LIVEABLE, INCLUSIVE, SAFE, AND RESILIENT CITIES: IMPLEMENTING SA'S URBAN AGENDA

SOUTH AFRICAN URBAN CONFERENCE REPORT

CITIES IN CONVERSATION

30 October 2017

Moses Mabhida Stadium, eThekwini

Cooperative Governance
Traditional Affairs
Human Settlements
National Treasury

ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
SALGA
Inspiring service delivery

The South African Council for Planners
SACPLAN

South African CitiesNetwork

Introduction

The 2017 South African Urban Conference took place at the Moses Mabhida Stadium, Durban on 30 October 2017. It was hosted by the South African Cities Network (SACN) in collaboration with the Departments of Human Settlements (DHS) and Cooperative Governance (DCOG), the National Treasury, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN), and the Ethekwini Municipality.

The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) vision of building "liveable, safe, integrated, economically inclusive, and globally competitive cities" informed the 2017 conference. This vision is closely aligned to the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 "Making Cities and Human Settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

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PARTICIPANTS FROM THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND ACADEMIC SECTORS ATTENDED THE ONE-DAY URBAN CONFERENCE

Cities and urban areas are at the forefront of transformative development. The United Nations (UN) have adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 11, which aimed at making cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. A globally agreed driver of change for urban development is the adoption of urban policies. In South Africa, the National Development Plan (NDP) provides a long-term plan for the country aimed at eliminating inequality and poverty. Chapter 8 of the NDP focuses on "transforming human settlements and the national space economy" and is given further expression through South Africa's urban policy for the country, the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) which was adopted by Cabinet in 2016. The IUDF provides a vision of urban areas that are "Liveable, safe, integrated, economically inclusive and globally competitive, where residents actively participate in urban life".

The conference provided an opportunity to assess the IUDF policy drivers for sustainable urban development and to look at how the country's current policies and programmes may assist and guide South Africa's international commitments to implementing the SDG Goal 11 and building an intergovernmental localisation framework for the NUA. It also gave urban partners and stakeholders a stimulating platform for urban partners and stakeholders to learn and exchange knowledge, as it is only through active and continuing dialogues and extensive collaboration that South Africa will achieve the objectives of its urban agenda.

Conference objectives

- *Communication*: An improved common understanding and awareness among government actors (focused at local level) of urban development in South Africa, guided by the IUDF (linked to regional and global imperatives).
- *Coordination*: Sharing strategies, actions and considerations for the co-production of the city, and the roles of different urban partners (an inter-RG convening).
- *Intelligence*: Information, lessons and insights to support and strengthen the voice and role of cities and urban municipalities on translating and implementing the urban agenda at the local level – experiences, challenges, complexities and opportunities in trying to create inclusive and accessible cities.

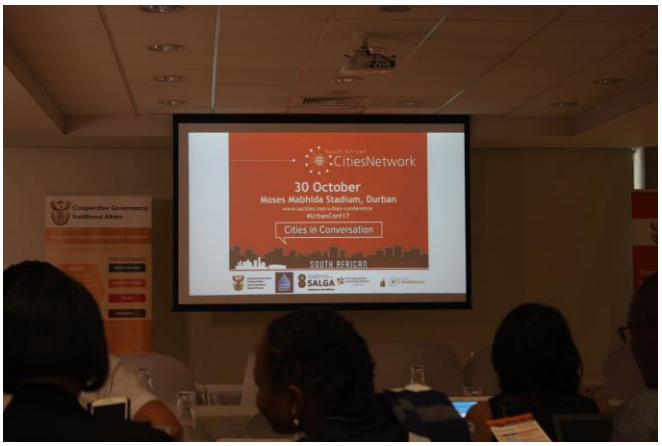
Opening Plenary

Cllr Parks Tau, President of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), spoke of the challenge of rapid urbanisation at an unprecedented scale. Globally and nationally, managing urbanisation is the topic under discussion – the policies and programmes implemented will have a huge influence on the future of cities, countries and humanity on our planet.

Cllr Zandile Gumede, Executive Mayor eThekwini and Deputy President of SALGA welcomed all to the Urban Conference, which forms part of Urban Week that includes World Cities Day (31 October) and AFUS. She highlighted eThekwini's commitment to the goals of the NDP and IUDF, and to sustainable development, as shown through projects such as Let's Go Durban (integrated urban transport), Conobia housing (promoting a compact city) and renewable energy and green buildings.

