

A “GLOBAL PARLIAMENT OF MAYORS” GOVERNANCE NETWORK

Benjamin Barber

Political Theorist and Author of
If Mayors Ruled the World

Richard Florida

Director, Martin Prosperity Institute
University of Toronto

and

Don Tapscott

Executive Director
Global Solution Networks

*with Steve Caswell, Principal Researcher
Global Solution Networks*

With globalization on the one hand and the growing importance of cities on the other, there is increasing pressure to rethink the role of the nation state in global problem solving. Cities are becoming networked and collaborative in their approach to solving issues such as climate change. At the same time, cities are important nodes for localizing global solutions. Are cities becoming a critical venue for solving global problems? What roles will cities play in the future, and how can we enable the residents of urban centers to participate more effectively in global issues?

Table of Contents

Part I—The Concept

The Idea in Brief	1
Developing a Global Parliament of Mayors	2
Reasons for a Global Parliament of Mayors	3
The Global Migration to Cities and the Urban Predisposition for Problem-Solving	4
<i>Developing New Governance Models</i>	4
<i>Digital Networks, Digital Citizens and the Four Pillars of Society</i>	6
What Will the Global Parliament of Mayors Achieve?	7
How Will the Global Parliament of Mayors Operate?	8
<i>The “Soft” Governance Model</i>	9
<i>The Global Parliament of Mayors’ Online Network</i>	9
Can a Global Parliament of Mayors Be a Legitimate Form of Governance?	10
Putting It All Together: The Project Plan	11
<i>Become a Founder</i>	11
<i>The Initial Kick-Off</i>	11
<i>Developing a Constitution</i>	12
<i>Funding</i>	12
Endnotes	14

Part II—Putting the Concept Into Practice

The Idea in Brief	16
Background on the Global Parliament of Mayors	17
The Limitations of State-Based Institutions	18
The Global Migration to Cities	18
A New Role for Cities	20
Existing City Collaboration Activities	21
Global Problem Solving and Governance through Networks	22
The 10 Types of Global Solution Networks	24
Suitable GSN Types for a Global Parliament of Mayors	24
Anatomy of the Global Parliament of Mayors	26
<i>Key Characteristics that Make the GPM Unique</i>	27
<i>Sovereignty and Cooperation Issues</i>	30



Governance Models and Decision-Making	32
<i>At the Intersection of the Old and New</i>	33
<i>Soft Governance Models</i>	34
<i>Developing Real Laws</i>	34
<i>The Role of Voting</i>	35
Operating a Comprehensive Online Network	37
<i>The Central Portal</i>	37
<i>Administrative Component</i>	38
<i>Collaboration and Document Development Environments</i>	38
<i>A Knowledge Base, Wiki and Data-Driven Governance</i>	38
<i>Custom Search Engine</i>	39
<i>Digital “Brainstorming”</i>	39
<i>Learning Management System</i>	39
<i>Network of Networks</i>	39
<i>An RFP and Funding</i>	39
Achieving Legitimacy, Measuring Effectiveness and Overcoming Legacy Models	40
<i>Can Cities Provide Legitimate Leadership?</i>	40
<i>Can a Global Parliament of Mayors Be Effective?</i>	43
Civic Citizenship	43
<i>Online Citizens</i>	43
<i>Development of a Global Urban Political Party</i>	43
<i>Development of a Global Public Interest</i>	44
Endnotes	45
About the Authors	46
About Global Solution Networks	48



A “GLOBAL PARLIAMENT OF MAYORS” GOVERNANCE NETWORK:

Part I—The Concept





The Idea in Brief

Nation-states work together through multi-lateral agreements and global institutions in an effort to solve global problems and govern global resources. But states have limitations rooted in their very strengths—their independence and sovereignty—and their cooperative efforts in our new era of interdependence and globalization are increasingly insufficient and even ineffective and outmoded. The global governance network that curates the Internet itself demonstrates that new models of global governance—multi-stakeholder and not controlled by countries—can be effective and achieve broad legitimacy. The Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) represents another type of governance network with enormous potential.

More than 50 percent of the world’s population lives in cities, and this rises to almost 80 percent in the developed world. In all countries, people are migrating from rural to urban areas. The pace and complexity of urban life mean city governments must be closely involved in the day-to-day problems citizens face, such as pollution, transportation, unemployment and violence. At the same time, cities offer broad potential for citizen engagement and can facilitate collaboration amongst the companies, NGOs, learning institutions, foundations, local movements and citizens that are both their stakeholders and their constituent problem-solvers.

By studying other global governance networks and conducting a review of inter-city networks such as ICLEI, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and the UCLG, we have formulated a workable model for a proposed Global Parliament of Mayors. Rather than modeling itself on a traditional global institution, the GPM would be a network, embracing innovative global governance concepts. We propose a set of objectives and a scope of action for the parliament that make the case for a non-traditional, multi-stakeholder collaboration. It makes sense for this network to be multi-stakeholder, including not only mayors, but also key urban stakeholders beyond local government officials. Key areas of cooperation range from knowledge sharing, standards development and policy formulation, to actual solution delivery and ultimately a new model of “soft” global governance.

