# Sustainable Development Goals, Cities, and Inclusive Prosperity

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## Course Background and Purpose (DRAFT)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), were adopted by world leaders in 2015 at a historic UN summit and came into force on 1 January 2016. A set of 17 ambitious goals, the SDGs call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to enhance planetary health, prosperity and vibrancy. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling the causes and consequences of anthropomorphic (human-driven) climate change, such as rapid urbanization, excessive resource extraction, pollution emission, and inadequate conservation. But it's not just countries that need to address the goals – it's all of us, including universities.

At the same time, the world continues to urbanize. In the 100 years starting 1913, the proportion of the world's population that lives in cities grew 5-fold from 10% to 50%, and estimates suggest that 75% of the world's population will live in cities in 2050. Though history reveals that urbanization has always been an accelerator of growth and development, it also poses profound challenges for corporates, communities, cities, and countries. A recent McKinsey report succinctly notes: "Cities are essential to global economic growth and productivity. They are where most of the world's population live, work, and play, and they are important to everyone else, too. They are the world's economic engine, consuming the majority of global power and resources, while generating 80 percent of GDP and 70 percent of greenhouse-gas emissions. Making cities great is the critical infrastructure challenge of this century." Indeed, UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 focuses on "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." Because cities are often at the front line of many shocks and stresses, and contribute significantly to economic growth, addressing SDG 11 is likely to offer significant co-benefits in addressing many of the other UN SDGs.

The purposes of the course are to help students across the Global Network:

- o Critique the challenges and opportunities of the implementation of the UN SDGs in securing inclusive prosperity
- o Evaluate how local and regional context shapes the challenges and opportunities facing global cities, and how cities can be a leverage point for other SDGs
- o Develop, within a global team, recommendations to address a Resilience Hackathon posed by an NGO