



REFRAME

Aligning Africa's Urban Agenda



A conversation series in five parts

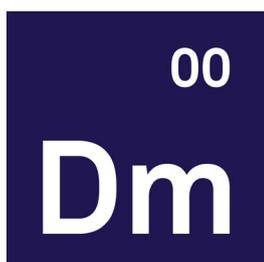
23 September | 29 September | 7 October | 14 October | 21 October

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AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CITIES
urbanism from an african perspective

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**GOTHENBURG CENTRE FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (GMV)**



CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY | UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG





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Concept

Covid-19 manifests most intensely in cities. As the pandemic unfolds, pre-existing urban problems – especially in cities of the global South – are rendered in stark relief e.g. the chronic lack of access to basic services such as water and sanitation, the inadequacy of primary healthcare infrastructure, and most worryingly, the precarity of livelihoods of urban majorities embedded in informal economic circuits. The mobilisation of public and societal resources represents an opportunity to take a longer view and refocus efforts to actively promote sustainable urbanism as an essential development strategy for African cities and countries.

Against this backdrop the African Centre for Cities and partners presents the REFRAME platform to promote informed debate and proposition on how best we can programmatically advance sustainable and inclusive African cities. This propositional conversation series seeks to set an agenda and provide a set of coordinates for multilateral partners, knowledge institutions, social movements, governments, networks and concerned business to gravitate around. The intention is to equip all stakeholders to influence policy formulation processes at a pan-African scale, between Africa and Europe, US and Asia, at national and local levels. It seeks to make plain the urban conditions it will take to achieve the lofty and urgent goals of Agenda 2063, the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.

While we note that significant policy progress has been made since a decade ago, reflected most clearly in the adoption of National Urban Policies/Plans(NUP) in at least 21 African countries, the quality and focus of these NUPs leave a lot to be desired and we have seen very limited progress on the democratic decentralisation front. Furthermore, the African Union is falling short of its mandate to persuade member states to ratify the *African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local governance and Local Development*. Even though the Charter was formally adopted in 2014, only six African states have ratified to date. This is simply scandalous.

The REFRAME conversations serves as a critical resource for civil society and development institutions to forge common purpose on how best to engage political leaders in order to achieve dramatic policy change in the short and medium-term.

Thus, the objectives of REFRAME that takes place online once a week for a month are:

- Consolidate the existing political commitment to sustainable urbanisation made by African governments;
- Highlighting the lack of progress in terms of effective institutionalisation and implementation;
- Apply pressure for more vigorous action to prioritize an inclusive, participatory and low-carbon urban development approach despite legal and political constraints;
- Showcase emergent examples of innovative African practices that should be adapted by African governments and partners;
- Consider an effective civil society-based monitoring mechanism to hold African governments to account, whilst promoting innovation and risk-taking.

Curatorial approach

REFRAME is designed to bring together a relatively small number of African leaders from diverse sectors who have practice-based views on how we can radically improve the quality of urban policy and action. These leaders come from the worlds of public policy, private initiative, academia, think tanks, social movements, development finance institutions, professional associations, the arts and innovation hubs.

To ensure that deliberations will not simply be panels where participants offer precooked ideas to a converted audience, attendees are offered a debate primer at the outset of the series and provocations for each of the sessions. We expect participants will offer considered responses to the primer grounded in current realities but also open to the potential of radical innovation, without being naïve about the limiting effects of political economy considerations.

At the core of the primer is a desire to foreground the importance of sustainable urbanism and work, especially in light of the youthful demographic in most cities and extreme climate vulnerability. It explores how the necessary transition towards more sustainable and resilient urban flows and spatial forms can best connect with new employment opportunities and the promotion of vibrant and inclusive cultural practices.

REFRAME will run over five weeks from 23 September to 21 October 2020. Given the constraints on travel and face-to-face gatherings, the discussions are hosted virtually via Zoom and live streamed to YouTube.

The series is free of charge.

Registration

[REGISTER HERE](#)

You will receive a confirmation email with the option to add the series of events to your calendar.

The primer for the REFRAME series will be sent out before the event commences on 23 September 2020.

Reading resources

National Urban Policies: Linking Global Agendas with Local Specificities

- *Embedding National Urban Policies in Africa* - Edgar Pieterse
- *National and Local Approaches Towards the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Argentina* - Gabriel Lanfranchi

Developing Prosperous and Inclusive Cities in Africa - National Urban Policies to the Rescue?