We also propose steps to achieve efficacy and legitimacy, and a decision-making model based on the Internet governance ecosystem’s *modus operandi* of “rough consensus and running code.” “Rough consensus” refers to the ecosystem’s underlying governing ethic in which decisions are reached by consensus rather than formal voting, while “running code” means that developing practical results drives the network’s activities.

Our proposed parliament would operate as a global urban network with a vibrant online community that collaborates on key issues 365 days a year.



Developing a Global Parliament of Mayors

In 1943 Jean Monnet, the brandy merchant visionary who would make the case for a transnational post-war Europe, spoke these prophetic words: “There will be no peace in Europe if the states are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty. The countries of Europe are too small to guarantee their peoples the necessary prosperity and social development.”

Today, in a world where nation-states are growing even more ineffective, and we see the noble European Union experiment of pooled sovereignty struggling, we can say with equal certainty that there will be no peace or prosperity or sustainable economic development on the planet on the basis of purely national or even supra-national sovereignty. Neither sovereign states nor the international institutions they build can assure human survival. So instead of looking to nation-states as the vehicle to provide top down solutions to our many 21st century problems, we need to look elsewhere for solutions to problems such as climate change, environmental sustainability, terrorism, energy usage, water availability and food production. And perhaps the best place to look is where the majority of people in the world live: cities.

In 2013, the Yale University Press published a provocative, forward-thinking book, *If Mayors Ruled the World*, written by the well-known urbanist and political theorist Benjamin Barber. Barber argued that in the face of the most perilous challenges of our time—climate change, terrorism, poverty and trafficking of drugs, guns and people—the world’s countries seem paralyzed. The problems are too big, too interdependent or too divisive. Once society’s best example of democracy, nation-states are increasingly dysfunctional. Cities, and the mayors who run them, on the other hand, can do and are doing a better job.

Cities worldwide share unique capabilities that pre-dispose them to such a role: pragmatism, civic trust, participation, indifference to borders and sovereignty, and a democratic penchant for networking, creativity, innovation and cooperation. And in many instances, city mayors, singly and jointly, are responding to transnational problems more effectively than nation-states mired in ideological infighting and sovereign rivalries. Since *If Mayors Ruled the World* was published, Benjamin Barber has been working towards launching what he calls the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), which would bring his vision into reality. Barber’s GPM would be an organization of mayors that would provide a new form of global “soft” governance based upon cooperation amongst the world’s cities. While working towards establishing the GPM, Barber enlisted the aid of: fellow urbanist, Richard Florida; Don Tapscott, a world-renowned expert on the impact of technology on society and the head of the Global Solution Networks project run by the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management; and Steve Caswell, one of the pioneers of the email industry and an expert on the design of online meeting environments.



As a result of the collaboration, the Global Parliament of Mayors concept has matured from an organization of mayors into a multi-stakeholder global solution network that would incorporate all four pillars of society: government, private enterprise, civil society and individual citizens. The GPM’s network, furthermore, would become one of the world’s most forward-looking online environments. On a local and regional level, it would connect digital citizens with city and regional governments around the world and one day would encompass millions of users, while it would also serve as the network for the GPM itself.

This paper envisions what could become a major new form of global governance that would benefit organized life on this planet, including cities, countries and international organizations.

Reasons for a Global Parliament of Mayors

There are five fundamental reasons why the world needs a Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM):

1. **Global migration to cities.** Most people live in cities, so it makes sense to concentrate problem-solving capabilities there.
2. **Urban predisposition for problem-solving.** Cities are entrepreneurial, close to the people and richly connected to a wide variety of stakeholders. They have a history of cooperation and pragmatic problem-solving.
3. **A need for experimentation with new governance models.** Traditional models of state-based global governance have struggled to advance effective solutions to many global problems, so there is an urgent need to experiment with new models. The GPM is the most promising.
4. **Digital networks.** Online collaboration technology makes it possible to operate a largely virtual parliament that would not only be more cost-effective, but more transparent, inclusive and productive.
5. **Digital citizens.** There is a large, educated and motivated population of digital citizens that could be tapped to improve urban governance.



The Global Migration to Cities and the Urban Predisposition for Problem-Solving

Currently more than half of the world’s population and close to 80 percent of people in industrialized nations live in cities. It is not surprising, then, that cities themselves have become primary centers of economic wealth production globally. Up to 80 percent of global GDP comes from metropolitan regions, and as much as 50 percent comes from the world’s 380 largest cities.¹ Furthermore, while technology may have “flattened” the world and given almost anyone the ability to work creatively from anywhere they choose, in practice, the most creative people in our societies increasingly congregate in what might be described as several dozen “mega-regions,” the concentrated areas of population that develop around major cities.

As Richard Florida points out in his book, *Who’s Your City? How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*, the top 40 mega-regions globally encompass about 18 percent of the world’s population, but account for some 66 percent of economic activity, develop 86 percent of patented inventions, and house 83 percent of the most cited scientists.² Basically, cities (and the mega-regions developing around the largest of cities) are now the primary face of governance that most people encounter in their daily lives, and also the crucial global problem solvers, which is propelling them to prominence as political, civic, cultural, economic and governance organizations.

