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UCT-led coalition rethinks the future of Africa's cities

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) [African Centre for Cities \(ACC\)](#) is spearheading a coalition of 13 leading African and global institutions, Urban2063, which has challenged Africa to rethink the future of its cities radically through the launch of [An Unstoppable Force](#) – a powerful new Cityscapes Magazine special report.

Anchored in the African Union's [Agenda 2063](#), the report delivers an unflinching assessment of the continent's urban trajectory, while offering a bold roadmap to harness urbanisation as a catalyst for inclusive growth, resilience and justice.

The report emphasises that Africa has all the ingredients it needs to chart a new path. With its resources, talent, demographic advantage and the ingenuity of its youth, the continent can turn its cities into engines of inclusive growth and opportunity. What remains missing though is leadership willing to embrace reform and act with urgency.

An additional one billion Africans will be living in cities by 2063. Yet today, over 80% of urban jobs remain informal, millions of young people grow up in slums and basic services such as housing, healthcare and education remain out of reach.

These structural failures are compounded by climate change, with 70% of African cities already classified as extremely vulnerable. In the face of this escalating crisis, the report serves as both a warning and an invitation: a call to recognise that Africa's urban future is not yet written and can still be transformed.

"By 2063, a billion more Africans will live in cities. This report is a wake-up call and a roadmap for how we can harness this transformation for dignity and justice," said Professor Edgar Pieterse, director of the ACC.

The report – through interviews with mayors, government officials, business leaders and activists, alongside provocations and think-pieces from scholars and organisers – outlines bold solutions to overcome structural challenges. It also incorporates fresh data, reporting and diverse perspectives from across the continent.

Contributors include former South African Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel, former Mozambican Prime Minister Luisa Dias Diogo, Zimbabwean activist Namatai Kwekweza, Kenyan community organiser Regina Opondo, Will Senyo of Accra Impact Hub, and the

mayors of Shaggar City, Lusaka and several other African cities. Together, they share the conviction that Africa's future lies in unlocking the transformative potential of its cities.

As protests in Nairobi, Maputo and Dakar demonstrate, Africa's youth are demanding more accountability, better services and opportunities to build their futures. The report underscores that resilience, innovation and tech fluency are not enough without structural reforms to housing, energy, education and healthcare.

With climate change threatening to make fragile urban systems even more volatile, the urgency to act is greater than ever. An Unstoppable Force urges policy makers, investors, development practitioners and citizens alike to recognise this critical moment and commit to transformative action.

The report serves as both a provocation and a reference point for policymakers, urban leaders and practitioners seeking to engage with the challenges and opportunities of Africa's urban future.

About the coalition

The [coalition](#) brings together leading institutions, including the ACC, African Climate and Development Institute, Association of African Planning Schools, ARUP – Africa Region, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (Africa chapter), Centre for Sustainability Transitions (University of Stellenbosch), Climate KIC, Club of Rome (Africa Section), Urban Futures Lab, Utrecht University, Women in Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), World Resource Institute (WRI), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), GSMA, and CS Studio.

- [Read the report.](#)

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