Deputy Minister Zoe Kota-Fredericks, Department of Human Settlements wished everyone a Happy Habitat month and provided a summary of the development of South Africa's urban agenda, the IUDF, which happened in concert with South Africa's engagement on the UN's New Urban Agenda. She reminded delegates that the Urban Conference was a day for creating solutions, for grappling with how to co-create actions and what actions are needed for a better future.

Deputy Minister Andries Nel, Department of Cooperative Governance thanked the various partners involved in organising the Urban Conference (DHS, SACN, SALGA, Sacplan) – urbanisation requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, and collective action is key for managing urbanisation successfully. He invited all present to discuss, exchange knowledge, and most importantly, concretise actions that can inform the implementation of South Africa's urban agenda and the IUDF.



Inclusive Growth

Theme: how do we strengthen and grow city economies to be more inclusive?

Moderator	Presenters	Respondents
• Shiva Makotoko (INCA)	• Dr Geci Karuri-Sebina (SACN) • Mr Charles Parkerson (SALGA)	• Mr Roland Hunter (CSP: National Treasury) • Mr Augustine Makgata (City of Tshwane) • Ms Joanne Yawitch (NBI)

Key points from the presentations

- Cities play an important role in economic development: 30 cities (8 metros and 22 secondary cities) contribute 70% of South Africa's gross value added (GVA).
- The secondary and tertiary sectors dominate the economy of metros, with financial services or government the largest contributor to their economy. In contrast, the economy of secondary cities tends to be primary-sector based (mainly mining). This differentiation implies different roles for government.
- Governments do not grow cities (and economies) – their role is to enable (disable) the economy through providing public administration and services, "framework conditions", and land ownership and governance.
- Policy context for economic function is consistent across White Paper on Local Government National Development Plan and Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). Lever 6 of the IUDF concerns economic development and has nine priorities – no. 1 priority is to strengthen the economic role of municipalities. The IUDF makes the case for inclusive economic development and provides high-level guidelines for implementation.
- Municipal case studies, of metros, secondary cities and district municipalities, looked at the economic development function and found:
    - Cities are struggling to define, prioritise and implement inclusive economic development.
    - Tension between strategic economic development (municipalities as land owners, planning authority, infrastructure planner and provider) and local economic development (job creation, business facilitation, tourism, skills development)
    - Cities are limited internally (constitutional framework and how they conceive of their role – three cities studied have different organisational approaches)
    - City leadership strongly influences economic development understanding and practices, and strategic significance.
- Cities need to be empowered and strengthened vertically (through appropriate legislation) internally (institutional arrangements) and externally (better relationships with private sector and communities).

Questions to consider

1. What functions do cities need to hold in order to drive effective inclusive economic growth?
2. How can the economic governance architecture for cities be improved? (internally and intergovernmentally)
3. How can cities improve their relationships with private sector and communities?
4. How else can a city practically drive inclusive economic growth?

Points made during the discussion

- Local government is responsible for infrastructure and regulatory approvals, both of which are important for economic development. Cities need legislation that allows for differentiation and innovation.
- Business and government needs to have transactional discussions focused on our joint problems of unemployment (shorter term) and sustainability (longer term), and looking for opportunities to find joint solutions.
- SA economy is very concentrated, with 70% of the economy in the private sector, where 80% belongs to 150 companies. There is a need to disrupt the way in which the South African economy is structured, to enable the disadvantaged to access the mainstream economy.
- Partnership with the private sector can assist cities with (e.g.) data and information that can inform decision-making, but these partnerships are not always working. For instance, Anglo-American using their spatial analysis tool in Limpopo to look at economic opportunities but struggling to connect with the municipality. Cities do not know how to engage with the private sector, other city departments or government spheres.
- The private sector can do more, although some companies are doing useful things, e.g. Sanlam – working with municipalities to build resilience (information systems). What is missing is scale.
- An area where private and public sectors should work together is the megatrend that shows jobs being shed as computers/robots take over.
- Inclusive growth can be defined in different ways. E.g. CSIR/Rockerfeller definition with five aspects, including participatory. IUDF does a reasonable job of defining inclusive growth.
- Cities need to have a different approach to the informal economy, which represents an important part of the economy, e.g. the City of Joburg's inner city's informal economy has been valued at R10-billion. And township enterprises should be connected to big businesses.
- Cities need to understand that everything affects the economy, and that inclusive economic development needs dealing with those who are outside as well as those who are inside the system
- Currently, the system is geared up to the private sector coming in and developing the land and is not set up to engage with those who want to use the land (e.g. community members). Citizens must be at the centre – participation of all must be for the benefit of all.

