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دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



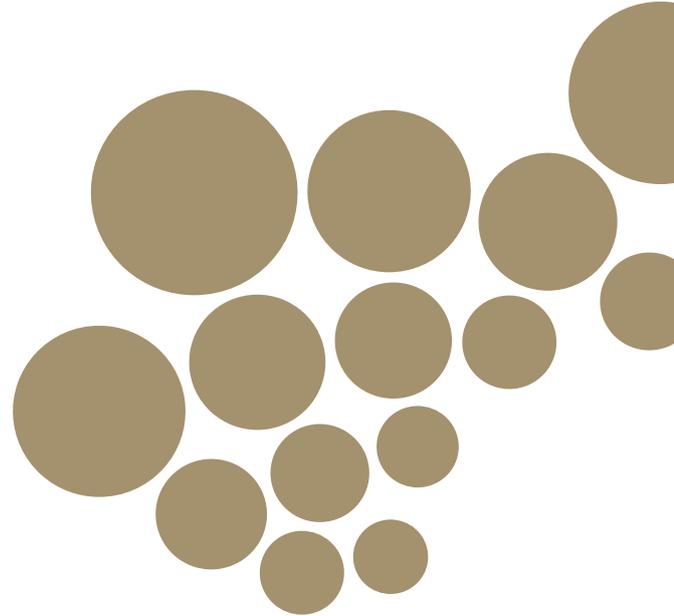
المجلس العالمي  
WORLD MAJLIS

# المجلس العالمي WORLD MAJLIS

**The Future of Cities  
World Expos as Experiments in Mega-Change**

## **Summary**

World Expo Museum, Shanghai  
14 December 2018





Great Exhibition London, 1851

## **WORLD EXPO AND GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS**

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, World Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future. With its mix of art and science, imagination and analysis, machines and ideas, nations and people, the Expo is a special place for convening inquisitive minds to come together and explore the future. Expos have always been a mirror of their time.

Inspired by the format and values of the traditional majlis, the World Majlis is an original format for open, informed and measured conversations between diverse thought leaders and change-makers with the objective of helping us to explore and better understand areas of great significance for society from multiple points of view. The goal of these conversations is to generate new perspectives and incubate meaningful connections between people and new ideas.

The World Majlis is taking place in the UAE and internationally in the lead-up to and during Expo 2020, with the goal of opening new horizons around the theme and the subthemes.

Hosted in culturally significant locations, these conversations are committed to an inclusive and constructive dialogue of the highest quality in an environment that reflects the UAE's tradition of welcome and respect... the Majlis.



## INTRODUCTION

With the World Expo Museum uniquely positioned to showcase the impact and essence of World Expos, and Expo 2020 Dubai striving to take forward the Expo spirit as the upcoming host, the World Majlis in Shanghai was the perfect setting for a conversation about the impact of Expos on a city and its people, and what this could teach us for the future.

In a session that brought together experts on a range of topics including culture, urban planning and technology, as well as thought leaders from Expo host cities – past, present and future – the conversation sought to address the following question: How can Expos shape the future of urban living and influence the long-term development of host cities and beyond?



*“As the first World Expo to take place in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, Expo 2020 has the potential to positively influence urban development across Dubai, the UAE and the region as a whole. The insights generated during the World Majlis session in Shanghai will help shape this journey, making a meaningful contribution to the impact of the next World Expo on future cities.”*

Najeeb Al-Ali, Executive Director, Expo 2020 Dubai Bureau



## KEY FINDINGS

- Expos must be considered as part of the wider strategic vision and masterplan for a city's development. Expo authorities, government and citizens must work closely together to achieve maximum impact from an Expo-driven transformation.
- Expos can be a powerful catalyst not only for the development of infrastructure, but also have a significant impact on people and communities .
- We must take a holistic view when envisaging the Cities of the Future, ensuring the needs of all citizens are considered and the values of inclusivity, harmony and empathy are supported.



*"The insights shared by participants during the latest World Majlis session will prove invaluable as we push ahead with the development of District 2020 – a connected, tech-enabled destination that will reuse 80 per cent of Expo 2020's built environment to create a future city in which people can connect, create and innovate for generations to come."*

Marjan Faraidooni, Senior Vice President, Legacy Development & Impact, Expo 2020 Dubai

## LESSONS FROM THE PAST



EXPO 2010 SHANGHAI

Behind every Expo has been a vision for change, a vision of a new life for the host city, and a new place within the world order for the host country. This has been the case for almost two centuries, since the first Great Exhibition of 1851 spawned a new area of London that is still a global hub for world renowned cultural and academic institutions today.

