



German Advisory Council on Global Change

Conference The Transformative Power of Cities

Berlin, 29 June 2017

Programme



German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU)

The German Federal Government set up the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) as an independent, scientific advisory body in 1992 in the run-up to the Rio Earth Summit. Its main responsibilities are to analyse and report on global environmental and development problems, issue early warnings of new problem areas, prepare recommendations for action and research, and raise public awareness of global change issues.

The Transformative Power of Cities

It will be decided in cities whether the transformation towards sustainability succeeds worldwide or not. Urban areas are playing a decisive role in this 'century of the cities': cities and their populations are thus drivers of global environmental change, while at the same time being affected by it. The progress of the transformation towards sustainability will depend substantially on the decisions that will be taken in cities over the next few years and decades. We need a paradigm shift away from incremental approaches that are essentially driven by short-term requirements, towards transformative changes with a strategic, long-term view of humanity's natural life-support systems and the creation of a form of urbanity that promotes human quality of life.

In 2016, the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) published a report entitled 'Unlocking the transformative power of cities', revealing prospects and what is needed for this paradigm shift in urban development. The WBGU describes constraints within which cities' development pathways towards a people-oriented form of urbanization should be realized, and which, if breached, would put sustainable development at risk. In this regard, all cities and urban societies should pursue development pathways that abide by the planetary guardrails, and they should ensure that universal minimum standards on substantive, political and economic inclusion are adhered to. Furthermore, they should promote '*Eigenart*': i. e. cities should create the necessary conditions for self-efficiency, quality of life and local identity, and all decision making should take into account the socio-cultural and spatial diversity of cities.

Taking a global perspective and a multi-sectoral (systemic) and transdisciplinary approach on urbanization, the conference will give special focus to two main issues for future urban development: the role of real-estate markets within the global financial system, and the influence of the increasing digitization of cities and urban living environments.

Time and venue

29 June 2017, 13.00 – 21.00

silent green Kulturquartier, Gerichtstraße 35, 13347 Berlin

12.00 **Registration**

13.00 **Welcome note**

Sabine Schlacke, Chair, WBGU, Institute for Environmental Law and Planning Law at the University of Münster

Keynote

Global Urbanisation and the Transformation towards Sustainability

Dirk Messner, Chair, WBGU, German Development Institute – DIE

Keynote

Germany's Responsibility for Sustainable Global Urbanisation

Barbara Hendricks, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Federal Republic of Germany

14.00 **Thematic session 1**

Do Real Estate Markets Lead to Unjust Cities?

Saskia Sassen, Columbia University - KEYNOTE

Stephan Bone-Winkel, Beos AG, IREBS International Real Estate Business School, University of Regensburg

Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur for Housing and Human Rights – video message

Joseph Schechla, HIC-Housing and Land Rights Network

Moderator: *Karen Pittel*, WBGU, Ifo Center for Energy, Climate and Exhaustible Resources

Coffee break

16.30

Keynote

Cities as Complex, Self-organizing Systems

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, WBGU, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

17.00

Thematic session 2

Digital Cities – Potential or Risk for Sustainable Development?

Carlo Ratti, Carlo Ratti Associati, SENSEable City Lab, MIT
Shivani Chaudhry, Habitat International Coalition – South Asia Program
Andreas Knie, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Moderator: *Ina Schieferdecker*, WBGU, Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems FOKUS

Conclusions

Sabine Schlacke, Chair, WBGU

19.00

Reception

MARS KÜCHE @ BAR will serve food and drinks. The reception will take place in the garden, weather permitting.

Musical background will be provided by *Andreas Wirth-Trio* with easily swinging modern New York Jazz.

Thematic Sessions

1. Do Real Estate Markets Lead to Unjust Cities?

The first panel will discuss the major implications of a globalized financial system for real-estate markets and urban development. For two decades, real estate in general and housing in particular have been at the centre of a historic structural shift in global finance. It is believed, for example, that about 60–70% of banking business transactions in industrialized countries today are related to land and real-estate investment. This impact of global financial markets effects cities in different ways. On the one hand, they are regarded as drivers of economic growth by channelling investment to cities. On the other, the assumption that markets are the most rational means of resource distribution for regulating the allocation of urban land and housing has led to public policies that have abandoned people-oriented city planning and the idea of land and housing as a social good. Financialized housing markets respond to the preferences of global investors rather than to the needs of the communities. It is also argued that the dominant impact of wealth and private investment has often created and perpetuated spatial segregation and inequality in cities; housing disconnects from its social function and becomes only a commodity. Today, residents are sometimes confronted with the fact that, as a result of a wide range of financial products, their homes – and even