- Anton Cartwright, Ian Palmer, Anna Taylor, Edgar Pieterse, Susan Parnell, and Sarah Colenbrander

Programme

Conversation 1

REFRAME: African Cities and Agenda 2063

Edgar Pieterse | Carlos Lopes | Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE

23 September 2020

1:00 to 2:30pm CAT

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Conversation 2

REFRAME: Political Economy of Urban Transformation

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi | Hastings Chikoko | Astrid Haas |

Taibat Lawanson

29 September 2020

2:00 to 3:30pm CAT

Conversation 3

REFRAME: Sustainable Infrastructure as the key to success

Edlam Yemeru | Claude Borna | Lesley Ndlovu | Stefan Atchia

7 October 2020

2:00 to 4:00pm CAT

Conversation 4

REFRAME: Civic power

Michael Uwemedimo | Joy Mboya | Mandisa Dyantyi |

Gaétan Siew

14 October 2020

2:00 to 4:00pm CAT

Conversation 5

REFRAME: Innovative Regulation is Transformative Politics

Indy Johar | Mark Swilling | Oumar Sylla | Sue Parnell

21 October 2020

2:00 to 4:00pm CAT

Programme

23 September | 29 September | 7 October | 14 October | 21 October

Conversation 1 | African Cities and Agenda 2063

23 September 2020

1:00 to 2:30pm CAT

Welcome & introduction to Reframe Series: Edgar Pieterse (Director, African Centre for Cities)

Why African cities hold the key to the success of Agenda 2063: Carlos Lopes (Professor in the Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town)

Respondent: Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE (Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone)

Structured Q & A

Objectives:

- To establish at a high level why sustainable and inclusive urbanisation matters for Africa's macro development in the context of various international and African agreements.
- To put forward propositions on how the negative political economy dynamics can be confronted and addressed.

Conversation 2 | Political Economy of Urban Transformation

29 September 2020

2:00 to 3:30pm CAT

Welcome & introduction: Edgar Pieterse (Director, African Centre for Cities)

Panel:

- Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi (Secretary General UCLG Africa)
- Hastings Chikoko (C40 Africa Director)
- Astrid Haas (Policy Director, International Growth Centre)
- Taibat Lawanson (Professor, University of Lagos)

Structured Q & A

Objectives:

- To remind ourselves of the disjuncture between policy commitments and implementation.
- To identify the reasons why policy implementation so often does not happen despite formal rhetoric.
- Explore more effective solutions.

Programme

Conversation 3 | Sustainable Infrastructure is the key to success

7 October 2020

2:00 to 4:00pm CAT

Welcome & introduction: Edgar Pieterse (Director, African Centre for Cities)

Panel:

- Edlam Yemeru (Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)
- Claude Borna (Sèmè City, Conakry, Benin)
- Lesley Ndlovu (Chief Executive Officer, African Risk Capacity Limited)
- Stefan Atchia (Officer in Charge of Urban Development Division Infrastructure & Urban Development Department, African Development Bank)

Structured Q & A

Objectives:

- To underscore that unless routine infrastructure investments are redefined and channeled into infrastructure packages that are environmentally sound, labour intensive and able to blend formal and informal systems, they won't work in the African context.
- To demonstrate that significant progress that is already being made in advancing these alternative infrastructure approaches, and how the real-world potential has hardly been tapped.
- To challenge infrastructure investors to rethink their viability and risk criteria so that new kinds of projects can become feasible.

Conversation 4 | Civic Power

14 October 2020

2:00 to 4:00pm CAT

Welcome & setting the scene: Edgar Pieterse (Director, African Centre for Cities)

Response Panel:

- Community mapping, power & culture: Michael Uwemedimo (CMAP, Port Harcourt, Nigeria)
- Art and civic webbing, Joy Mboya, (GoDown Arts Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya)
- Social movement perspective: Mandisa Dyantyi (Director, Social Justice Coalition, Cape Town, South Africa)
- Design and social power: Gaétan Siew, (Port Louis Development Initiative and Special Envoy for UN Habitat, Mauritius)

Q & A

Objectives:

- To demonstrate the full potential of understanding and working with the agency and power of ordinary urban dwellers who effectively build their own cities.
- To explore the potential of digital platforms to engage collective action whilst stimulating greater accountability and transparency from the state.
- To explicate the "soft" dimensions of pursuing hybrid infrastructure and investment approaches in the African context.

Programme

Conversation 5 | Innovative Regulation is Transformative Politics

21 October 2020

2:00 to 4:00pm CAT

Indy Johar (Dark Matter Labs), global expert on alternative thinking on regulation, will set the stage by presenting global trends in relation to potential for African cities.

