

Press release November 6, 2006

German Chancellor Merkel to open Urban Age Summit in Berlin

The Urban Age Summit will take place 10 – 11 November 2006 in the Deutsche Bank Atrium, Unter den Linden in Berlin.

Since 2005, the Alfred Herrhausen Society—the International Forum of Deutsche Bank—and the London School of Economics have convened world experts as part of the Urban Age initiative to debate the future of cities. Conferences were held in New York, Shanghai, London, Mexico City and Johannesburg to examine challenges of growth and governance there, while a symposium in Halle, Germany, focused on the German city network and the phenomenon of shrinking cities. The Urban Age Summit in Berlin will present the results of this two-year investigation into the future of the cities worldwide.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit will open the conference, which will include mayors, city planners and world-renowned architects like Enrique Norten and Mphete Morojele. German Transport Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee will speak about “A new spatial paradigm for Germany”. A discussion featuring the London and Mumbai police chiefs, as well as the president of the German Federal Criminal Police Office, will tackle security threats in our cities. The outgoing mayor of Washington, the governor of Sao Paulo, New York’s city planning director and the newly elected mayor of Mexico City will exchange methods of city governance. Acknowledging that the summit is being held in the German capital, editor Hans-Ulrich Jörges will chair a panel on Berlin’s future that includes UK architect Norman Foster, Axel Springer head Mathias Döpfner and *FAZ* editor Frank Schirmacher.

By 2050 two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities — making them places of hope for millions of people — and by 2020, according to UN estimates, 1.4 billion will live in slums. The boat people of the Mediterranean signal the next wave of migration that will also soon reach German cities, and last year’s images of burning Parisian suburbs are a sign of the violence to follow. All of today’s problems converge in tight spaces in cities. But are current ways of governing cities enough to address the challenges of the urban age?

Despite their problems, cities remain the economic engines of all countries. Sociologist Saskia Sassen, who coined the term “global city”, will speak about new forms of the informal economy. Hamburg-based scholar Dieter Läßle will offer the German city network as an alternative to the “global city” concept. Bogotá’s former mayor, Enrique Peñalosa, will use examples from London, Vienna and Berlin to discuss the future of public transport, while Spanish architect Alejandro Zaera-Polo will present innovative strategies for transport interchanges.

Conference participants will also debate the notion that the relationship between cities and nations must be redefined in the urban age. As laboratories of post-nationalism, today’s multiethnic and cosmopolitan world cities hold the future of human organization.

More information can be found online at www.urban-age.net.

Press must be accredited by the close of business Tuesday, Nov. 7. Please contact:

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