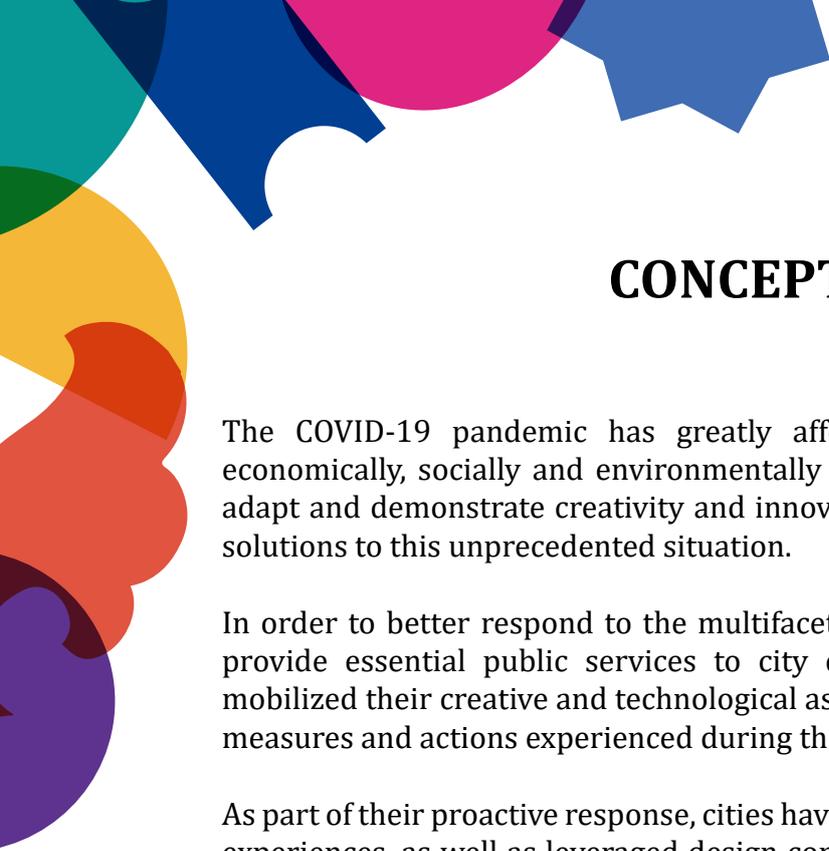


Third UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit

Creativity Empowers Cities, Technology Creates the Future

Shougang Park, Beijing, China
17 and 18 September, 2020





CONCEPT NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected all the aspects of urban life – economically, socially and environmentally – compelling cities around the world to adapt and demonstrate creativity and innovation to devise appropriate and effective solutions to this unprecedented situation.

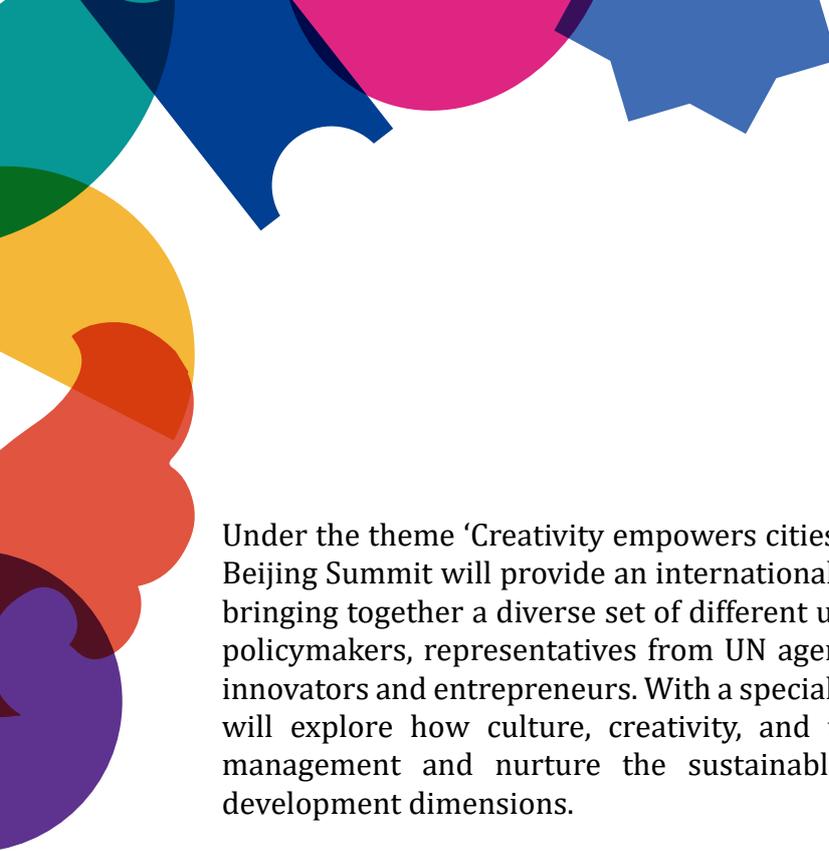
In order to better respond to the multifaceted impact of this crisis, and continue to provide essential public services to city dwellers, cities around the world have mobilized their creative and technological assets and talents, devising a wide range of measures and actions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of their proactive response, cities have transformed culture and arts into digital experiences, as well as leveraged design components and cutting-edge technology to protect the health and safety of their inhabitants, while developing and democratizing remote education and learning for all generations.