Take-aways

- ❖ A common understanding of inclusive economic growth is needed, and what that means for each city's context.
- ❖ Cities are limited internally in terms of the legislative framework within which they operate.
- ❖ Cities must engage more with other actors, especially the private sector and communities, to forge partnerships for action.
- ❖ Current system favours those who are already part of the economy. There is a need to reduce barriers to entry, and to enable the informal sector and the disadvantaged to be part of the economy.

Urban Land & Spatial Integration

Moderator	Presenters	Respondents
• Sue Bannister	• Mr Geoff Bickford (SACN)	• Dr Soobs Moonsammy (eThekwini) • Ms Lekgool Mayathula (COJ) • Mr Johan Mettler (NMBM)

Theme: Spatial integration is critical to forge new forms of settlement, transport, social and economic areas. In order to drive this integration, how we use and design urban land and space becomes critical.

Key points from the presentations

- Land inequality is a global issue that manifests into generational wealth. Land has become a complex commodity, used to leverage finance, traded on global markets, speculated value etc.
- Land market exclusion is a systemic challenge to driving inclusion that will require more than a planning response. Currently, cities tend to focus on technical planning (spatial and social integration through transit-oriented development) rather than urban land systems (tension between land as a commodity vs constitutional right to access land).
- Cities might become more efficient through improved planning but will remain exclusionary if the broader land issues (the underlying land administration systems) are not addressed. (land systems are human made therefore making land a social construct.)
- South Africa uses the cadastral system and title-based land ownership, a cornerstone of the modern economy in which land has an economic value.
- In South Africa, the inequality in the access to land is racialised, and the response has been to address the racial discrimination, with not enough thought being given to the underlying system. When thinking about urban land reform, it's important to acknowledge the deeper systemic issues of land systems, and how they undermine equitable access to urban land and space.
- Equitable land access is a financial question: under the current financing model, land value increases are at the heart of municipal revenue. Both municipalities and private investors have a vested interest in land value remaining stable and increasing. Yet property values reflect apartheid patterns of segregation and mono-functional use.
- In the IUDF, policy lever 5 deals with efficient land governance and management and provides the following diagnosis: state land must be disposed at "market-related" value; tenure uncertainty and insecurity; inadequate land-use management instruments; slow land-use planning and management processes. Short/medium-term priorities include simplifying land-use planning and management, promoting land value capture and ensuring legislative concepts.
- TOD is anchored in all policy documents (NDP, IUDF, BEPP), i.e. bringing planning and transport together, and used by metros to integrate planning and infrastructure investment to drive spatial integration.
- SACN's Urban Land Papers Vol. 2 uses the TOD lens for understanding land and concludes that:
- Planning reform cannot be though about in isolation of land reform. TOD is a powerful tool to engage about how space is being used. The components of the TOD are density, diversity and design, all of which deal with issues of urban land.
- Information transparency is a barrier to access to land ownership: it's difficult to claim land in the cities due to the lack of transparency. Research found that the City of Joburg owns most of the land along the corridors.
- SPLUMA provides opportunities for cities to use existing planning and land use management tools to drive more inclusive development.
- The cities cannot deal with urban land issues on their own, as it is beyond their mandate (spatial justice)
- There is opportunity to think through more effective and differentiated land use management practices to promote inclusive growth
- But ownership patterns and land based financing instruments require further interrogation

Questions to consider

1. How do we bring an urban land transformation agenda more centrally to the IUDF?
2. How do we get SPLUMA to perform effectively in achieving spatial justice?
3. What challenges do cities face in driving spatial integration?
4. Acknowledging that urban land markets are exclusive what can be done to achieve spatial integration in the short- medium and long term?
5. What are the roles of actors in supporting urban land reform towards spatial integration and reforming planning efforts?

