextricably linked

- **Solving the housing crisis is a multidisciplinary task that requires more than affordable housing solutions.** It requires the creation of an ecosystem such that residents can access the city and its opportunities. Solutions have to combine affordability and accessibility. For this, the city has to be compact, resilient, sustainable and productive, with public spaces that provide a high quality of life.

- **Cities are the main engines for economic development because of the interactions among residents and more innovative, creative production.** Transit-oriented development enables the development of large areas of housing that are well-served by public transport service. It can also foster mixed land-use, which reduces the average distance of trips.

- **Funding solutions must combine public and private financing.** Taxation is key to enable both urban investment and maintenance. Land regulation and property taxes are important in this context. They need to be implemented through inter-ministerial collaboration and a national framework for urban development that includes all citizens and that integrates efforts across levels of government.

- **Cities should be inclusive.** Cities are more than housing. They should be for all residents, who need to have a strong participative voice in shaping the city. Cities should not be the expression of segregation and inequality.

“Many people who do not have a proper job and have scarce resources do not qualify to get credit from banks to buy a house.”

Maria Teresa Gomez de Marroquín, Advisor, Villa Nueva, Guatemala
On the road to COP21 and Habitat III: What role for urban policy?

Tanya Müller
Minister of Environment of the Federal District, Mexico City

“The solution to climate change will happen in cities. With concrete actions, cities are demonstrated leaders in the fight against climate change.”

As we approach COP21, the solution to climate change will be in cities – and cities are already leading the climate change fight. Cities are in a unique position to empower citizens and help them understand the key issues and public policies under development. But cities can’t do it alone: co-ordination between local and national levels is key.

Mari Kiviniemi
Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD

With the Habitat III conference to take place in Quito in 2016, we have an opportunity to help shape the global urban agenda for the next 20 years. The central themes of today’s Roundtable – social inclusion and resilience – should be a major driver of the public policy framework for cities in the decades to come. Cities and countries need to design and implement public policies that boost their resiliency, which will help cities avoid shocks, as well as absorb, recover, and adapt to the impact of shocks or chronic pressures.

“Habitat III is an opportunity to help shape the global urban agenda for the next 20 years.”
Cities and citizens need to be empowered to develop local solutions:
Key messages from the discussion

• The work of mayors and ministers is at the intersection of economic, physical and social agendas. The SDGs are an interesting tool for a holistic approach, because they set targets that are not sectoral.

• Cities that can withstand acute shocks, like earthquakes, tornadoes and terrorism, are those that have begun working on the slow-burning chronic challenges, such as long-term food shortages, and violence. Risk factors for the former are related to the latter. For instance, in New Orleans with hurricane Katrina; unemployment and social tensions were inextricably linked.

• Successful cities are inclusive – yet understanding how to capture the benefits of successful cities without generating massive inequalities is still a challenge in most places.

“Our mission has to extend beyond a family’s front door. A good home is linked to the institutions that surround it, businesses that offer high paying jobs, good schools that allow our children to maximize their potential, and accessible transportation that helps folks to get to these jobs and schools quickly. This means a national policy that affirmatively favours fair and inclusive housing and urbanisation.”

Gustavo Velazquez, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, United States
“We need resources and people to champion local actions.”

Mohammed Nabil Benabdallah, Minister of Housing and Urban Policy, Morocco

“We need to foresee public policies [...] that make vehicles step aside and leave room for people. We need to make cities more human.”

Carlos Moscoso Perea, Mayor of Cusco, Peru
“For Habitat III, we should ask not ‘what cities can do for their national governments,’ but ‘what do national governments need to do for cities.’”

Rohit Aggarwala, Co-chair of the Fourth Regional Plan for the New York metropolitan area, Regional Plan Association, United States

“A critical component is reaching out and engaging underserved communities. We need to have a very conscious equity agenda, where we are not just reacting to the communities that come forward, but we are making sure that these underserved communities are really getting the support and infrastructure they need to be at the table and participate in the decision-making process.”

Sam Chase, Metro Councillor, Portland, Oregon, United States
List of participants

Hosts

**OECD**
Mr. Ángel GURRÍA  
Secretary-General  
OECD

Ms. Mari KIVINIEMI  
Deputy Secretary-General  
OECD

Mr. Rolf ALTER  
Director of the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate  
OECD

**SEDATU**
Ms. Rosario ROBLES BERLANGA  
Minister of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU)  
Mexico

**MEXICO CITY**
Mr. Miguel Angel MANCERA ESPINOZA  
Mayor of Mexico City  
Mexico

Ms. Tanya MÜLLER  
Minister of Environment of the Federal District  
Mexico

**INFONAVIT**
Mr. Alejandro MURAT HINOJOSA  
Director-General INFONAVIT  
Mexico

Mr. Vicente MENDOZA TELLEZ-GIRÓN  
Chief Financial Officer INFONAVIT  
Mexico
City and national leaders

Mr. Enrique ALFARO RAMÍREZ
Mayor
Guadalajara, Mexico

Mr. Silvano AUREOLEZ
Governor
Michoacan, Mexico

Mr. Nabil Mohammed BENABDALLAH
Minister of Housing and Urban Policy
Morocco

Mr. José Manuel CALVO DEL OLMO
Councillor of Town Planning
Madrid, Spain

Mr. Jesús Alberto CANO VELEZ
Director General, Federal Mortgage Corporation
Mexico

Mr. Sam CHASE
Metro Councillor
Portland, United States

Ms. Lisa COOPER
Director of Economic Development
Birmingham, United States

Mr. José ELIAS LEAL
Mayor
Reynosa, Mexico

Mr. Hüseyin EREN
Deputy Secretary General Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
Istanbul, Turkey