In fact, World Expos can be considered one of the greatest cultural and urban experiments in history, providing over 170 years of cumulative experience in executing change at the city level, and realigning a city's aspirations, infrastructure and people with a new future.

But what can we learn from them? Do we now have a blue print for a Better City, a Better Life? Or a roadmap for Creating the Future?

According to Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales, Secretary General of the BIE, in order to be truly impactful, World Expos must be considered as part of the wider strategic vision and masterplan for a city's development – they are not a means to an end, but rather an instrument or tool in catalysing growth. Mr Loscertales gave the example of the 1998 Expo in Lisbon, which not only had a significant and lasting impact on the country's employment levels, tourism industry and economy, but also catalysed the complete redesign of the previously neglected eastern part of the city. This redevelopment created an entire new neighbourhood using components from the Expo site, with the former industrial wasteland now the main business district of the city and popular residential area.

Several participants also commented that a successful legacy vision also required support from a range of stakeholders, all working closely together to achieve and benefit from the maximum impact. This includes not only Expo authorities, but also government and the citizens themselves.

*“Integration between the government and citizens creates the best results as was the case in Japan. Shanghai also showed what a World Expo can do for a city, where the citizens supported its vision during and after. These are examples of some of the urban best practices that can inform how we continue to drive progress on the journey to 2020 and beyond.”*

Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales, Secretary General, Bureau International des Expositions



*“The location of the Expo site is very important and needs to be considered in relation to the long-term vision for the city. And many of these principles that we're talking about today apply not only to World Expos but other events, such as the Olympic Games.”*

Professor Joan Busquets, Chair Professor of Urban Planning and Design at the GSD, Harvard University

*“The upcoming specialised exhibition will be held in 2023 in Buenos Aires and will be the first Expo in Latin America. We will develop our neighbourhoods to give all the citizens the same opportunities with the Expo site being in the middle of the city.”*

Hernán Santiago Lombardi, Secretary of Government of the Federal System of Public Media and Contents of Argentina



## ACCELERATING GROWTH

History has shown us that Expos, and mega-events more generally, can be powerful catalysts when it comes to existing plans for new infrastructure developments or enhancements. China provides two clear examples of this – the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai saw a planned extension to the city’s metro accomplished 25 years ahead of schedule, whilst the upcoming International Horticultural Expo in Beijing has expedited the construction of a number of new highways, enhancing connectivity and improving traffic flows.

These projects may be led at a government level, but the impact can be felt most strongly by the every day citizens, and it is this that is driving the long-term vision for the 2025 World Expo in Osaka.



*“2025 will be the second time that Japan has hosted a World Expo and we know it can be a powerful catalyst for socio-economic development. This is an opportunity for us to try something new, and address the growing needs of a population that are not only living longer lives, but wanting to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.”*

Jun Kuroda, Deputy Director General, World Expo 2025, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry



EXPO 1970 OSAKA



EXPO 1992 SEVILLE

The cutting-edge technology developed for or during an Expo can also become part of daily life for a city's population. It may also continue to serve as 'best practice' and inform future innovation. For example, the Alta Velocidad Española (AVE) railway originally developed to connect Madrileños to the 1992 Expo in Seville is still widely considered to be one of the best examples of a high speed railway in the world. It also continues to influence work on a range of areas, including Artificial Intelligence. This will also be true of the innovations set to be unveiled at Expo 2020, including the first major commercial deployment of 5G services in the region.

*"Shanghai gives us lots of examples of how the extraordinary technology developed for an Expo can transform the lives of everyday people. I see a real opportunity for Expo 2020 to do the same."*

Dr Zhu Xiaoxun, Executive Vice President, Siemens Ltd., and Head of Siemens Corporate Technology, China



*"Now when you arrive in Shanghai, you can see that it is very convenient to go anywhere thanks to Shanghai Expo metro line which was the result of Shanghai Expo. For the Beijing Horticulture Expo that will be held in 2019 in Beijing, you will see a new international airport in Beijing which will become one of the biggest in the whole world."*

Zhang Liang, Director of China Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan, Vice President of CIEC

## BEYOND INFRASTRUCTURE – THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

Whilst some may question the validity or relevance of a physical mega-event in today's digital age, previous experience shows that the opportunities an Expo can offer for face-to-face connections can create a meaningful legacy for the people living in a host city. The impact created by human interactions may not be as tangible or immediate as infrastructure developments, but is no less powerful.



“Shanghai Expo not only brought about enhancements to the city's infrastructure, but also led to significant change in the mind-set and behaviour of its people. The streets became cleaner, people became better at queueing, public facilities became more hygienic...our society became more harmonious and more civilized.”