their neighbourhoods – are owned by bondholders, public stockholders, multibillion dollar funds or even nameless shell companies. It is then difficult to know who might be accountable when it comes to the rights of the tenants. Moreover, in many cities an increasing number of investor-owned homes are left empty due to real-estate speculation. In developing countries and emerging economies, these developments have particularly profound consequences for those in need of adequate housing. The urban poor are pushed out into suburbs where their time and money is further taxed by longer commutes, more expensive transportation and/or insecure tenure.

The interconnections between the global financial system and private investors in the development of cities and urban societies are enormously complex. So far, responses have tended to be very sporadic and reactive with little impact on access to housing for all and sustainable urban development.

However, improvements can probably not be tackled by any single ‘big bang’ solution on its own. Rather, for the transformation of cities towards sustainability the role of real-estate markets needs to be discussed and broader systemic issues regarding the financialization and commodification of housing urgently addressed.

2. Digital Cities – Potential or Risk for Sustainable Development?

The second panel will discuss the growing digitization of cities. The spread of information and communication technologies, which has accelerated since the beginning of the 21st century, is one of the most important global trends. There is no doubt that the emerging 'digital age' will have a huge impact on the way cities and city dwellers' quality of life will develop. Whether all forms of urban digitization will contribute to people-oriented and sustainable urban development is, however, controversial.

Up to now, the 'smart city' rhetoric often promises an urban utopia in which the urban citizen enjoys the full range of technological support: self-driving electric cars take you to the next train station, drop you there and then drive themselves off to park and recharge. A person who has a heart attack can be rescued by sending a drone equipped with a defibrillator long before an ambulance arrives. Multi-functional street lighting switches on only when a person or a car is passing by; it can be simultaneously used for recharging electric cars and provides wireless internet access. Cities will be built using architecture that senses and responds.

Other people are critical as to whether the digital city will be able to solve fundamental problems of urban life, such as access to adequate and

affordable housing, a functioning public transport system, avoidance of air pollution, or access to open public or green spaces. Some argue that smart cities, especially in developing countries and emerging economies, might become enclaves that keep out the poor; even public funds are being spent on gated 'privatopias' instead of on low-cost housing and basic services. In this sense, digitization can aggravate the urban divide. Furthermore, issues such as privacy, data governance and security are often also ignored by governments and civil society.

Although we don't know where the digital future will take humanity, we urgently need to discuss how we can steer the digitization of cities in a way that leaves no one behind and supports the transformation towards sustainability.

List of Speakers

Sabine Schlacke

Sabine Schlacke is Professor of public law and executive director of the Institute for Environmental Law and Planning Law, University of Münster since 2013. Judge at the Constitutional Court of Bremen since 2011. 2008–2013 Professor of Public Law, specializing on German, European and International Environmental and Administrative Law, and executive director of the Research Centre for European Environmental Law, Bremen University. WBGU Member since 2008, since 2016 WBGU Chair.



Dirk Messner

Dirk Messner is Director of the German Development Institute (DIE), Bonn since 2004 and Co-Director of the Center for Advanced Studies on Global Cooperation Research, University of Duisburg-Essen since 2012. He teaches political science at the University of Duisburg-Essen; Professor for International Political Economy at the University of Munich (2003). WBGU Member since 2004, Chair since 2009.



Federal Minister Barbara Hendricks

Barbara Hendricks is Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. She holds a doctorate in history and has been a Member of the German Bundestag since 1994. Barbara Hendricks was a Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Finance from 1998 to 2007.



Saskia Sassen

Saskia Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology and Member, The Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University. Her latest book is 'Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy' (Harvard University Press 2014). She is the recipient of diverse awards, including multiple doctor honoris causa, the Principe de Asturias 2013 Prize in the Social Sciences, and made a Foreign Member of the Royal Academy of the Sciences of Netherland.