To be sure, cities are far from perfect. One significant problem is that there is really no set of world standards associated with how cities should be governed. While some cities have great mayors and city councils, many others have weak and dysfunctional leadership. There are also few places to go to learn how to govern a city of significant size. When mayors and city councils are elected, they’re largely on their own. For city leaders there is no equivalent of a law school for lawyers or a medical school for doctors. Furthermore, while the more advanced cities are moving their operations into the 21st century, many city administrations are stuck in the 20th century, with little or no guidance for modernizing their approaches to economic development and governance.

As imperfect as the situation may be, however, it is far from bleak. Cities have a long record of improvising as required to solve problems. There is also a lengthy record of cities banding together to solve problems cooperatively. Today, for example, there is a growing number of inter-city organizations that share best practices and represent the interests of cities globally.

Developing New Governance Models

While it makes sense to look toward cities to potentially solve a number of the key problems that we now face globally, it is not enough if we expect those cities to govern using the same models of governance that we’ve used since the formation of “modern” democracies. The Internet has changed our ability to acquire information and to communicate on



a global scale. In order for the GPM to succeed, it must embrace a new governance model that leverages these Internet-based capabilities.

To that end the Martin Prosperity Institute, in a project led by Don Tapscott, has been conducting the world’s most comprehensive study of Global Solution Networks—networks that are springing up via the Internet to solve a wide variety of global problems. So far, the project has identified 10 types of Global Solution Networks:³

1. **Advocacy Networks** seek to change the agenda or policies of governments, corporations or other institutions.
2. **Diasporas** pursue problem-solving through kinship and ethnicity connections.
3. **Global Standards Networks** are non-state based organizations that develop technical specifications and standards for virtually anything, including standards for the Internet itself.
4. **Governance Networks** have achieved or been granted the right and responsibility of non-institutional global governance.
5. **Knowledge Networks** develop new thinking, research, ideas and policies that can be helpful in solving global problems. Their emphasis is on the creation of new ideas, not their advocacy.
6. **Networked Institutions** provide a wide range of capabilities similar to state-based institutions but with a very different *modus operandi*.
7. **Operational and Delivery Networks** actually deliver the change they seek, supplementing or even bypassing the efforts of traditional institutions.
8. **Platforms** create the capability for other networks to organize.
9. **Policy Networks** create government policy even though they are not networks of government policy makers.
10. **Watchdog Networks** scrutinize institutions to ensure they behave appropriately.

To succeed, the Global Parliament of Mayors will need to develop an online digital network that embodies a number of the Global Solution Network types. Specifically:

- **Governance Network**—First and foremost, the GPM would be a governance network, although it would be from the perspective of bottom up, soft governance rather than from a perspective of top down, hard governance. The GPM would establish strategies and



guidelines in a wide variety of areas and encourage its member cities to follow suit. And in doing so, it would encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing in promoting the most innovative methods for implementing urban projects and strategies. Guideline areas might include climate change strategies, energy usage, pollution levels, waste management and almost any topic associated with city management. These guidelines would not have the same force of law as what exists in nation-states. Instead, they would be implemented as city ordinances adjusted to meet local and regional environments. Nevertheless, such guidelines would likely have a huge impact on cities worldwide and would also likely influence national governments and international organizations.

- **Knowledge Network**—The GPM could become the world’s leading source of information about cities and how they function. This information would be available to the general public.
- **Operational and Delivery Network**—The GPM would provide online services to its members and, as such, would be an operational and delivery network.
- **Platforms**—The GPM would offer a version of the platform it develops for its own use to its member cities. Such a platform is increasingly needed by city and regional administrations to collaborate with their many stakeholders, especially the hundreds of millions of digital citizens who use the Internet daily.
- **Policy, Advocacy and Watchdog Networks**—The GPM would develop and promote solutions that were developed by its members. It would also serve in a watchdog capacity to monitor how these solutions were implemented.
- **Standards Network**—The GPM can aid in the development of a variety of standards that are increasingly needed on a global scale, including standards associated with how cities should be governed, and standards related to urban challenges such as water conservation, green infrastructure and climate change. The GPM should create a data bank housing such operational standards.

Digital Networks, Digital Citizens and the Four Pillars of Society

There are four recognized pillars of society: government, private enterprise, civil organizations and individual citizens. But outside of elections, city governance typically involves government administrations, private enterprise and civil organizations. Few individual citizens participate. The GPM can bring millions of digitally-empowered citizens directly into the governance process.



In terms of their access to information and their ability to communicate and collaborate, today’s Internet-enabled citizens are an order of magnitude ahead of previous generations. Empowering citizens to interact with city governments and participate in the governance process is a key GPM goal.

Citizens have proven themselves able to make measured, well-reasoned decisions about budgetary issues in cities around the world. In New York City in 2013, for example, \$14 million in public funds were allocated directly through participatory budgeting where 17,000 residents in 10 council districts helped set priorities for local infrastructure projects. The Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte has been doing participatory budgeting since 1993 and today allocates some \$43 million for public works projects that are selected by citizens in nine individual districts. In Zeguo Township, China, citizens have been convened through statistically random sampling to establish spending priorities for road-building and construction projects. The German city of Hamburg is perhaps the most technically sophisticated: its participatory budgeting exercises conducted in 2006 and 2009 featured an online budget app with sliders that citizens could manipulate up or down to increase or decrease the level of funding for 22 budget items. The site attracted 50,000 visitors who generated over 2,100 draft citizen budgets, a selection of which were published in local newspapers and used as a basis for discussion in the local parliament. If the GPM brings about such large-scale engagement on an array of issues, it would be a governance revolution.