Beyond mitigating the direct effects of the crisis, the increasing use of emerging technologies and science has led cities to explore how creativity and innovation can improve urban management, with a view to building the sustainable cities of tomorrow. To implement UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular SDG 11 to 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', there is an imperative need to shape long-term strategies to allow for a smooth digital transformation based on innovative thinking.

In this context and in line with the UNESCO's transversal approach to cities and urban development, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) has served as a collaborative platform for its 246 member cities from over 80 countries, with the aim of boosting sustainable urban development powered by creativity and innovation and improving the overall life quality of their citizens.

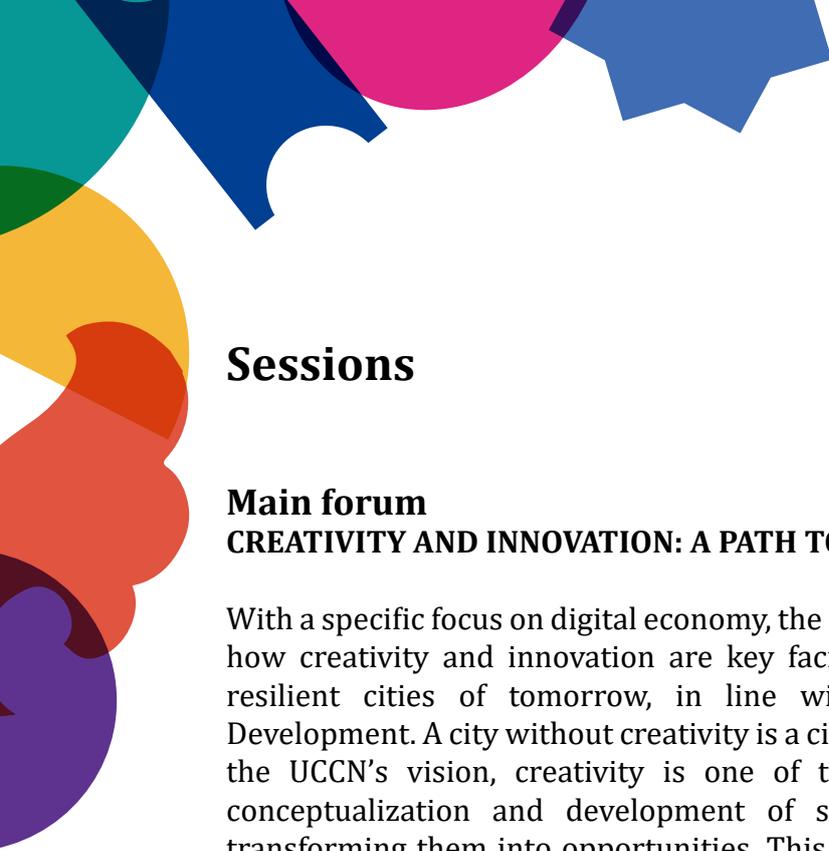
Successfully co-organized by UNESCO and the city of Beijing – a UNESCO Creative City of Design – in 2013 and 2016, the first two editions of the UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit cemented the event as a regular platform for Creative Cities to exchange their experiences and expertise as well as collectively reflect on how to best strengthen sustainability in urban development. This year, building on Beijing's strengths in science and technology, which is supported in particular by its vibrant new technology companies including sector leaders and innovative start-ups, the third UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit aims to call further for creativity and innovation in and for cities, as well as promote culture's driving role for sustainable urban development.