Ms. Margarita GALLEGO SOTO
Mayor
Aguascalientes, Mexico

Ms. Maria Teresa GOMEZ DE MARROQUÍN
Advisor
Villa Nueva, Guatemala

Mr. Ricardo GUTIERREZ
Director, Metropolitan Institute of Planning
Guadalajara, Mexico

Mr. Fernando GUZMAN RODRIGUEZ
Director of the Colombian Association of Capital Cities
Colombia

Mr. Kwanza HALL
Council member
Atlanta, United States

Mr. Kizo HISAMOTO
Mayor
Kobe, Japan

Mr. David JACOME POLIT
Metropolitan Director of Urban Development
Quito, Ecuador

Ms. Jinsook KIM
Director General for Architecture Policy, Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport
Korea

Mr. Juan Carlos LASTIRI QUIROS
Deputy Minister of Urban Development and Housing
Mexico

Mr. Juan LOZANO TOVAR
Secretary General of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security
Mexico

Mr. Miguel Angel MANCERA ESPINOSA
Mayor
Mexico City, Mexico

Mr. Victor Manuel Alejandro MARTINEZ RUIZ
Advisor
Guatemala City, Guatemala
City and national leaders (continued)

Mr. Luis MELLA GAJARDO
Mayor
Quillota, Chile

Ms. Lilyana PAVLOVA
Minister of Regional Development and Public Works
Bulgaria

Mr. David MILLER
President of WWF-Canada and former Mayor of Toronto
Canada

Mr. Rosendo PUJOL-MESALLES
Minister of Housing and Human Settlements
Costa Rica

Mr. Carlos MOSCOSO PEREA
Mayor
Cusco, Peru

Mr. Miguel Angel RIQUELME SOLIS
Mayor
Torreon, Mexico

Mr. Alejandro MURAT HINOJOSA
Director General, INFONAVIT
Mexico

Ms. Maria Eugenia RIVERA ARAYA
Municipal Council President
San José, Costa Rica

Ms. Soledad NUÑEZ
Minister of Housing
Paraguay

Ms. Rosario ROBLES BERLANGA
Minister of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development
Mexico

Mr. Rolando OCAMPO ALCANTAR
Vice president INEGI
Mexico

Mr. Willehaldo SAAVEDRA GONZÁLEZ
Chief of Cabinet
Tlajomulco De Zúñiga, Jalisco, Mexico

Mr. Akira OSHIDA
Advisor, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
Japan

Ms. Paulina SABALL
Minister of Housing and Urbanism
Chile

Mr. Toshihiko OTA
Mayor
Toyota, Japan

Mr. Thiago TEIXEIRA DE ANDRADE
Secretary of Territorial Management and Housing
Brasilia, Brazil

Mr. Federico PATIÑO MARQUEZ
Director General, Airport Group of Mexico City
Mexico
City and national leaders (continued)

Mr. José Alfredo TORRES MARTINEZ
Secretary Urban Development
State of Mexico, Mexico

Mr. Sjaak VAN DER TAK
Mayor
Westland, Metropolitan Region Rotterdam -The Hague, The Netherlands

Mr. Gustavo VELASQUEZ
Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
United States

Mr. Matthew YATES
Head of Transport, Planning and Projects
London, United Kingdom

Chairs, rapporteurs, scene setters & table leaders

Mr. Rohit AGGARWALA
Co-chair of the Fourth Regional Plan for the New York metropolitan area
Regional Plan Association

Mr. Don CHEN
Director of Metropolitan Opportunity
Ford Foundation

Ms. Ana Marie ARGILAGOS
Senior Advisor
Ford Foundation

Mr. Ani DASGUPTA
Global Director
WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities

Mr. Michael BERKOWITZ
President, 100 Resilient Cities
Rockefeller Foundation

Ms. Mari KIVINIEMI
Deputy Secretary General
OECD

Mr. Armando CARBONELL
Chair of Planning and Urban Form
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Mr. Vincent FOUCHIER
Chair Urban Working Party
OECD

Mr. José CARRERA
Vice-president of Social Development
Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)

Ms. Yamina DJACTA
Director New York Office
UN-Habitat
Chairs, rapporteurs, scene setters & table leaders (continued)

Ms. Tanya MÜLLER
Minister of Environment of the Federal District
Mexico

Mr. Roberto MARTÍNEZ YLLESCAS
Head of Centre –Mexico/ Latin America
Mexico

Mr. Joaquim OLIVEIRA MARTINS
Head of the Regional Development Policy Division
OECD

Ms. Ana María RODRIGUEZ ORTIZ
Manager of Institutions for Development
Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

Mr. Josep ROIG
Secretary General
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Mr. Keith THORPE
Head of Urban Policy Support Department for Communities and Local Government
London, United Kingdom

Ms. Sara TOPELSON
Chair
Urban Land Institute Mexico Delegation

Mr. Gino VAN BEGIN
Secretary General
Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)

Mr. José VIEGAS
Secretary General
International Transport Forum

OECD Ambassadors

Mr. Dionisio PÉREZ-JÁCOME FRISCIONE
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OECD
Mexico

Ms. Claudia SERRANO
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Chile to the OECD
Chile

Partners

CAF
Mr. José CARRERA
Corporate Vice-president of Social Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)

Ms. Moira Paz ESTENSSORO
Director Mexico’s office Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)

IADB
Ms. Ana María RODRIGUEZ-ORTIZ
Manager of Institutions for Development Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

Mr. Andrés BLANCO
Senior Specialist in Urban Development and Housing Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)
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Co-hosts

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www.oecd.org/urban/roundtable

For further information, please contact RTMM@oecd.org

Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate
OECD
2, rue André Pascal
75775 Paris Cedex 16
FRANCE