What Will the Global Parliament of Mayors Achieve?

The GPM has eight important goals that range from practical and readily achievable to ambitious and speculative. The GPM would:

- Provide a solutions forum where cities can work together to solve many of the critical problems that nations have not yet been able to solve, such as urban pollution, climate change, inter-city criminal and terrorist activity, labor migration and undocumented immigration, water, gun control and transportation.
- Provide a governance capability where model city ordinances are crafted based on the solutions developed within the forum.
- Develop a framework for its ordinances to be implemented by member cities in a practical manner.
- Develop a “brainstorming” system that will help identify innovative ideas from around the world.
- Develop a global database of information about cities, including best practices and recommended standards for common city engineering issues, such as street



maintenance, garbage collection, recycling, sanitation, water delivery, building codes and traffic control.

- Provide city administrators with education associated with best practices for city management.
- Provide cities with a local platform that enables them to communicate effectively with their stakeholders, including private enterprise, civil organizations and individual citizens.
- Serve as a platform for existing inter-city organizations to participate within the GPM in order to collaborate and share their experiences with the global community of cities.

Can the GPM achieve these goals? It is certainly ambitious to expect the GPM to solve problems that have proven difficult for countries to solve. It is one thing for cities to cooperate to solve engineering-related problems, such as sanitation or garbage collection. It is another thing for them to grapple with problems like international terrorism or climate change. Nevertheless, it is worth the attempt, especially since there are important goals that a GPM can quite reasonably be expected to achieve, including building a worldwide database of standards and best practices and providing needed education to city managers.

How Will the Global Parliament of Mayors Operate?

The GPM’s operating structure and rules of conduct will be developed by a group of founders that will be constituted in a meeting in The Hague on September 19-21, 2014. Five principles will guide the GPM’s operation:

- The GPM must be based upon a “soft” governance model. Since it cannot pass laws that are binding on its members, it must expect its member cities to implement recommended ordinances based upon their particular needs.
- The GPM’s management will be based upon collaboration and consensus building as opposed to a top-down management style in which a group of leaders determines policy and passes it down through the ranks.
- Membership in the GPM will be multi-stakeholder and include all four pillars of society: city governments, private enterprise, civil organizations and individual citizens.
- Most of the GPM’s business will be conducted online throughout the year, allowing everyone to participate without straining city, organization or individual budgets.



- The GPM’s online solution network will be global and have multiple functions.

The “Soft” Governance Model

The imperative of governing on a global scale is the most important element of the GPM. It’s not enough that the GPM shares best practices or acts as an advocate for cities. Existing inter-city organizations already do this and it is hoped they will use the GPM’s resources to participate as key members and help meet its overall goal: developing a type of global governance emanating from the collective power of cities.

The GPM will create a new type of global governance. It will not aspire to become a surrogate top-down “world government” of cities that would displace national and international institutions, although it would certainly attempt to influence their activities. Instead, the GPM would operate bottom-up, favoring a soft governance approach based on collaboration and common ground. This type of consensus would allow cities to tailor individual solutions to particular circumstances, and thus meet the specific needs of stakeholders without giving up on common ground.

Consensus does not mean that everyone unanimously agrees. Building consensus is based upon identifying problems associated with a proposed solution and then eliminating the problems or adjusting the solutions until all of the problems have been resolved. Collaboration and consensus have worked very well as the management model used by the Internet Governance Network, which is the multi-stakeholder network that manages the Internet.⁴

The Global Parliament of Mayors’ Online Network

Legendary communication theorist Marshall McLuhan coined the term “global village” and predicted the World Wide Web in the 1960s. His most famous expression was “the medium is the message.”⁵ The GPM’s online network is the embodiment of this statement because it is the critical element that will enable the GPM to meet its goals. The GPM’s network will have the following characteristics:

- A **central portal** capability to keep everyone informed about the GPM’s activities.
- An **administrative component** to enroll new members, and to conduct a variety of business operations, such as placing ads throughout the network to help fund the GPM (obviously optional), selling GPM-branded items and specialized information reports or, providing educational services.
- A robust **collaboration and consensus building** capability that would be used by the working groups to develop policy recommendations.
- An effective **deliberation** component that assures broad debate and the airing of opposing viewpoints.



- A **document development** environment that would allow the documents supporting the solutions identified by GPM working groups to be developed in an online environment by participants from around the globe.
- A **knowledgebase or wiki** that would serve as a data base of best practices and solutions to problems developed on a worldwide scale.
- A **custom search engine** that would search across all GPM-related sites worldwide.
- A **digital “brainstorming”** system that is designed to identify innovative thinkers and their ideas associated with solving various problems facing cities.
- A **learning management system** so that educational programs can be developed to train members in using the network’s various components and to develop educational programs about the solutions to major problems developed by the GPM.
- A **“network of networks”** component so that the GPM system could be used by other inter-city organizations for their communications and also by cities to communicate with their local and regional stakeholders.

The GPM network, of course, still needs to be designed and developed. The technology required is well established. The biggest issue associated with its development is the proper funding of the staff required to operate the network and train users.

