



Ecological Cities as Economic Cities

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Conference Edition

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Urbanization in developing countries may be the single greatest change in our century. It is projected that developing countries will have tripled their entire built-up urban area between 2000 and 2030 from 200,000 square kilometres to 600,000 square kilometres. These 400,000 square kilometres of new urban built up area, which are being constructed within just 30 years, equals the entire world's total built up urban area as of 2000. One could say we are building a 'whole new world' at about 10 times the speed, in countries with severe resource constraints (natural, fiscal, administrative, and technical). We are doing so in an increasingly globalized context with many new, constantly fluctuating, interlinked, and uncontrollable variables.

So what is driving the massive rates of urbanization described above ? Historically, and across most regions, urbanization has pro-pelled the growth of national economies. On average about 75 percent of global economic production takes place in cities, and in developing countries this share is now rapidly increasing. In many developing countries, urban shares of GDP already surpass 60 percent. In most regions of the world, the opportunities provided by urbanization, have enabled large segments of the population to lift themselves out of poverty.