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**VENICE BIENNALE PROVIDES A FITTING STAGE FOR
THE URBAN AGE 'SHAPING CITIES' CONFERENCE
on 14-15 JULY 2016**

Over 40 speakers from 25 cities in Asia, Africa, Europe, South and North America will gather in Venice at the Urban Age "Shaping Cities" conference to debate one of the most pressing problems of the 21st century: How are cities shaped? By whom and for whom? How are the conflicts of our increasingly urban age – inequality, climate change, urban growth and expansion, informality, democratic representation and urban stewardship – experienced and lived by the majority of urban dwellers? And, what can we do to make cities more tolerant, adaptable and sustainable?

Mayors and urban leaders of Barcelona (Spain), Bogotá (Colombia), Kampala (Uganda), Venice (Italy), Paris (France) and Safed (Israel) will debate these questions with the key players in international and national organisations including the United Nations, UN Habitat, the Cities Alliance, India's National Institute of Urban Affairs and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Urban decision-makers, researchers and commentators will join leading architects, planners and designers whose creative work and practical ideas feature in the world's largest and most respected architecture exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia.

Pritzker Prize-winning architect **Alejandro Aravena**, who masterminded the global assemblage of provocative and socially engaging projects from around the world, will talk about social relevance and scales of intervention with Lagos-based **Kunlé Adeyemi** and Mumbai-based **Rahul Mehrotra** alongside emerging and established designers working in Delhi, Mexico City, Cape Town, Singapore and a number of European cities.

Sociologists **Saskia Sassen** and **Richard Sennett**, ethnographer and anthropologist **AbdouMaliq Simone** and economist **Edward Glaeser** will engage with the newly elected grassroots Mayor of Barcelona **Ada Colau**, the executive director of Kampala **Jennifer Musisi** and the recently re-elected Mayor of Bogota **Enrique Peñalosa** on how their cities are coping with radical change, rising inequality, lack of infrastructure and political restructuring.

The two-day Urban Age conference, organised by the London School of Economics and the Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft, is designed to bring the world of cities and city-makers to Venice. With hundreds of projects displayed across the city for the 15th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, it provides an ideal context to feed fresh ideas to the United Nations Habitat III conference on Sustainable Cities to be held in Quito in October 2016. To this end, the Director of Habitat III and Under-Secretary of the United Nations **Joan Clos** will participate and provide closing remarks on what messages to take forward in formulating a New Urban Agenda to help shape the future of the 21st century.

The Urban Age conference in Venice is organised around in six distinct themes:

- **Who Owns the City?** What are the main political and economic forces shaping urban societies?
- **Expansion or Redevelopment?** Can spatial planning tame urban growth and what are the impacts of urban form on productivity, the environment and social inclusion?
- **Adaptation and Social Integration.** How do existing residents adapt to the arrival of newcomers and how can their interactions be shaped by different physical environments?



- **What Role for Architecture?** How can design ingenuity be harnessed to respond to everyday social and environmental battles? What are the limits of the design profession in addressing both the scale and nature of the urban condition?
- **Scales of Intervention:** a comparative overview of bottom-up and top-down approaches to urban design, repair and planning including projects from cities across the world.
- **Shaping the New Urban Agenda.** What are the main messages emerging from architecture, urban design and planning for Habitat III? What forces will shape the New Urban Agenda?

NOTE TO EDITORS

The Urban Age conference is a two-day event which explores the interrelationships between urban form and urban society. Jointly organised by LSE Cities and Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft, it is considered the most authoritative interdisciplinary conference on global urbanism, bringing together presidents, prime ministers, governors, mayors, designers, planners, academics and activists. 14 Urban Age conferences have been held since 2005 with over 6,000 speakers and participants, taking place in cities including Istanbul, Delhi, Mexico City, Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg.

The Urban Age "Shaping Cities" conference (July 14-15) is integrated with the 15th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (28th May – 27th November 2016), the world's most high-profile architectural event visited by over 300,000 people. Hosted by La Biennale di Venezia in the context of the Special Project "Report from Cities: Conflicts of an Urban Age", it is organised in partnership with United Nations Habitat III.

The conference will take place at Teatro alle Tese, Arsenale, La Biennale di Venezia from 14-15 July 2016. The conference is open to visitors who have registered at <https://urbanage.lsecities.net/conferences/shaping-cities-venice-2016> and ticket-holders of the 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia.

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