Can a Global Parliament of Mayors Be a Legitimate Form of Governance?

While there are many questions about the capacity of nations to solve global problems, there is no question about their legitimacy to address those problems, at least when they are constitutionally grounded and democratic. Cities, in contrast, lack the foundational legitimacy of nations when trying to solve global problems. Nevertheless, legitimacy is not synonymous with efficacy. Nations might have legitimacy to address problems, but that does not make them effective at doing so.

While the GPM may not have a formal legitimacy to address global problems, it could develop a significant degree of legitimacy if it were able to:

- Operate with an open, collaborative, and transparent structure.



- Include a wide variety of stakeholders in a systematic search for innovative ideas to help resolve our vexing problems.
- Avoid boundary conflicts and zero-sum games and instead focus on pragmatic problem-solving that benefits members.
- Develop solutions that contribute to solving a number of the world’s thorny problems like climate control and international terrorism.

To be sure, there is a subjective quality associated with legitimacy, which is in part a function of perception. Legitimacy is subjective, thus there is really no definitive way to “prove” a GPM’s putative legitimacy. Yet it seems clear that a GPM generating innovative ideas, helping solve global problems and making the world a more livable place would be widely viewed as legitimate.

In the final analysis, the most important factor is whether a GPM would be effective as a global problem solver, especially in the domains where nation-states have failed. When talking about whether the Global Solution Network that governs the Internet was legitimate, Internet pioneer Vint Cerf said, “This is a meritocracy... If your stuff works, you get legitimacy. If it doesn’t, you don’t.” In sum then, legitimacy does not seem to be an obstacle to success for a GPM. Indeed, its formal success is likely to be the condition of its legitimacy.

Putting It All Together: The Project Plan

The Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) is a bold and sweeping concept—call it a governance revolution—whose time has come. With our nations seemingly paralyzed and incapable of addressing our world’s most pressing problems, it is time for cities to step boldly into the breach.

Become a Founder

The initial challenge to establishing a GPM is finding the leaders who are willing to step up and get the ball rolling. It’s one thing to understand the idea and agree with it. It’s another to take steps to make it happen. Consider this document a call-to-action to become one of the founders who will join with engaged citizens and already committed mayors to make the GPM happen.

The Initial Kick-Off

The effort to launch the GPM is already underway, and a number of mayors have already expressed strong interest. Several preliminary meetings have



been held, including one in Seoul in February 2013 and another in New York in October 2013.

The next meeting, which is expected to formally launch the GPM, is scheduled for September 19-21, 2014, in Amsterdam. The meeting will be hosted by the G4 mayors of Holland (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). This planning session will be followed by an interdisciplinary workshop at Leiden University, The Hague, on Monday, 22 September. At these meetings we expect to:

- Explore the GPM concept in detail.
- Launch a planning committee to develop a constitution for the GPM.
- Introduce an initial online network that will be used to publicize the GPM and for online meetings, including development of the constitution.
- Identify partners to work on developing the GPM's more comprehensive online network.
- Establish a finance committee to solicit the funds required to operate the GPM.
- Begin publicity and member recruiting.

Developing a Constitution

The GPM is not just one more inter-city organization, so developing a constitution that manifests the GPM's sweeping vision is a daunting prospect. It has at its core the idea of changing how the world is governed. The very act of participating in such a project is both presumptuous and humbling, so the first step is to develop a constitution that makes the idea real, practical and, above all, doable.

We have proposed that the GPM sits between the classic world of management by command and control and the newly-emerging world of management by collaboration and consensus. These two worlds have two very different models of how decisions are made and how laws are adopted, and the GPM's constitution-makers will have to make a choice (if only to combine or balance the two models).

Funding

In order to launch the GPM, a number of steps are required, including:

- Establishing an initial planning and administrative team that will perform the activities required to launch the GPM (currently led by CivWorld and the Interdependence Movement housed at the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at the Graduate Center of the City University



of New York, headed by President and Founder Professor Benjamin Barber and Executive Director Eileen Woods, with an informal planning group of mayors).

- Planning for the third mayor planning meeting to be held in The Hague, September 19-21, 2014, which is currently moving forward with the G4, the office of the Mayor of Amsterdam and CivWorld.
- Developing an initial online environment that would consist of a website to explain the GPM concept, solicit membership and hold online meetings to help plan the GPM. Preliminary discussions have been held with IBM Europe and Cisco Systems, and other ICT companies will be approached.
- Publicizing the September meeting to attract as many participants as possible. Invitations have been sent to several dozen mayors already knowledgeable about the project as well as a dozen inter-city organizations and selected experts and urban professionals.
- Creating a comprehensive Request for Proposal for the GPM's online network, so that system integrators can submit appropriate bids.



Endnotes

- ¹ http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/urbanization/urban_world
- ² Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?*, Basic Books, New York, NY, 2009, Kindle location 575.
- ³ <http://gsnetworks.org>
- ⁴ See the Global Solution Network project's report titled “The Remarkable Internet Governance Network,” which is available at <http://gsnetworks.org/featured-research/>
- ⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_McLuhan



A “GLOBAL PARLIAMENT OF MAYORS” GOVERNANCE NETWORK:

Part II—Putting The Concept Into Practice



The Idea in Brief

This is Part II of a paper outlining the concept of a Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM). The GPM would be one of the 10 types of Global Solution Networks (GSNs)—a governance network.