Under the theme ‘Creativity empowers cities, technology creates the future’, the third Beijing Summit will provide an international platform for discussion and networking, bringing together a diverse set of different urban stakeholders, including Mayors and policymakers, representatives from UN agencies, academics and experts, as well as innovators and entrepreneurs. With a special focus on the digital economy, the Summit will explore how culture, creativity, and technology can help to improve urban management and nurture the sustainable cities of tomorrow across different development dimensions.

One of the highlights of the Summit will be the launch of the latest UNESCO e-publication entitled ‘UNESCO Creative Cities Response to COVID-19’ initially available in English, French and Chinese. As a result of UNESCO’s call to its Creative Cities, this e-publication showcases good urban practices that have leveraged the power of culture and creativity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Culture and creativity have been identified as important building blocks for the future of cities, and now, amidst a global crisis, they have become more important than ever, providing an opportunity to build a better future for cities that will benefit all their inhabitants. Echoing the objectives of the Beijing Summit, this e-publication will increase the impact and outreach of the event, as well as highlight the Network’s contribution to the international community’s fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a special exhibition will be held online during the Summit, which will feature some of the most remarkable aforementioned initiatives.

In the recently published ‘UN Secretary General’s Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World’, Mr António Guterres emphasizes that ‘ensuring that innovation is integral to the design, planning and management of cities has multiple benefits’. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the UNESCO Creative Cities have been mobilized to further reinforce solidarity and collaboration within the Network and beyond. More than ever, the power of creativity and innovation should be fully supported to cope with the evolving situation, and reinforce ties between people and communities in the post coronavirus era, where new urban management systems and models underpinned by culture and empowered by creativity will rise to respond to contemporary urban challenges and opportunities.



Sessions

Main forum

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: A PATH TO THE CITIES OF TOMORROW

With a specific focus on digital economy, the Main Forum will be an occasion to discuss how creativity and innovation are key facilitators in building the sustainable and resilient cities of tomorrow, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A city without creativity is a city without a future. Sitting at the center of the UCCN's vision, creativity is one of the most powerful inspirations for the conceptualization and development of solutions to urban challenges, thereby transforming them into opportunities. This forum will highlight the enabling role of creativity and innovation in creating a path towards more sustainable development patterns for cities.

