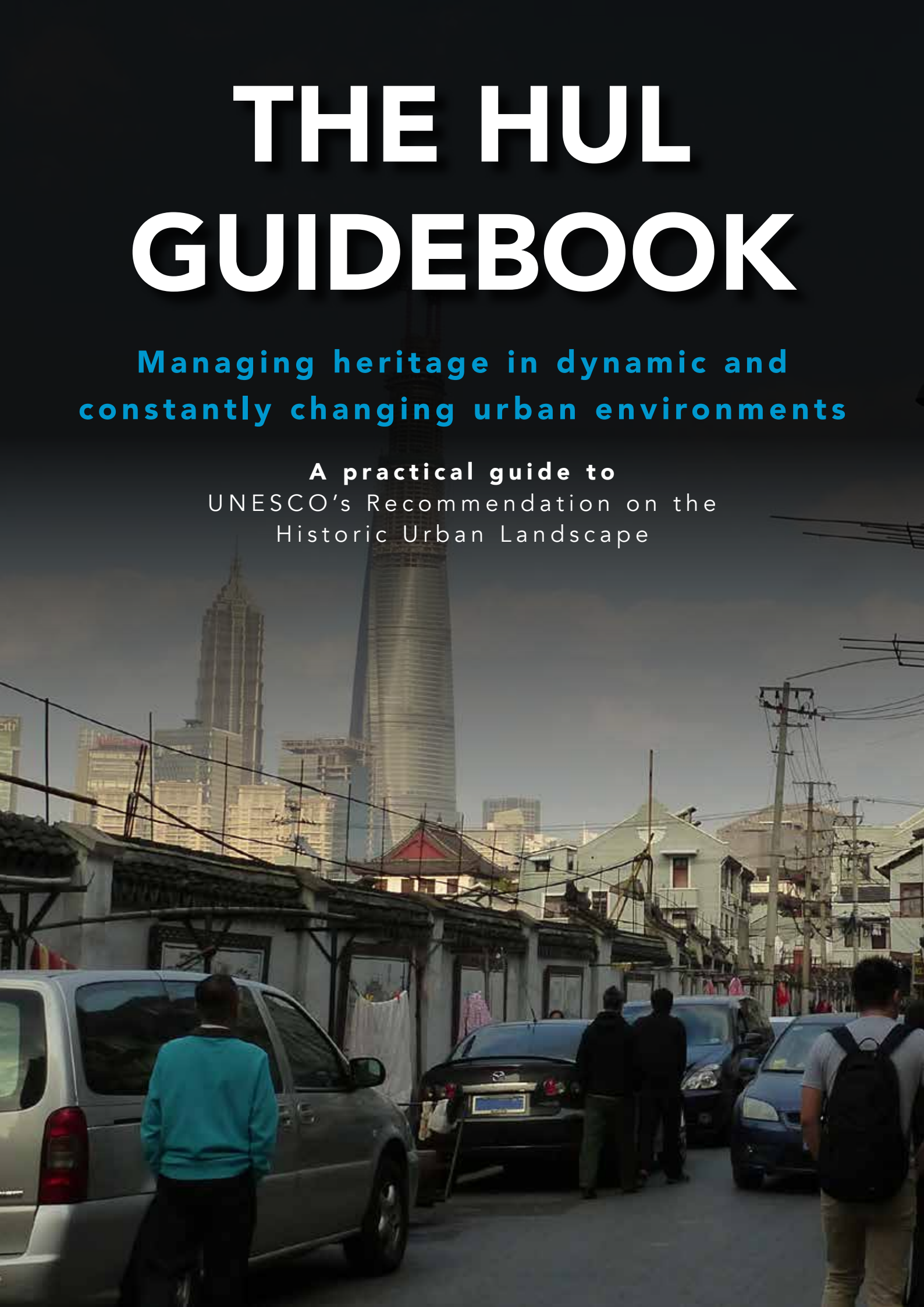
THE HUL GUIDEBOOK

Managing heritage in dynamic and constantly changing urban environments

A practical guide to
UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape



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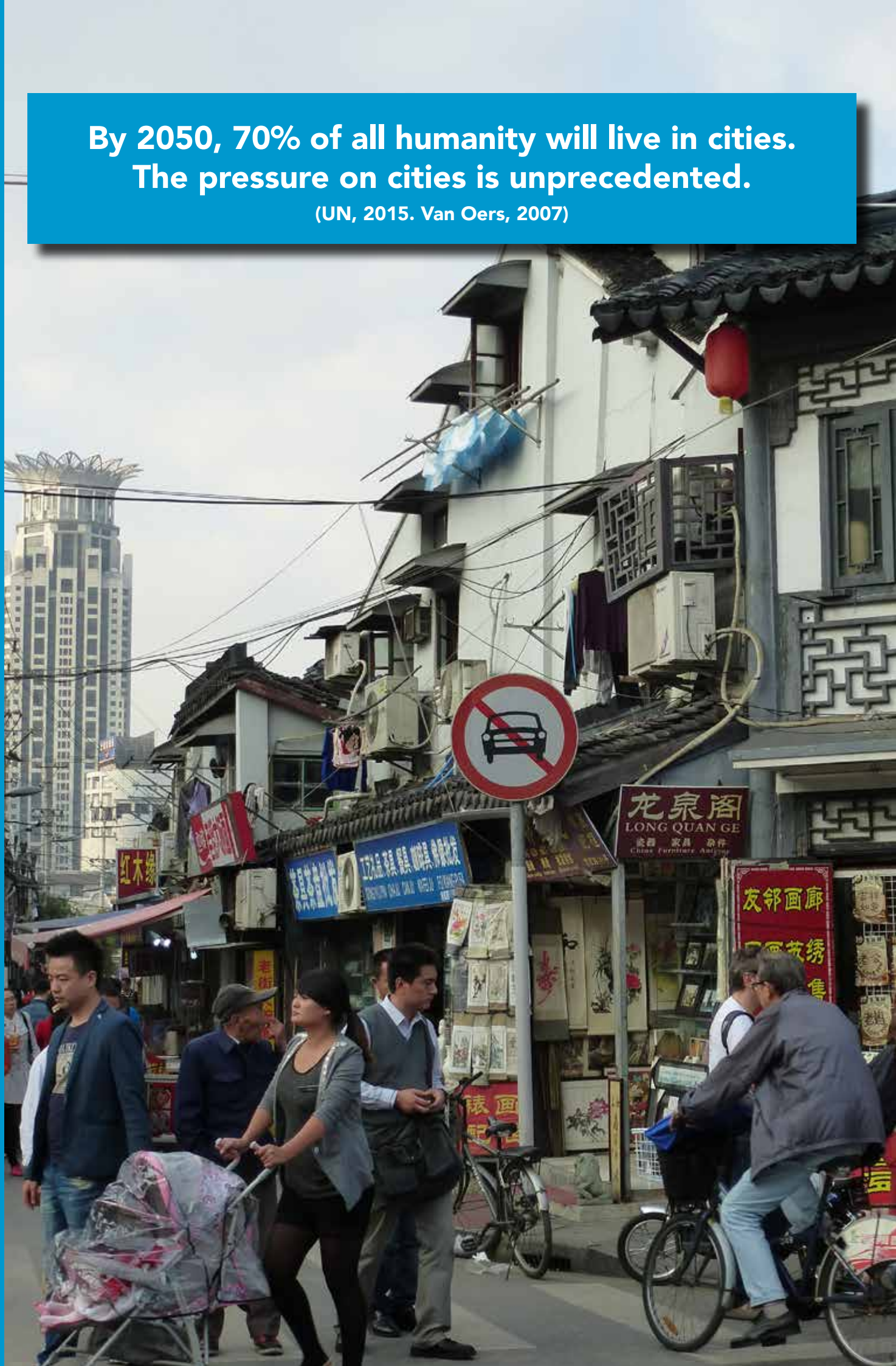
By 2050, 70% of all humanity will live in cities. The pressure on cities is unprecedented.