Governance networks are radically different in form, structure, composition, decision-making and operations compared to traditional global institutions like the United Nations or World Bank. As such, the Global Parliament of Mayors would not be the creation of a new global government or institution. It is a more of a network than a government, yet it would still have “governance” capabilities. The best working example is the ecosystem that currently governs the Internet, which the GSN program calls the Internet Governance Network. It has overseen the Internet’s rise from a small and low-profile academic and military network in the early 1990s to today’s communications behemoth. It has knowledge sharing, standards, policy development, advocacy and watchdog capabilities, and it is also a delivery network because it actually delivers key functions of the Internet such as the assignment of domain names.

The GPM would not simply be a network of mayors either, but rather a network of cities working together to solve collective problems faced by their citizens and stakeholders. Further, because city governments are typically better integrated with the four pillars of society—government, private industry, not-for-profit civil organizations and citizens—the GPM would have a multi-stakeholder character. As such, the GPM is really a network of cities and their key stakeholders.

We considered calling the initiative The Global Network of Cities. At some point that may be a more accurate formulation for what we’re trying to achieve. The term “mayors” is symbolic and honors the critical role that the mayors of the world would play in launching the GPM.

A number of organizations already exist to promote inter-city cooperation and knowledge-sharing. The GPM would not compete with these. Instead, it would build on them, operating as a network of networks, and would allow each of these organizations to operate as part of a global solution network to create a single global voice representing urban interests.

The GPM would also be action-oriented and with a decision-making ethos more appropriate for networked governance. The ecosystem that governs the Internet operates largely by consensus. For example, the standards developed by the Internet Engineering Task Force are agreed to and implemented by all of the stakeholders on a consensus basis. But there is no enforcement. Stakeholders are free to choose whether they will comply. The reality is that they do because it is in their interest to do so.

The GPM’s goal is to provide cities and related inter-city organizations with a platform that they can use to magnify their own activities by working



together to create a common urban voice. The GPM can also play a leading role in helping city leaders and managers improve their own skill sets in order to have stronger, better-managed and better-governed cities.

The GPM would not replace nations and the international community. The GPM could be a catalyst to help cities, national governments and the international community work together more effectively. Almost by definition it would be based on the Internet and in addition to face-to-face meetings engage cities in 365 day a year collaboration.

This paper explores the functions of the network, how it will operate, make decisions and achieve legitimacy, and its relation to traditional states and state-based institutions.

Background on the Global Parliament of Mayors

This discussion draws heavily from two books:

- *If Mayors Ruled the World* by Benjamin Barber, which explores the concept of a Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) and is the major work associated with the underlying philosophy of the GPM. Highly recommended.
- *Who's Your City? How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life* by Richard Florida. While it doesn't address the GPM directly, it demonstrates clearly that the overwhelming majority of our most creative and productive citizens live in cities.

The Global Solution Networks project led by Don Tapscott is another source of insight, especially its two part study, “The Remarkable Internet Governance Network,” available at gsnetworks.org. The paper examines the multi-stakeholder network responsible for the Internet's rise from a small and low-profile military and academic network to today's communications behemoth. In the next decade the Internet will connect 5+ billion human users and several trillion devices.

The Internet Governance Network is the model that was used to expand the GPM proposal from a group of mayors and city managers into a multi-stakeholder network that incorporates the four pillars of society: government, private enterprise, civil organizations and individual citizens.

Another project key to this paper is an Asian Development Bank initiative to build online communication portals linking rural communities in Nepal,



Bhutan, Northern India and Bangladesh with larger cities. It will deliver services like distance education, telemedicine, e-commerce, social networking and Information Technology (IT) research. The project is part of the overall South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program.¹ Steve Caswell developed a working model of the project’s communication portal, and this work contributed greatly to the proposed GPM network.

The Limitations of State-Based Institutions

Today’s structure of global governance centered on the United Nations is inadequate to deal with today’s problems. Whether the issue is markets, capital, goods and labor, immigration, terrorism, pandemic diseases, technology or climate change, each of these is fundamentally a global, interdependent, cross-border issue. For perhaps 400 years nation-states not only had sovereign jurisdiction over such problems, but the problems themselves, with a few exceptions, largely took place inside those sovereign boundaries.

The problem is that the governments who formed the UN all act with their own sovereign self-interest at heart—as they were designed to do. Contrast this with how parliaments and legislatures function within a given country. While their members represent the interests of their own political party and the regions that elected them, each member is also expected to represent the overall interests of their country. Nations have no such expectation in relationship to the UN. This is the fundamental source of the UN’s dysfunction on issues that cut across national boundaries.

