

Foreword

almost a half century has passed since the Rockefeller Foundation helped create the field of urban design and theory. One of the Foundation's initial grants in that effort was to the young author, activist, and urbanist Jane Jacobs, whose life's work, especially her classic, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), continues to shape perspectives about cities, planning, and city planning. "In order for a society to flourish," Jacobs wrote all those years ago, "there must be a flourishing city at its core." This bedrock recognition informs and inspires the Rockefeller Foundation's enduring commitment to and investment in "flourishing cities."

Today that commitment is more important than ever because the world's population is moving to and growing in cities at an astonishing rate. One of every ten people lived in urban areas a century ago. This year, for the first time, a majority of people live in cities. By 2050, the United Nations projects, almost three-quarters of the world's population will call urban areas home. Most of this growth is centered in the developing countries of the Global South. In these emerging economies, nearly three of every five people will live in urban areas by 2030.

These are not cities with postcard skylines. Accelerating, unplanned urban growth multiplies populations of slum dwellers, overburdens housing, transportation, and infrastructure systems, and leaves hundreds of millions vulnerable to new environmental and health threats. In fact, UN-HABITAT projects that within three decades, one of every three human beings will live in near total squalor — lacking sanitation and clean water, fueling the spread of disease, and possibly igniting the next global pandemic.

To help shape our shared response, the Foundation convened the Global Urban Summit at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in July 2007. This month-long colloquy featured a diverse ensemble of voices from around the world: government officials, finance experts, urban thinkers, and other leaders from every walk of life. It explored new approaches to solving 21st century urban challenges. It identified the gaps in our knowledge and fashioned an agenda to fill

dynamism

them.

For our part, the Foundation is already supporting substantial work to address new urban vulnerabilities. In the United States, we are helping to frame smarter, more sustainable 21st century transportation policies and to elevate the stature of transportation and infrastructure challenges on the national agenda. Efforts to strengthen urban planning, financing, and governance in the Global South will soon follow.

This volume emerges from the seminal Rockefeller Foundation Global Urban Summit and in the proud tradition of Jane Jacobs and urbanism, the field she pioneered and personified. It shares the valued perspectives of our partners: the Center for Sustainable Urban Development at Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania Institute for Urban Research, Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, and Regional Plan Association, among others. It supplies crucial, intellectual bricks and mortar with which more communities in more places can build sustainable futures. And it reflects the Rockefeller Foundation's continuing commitment to help more societies "flourish" by strengthening the cities — and the lives of citizens — at their core.

Judith Rodin
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