Response Panel:

- Mark Swilling (Development Bank of Southern Africa)
- Oumar Sylla (UN Habitat)
- Sue Parnell (PEAK-Urban)

Closing statements by: Representatives from SIDA & The Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft.

Objectives:

- To sketch a picture of the kinds of governance and regulatory innovations that will have to be developed to implement the ideas discussed in the previous sessions.
- To engage pan-African development institutions with the mandate to strengthen urban governance and democratic decentralisation on their priorities and plans.

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Speakers



Edgar Pieterse | Director, African Centre for Cities | South African Research Chair in Urban Policy

An expert on African urbanisation, Edgar Pieterse, knows what radical and rapid urban change means for a city, a country and a continent. He is deeply fascinated by the drama of cities everywhere and at different moments in time, including the future, the past and science fiction invocations. Simultaneously, he endeavours to remain grounded in the tough and messy realities of cities—invariably always on the move—working with materialist and aesthetic optics. As such he extends himself in research and teaching theoretical and applied concerns.

He is currently engaged in several interrelated research topics: Radical Social Economies; Sustainable Infrastructure; Adaptive Urban Governance; Speculative Urban Experiments; Urban Innovation Systems as well as Urban Pedagogy and Southern Urbanisms.

In his teaching practice he is currently deeply immersed in the curriculum development of a new Profession Masters degree in the Practice of Sustainable Urbanism set to launch later this year, as well as teaching into the Urban Theory module of the MPhil Southern Urbanism programme.

In his latest book *New Urban Worlds: Inhabiting Dissonant Times*, co-authored with longstanding collaborator AbdouMaliq Simone, explores the emerging epicentres of global urbanisation through the detail of people's lives. The authors argue, we need adequate concepts and practices to grasp the composition and intricacy of these shifting efforts to make visible new political possibilities for action and social justice in cities across Asia and Africa.



Carlos Lopes | Professor in the Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town

Honorary Professor at Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, Faculty of Commerce, University of Cape Town. Visiting Professor at Sciences Po, Paris, and Associate Fellow at Chatham House, London. 2017 Fellow at Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford.

Has been associated with a number of high level boards, including the Global Commission for Economy and Climate, Global Commission for the Future of Work, Global Commission on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation, Kofi Annan Foundation. Is a current member of the boards of Jakaya Kikwete Foundation, Hailemariam and Roman Foundation, the Graça Machel Trust, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, the Global Advisory Board of the African Leadership Institute, Waterloo University International Advisory Board, Blockchain Charity Foundation, African Center for Cities Advisory Board, as well as Honorary Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences and Lifetime Member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences.

Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Cândido Mendes University, Brazil, Hawassa University, Ethiopia and the Polytechnic University of Mozambique.

Past chair of the Lisbon University Institute (2009 to 2017). Past head of several institutions at the United Nations, including the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UN System Staff College and UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa, (2012-2016).

Has occupied prominent positions such as UN Assistant Secretary-General and Political Director for Secretary-General Kofi Annan and he is currently the African Union High Representative for Partnerships with Europe and a member of the African Union Reform Team led by President Paul Kagame.

Speakers



Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer OBE | Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer OBE was sworn in as Mayor of Freetown on May 2018 with a commitment to transform the city using an inclusive, data-driven approach to address challenges in the city. The 3-year *Transform Freetown* plan details 19 concrete targets across 11 sectors and covers issues ranging from tackling environmental degradation to facilitating the creation of jobs in the tourism sector. She is a finance professional with over 25 years of private sector experience in strategic planning, risk management consulting and project management.

Her public sector engagement began with her work during the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic and her subsequent role as Delivery Team Lead for the second phase of a multi-stakeholder programme to drive socio-economic recovery in Sierra Leone post Ebola. Mayor Aki-Sawyer is a Chartered Accountant and holds an MSc in Politics of the World Economy from the London School of Economics and a BSc Hons in Economics from Fourah Bay College.



Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi | Secretary General of the United Cities and Local Governments Association

Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi is Secretary-General of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa - UCLGA, Morocco. Elong Mbassi has held his current position since 2007 coordinating actions in decentralisation, support to Local Governments services supply and infrastructure management. From March 1992 to March 2007, he was Secretary-General of the Municipal Development Partnership, West and Central Africa Office based in Cotonou (Benin Republic). He was Secretary-General of the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC), Geneva and from 1981-1991, he was CEO of the first Urban Project co-funded by the World Bank in Cameroon. He was Special Adviser to the President of the Planning and Cooperation Agency (Agence Coopération et Aménagement), a Paris-based French public company aimed at supporting developing countries in urbanization and territorial development.



