

The Inaugural SDG Leadership Cities Convening

The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center
Bellagio, Italy
April 3rd to 6th, 2019

Event description: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires investments and policies that affect specific places, and there is increasing realization that overall global progress will depend in significant measure upon local leadership and action. This convening will bring together senior government officials from 12 cities around the world that are at the cutting edge of pursuing local achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to develop a community of practice among vanguard and high-ambition cities – the SDG Leadership Cities Network – that are defining what it means to pursue the SDGs at the local level. This initiative of the Brookings Institution is supported by grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Key objectives of the convening include:

1. Building relationships that enable ongoing peer exchange to share best practices and innovations, and solve mutual challenges, in applying the SDGs at the local level.
2. Defining a shared policy and research agenda to help city leaders globally scale and deepen local achievement of the SDGs.
3. Strategizing and developing concrete proposals to leverage the two High Level Political Forums (HLPFs) in 2019, including the first-ever among heads of state, as well as other key global moments, such as the G7, G20, and 2020 COP, to demonstrate the importance of city-level action and leadership to SDG progress.

Key themes that the group will explore throughout the gathering include:

- Defining the value proposition of the SDGs for cities.
- Identifying the key elements of serious SDG implementation at the city level, exploring principles, targets, and actions that are common across cities. During each session, we will seek to identify the major challenges, biggest constraints, and potential “quick wins.”
- Maximizing collective learning and policy leadership among cities pursuing the SDGs.

Guidance for Participants: Gatherings at Bellagio are designed to be highly interactive sessions, with their success dependent upon engaged participation from all attendees. Each city representative will be given the opportunity to provide a “discussion-starter” during one particular session.

This presentation should consist of:

- ❖ Up to 3 brief points describing the origin of the city's commitment to the SDGs. What motivated the city's pursuit of the SDGs? (e.g., legacy of sustainable development planning; encouragement/integration in national government's SDG plan; demand from external stakeholder; etc.)
- ❖ Up to 3 brief points describing, in general, the main elements of the city's implementation of the SDGs to now. What have been the city's key activities?
- ❖ Further elaboration of the particular activity that is relevant to the theme of the session. This brief discussion might surface key challenges encountered, solutions developed, and the work that remains.

A time limit of 10 minutes will be strictly enforced. These discussion starters are meant to provide key insights and catalyze reflections from the group, rather than explain every step or detail. Participants will have ample time during the retreat's discussion to add details regarding the work of their city. If necessary, PowerPoint may be used, but will be limited to six slides.

Wednesday, April 3rd

19:00 – 21:00

Opening Reception & Dinner

- Welcome remarks: *Tony Pipa, Brookings Institution*
- Motivations for convening; outcomes of 17 Rooms at UNGA
- Overview of the SDG Leadership Cities Initiative
- Introduction of participants
- Relationship-Building Exercise

Thursday, April 4th

8:00 – 9:00

Breakfast

9:15 – 9:30

Welcome

- Why are we here? Event Objectives, Guiding Principles

9:30 – 11:00

Session I

Setting the stage: a closer look at the preparatory survey results

- Where are there commonalities among each city's approaches to the SDGs? Differences?
- What issues might be prioritized in the short-term? Long-term?
- What was unexpected or missing?

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee & Tea Break

11:15 – 13:00

Session II

Aligning against the SDGs: Translating a Global Agenda to the Local Context

10-minute discussion-starters by 3 cities

- What approaches have been successful in mapping city plans and strategies to the SDGs?
- How are cities localizing data and indicators to manage performance and progress? What is the right balance between comparability and customization?
- What practices or tools could be developed or scaled to ease alignment of the SDGs at the local level?

Speakers:

Los Angeles
Mexico City
Bristol

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch and Break

14:30 – 15:45

Session III

Using Analysis to Focus SDG Efforts

10-minute discussion-starters by 3 cities

- Are there priority SDG targets common to most cities, and to what extent is it valuable to define that set?
- What approaches have been successful, and what would be helpful, for identifying gaps or lack of progress that cities should address?
- How do Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) help focus city efforts on the SDGs? What are the benefits of collectively pursuing VLRs, and how can they surface challenges as well as areas of progress?

Speakers:

New York City
Helsinki
Durban

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other tools, research, or partners – e.g., scenario planning, trend analysis – would be helpful to use the SDGs as a platform for defining priorities and/or changing business as usual? 	
15:45 – 16:00	<i>Coffee & Tea Break</i>	
16:00 – 17:15	<p><i>Session IV</i></p> <p>Small Group: Aligning, Analyzing, Measuring Idea generation and recommendations Report-out w/plenary discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should the SDGs affect a city’s planning? • How do cities stay true to the principle of outcome-based, time-sensitive SDG targets? • What are the key elements of a relevant research agenda? 	
17:15- 17:30	Reflections and observations on the day	
19:00 – 21:00	Dinner and Interdisciplinary Exchange with Scholars in Residence	
Friday, April 5th		
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast	
9:15 – 11:00	<p><i>Session V</i></p> <p>Taking Action to Achieve the Goals 10-minute discussion-starters by 3 cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are cities integrating the SDGs into budgeting, policymaking, or procurement processes? How have cities demonstrated the importance of that integration with internal and external stakeholders? • What are the different models of organizing internally to enable strong SDG implementation? What is the role of the mayor and other elected officials? • How are cities identifying resources – human, financial –to manage SDG implementation? • What can help institutionalize SDG priorities, plans, and resources so that they outlive electoral cycles and are politically independent? 	<p><u><i>Speakers:</i></u> <i>Malmö</i> <i>Accra</i> <i>Mannheim</i></p>
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Coffee & Tea Break</i>	
11:15 – 13:00	<p><i>Session VI</i></p> <p>Mobilizing Resources: New Avenues for Financing and Partnerships 10-minute discussion-starters from 3 cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What successful models for mobilizing and organizing external partners for common purpose have resulted in significant impact? What roles can universities and philanthropies play? • How can the SDGs provide a platform for alignment across different levels of government (county, state/province, national)? How can they encourage local autonomy in the relationship with national governments? 	<p><u><i>Speakers:</i></u> <i>Madrid</i> <i>Yokohama</i> <i>Orlando</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can being SDG-oriented offer cities the opportunity to tap into new investors and sources of financing? How can a city prove that its SDG efforts strengthen its financial credibility? 	
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch and Break</i>	
14:30 – 15:45	<i>Session VII</i> Telling the Story 10-minute discussion starters from 2 cities	<i>Speakers:</i> <i>Pittsburgh</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be useful for building a narrative that is compelling at the local level? • What are successful models for using the SDGs to improve or expand civic engagement and engage youth leadership? How might tools like 17 Rooms, Solutions Summits be adapted for local level? • To what extent does local SDG implementation benefit from a city communications strategy? Should the SDGs be integrated with political messages advanced by mayors and elected officials? 	
15:45 – 16:00	<i>Coffee and Tea Break</i>	
16:00 – 17:15	<i>Session VIII</i> Creating the Movement Small Groups Discussion and Report Back	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can mayors and local officials maximize the global political opportunities to showcase the importance of local SDG leadership? How do they do so collectively? • How to align with existing city networks and leverage them, both politically and substantively? What are the best opportunities to do so in the near term? • How can we expand reach and scale? How do we maximize efforts being led by Local 2030, UGLC, U20, and others? 	
17:15- 17:30	Reflections and observations on the day	
19:00 – 21:00	Dinner	
Saturday, April 6th		
08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast	
09:15 – 10:45	Towards a Bellagio Consensus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key elements of the SDG value proposition for cities? • What are the key elements of a research agenda that will enable scaling and widespread implementation? • What are the key elements of a political and policy strategy to expand local implementation and deepen local progress? 	
10:45-11:45	Summary & Next Steps	

Participants:

- ❖ Ms. Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner, NYC Mayor's Office of International Affairs
- ❖ Ms. Erin Bromaghim, Director of Olympic and Paralympic Development, LA Mayor's Office of International Affairs
- ❖ Ms. Kaysie Brown, Head of Policy Planning, UN Foundation
- ❖ Mr. Chris Castro, Director of Sustainability & Resilience, City of Orlando
- ❖ Mr. Grant Ervin, Assistant Planning Director & Chief Resilience Officer, City of Pittsburgh
- ❖ Mr. Nicholas Gharbi, Senior Advisor, Madrid City Council
- ❖ Dra. Diana Alarcón González, Chief Advisor and Foreign Affairs Coordinator, Mexico City
- ❖ Ms. Alex Hiniker, Program Director, NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs
- ❖ Mr. Christian Hübel, Head of Strategic Initiatives, Mannheim Mayor's Office
- ❖ Mrs. Sanna-Mari Jäntti, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Helsinki Mayor's Office
- ❖ Mr. Allan Macleod, SDG Research and Engagement Associate, Bristol City Council
- ❖ Ms. Beryl Mphakathi, Deputy City Manager for Human Settlements, Engineering and Transport, Ethekewini Municipality (Durban)
- ❖ Mr. Tony Pipa, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- ❖ Mr. Nirav Patel, Research Analyst, Brookings Institution
- ❖ Ms. Patricia Purcell, Head of Partnerships, UN Global Compact
- ❖ Mr. Moses Quarshie, Business and Investment Advisor, Accra Metropolitan Assembly
- ❖ Ms. Caterina Sarfatti, Head of Inclusive Climate Action, C40 Cities
- ❖ Mr. Makoto Sekiyama, Executive Officer for Global Partnerships & Networking, City of Yokohama
- ❖ Mrs. Lena Wetterskog Sjöstedt, Head of the Office for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda at the City of Malmö
- ❖ Ms. Maria Vittoria Beria, Director of International Affairs, Milan Mayor's Office