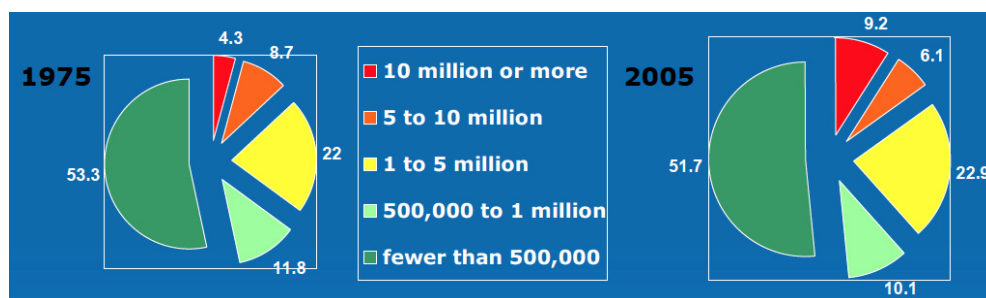
This doesn’t mean that all of the global institutions that have been established are dysfunctional. Numerous organizations affiliated with the UN, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), provide invaluable services. For example, the WHO has worked with Rotary International, the Gates Foundation, and numerous governments in a hugely successful campaign to eradicate polio.² Yet such success stories are overshadowed by the deep incapacity of sovereign nations to cooperate across their sovereign boundaries.

The Global Migration to Cities

Nation-states have been the dominant political structure globally for hundreds of years, but cities have also grown in importance. Today more than half of the world’s population lives in cities. This number is closer to 80 percent in industrialized countries.³



A recent UN study reported that there has been a slow, but steady march of people migrating to cities of larger size as shown in the following table:⁴



In 1975, for example, 53.3 percent of the world’s cities had populations of less than 500,000 people. That percentage had decreased to 51.7 percent by 2005. During the same period, the share of people living in cities of more than 5 million increased from 13 percent to 15.3 percent. In short, the world’s population is migrating to cities of increasing size.

It is not surprising, then, that cities themselves have become primary centers of economic wealth production globally. Up to 80 percent of global GDP comes from metropolitan regions, and as much as 50 percent comes from the world’s 380 largest cities.⁵ Furthermore, while technology may have “flattened” the world and given almost anyone the ability to work creatively from anywhere, in practice the most creative people in our societies increasingly choose to congregate in what might be described as several dozen “mega-regions.” These are the concentrated areas of population that develop around major cities.

According to Richard Florida’s *Who’s Your City?*, the top 40 mega-regions globally encompass about 18 percent of the world’s population, but account for some 66 percent of economic activity, develop 86 percent of patented inventions, and house 83 percent of the most cited scientists.⁶ Basically, cities (and the mega-regions developing around the largest cities) are now the primary face of governance that most people encounter in their daily lives, and also the crucial global problem-solvers, which is propelling them to prominence as political, civic, cultural, economic and governance organizations.

Historically, there are a number of well-known reasons why people moved to cities. First, businesses located their factories near major population centers to have a better supply of labor. Second, these factories attracted a continuing influx of people, creating a symbiotic relationship. Third, as wealth increased, industries developed to provide services to the people who moved to cities and were no longer producing their own food. Fourth, as these service industries grew strong and the manufacturing businesses required an increasing number of “knowledge workers” for non-manufacturing activities, cities and their developing metropolitan regions became even stronger because of such self-reinforcing industries as manufacturing, banking,

insurance, transportation, construction, maintenance, education and entertainment.

Moreover, modern engineering techniques in the 19th and 20th centuries opened the door to advances like electricity, telephones, improved garbage collection and disposal, water distribution, health care systems, travel, entertainment, computers, cell phones and advanced communications, and these in turn led to an improved standard of living and quality of life.

A New Role for Cities

In 1943 Jean Monnet, the brandy merchant visionary who would make the case for a transnational post-war Europe, spoke these prophetic words: “There will be no peace in Europe if the states are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty. The countries of Europe are too small to guarantee their peoples the necessary prosperity and social development.”

Today, in a world where nation-states are growing even more ineffective, and the noble European Union experiment of pooled sovereignty is struggling, we can say with equal certainty that there will be no peace or prosperity or sustainable economic development on the basis of purely national or even supra-national sovereignty. Neither sovereign states nor the international bodies they build can assure human survival. So instead of looking to nation-states as the only vehicle to provide top down solutions to our many 21st century problems, we need to look elsewhere for solutions to problems such as climate change, environmental sustainability, terrorism, energy usage, water availability and food production. And perhaps the best place to look is where the majority of people in the world live: cities.

To be sure, cities are far from perfect. For example, there is no set of world standards for how cities should be governed. While some cities have great mayors and city councils, many others have weak and dysfunctional leadership. There are also few places to go to learn how to govern a city of significant size. Basically, when mayors and city councils are elected, they’re largely on their own. City leaders have no equivalent of law schools or medical schools. Furthermore, while the more advanced cities are moving their operations into the 21st century, many city administrations are stuck in the 20th century with little or no guidance for how to modernize their approaches to economic development and governance.

To their credit, cities have a long record of improvising to solve problems as best they can. They also have a well-earned reputation of banding together to solve problems cooperatively. As will be discussed more fully in a moment, a growing number of inter-city organizations already share best practices and represent the interests of cities globally. Some of these could provide a basis for comprehensive training programs for city leadership and administration.

The sheer importance of cities, especially the developing mega-regions, suggests that they are key to the development of more effective and



democratic institutions. Moreover, the Internet opens the door to a variety of global solution networks (GSNs) that are changing the ways worldwide problems can be managed. As discussed later in this paper, the [Global Solution Networks](#) project has identified 10 types of GSNs.

