



International Colloquium
"The African sustainable city: between utopia and reality"

Douala, 14, 15, 16 December 2023
Working languages: French, English and Duala

Call for papers



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1. Background

The long-awaited African renaissance is currently much more concerned with foresight, which aims to detect the explanatory elements of the evolution of a society in order to develop forecasting tools, than with reality. In an increasingly African world, sub-Saharan Africa is already a major player in the world's demography. *"The region's contribution to world population growth will continue to increase considerably, from 11% between 1960 and 1980 to 16% between 1980 and 2000, then to 28% between 2000 and 2020, reaching almost 50% between 2020 and 2050"* (Tabutin, & Schoumaker, 2020, p 224). It is now clearly established that population growth interacts with economic, social, cultural and environmental protection. After having undergone years of structural adjustment, African countries have inaugurated a neo-liberal model of strong growth but no real development, which is mainly reflected in rapid and anarchic urbanisation. *"While only 15% of the population lived in cities in the 1960s, the urbanisation rate reached 27% in the early 1990s and is currently 41%. According to the latest UN projections (2018), urbanisation is expected to continue, reaching 50% by 2035 and 58% by 2050"* (ibid, p 228). This urbanisation is particularly fuelled by population growth. *"Between 1990 and 2020, the urban population increased more than threefold (from 136 million to 459 million). More than 1.25 billion Africans will be living in cities by 2050. More than 1.25 billion Africans will be living in cities by 2050. Sub-Saharan Africa is therefore clearly becoming urbanised, and cities are expected to absorb nearly 80% of the continent's additional inhabitants by 2050"* (ibid, p 229). It is also an urbanisation that is accompanied by a ramshackle living environment, galloping unemployment, exponential urban disorder, an increasingly polluted environment, etc.

Considering the future of Africa with its current demographic growth raises questions about the way its cities will be built over the next three decades. In concrete terms, how can we think about the African cities of tomorrow? The sustainability of African cities depends on good planning that aims to put an end to slums, urban disorder and anarchic urbanisation. The planning in question here calls for land governance (Ouafi, & Assako, 2018) and requires the proper use of urban planning documents in compliance with international regulations on sustainable cities. To this end, the modalities for the implementation of sustainable cities (Esoh Elamé, 2016, 2022) in Africa can no longer be put off.

The present international colloquium, organised by the Douala 1 council municipality (Cameroon) in collaboration with the Cameroonian Society of Geographers (CGS), is an in-depth examination of sustainable cities and municipalities in Africa. The symposium is part of the *UNESCO Heritage*



for *Sustainable City (USC)* project funded by the European Commission, which aims to make the Douala I council a sustainable and smart council that cares about its tangible and intangible heritage. It is a question of broadening the focus beyond the European USC project to concentrate on the issue of the sustainable city in Africa by mobilising researchers, practitioners and experts from various backgrounds. The question of the urban identity to be built, the imperative to think today about the African city of tomorrow, are major challenges for the present generations of the black continent. The aim of this colloquium will be to address certain societal issues concerning urban development with the immediate aim of designing and proposing tools and codes for reading what the sustainable African city should be. This conference will therefore sufficiently problematize the ways of imagining the African cities of tomorrow in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. The manufacture of the urban is questioned here on a variety of themes that allow us to understand the complexity of African cities. These include:

Axis 1 –Thinking the African city of tomorrow

- The conceptualisation of the African city.
- The Intercultural African city.
- The African city and ethnic segregation.
- The postcolonial city.
- The contribution of the SDGs to the conceptualisation of the African city.

Axis 2 - Transition to sustainable African cities

- Sustainable urbanisation of African cities.
- Sustainable urban planning in African cities.
- Sustainable cities in Africa.
- Thinking the Smart City in Africa.
- Urban and peri-urban agriculture.
- Urban disorder in African cities.
- African cities and social inequalities.
- African cities and climate change.



- African cities and land issues.
- Sustainable cities and the ISO standards.

Axis 3 - Circular economy

- Decentralisation, African cities and waste management.
- Pre-collection of waste in African cities.
- Waste collection in African cities.
- Waste recycling practices in African cities.
- Landfilling in African cities.
- Wastewater treatment in African cities.
- Circular economy and ISO standardisation.

Axis 4 - Educative cities

- Cities and education for sustainable development.
- Decentralization and educational policies in African cities.

Axis 5 - Transition towards citizen cities and city diplomacy

- Participation in the decision-making process in African cities.
- Decentralisation and local development.
- Experiences of decentralised cooperation in African cities.
- Pan-Africanism and city diplomacy.
- Humanitarianism in African cities.

The list of issues presented here is of course not exhaustive. All topics related to the challenges of the African city are welcome. The conference is open to contributions that mobilise different methodologies, theoretical or empirical contributions. It is especially open to contributions from different disciplinary fields. Papers from a more critical perspective are also welcome. Disciplinary, multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research on urban issues is also expected, coming from both



theoretical analysis models, as well as empirical, field studies and practice analyses. Priority is given to the scientific quality of the work.

1. How to submit:

Proposals may be written in English, French or Duala and should not exceed 5,000 characters (including spaces). Proposals should include the following information: the title of your proposal, the abstract, 5 key words, some bibliographic references and information on the author: surname, first name of the author, status, research team, institution and e-mail.

Proposals for papers should be sent by e-mail to: colloque.usc@gmail.com

The international colloquium will be held in a hybrid mode, both in person and online. Simultaneous translations from French to Duala and from English to Duala are foreseen.

2. Calendar:

Dissemination of the call for papers:	20 March 2023
Deadline for submission of proposals:	30 April 2023
Notification to authors:	15 May 2023
Reception of communications	15 July 2023
Evaluation of communications	15 August 2023
Reception of corrected communications	5 September 2023
Publication of the proceedings	10 December 2023
Colloquium :	14, 15, 16 December 2023

3. Registration fees:

Participation in the conference is funded by the USC project of the Douala 1st council Municipality. Those registered for the colloquium will be able to participate in all activities and have access to participant materials, as well as participation in the gala dinner.

Travel and accommodation costs are at the expense of the participants. About twenty African researchers will only be able to benefit from the payment of their plane ticket to participate in the colloquium.

4. International Organizing Committee:

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