Hastings Chikoko | Regional Director for Africa at C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

Hastings Chikoko is the Regional Director for Africa at C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. He serves on the Advisory Board of African Centre for Cities and the Global Supervisory Council/Board of Wetlands International. He is currently a member of the Institute of Business Advisors - Southern Africa (IBASA). With a postgraduate degree in Cities from the London School of Economics (LSE), his work with local governments started at the City of Blantyre and later at the Ministry of Local Government in Malawi. Prior to joining C40, Chikoko had a long career with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa and Switzerland; including being the Regional Director (ad Interim) for East and Southern Africa and Head of IUCN in South Africa. He has also been one of the IDRC African Mentors for policy think-tanks in Africa, a member of the Regional Technical Committee for the Global Water Partnership; a Board Member for Africa World Heritage Fund, and Advisory Board Member for the Responsible Business Forum. Besides an MSc in Cities from LSE, he also holds an MSc in Strategic Management (University of Derby, UK), Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Diplomacy - specialising in Green Economy (University of Geneva, Switzerland) and a BSc in Economics (University of Malawi).

Speakers



Astrid Haas | Policy Director, International Growth Centre (IGC)

Astrid Haas is the Policy Director of the IGC. She was previously the Senior Country Economist for Cities and Head of the Cities that Work Initiative at the IGC. Her current research specialises in the area of municipal and infrastructure finance. She works with various mayors, city managers and their teams in Africa and Asia to support research and evidence-based policy reform. In this capacity, Astrid has been invited to provide a peer review of the new Municipal Law of Afghanistan by the Acting Mayor of Kabul, to co-chair the Hargeisa municipal finance reform task force by the Minister of Interior of Somaliland as well as helping set up a research programme within the Kampala Capital City Authority.

Prior to joining the IGC, she worked for Innovations for Poverty Action as well as for Evidence Action, which included work in Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi. Haas has also worked as an analyst on a large-scale agriculture project in South Sudan and as an Economist in the Ministry of East African Community in Kenya. She holds an MA in International Economics and International Development from Johns Hopkins University (in Italy and the USA). In 2016, she was nominated by the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town as one of Africa's Young Leaders.



Taibat Lawanson | Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Lagos, Nigeria

Taibat Lawanson is a Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Lagos, Nigeria where she leads the Pro-Poor Development research cluster, and serves as acting director of the Centre for Housing and Sustainable Development. She holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning from the Federal University of Technology, Akure. Over the last eighteen years, she has taught courses and conducted research on urban informality, urban management, pro-poor development, governance and environmental justice. She has authored over 50 articles, and supervised more than 30 post-graduate dissertations. She is a 2013 World Social Science Fellow, 2016 Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio fellow, and 2017 DAAD visiting professor to the Habitat Unit, Technical University, Berlin.



Edlam Yemeru | Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Edlam Abera Yemeru is currently the Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section at UNECA. In this capacity, she leads the delivery of technical assistance to African member States in support of policies and strategies to leverage the potential of urbanization for economic diversification and inclusive growth. This involves strengthening linkages between spatial planning and economic, national and sector policy priorities and investments, including through long-term program and project prioritisation. A particular focus of this work aims to better connect urban and industrial policies in Africa. Previously, she led a number of normative and operational programs to promote sustainable urbanization at UN-Habitat, where she also co-authored several editions of the Global Report on Human Settlements. Edlam holds an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge and a PhD in Human Geography from the University of London.



Claude Borna | Director, Sèmè City Development Agency

Claude Borna joined the Presidency of Benin in 2016, with the task of conceiving and establishing the international city of innovation and knowledge, a project at the center of the Revealing Benin investment and development program. A native of Benin, Borna's studies and career have mostly been in an international setting, with a specialization in business strategy and marketing. She is a graduate of University of California, Los Angeles and of McGill University, and has held different positions in such major corporate groups as Deloitte, Amazon, and Sony Pictures, which she left in 2014 after having established a European department for innovation and strategic planning, and where she was Senior Vice President for Global Customer and Worldwide Commercial Strategy.

Drawn to the world of entrepreneurship, she then made contributions to start-up projects before returning to Benin to place her expertise in innovation, incubation, and marketing in the service of the country's development.