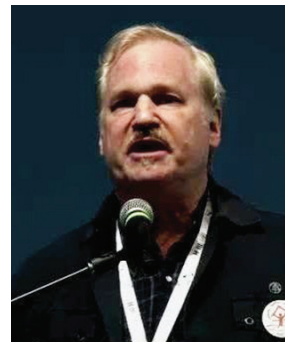
Stephan Bone-Winkel

Stephan Bone-Winkel is the founder of BEOS AG and serves as a Member of the Supervisory Board. He is also the Managing Partner of BEOS Beteiligungs-GmbH & Co. KG and CEOS Investment GmbH. In 2003, Stephan Bone-Winkel was appointed to the Endowed Chair for Real Estate Development at the European Business School. In 2006 he became Honorary Professor for Real Estate Development at the University of Regensburg (IREBS). He is a founding member of the Society for Property Researchers, Germany (gif) and the EBS alumni association, immoebis e.V. In 2014 he received the ULI Leadership Award in the Real Estate Industry category.



Joseph Schechla

Joseph Schechla has coordinated the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) from Cairo, Egypt since 2000. He has previously served as programme coordinator with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Gaza, Palestine) and director of democratic development programs (AMIDEAST, Washington, DC). He has focused most of his research and field experience on popular movements and legal defense of economic, social and cultural rights within the UN Human Rights System.



Leilani Farha

Leilani Farha is the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council. She is also the executive director of Canada Without Poverty, an NGO based in Ottawa, Canada. A human rights lawyer by training, she has worked both internationally and domestically on the implementation of economic and social rights for the past 20 years. In Canada Leilani Farha worked on housing rights issues as the Executive Director of the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA).



Karen Pittel

Karen Pittel is Director of the Ifo Center for Energy, Climate and Exhaustible Resources and Professor of Economics, esp. Energy, Climate and Exhaustible Natural Resources, Faculty of Economics, University of Munich since 2010. Director of Center for Economic Policy at ZHAW, Winterthur 2009–2010. Member of, i. a., the Climate Council of Bavaria since 2015, the German Committee Future Earth (German Science Foundation DFG) since 2013 and the Council of the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE) since 2014. WBGU Member since 2016.



Hans Joachim Schellnhuber CBE

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber is Founder and Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research; Professor for Theoretical Physics at the University of Potsdam; External Professor at the Santa Fe Institute. Leadership and review activities for numerous international programmes. Since 2005 Member of the National Academy of Sciences. Blue Planet Prize Winner 2017. WBGU Member since 1992, 1994–1996 Vice Chair, 1996–2000 Chair, 2004–2008 Vice Chair again, 2009–2016 Chair.



Carlo Ratti

An architect and engineer by training, Carlo Ratti teaches at MIT, where he directs the Senseable City Lab. He is also a founding partner of the international design and innovation office Carlo Ratti Associati. His work has been exhibited worldwide at venues such as the Venice Biennale, the Design Museum Barcelona, the Science Museum in London, MAXXI in Rome, and MoMA in New York City. He is currently serving as co-chair of the World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Cities and Urbanization.



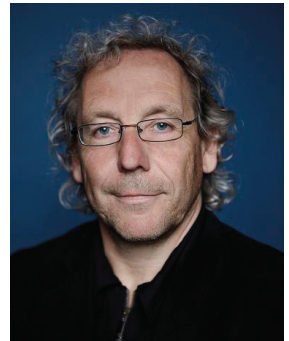
Shivani Chaudhry

Shivani Chaudhry is the Executive Director of Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), New Delhi, where she has been working since 2004. Prior to this, she worked with the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) in Washington, DC. She has been working in the field of human rights for over fifteen years, with a specific focus on economic, social and cultural rights, especially the human rights to adequate housing, land, livelihood, and the environment. She was a member of the Ministry of Rural Development's Task Force on Land Reforms, and contributed to the draft national land reform policy.



Andreas Knie

Andreas Knie is Head of the Research Group "Science Policy Studies", WZB since 2017. Since 2006 Management Director of the Innovation Centre for Mobility and Change (InnoZ) a subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn AG, the Social Science Center Berlin (WZB), T-Systems International Enterprise Services GmbH and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR). Since 1996 Professor of Sociology at the TU Berlin. Since 1988 Research Fellow, Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB).



Ina Schieferdecker

Ina Schieferdecker is Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems (FOKUS, since 2015), President of the Association for Software Quality and Education (ASQF, since 2015), Spokesperson of the Smart City Network Berlin (since 2016), Professor for Quality Engineering of Open Distributed Systems at Technische Universität Berlin, formerly Professor for Model-Driven Engineering of Software-Based Systems at Freie Universität Berlin (2011–2014) and Professor for design and testing telecommunication systems at Technische Universität Berlin (2003–2011). WBGU Member since 2016.



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Conference team

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