Points made during the discussion

- The planning system needs to be made easy to understand, free and transparent, so planners can focus on the larger issues
- Unless our institutions and professions change their thinking, we will continue to use the same tools and make only incremental changes, which result in the same outcomes.
- The challenge is how to create economic growth and economic opportunities to people in the TOD "corridors".
- The land use management systems promote corruption (discretion provided to officials) and undermine economic development (long lead times and environmental, heritage and administrative processes).
- Achieving our spatial transformation objectives will require disruptions in the society-economy-space nexus. There can be no spatial transformation without social transformation, which means having to address privilege vs. under-development within cities. This will involve radically changing land use management systems and reviewing the legislation (e.g. Heritage Act) that protects colonial legacies and the status quo.
- Cities must be more imaginative with land-use management systems, which need to be flexible and anticipative, with fewer but stricter zones (not more flexible zones) and certain social and services obligations (e.g. indigenous tree-lined streets, mixed-income housing, etc.).
- The system will fight back through nimbyismb and administrative inertia (education that limits the imagination, officials that resist change because of fear of retrenchments), to retain the status quo of:
    - Rich, mainly white people, who will do what they can to protect what they have based on generational wealth;
    - Poor, mainly black people who do what they need to do to survive based on generations of neglect;
    - Development policies which, despite the liberal insertion of the word "integrated" in almost every document, promote the rich, mainly white and poor, mainly black scenario; and
    - Officials who are desperately trying to implement policies that are not implementable because irrelevant to local contexts.
- Transformation is costly and so cities require complex and non-spatial support, and mandate (and funding/staff) to deal with all things that pertain to sustainable settlements (e.g. health, child welfare).
- Achieving transformation requires new, bold solutions, finding a way to balance the rights of an individual against those of society, to retrofit existing suburbs, to develop new forms of institutions and systems (rather than tinker with existing institutions and tools), and to relook at how land is valued (include quality of life).

Take-aways

- ❖ Many spatial plans ignore the basic relations between people, economy and land. The voices of the urban poor/marginalised are not incorporated into projects such as the Corridors of Freedom.
- ❖ Land systems (cadastral, title-based ownership) undermine equitable access to urban land and space, limiting the ability to make cities more inclusive. Under these systems, land's economic value is greater than other values (e.g. social) because it is the cornerstone of municipal revenue.

- While cities understand the need for change and spatial transformation/integration, the strength of the status quo makes spatial integration difficult. Also, cities cannot drive spatial transformation alone and need support through stronger intergovernmental relationships and transactions. Policy and legislature needs to be aligned to implementation/ action for spatial integration.
- Land use management systems need to be more flexible and anticipatory (anticipate future city trends).

Urban Well-being, Inclusion & Access

Theme: Cities that are liveable for all are places where people have access to social and economic services, opportunities and choices.

Moderator	Presenters	Respondents
• Mr Sithole Mbanga (SACN)	• Ms Siphelele Ngobese (SACN)	• Dr Jo Veary (Wits) • Mr Ahmedi Vawda (DPME)

Key points from the presentations

- Cities still largely benefit those who can afford to "buy" their rights and freedom to the city, and the majority remain socially, spatially, culturally and economically excluded
- The IUDF describes South African cities as historically hostile environments, shaped by violence, poverty and exclusion that should be "safe, liveable, socially integrated, economically inclusive, resilient and globally competitive, with an active citizenry".
- Cities must achieve social justice through inclusion and empower citizens to participate in planning, developing and managing their city.
- Well-being recognises that everyone aspires to live well and is measured by a combination of facts, figures and indicators. It refers to quality of life and material living conditions, including health, housing, work, income, education, social connections, safety, and the quality of physical and natural environments.
- Stemming from the concept of wellbeing is the emphasis on safety, as a critical element to better understand how spaces within the city are accessed.
- Violence is a barrier to well-being and comes in different forms, including systemic (colonialism, apartheid, neo-liberalism). The question is whether development strategies can be implemented on top of systemic violence that permeates every aspect, including institutions?
- Space is a key determinant of your life chances (access to education, health) and well-being in SA cities. SACN working with CSIR on space as a determinant for wellbeing in south Africa. The project entails ideas around:
    - space as a key determinant for urban well-being, including access to economic and work opportunities, shelter, health, education and overall safety in cities;
    - the role that location and space play in whether society is transforming and, if so, for whom and in what way; and
    - how systems maintain or reproduce the existing order, and what the implications are for national and global development imperatives.
- Important to distinguish between security and safety, as research suggests no relationship between increasing police budgets and reducing crime rates. Longer term, integrated and cross-sectoral interventions are needed, such as social crime prevention, in addition to policing.
- Cities have various programmatic responses, including safety through urban upgrading, safe open public spaces, early childhood development, social crime prevention and alternative conflict resolution (especially the youth).

Questions to consider

1. What are the fundamental barriers to socio-economic transformation towards inclusion?
2. What can be influenced through [city] policy/implementation/practice?
    - The spatial implications of city growth and change on well-being?
    - The time it takes for policy and practice to impact well-being?
    - The actions (programmatic, institutional, practical) to take?
    - Capacity-building support?
3. At what scale should we be measuring inclusion, access and wellbeing? At what frequency and towards what outcomes?
    - How does the place where on grew up influence where one ends up?

