



## Prosperity, People and Planet in the Cities

A Special Symposium of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network on Cities and the Sustainable Development Agenda



In September 2015 the world's governments will agree upon a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals revolve around three themes: empowering **people**, eradicating poverty and protecting human dignity; shared **prosperity** and decent, fair jobs for all; protecting the **planet** and tackling climate change. These 15-year goals will help guide the public's understanding of complex sustainable development challenges, inspire public and private action, promote integrated thinking, and foster accountability. SDG 11 will call for Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements.

Urbanization will be a defining trend over the next several decades. Today, 50% of the world's 7 billion people live in cities, and, by 2050, this is expected to rise to around 70%. Cities are currently home to extreme deprivation and environmental degradation with around one billion people living in slums. At the same time, roughly 75% of global economic activity is urban, and as the urban population grows, so will the urban share of global GDP and investments.

This special symposium will bring together local government leaders and other urban development practitioners to consider how cities can drive the implementation of the new sustainable development agenda and forge a roadmap for their realization. Mayors and other participants will consider the challenges of social inclusion, economic development and environmental preservation including cities' carbon commitments. Furthermore they will reflect upon the governance arrangements and financial architecture that will empower cities to accelerate the SDG implementation process.

Taking place just 2 months before Heads of State and Government gather in New York to approve the SDGs and 4 months before the climate negotiations in Paris, this event will provide a crucial opportunity for city leaders to start to consider clear, quantifiable commitments which demonstrate their dedication to a fairer, more sustainable world.