(UN, 2015. Van Oers, 2007)



1. ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

Introduction

Currently, more than half of the world's population lives in an urban environment or city. In today's globalizing and urbanizing world, cities play a major role within the broader international development framework, as a large number of metropolises and intermediate cities are developing at an unprecedented rate. It is projected that exponential population growth and urbanization of the world will mean that 70% of all humanity will live in cities by 2050. (UN, 2015)

Cities are of great importance to the protection of human welfare and health, the development of social creativity and cultural diversity, as well as the conservation and sustainable use of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In this sense, it is important to acknowledge cities as a vital resource for the future. Nevertheless, cities are dynamic organisms: social structures and needs are always evolving, and the physical fabric adapts constantly. It is in this context that urban conservation can be positioned to protect heritage - often with little or no integration in broader urban development considerations (Bandarin, Van Oers, 2015). Therefore, in a context where 'development' and 'urban heritage conservation' are seen as conflicting rather than cooperative processes, there was a need for an updated, integrated approach to urban management. This is how the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach was developed and adopted by the UNESCO General Conference through the 2011 *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*.

Since 2011 the HUL approach is being successfully applied in a number of cities around the world and integrated into new global approaches for sustainable cities. Though this is just the start. The future of HUL includes embedding it in multidisciplinary practice and national/regional frameworks, increasing our knowledge on its application and growing cooperative networks for cities worldwide.

What is the purpose of the 'HUL' Guidebook and who is it for?

This Guidebook delivers a practical understanding of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, along with information regarding its purpose and application. It is structured as a manual, that:

1. Equips readers with an introductory set of practical and theoretical information, including case studies of cities implementing the HUL Approach;

2. Brings together a list of experts and resources to assist with implementing the HUL Approach.

The Guidebook has been designed to assist stakeholders who wish to effectively deal with change in a way that harmonizes urban conservation with urban development and regeneration. In this sense, it is aimed at, but not limited to:

- local authorities
- government officials
- practitioners operating in the field of urban conservation or urban development
- researchers
- consultants
- University and training partners

The need for the HUL approach

Cities are centres of knowledge and cultural diversity and hubs of businesses and varied industries. They act as crucibles of change and innovation, showcasing the ways in which societies are developing. In many ways, cities are the product of both natural and human evolution. However, many cities throughout the world have been greatly affected by rapid urbanization and unsustainable development processes. Poorly planned and implemented urban growth has led to a deterioration of urban quality. Population growth, excessive building density, standardized and monotonous modern developments, a loss of public spaces and facilities, improper infrastructure, social isolation, urban poverty, an unsustainable use of resources and climate change are just a of few of the issues facing a growing number of cities worldwide. In the wake of intense globalization and an increasing demand for modernization, the local identity and visual integrity of cities, shaped by their distinctive culture and historic development, are directly impacted. Rapid uncontrolled urbanization has led to the deterioration and destruction of urban heritage, threatening the identity and local culture of communities and the sense of place in cities.

How can culture and heritage help cities in an era of globalization?

In the era of globalization, cities are increasingly competing with one another, both nationally and internationally. Globalization makes cities similar in terms of finance, information technology or patterns of modern urban development, whilst ***culture and heritage are the resources which will always distinguish them from one another.***

Culturally, vibrant cities build stimulating environments, acting as incubators for creativity and appealing to diverse groups of people. The conservation of heritage, culture and creativity in cities can help maintain and showcase their unique character, while increasing their international visibility and placing them within a global continuum. Culture-led regeneration strategies that reuse heritage buildings and engage with local citizens, for example, can reinforce local culture and a community's sense of pride and local identity.

A society's values and the way they are expressed are their culture. Cultural resources are the distinguishing feature of our cities.

A new international framework for urban development

The United Nations (UN) has convened conferences on Housing and Sustainable Development every 20 years since 1976 to stimulate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization. The 2016 conference, HABITAT III, focusses on implementation of a *New Urban Agenda* to respond to the latest challenges facing cities. It is the first major UN Conference following the approval by the General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 *Sustainable Development Goals*.

In this context, the United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) states:

"At a time when the international community is discussing future development goals, numerous efforts are focused on putting culture at the heart of the global development agenda. Culture, in its manifold expressions ranging from cultural heritage to cultural and creative industries and cultural tourism, is both an enabler and a driver of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development."

In the framework of the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNESCO launched the 'Culture for Sustainable Urban Development Initiative', to raise awareness on the contribution of culture to sustainable development in cities.