- What are the other critical factors that need to be in place? Access to finance? Quality of education? Family support?
- Who should act/respond (accountabilities)?

4. What systems/approaches should be used, and how will they align to the IUDF?
    - What M&E systems will be required?

Points made during the discussion

- Safety is a key lens for promoting well-being.
- The spatial landscape to South African cities affects people's access to health and other services. People may live within walking distance of primary health clinics but have difficulties accessing the services (move to centre during week and back to periphery at weekends).
- Migrants often arrive healthier than people already living in the city but, over time, this health benefit drops off quickly because they cannot access determinants of health.
- We need more capacity, skills, data (collection and using existing data) and better methodologies (access to peripheral groups is difficult) and mapping data from different sectors (e.g. health and transport). Municipalities should develop strong relationships with academic institutions.
- Three breakdowns: (i) the structuring of finance between state, household and private sector; (ii) the planning framework between national, concurrent and local functions; and (iii) the urban management causal pathway.
- The real problem is urban management, driven by fiscal considerations and land use planning. The allocation of value in property is through land-use schemes; spatial is just a concept. Land – not space – produces value.
- Most rulings on social rights has been on housing.
- Technological developments can be positive (e.g. free Wi-Fi, internet access, surveillance) but need to be careful its use does replace (e.g.) eyes on the streets and an active citizenry, or reinforce historical inequalities.
- Safety has little to do with policing in cities and is more about surveillance and mix of land use, so streets are kept active for longer. Zoning laws separate residential and commercial uses, but allowing people to sleep over where they work would increase safety because people would be around longer, and the streets would be busier.
- The biggest problem is the dislocation between township and work, and the cost of transport. Our answer is densification, but the answer should be connection. Mixed-income and mixed-use areas provides upward mobility for middle-level Americans – it also helps to have two-headed households.
- An integrated approach to safety means looking beyond thinking safety is just a crime issue to thinking that safety involves everybody within a geographic boundary.

Take-aways

- ❖ Safety is a key lens for the promotion of well-being.
- ❖ Cities still largely benefit those who can afford to buy their rights and freedom to the city.
- ❖ Need to distinguish between security (policing) and safety (crime prevention, social interventions and liveable spaces).
- ❖ Safety is not just about surveillance but about land use and who accesses/uses the space. Therefore, safety interventions must include upgrading open public spaces and facilities.
- ❖ Technology should be part of the safety conversation, given the advancement of technology.
- ❖ Institutions involved in crime prevention and various stakeholders involved in developing cities must coordinate their efforts and work together.

Urban Governance

Theme: Achieving spatial and social integration requires a capacitated state and active citizens.

Moderator	Presenters	Respondents
• Ms Nellie Lester (independent)	• Mr Danga Mughogho (SACN)	• Ms Malijeng Nqaleni (National Treasury) • Cllr Parks Tau (SALGA) • Dr Chippy Olver (DCOG)

Key points from the presentations

- Coalition government at local level: the local government elections of August were a turning point, resulting in coalitions in three metropolitan municipalities.
- As coalition government becomes the norm, it raises various questions, such as: will such governments govern differently/better than those in the past? Will increased contestation within local governments lead to different policy approaches across a city? Will intergovernmental relations improve or worsen?
- South Africa is facing several socio-economic challenges: slow economic growth, little job creation, migration to urban areas and competition for resources.
- The IUDF (lever 8) has a vision of “cities and towns that have the necessary institutional, fiscal and planning capabilities to manage multiple urban stakeholders and intergovernmental relations, in order to build inclusive, resilient and liveable urban spaces”. Effective urban government is essential for achieving all the other levers.
- Obstacles to effective urban governance include issues in intergovernmental relations (IGR), oversight processes not working well, shortage of skills and competent staff, poor systems processes, poor citizen communication and engagement, and lack of capacity to deal with high levels of corruption (reliance on consultants).
- Public participation is poor, as the types of participation (e.g. meetings, ward committee systems, petitions) have not resulted in active citizens. The reality is that local government undertakes public participation for compliance and legitimation purposes, i.e. “participation without power”.
- The focus on audit outcomes has lead to an emphasis on adhering to rules rather than delivering services and meeting the needs of residents.
- Local government suffers from institutional instability, while interference by national government does not lead to the development of local government officials.
- What is needed:
    - functioning and capable municipalities;
    - constructive collaboration and IGR;
    - accountable and transparent, responsive governance; and
    - citizen engagement.
- What needs to be looked at:
    - systems and processes,
    - stakeholder mobilisation,
    - capacity and corruption,
    - participation at local government level, and
    - real participation in IDP, which means fulfilling on the intent, to go beyond service delivery to poverty reduction and socio-economic development, not the current reality of merely consultative and legitimating.
- Emerging administration issues: institutional instability before and after elections, and focus on audit outcomes over developmental issues
- Emerging political issues: coalition governments and effect on key areas of governance (passing of budgets, IDP consultations, city administration, policy).

