



## **The Urban melting pot: A recipe for sustainable living?**

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Many of the milestones of human development can be traced back to people assembled in groups where economies of scale, competition and social interaction stimulated innovation. Considering that more than half the global population now lives in cities and towns and that most of the growth in the global population in the remainder of this century will continue to take place in the urban environment, the question could be asked whether humankind will continue to capitalize on the traditional benefits of city life to find solutions for growing environmental challenges?

By ensuring that cities are planned and operated to make best use of the prevailing climate, resources and in a manner in which its inhabitants are safe from extreme weather and environmental events there is a good chance that cities will continue to contribute to solutions. However, if cities are allowed to develop in a haphazard manner with poorly managed infrastructure which expose citizens to the dangers of a changing climate and environmental degradation, the fight for survival will overshadow the entrepreneurial spirit.

There is now a window of opportunity for weather, climate, water and environmental scientists to contribute towards a more sustainable urban future by ensuring that services based on these sciences form an integrated part of urban development and management. WMO recognizes that the rapid urbanization will require new types of services making best use of science and technology and considers this problem as one of the main priorities. Such Integrated Urban Weather, Environment and Climate Services should assist cities in facing hazards such as storm surge, flooding, heat waves, and air pollution episodes, especially in changing climates. The talk will highlight some of the opportunities that exist in this regard.