*Hong Hao, Chairman, World Expo Museum.*

“The first fast speed train linking Madrid and Seville was an outcome of the first World Expo to take place in Spain in Seville '92. This change in the infrastructure completely changed the life of the average citizen in the country.”

*Ambassador Eduardo Lopez Busquets, Former Deputy Commissioner, Expo Zaragoza 2008*



Hosting an Expo can also provide an important opportunity for a city to position itself on the world stage and align its global aspirations with a specific cause. The 1998 Lisbon Expo was cited as a good example of the importance of choosing a theme that was relevant to the city's future aspirations. Under the theme 'The Oceans: A Heritage for the Future', the Independent World Commission on the Oceans presented a report at the Portuguese Pavilion, placing Portugal at the forefront of global efforts, and also saw a number of maritime institutions relocate to Lisbon.



“The theme of each Expo has to be relevant to the host city and its people, not only in terms of the content developed for the Expo period itself, but also when envisaging the long-term legacy.”

*Rolando Martins, Chief Visitor Experience Officer, Expo 2020 Dubai*

## BUILDING THE CITIES OF THE FUTURE – A HOLISTIC VIEW



If we recognise that Expos, and mega events more generally, can catalyse transformations across a range of dimensions – economic, social and physical – we should also consider them in relation to the Cities of the Future. What are the issues and priorities that need to inform an Expo’s strategic vision and long-term legacy? Do these ‘guidelines’ apply irrespective of whether a city is preparing for a mega-event or not?

One recurrent theme, first emerging during the recent Next Gen World Majlis held with UAE youth, was the importance of public spaces. Empathy, tolerance and inclusivity – components of a harmonious and civilized society – are best driven by human interaction and cultural exchange. Physical spaces such as parks and public squares can provide the right setting for this.



*“When we are designing and developing the cities of the future, we need to take a holistic view. We need to consider the needs of citizens at every level of society - where are they going to live? How are they going to access everything they need?”*  
Michel Ogrizek, Former Director of Communications, World Economic Forum

*“Cultural exchange is still so important and powerful and face-to-face, eye-to-eye is still the most powerful way of doing this. It’s what we see, what we touch, what we hear and what we smell. Expos are a fantastic platform for this, and I am very excited to explore the UAE’s culture in 2020.”*

Catherine J. Wang, President, Center for China Shanghai International Arts Festival



The economic fragility of mega-cities, where a significant percentage of GDP is concentrated, must also be considered. How can we ensure that the Cities of the Future are protected against the potentially devastating impact of external forces such natural disaster, epidemics and global economic crises?

Participants also spoke about the need for new developments and infrastructure that are sympathetic to the existing landscape. Our ability to maintain a strong sense of cultural and historical identity relies in part on our ability to find the fine balance between old and new.

And finally, with more than 40% of the world's population under the age of 25, youth must be a priority when we are envisaging the Cities of the Future. Employment and access to health and education, as well as wider opportunities for empowerment and active participation must all be considered.



*"A World Expo host city needs to work with a credible amount of companies, countries, and stakeholders. We [in UPS] expect to employ over 1000 people for the Expo 2020 Dubai only. For us as an organisation, this is an excellent opportunity to train young people to deal with international organisations on multiple levels across a global culture and structure which is an opportunity you cannot give to young people very often."*

