

# PREFACE

Half the world's population now lives in cities. By 2030, 60% of the world will reside in urban areas and by 2050, the proportion is likely to reach 75%. Much of the urban growth will come from cities in Asia, especially China and India. Of the projected 5.3 billion urban population in the developing world in 2050, Asia will host some 63% or 3.3 billion urban dwellers.

Although much of the attention has been focused on mega-cities with populations of 10 million or more, smaller cities with populations between 1 and 5 million are expected to increase in number exponentially. By 2015, the world can expect 59 such cities in Africa, 65 in Latin America and 253 throughout Asia.

Every city has unique characteristics, but the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation are universal. The basic needs of water, energy and food must be met in a way that is reliable, accessible and timely. The nexus between water, energy and food will determine whether cities can sustain their growing populations and economic activities into the future.

With growing concerns over volatile energy prices, environmental sustainability and the impact of climate change, cities must find new ways to secure their energy, reduce their carbon footprint, and create communities that are liveable and sustainable. At the Centre for Liveable Cities, we believe that these challenges require us to take a “systems” approach, where we seek to understand the interdependencies and interrelationships between the built environment and the communities.

Cities are essentially complex ecosystems. Infrastructure, economic and social policies must go hand-in-hand to address the many issues related to split incentives for energy efficiency, failure of the global commons; negative externalities, such as pollution and environmental degradation; and the inefficient functioning of markets and price signals. Tackling these challenges will require policy makers, urban planners, economists, engineers and scientists, among others, coming together to develop a coherent response. Those looking for a “magic bullet” will be disappointed to know that there is no such simple solution.

Good governance and sound public policies remain the most important aspects of the management of cities. Cities often confront difficult choices,

trade-offs and dilemmas. Leaders of their respective communities have an important role to play in setting the right policy agendas and framing these choices in a way that citizens can make well-informed decisions for the benefit of the whole community.

Therefore, it is crucial for cities to skillfully manage the basic challenges and their dependencies to help shape the development of cities. *Developing Living Cities* is a timely effort to bring together the latest thinking on the many contemporary issues confronting cities. I commend the authors in taking the initiative to help decision makers better understand the issues and identify more holistic and practical solutions.

The CLC is pleased to co-produce this book which is in line with its objectives — to distil Singapore’s expertise in urban management and to promote greater cooperation among cities and exchange of best practices. I hope the contents will be found useful by all those who are charged with planning liveable cities of the present and future.

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