Questions to consider

1. How should cities approach IGR?
2. How can cities change the legacy of non-implementation of development strategies?
3. What do cities want from CoGTA?
4. What kind of citizen engagement is ideal?

Points made during the discussion

- Everything rises or falls on good governance, but currently there is a sense of despair at complexity of governance and local government.
- What is needed: city leadership with vision for spatial change, the alignment/integration of actions across sectors and improved coordination within city administrations.
- Larger cities need to be less dependent on national government, as ultimately national transfers are about city independence and social integration. Yet most cities do not have the capacity to self-fund and are limited by conditions attached to national grants.
- Disparate oversight by national government (different national departments apply different instruments in an uncoordinated manner, while Department of Rural Development and Land Reform hold critical levers but are not part of the urban discussions) makes local government difficult.
- Land use management and land reform can have greater impact than expropriation and land restitution on realising de-segregation and meeting the needs of the poor.
- The IDPs are not doing what they were originally intended to do, i.e. to serve as an instrument of integration and spatial transformation.
- Although still discussion about SPLUMA (not seen as radical enough by some), the important thing is that SPLUMA is a long-term planning instrument that can drive spatial integration.
- The CoJ Ombudsman is a brilliant innovation and should be taken up by other cities, or perhaps be included in the amendments to the Municipal Systems Act.
- A clear paradigm is needed on managing the public service, to have systems and frameworks that enable us to be consistent in the decision and policy choices we make. Decisions need to be based on evidence.
- People, power and politics are often informal and unstructured – how can these conflicting interests be addressed and how do we incorporate informal processes that take place outside the formal structures? E.g. minibus taxi routes not demarcated by city planner but informally by taxi organisations.
- Institutionalisation of instruments of the state – the ideal situation will be stable administration, even if the political party/faction changes, with strong technocrats.
- Perhaps government needs to step back and let citizens find their solutions.
- The governance question is a collaborative and collective question. We need transparency of intentions. Instead of coordinating (we don't want to be coordinated) or partnering (only possible if equal powers), we need to find a way of collaborating towards a common vision.

Take-aways

- Four success factors of local government = LIFT
  - **L**eadership (clear vision for the city's future development that is communicated to and supported by all stakeholders),
  - **I**nstitutional stability (clear separation between politics and administration – "meritocracy"),
  - **F**inancial sustainability (compact with ratepayers and service providers).
  - **T**ransparency (open up processes to public scrutiny)
- Policy environment is not coherent – lack of vertical and horizontal coordination, with spheres not aware of what others are doing; then municipalities are expected to implement policies into integrated plans without being consulted, resourced or financed adequately.
- Everything will rise or fall on good governance: is baseline for developmental government.

Conclusion

Achieving the objectives of South Africa's urban agenda will require intensive dialogue and extensive collaboration

The 2017 Urban Conference represents the start of a conversation among urban institutions and key urban actors. It brought together officials from the SACN's member cities and targeted stakeholders to engage in a dialogue on urban South Africa. Over 200 participants from the public, private and academic sectors participated in robust and well-facilitated discussions.

The conference had an overall theme of "Liveable, inclusive, safe and resilient cities: implementing South Africa's urban agenda", and its sessions were organised around four sub-themes that were developed in line with the IUDF's four strategic goals: spatial integration, inclusion and access, growth and governance. The four sub-themes were inclusive growth; urban land and spatial integration; urban well-being, inclusion and access; and urban governance.

Each session comprised theoretical and evidence-based inputs as well as questions to consider, followed by lively discussions. Each session produced several take-aways relating to the four sub-themes. These take-aways will be used to guide further research and for deepening the conversation at the next Urban Conference in 2018.

What emerged clearly from the conference was that implementing South Africa's urban agenda will require all stakeholders to have a common understanding and vision, to collaborate extensively and genuinely, and to hold active and inclusive dialogues. The 2018 Urban Conference will provide the platform for deepening the conversations begun in eThekwini in 2017.