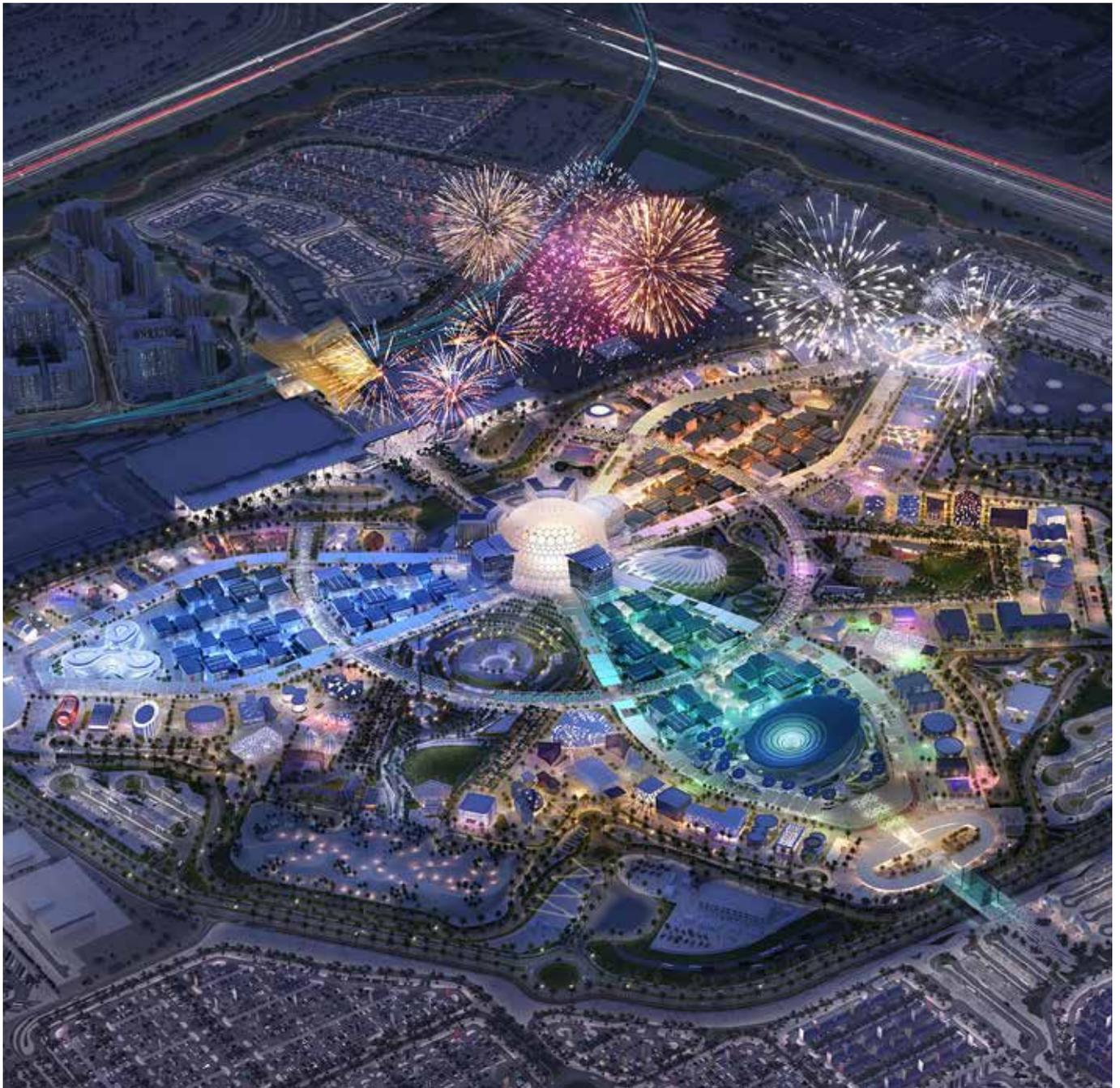
Harld Peters, President, UPS China

## QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONVERSATIONS

- In today's fast paced and increasingly efficient world, how can we slow down and create 'kinder' cities?
- How can Expos shape the future of urban living and influence the long-term development of host cities and beyond?
- How can we ensure that the Cities of the Future are protected against the potentially devastating impact of external forces such natural disaster, epidemics and global economic crises?

## THE WAY FORWARD

Expo 2020 Dubai will integrate the knowledge and outcomes of this World Majlis to inform further conversations before and during the next World Expo.



## PARTICIPANTS

### **Najeeb Al-Ali**

Executive Director, Expo 2020 Dubai Bureau (Host)

### **Marjan Faraidooni**

Senior Vice President, Legacy Development & Impact, Expo 2020 Dubai (Moderator)

### **Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales**

Secretary-General, Bureau International des Expositions

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Chairman, World Expo Museum

### **Hernán Santiago Lombardi**

Secretary of Government of the Federal System of Public Media and Contents of Argentina

### **Catherine J. Wang**

President, Center for China Shanghai International Arts Festival

### **Ambassador Eduardo Lopez Busquets**

Former Deputy Commissioner, Expo Zaragoza 2008

### **Harld Peters**

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### **Dr Cheng Jian**

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### **Professor Joan Busquets**

Chair Professor of Urban Planning and Design at the GSD, Harvard University

### **Jun Kuroda**

Deputy Director General, World Expo 2025, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)

### **Zhang Liang**

Director of China Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan and Vice President, CIEC

### **Michel Ogrizek**

Former Director of Communications, World Economic Forum

### **Rolando Martins**

Chief Visitor Experience Officer, Expo 2020 Dubai

### **Dr Zhu Xiaoxun**

Executive Vice President, Siemens Ltd., and Head of Siemens Corporate Technology, China

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