Speakers



Stefan Atchia | Officer in Charge of Urban Development Division Infrastructure & Urban Development Department, African Development Bank

Stefan Atchia has over 20 years of experience in urban development, transport and infrastructure policies. He has started his career as technical advisor to the Government of Mauritius in the field of Transportation (engineering, planning and capacity building), which included eight years at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Transport and two years at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Currently he holds the position of Officer in Charge of Urban Development Division Infrastructure & Urban Development Department at the African Development Bank (AfDB). The AfDB Urban Division is dedicated to drive the Bank's vision for African Cities including urban planning, policy and strategy, urban infrastructure services municipal finance development, municipal institutional reforms and governance and its future prospective areas of intervention. Before taking up this position he was responsible for Transport Policy and Planning at Urban Development Division at AfDB. He has contributed to projects on a global scale with detailed input into the end-to-end lifecycle from strategic planning, analysis, and road mapping, through to execution, and support.



Lesley Ndlovu | Chief Executive Officer, African Risk Capacity Limited (ARC Ltd)

Lesley Ndlovu is currently the Chief Executive Officer of ARC Ltd. He was the former CEO of AXA Africa Specialty Risks, a Lloyd's of London insurance syndicate and has extensive international experience spanning 14 years across corporate finance, audit, tax advisory, insurance and investment management sectors in several countries including Bermuda, Singapore, France and the United Kingdom.

Ndlovu is a graduate of the University of Oxford in England and at the Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires (INSEAD) in France. He is a CFA charter holder, a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England & Wales and a member of the Institute of Directors.



Michael Uwemedimo | Co-founder and Director, Collanorative Media Advocay Platform (CMAP), Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Based in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Uwemedimo is co-founder and director of CMAP and Senior Visiting Research Fellow at King's College London. As a founding member of the filmmaking collaboration, Vision Machine, and a producer of the Academy Award-nominated, BAFTA-winning documentary, *The Act of Killing*, he has been developing innovative approaches to documentary practice as a means of enabling critical reflection on histories of political violence and challenges to official impunity. As project director of the Human City Project, a community-driven media, architecture, planning and human rights initiative in Nigeria, he is exploring design processes through which violently marginalised urban communities might gain a greater measure of control over their representation and the shaping of their cities. He has curated major programmes at the National Film Theatre, Tate Modern, Architecture Association and Institute for Contemporary Art, London; sat on international film festival juries; and presented his research and work internationally.

Speakers



Joy Mboya | Executive Director, GoDown Arts Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya

Mboya, the executive director of the GoDown Arts Centre, the leading nonprofit multidisciplinary arts facility in Nairobi, Kenya. She is a performer and cultural activist. Educated as an architect, she has led the Centre's development as a site for artistic experimentation, cross-sector partnerships and creative collaboration. An outspoken advocate for artists, she has spearheaded a variety of ambitious programs, including Kenya Burning (2008) and the Nairobi-wide festival Nai Ni Who, and developed programs showcasing artists' work within the Centre's facility and around the city. Mboya has served on the Governing Council of the Kenya Cultural Centre, which oversees the Kenya National Theatre, she was a member of the Steering Committee for the ARTerial Network, a pan-African consortium for the cultural sector, and is currently trustee of Gaara Dance Foundation. Her work has been recognised by several awards: she received the Head of State Commendation Medal for her contributions to the development of Kenya's creative economy in 2009, and was awarded the Order of the Golden Warrior State Commendation in 2013 for her outstanding leadership in the field.



Mandisa Dyantyi | Director, Social Justice Coalition, Cape Town, South Africa

Mandisa Dyantyi is the Director of the Social Justice Coalition – a membership-based social movement made up of 17 branches across Khayelitsha, Kraaifontein, Crossroads, and Gugulethu in Cape Town. Dyantyi previously held the position of Deputy General Secretary and has been working in the social justice space for the past nine years. She's worked for organisations such as the Open Society Foundation, The Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office and the Economic Justice Network. Dyantyi holds a Master's in Political Studies from the University of the Western Cape. She has interests social justice and political education. She is passionate about fighting inequality in all its forms especially racial and gender inequalities and rights of women and Gender Non Conforming people.