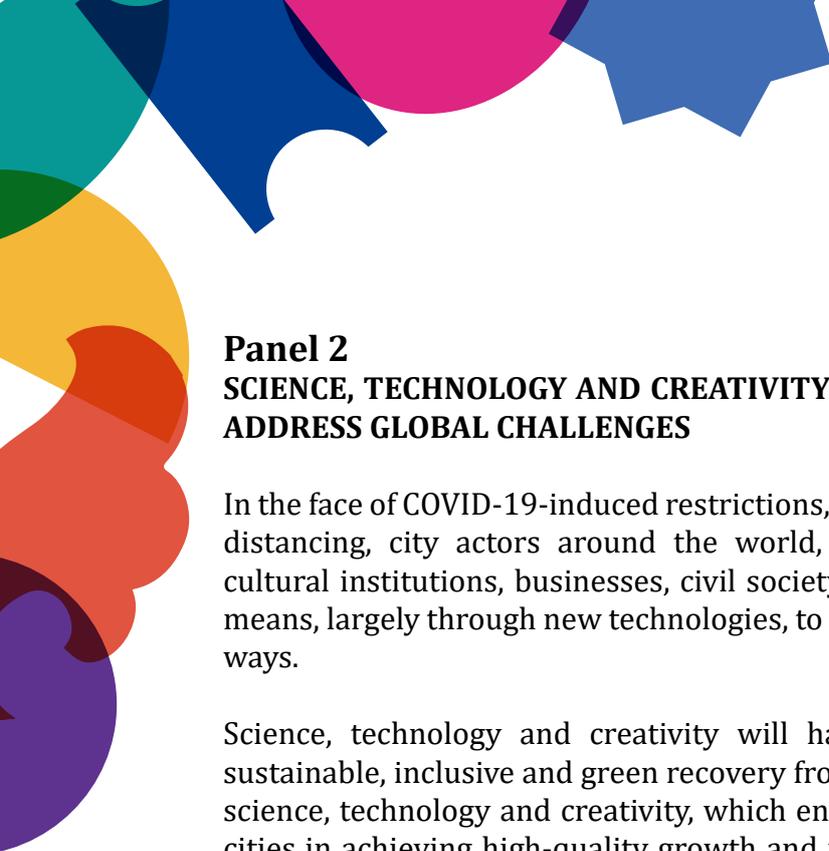
In the field of culture, creativity and innovation are key to safeguarding cultural heritage, strengthening its transmission and promotion, but also to regenerating cultural content and practices in ways that place people at their center. The Main Forum will focus on how to stimulate creativity and innovation, notably by utilizing science and technology, to foster better lives for urban dwellers.

Panel 1

CREATIVE CITIES: SHAPING A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL, LOCAL APPROACH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The first panel will focus on Creative Cities' role as hubs of creativity and innovation. Cities are the places where people, activities and resources converge, making them complex structures to be managed. Therefore, it is important to nurture multidimensional approaches for our path towards sustainable urban development.

Creativity and innovation can be utilized in all dimensions of local policies, strategies and actions. From economic development to accessing culture, education, tourism and urban infrastructure, creativity, particularly as expressed through new technologies, can facilitate the implementation of new ideas and concepts, increase their effectiveness, and improve the overall quality of the lives of city dwellers. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has made the intrinsic links between culture and the other dimensions of urban life more apparent than ever. In this regard, the discussion will revolve around the need to adopt more comprehensive and inclusive approaches to urban development.



Panel 2

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND CREATIVITY: ENABLING URBAN MANAGEMENT TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES

In the face of COVID-19-induced restrictions, often in the form of lockdowns and social distancing, city actors around the world, including mayors, local policy-makers, cultural institutions, businesses, civil society and general public, have explored new means, largely through new technologies, to maintain their activities using alternative ways.

Science, technology and creativity will have a key role to play in achieving a sustainable, inclusive and green recovery from COVID-19. This panel will discuss how science, technology and creativity, which enable and stimulate innovation, can assist cities in achieving high-quality growth and improve inhabitants' lives, by fostering a new urban development vision that emphasizes the interconnection and symbiose between people and their environment. Cross-cutting technologies with huge potential such as big data, cloud computing, blockchain and artificial intelligence, only to name a few, will be increasingly incorporated in urban management systems for the wellbeing of the their populations, particularly in the face of global challenges such as COVID-19 and climate change.

Panel 3

INTER-CITY COLLABORATION: NURTURING OPEN AND INCLUSIVE CO-DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CREATIVITY

In times of adversity, epitomized by the COVID-19 pandemic, collaboration and solidarity must prevail. This panel will focus on existing regional and international frameworks and mechanisms, such as the Belt and Road initiative and ASEAN, and how they can be utilized to promote cities as active agents for regional and international co-development, by sharing good practices and innovative policies, exchanging ideas and knowledge, and learning from each other.

To benefit all stakeholders, especially local people, this inter-city collaboration should be comprehensive and inclusive. There is a need to not only take into account the different dimensions of development but also all the stakeholders. One-sided development does not work in the long-term; only open and inclusive collaboration through innovation and creativity can drive sustainable development from a global perspective. More broadly, the panel will be dedicated to the concept of open and inclusive co-development within and across regions, which has been and will be future bolstered by inter-city cooperation.
