

**The International Social Science Council (ISSC)  
calls for applications from outstanding early career social scientists around the world**

**to become  
World Social Science Fellows**

**and participate in a  
World Social Science Seminar on**

**Sustainable Urbanization:  
Urban governance to tackle urban poverty and environmental sustainability**

**9-13 September 2015**

**Durban, South Africa**

As of 2007 the majority of the world's population of 7 billion lived in cities. The majority of the expected increase in the global population from 7 billion to 9.5 billion by 2050 will take place in the world's cities, in particular in Asian and African cities. Only 52% of the expected urban population in 2050 were alive in 2010. This means that over the next four decades the global urban population is expected to nearly double, with the vast majority of this happening in Asian and African cities. Half of this population is female, which requires specific policy and practical attention. This massive process of social transformation has major implications for how we think about poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. A business-as-usual scenario means rising urban inequality and conflicts, underpinned by accelerated resource depletion and negative carbon-induced environmental impacts.

Alternatives are unlikely to be derived top-down from global agreements or National Government policies. City-based coalitions of the willing are emerging to tackle these challenges from below in context-specific ways. If these coalitions are going to have a positive impact, much will depend on whether an alternative mode of urban governance emerges that appropriately responds to the underlying challenges by actively promoting these coalitions for change. This is why the third Sustainable Urbanization seminar is devoted to the core theme of urban governance. The core question is ***what modes of urban governance are emerging across the developed and developing world to demonstrate that it is possible to tackle the underlying challenges of urban growth, urban poverty and environmental unsustainability?***

Our discussion will be guided by the fact that the adoption of proposed Sustainable Development Goals by the UN includes an urban goal, namely Goal number 11 which states: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". This includes "enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries", as well as "by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums", "reducing the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities" and "supporting positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning".

These are certainly ambitious, but they remain vague, especially when it comes to implementation and contextual specificity. Some key questions arise: What does this mean for how cities formulate strategies and integrated development plans? What does it mean for service delivery systems, particularly given that this means supporting innovations on scale? What type of governance and institutional changes need to be implemented to foster inclusive urban sustainability processes? What does it mean for advocacy and direction, especially in societies where there is limited

democratic space for this? What does it mean for social learning through experimentation and the institutionalization of innovations?

Guided by the core question, **we are looking for talented early career social scientists to become World Social Science Fellows.** Candidates from across all world regions who are deeply familiar with their own local/regional contexts to address the challenge posed by Goal 11 are invited to apply. Their familiarity must take the form of case studies that are not merely descriptive, but rooted in a clearly articulated conceptual framework that contributes to the global debate about sustainable urbanization. It is essential that candidates are interested in developing this knowledge into new, interdisciplinary perspectives at the seminar.

We are offering the opportunity to interact with some of the leading thinkers in this area and a global group of other talented early career social scientists. This is the last seminar in a series of three on the topic of sustainable urbanization, and work at the seminar will build on work from the previous seminars. There will be a particular emphasis on the science-policy interface during this seminar, and the Cities Alliance is involved as one of the partners in the organization.

We will cover travel costs for the journey to Durban and local travel and subsistence costs for those selected as World Social Science Fellows.

Work as a World Social Science Fellow starts at the seminar, but it does not end there. We will ask all Fellows to work together during and after the seminar to develop at least one joint product presenting and discussing their main conclusions. We hope that being a World Social Science Fellow will enable you to forge new and lasting networks that can stimulate and support transformative social science research, and that the experience will provide a basis for advancing your own career as a member – and future leader – of the international social science community.

## **LOGISTICS**

**Dates:** 9-13 September 2015

**Place:** Durban, South Africa

**Agenda:** Four days of discussion on sustainable urbanization, some of it in a “traditional” academic setting, based on work submitted by Fellows. Other parts of the discussion will focus on interactive research visioning and action planning. At the end of the five days, Fellows will have a good overview of the current state-of-the-art of research as well as a vision for essential, compelling research priorities for the coming 5 to 10 years. A final, fifth, day of the seminar will take Fellows to the World Social Science Forum.

## **Selection process**

The ISSC will select a maximum of 20 early career social scientists to participate in the seminar and become World Social Science Fellows. We will seek to ensure representation from around the world and from different social science disciplines, as well as gender balance.

To be eligible to apply, you have to be:

- Deeply familiar with a local/regional context to address the challenge posed by proposed Sustainable Development Goal 11
- A post-doctoral researcher with a maximum of five years research experience following your PhD (candidates with more research experience can also be considered, if they explain why they should be eligible); or
- An early career researcher without a PhD but with an equivalent level of research experience and output;
- Under 40 years of age (candidates over the age of 40 can also be considered, if they explain why they should be eligible)

To apply for selection as a World Social Science Fellow, please submit the following, in English:

- A Curriculum Vitae of no more than 2 pages, including information about education, research projects and networks, awards and prizes and other pertinent experiences. In addition to the 2 page CV, add a list of your most important publications.
- An abstract (one page maximum) of the paper you would present at the seminar.
- A statement (one page maximum) outlining your perspective on the topic. Please highlight relevant experience you have in interdisciplinary research projects.
- Agreement from your home institution about your participation in the seminar, including a short outline of how you will share knowledge you have gained at the seminar with your colleagues/students after you return

The seminar will be held in English. Please indicate if this is a problem for you.

Applications can be submitted electronically and in one file to [Fellows@worldsocialscience.org](mailto:Fellows@worldsocialscience.org)

**Deadline for submission of applications: 8 June 2015, 00.00hrs GMT**

Successful applicants will be informed in July 2015.

*The ISSC (<http://www.worldsocialscience.org/>) is an international organisation that aims to advance the practice and use of the social and behavioural sciences in all parts of the world, and to ensure their global representation. The World Social Science Fellows Programme (<http://www.worldsocialscience.org/activities/world-social-science-fellows-programme/>) is sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida, <http://www.sida.se>). This seminar is organised in partnership with The Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP, <http://www.crop.org/>), the Urbanization and Global Environmental Change Project (UGEC, <https://ugec.org/>) and the Cities Alliance (<http://www.citiesalliance.org/>).*