Gaétan Siew | Chairman, Port Louis Development Initiative, Mauritius | Special Envoy of Republic of Mauritius to UN-Habitat

Past President of the International Union of Architects, and Past Secretary General of the African Union of Architects. Gaetan Siew is an avid world traveller, experiencing over 500 cities across 105 countries including most of Africa. For his contributions to the Architectural and Urban world, he was awarded several honorary membership and fellowships, and elevated to the rank of Grand Officer of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean by the Government of Mauritius, and elevated to the ranks of Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite, and de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Republic

Past Board Director of Futures Cities UK since July 2013, Past Chairperson of State Land Development Company (Smart Mauritius), Past Chairman of Construction Industry Board, and current chairperson of the Port Louis Development Initiative and Special Envoy for UN Habitat, Siew advocates for sustainable approaches towards urbanism aimed to socially and economically regenerate urban fabrics.



Indy Johar | Founder, Dark Matter Labs

Indy Johar is an architect, co-founder of 00 (project00.cc) and most recently Dark Matter Labs as well as a Studio Master at AA. Johar, on behalf of 00, has co-founded multiple social ventures from Impact Hub Westminster to Impact Hub Birmingham, along with working with large global multinationals & institutions to support their transition to a positive Systems Economy. He has also co-led research projects such as The Compendium for the Civic Economy, whilst supporting several 00 explorations/experiments including the wikihouse.cc, opendesk.cc. Indy is a non-executive director of WikiHouse Foundation & RIBA Trustee and Advisor to Mayor of London on Good Growth.

Most recently he has founded Dark Matter Labs – a field laboratory focused on radically redesigning the bureaucratic and institutional infrastructure of our cities, regions and towns for a more democratic, distributed great transition. Dark Matter Labs work with institutions around the world, from UNDP (Global), McConnell (Canada), TFL, GLA (London) to Bloxhub (Copenhagen). He has taught, lectured at various institutions from the University of Bath, TU-Berlin; Architectural Association, University College London, Princeton, Harvard, MIT and New School.

Speakers



Mark Swilling |

Mark Swilling is the Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Development in the School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University. He is also the Co-Director of the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (CST), member of the International Resource Panel (since 2007), fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, member of the Board of the Development Bank of Southern Africa since 2014 and Chairperson of the Board from January 2019 – September 2019, after which he was elected Deputy Chairperson of the Board. He also heads up the sustainable development degree programmes at the University of Stellenbosch, hosted in partnership at the Sustainability Institute. Since 2016 he's been Visiting Professor at Utrecht University (The Netherlands) and Sheffield University (UK). In 2018 he was the Edward P. Bass Distinguished Environmental Scholar at the Yale Institute for Biospheric Studies (YIBS), with a residency at Yale from March to October 2018 based in the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. In 2019 he was appointed by the South African Government to the Reference Group of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy of South Africa.



Oumar Sylla | Acting Director of the Regional Office for Africa, UN Habitat

Since January 2020 Oumar Sylla has been acting as Director for the Regional Office for Africa in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat). Before this, he was Branch Coordinator, Urban Legislation, Land and Governance in UN Habitat and, from September 2015, Head of UN Habitat's Land and GLTN Unit. Prior to joining the Land and GLTN Unit, Sylla served as a Senior Advisor in UN Habitat's Regional Office for Africa and focal point to support urban policies development and sustainable urbanisation in francophone countries. From 2009 to 2014, he was Chief Technical Advisor for UN Habitat's Land Programme in DR Congo and he also has experience with the European Union framework, which he gained as a Land Policy Advisor in South Sudan and Burkina Faso (2006-2008). From 1999 to 2005 he was a Research Fellow in the Laboratory of Legal Anthropology in Paris 1 Sorbonne, mainly working on land and decentralisation policies in West Africa. In Senegal, he worked as a junior researcher within the ILRI/ISRA institutional cooperation framework (1998-1999) dealing with land and natural resources.



Susan Parnell | Global Challenges Research Professor in the School of Geography at the University of Bristol, UK

Susan Parnell is a Global Challenges Research Professor in the School of Geography at the University of Bristol and Emeritus Professor at the African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town.

She has held previous academic positions at Wits University and the University of London (SOAS). She was a Leverhulme Visiting Professor at UCL in 2011/2, Emeka Anyaoku Visiting Chair University College London in 2014/15 and Visiting Professor at LSE Cities in 2017/18.

She has been actively involved in local, national and global urban policy debates around the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and is an advocate for better science policy engagement on cities.

She is the author of numerous peer-reviewed publications that document how cities, past and present, respond to policy change. Her most recent books include the co-authored *Building a Capable State: Post Apartheid Service Delivery* (Zed, 2017) and the co-edited *The Urban Planet* (Cambridge, 2018).

Parnell is currently on the Board of the International Institute for environment and Development (IIED) and the ACC and had previously served on several NGO structures.



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