These GSNs show how networks of stakeholders can band together to solve problems using a bottom-up, networking approach. Governance networks—communities that actually govern a resource on the planet, but are not controlled by countries—is one of these types. The most successful of these governance networks is the ecosystem that governs the Internet itself. Rather than being governed by some offshoot of the United Nations, the Internet is governed by a multi-stakeholder network consisting of private enterprise, citizens’ groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), individual citizens and governments (that do participate, but only as one of many stakeholders). One of the GSN project’s major reports, “The Remarkable Internet Governance Network,” details this network’s evolution.⁷

Using the Internet Governance Network as a model, we propose a governance network based on cities to help address the many problems besetting our world. The experience we already have of inter-city cooperation suggests this is a practical approach. Cities have worked together for many years through an array of inter-city associations in search of common solutions and shared best practices—from bike-share programs to participatory budgeting, from smart energy usage to curbing carbon emissions.

The Global Parliament of Mayors governance network would help cities improve their management through shared education and training, and offer critical data that could be used by cities globally. This will not come without major challenges. In particular, as cities improve their management capabilities and tackle new problems, they are going to require increased budgets, better technology, and increased access to and retention of highly-skilled individuals. This will be a challenge for financially strapped cities, but the reward will be substantial.

Existing City Collaboration Activities

Cities compete vigorously with one another to attract investment, film and cultural production, and major sporting events such as the World Cup and Olympics. But cities have also cooperated throughout history for trade, defense, cultural exchange and many other reasons, and exhibit a natural interdependence.

The film “300” captured the story of the Battle of Thermopylae, which took place in 480 BC.⁸ In that famous struggle, a small band of Spartans, Thespians and Thebans held off a Persian army estimated at between 100,000 and 150,000 soldiers for several days. The battle allowed the Greek city states to consolidate into a single army to fight the Persians.



Today, cities continue to forge intercity networks and associations to deal with pressing issues such as climate change, immigration policy, transportation problems and even security.

For example, the United Cities and Local Governments organization supports international cooperation between cities and their associations, and facilitates programs, networks and partnerships to build the capacities of local governments. The organization promotes the role of women in local decision-making, and is a gateway to relevant information on local government across the world. It has more than 1,000 member cities.⁹

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is a powerful collection of leading cities around the world. Started in 2005 by then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, the group grew out of climate change talks that London held with other cities with similar populations, infrastructures and budgets. It is one of the world’s most effective organizations working on climate change.¹⁰

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is a global sustainability network of more than 1,000 local governments of all sizes in 84 countries. The network claims to have instigated a movement of about 10,000 local governments that have engaged their citizens on issues such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving freshwater management and using innovative sustainability management systems.

Almost every city participates in one or more local or regional associations of cities. This large number of alliances and associations is strong evidence that cities hold substantial promise not just to set up a GPM, but to cooperate to propose solutions to many major problems.

Global Problem Solving and Governance through Networks

Emerging non-state networks of civil society, private sector, government and individual stakeholders are achieving new forms of cooperation, social change and the production of global public value. They address all of the urgent issues facing humanity from poverty, human rights, health and the environment, to economic policy, war and even the governance of the Internet itself. The Global Solution Networks project identified many of these networks and categorizes them into ten different types. A description of each type of network is presented later in this report.

In general, each type of GSN shares four characteristics and will greatly benefit from an optional fifth characteristic:

- Diverse stakeholders
- Global or multi-national in scope
- Uses digital networking



- Solves a global problem
- Operates with a “Management by Collaboration and Consensus” model (optional)

A “stakeholder” is “any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the solution of the problem addressed by the network.”¹¹ GSNs will typically have participants from at least two of the four pillars of society: government or international institutions, corporations and business interests, the civil society including NGOs and NPOs (e.g. schools & universities) and individual citizens who, thanks to the Internet, can now play an important role in solving global problems.

GSNs should also be either global or multi-national in its scope, with participants from more than one country. While many of the GSNs that have been identified in the Global Solution Networks project thus far have not been truly global in scope, if the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) were to be launched, it would have the ability to be so.

A third characteristic is that GSNs must take advantage of today’s digital networking tools to perform many, if not all, of their key functions. While that doesn’t mean that all activities must be online, it does mean that digital networking must play a key role in the organization’s operations. To date, existing city-related organizations typically are organized around face-to-face activities. While these organizations are moving toward more online activities, none has reached a status where digital networking is central to its activities.

The final characteristic—solving a global problem—means that the GSN must be focused on improving the state of the world through developing new policies and solutions. This is central to the concept of a GPM.

“The Remarkable Internet Governance Network”¹² highlighted a massive multi-stakeholder network model that holds management by collaboration and consensus as its core philosophy and in this manner governs the Internet. This style of management, which is still optional in a GSN, is in strong contrast to the industrial era’s command-and-control management style. Collaboration and consensus is well suited to networked environments.

It is important to note that the collaboration and consensus method must be defined within each organization that uses it. In general, however, it means that decisions are developed through collaboration with all of the stakeholders instead of being decided by the leaders at the top of the organization and then pushed down the chain of command. Consensus does not mean that everyone must agree with every detail before a decision is reached. Instead, consensus typically means that a decision is reached after dealing with as many objections as possible.



The 10 Types of Global Solution Networks
In order to meet its goals, the GPM would operate as a global solution network. In the Global Solution Networks project (discussed above in the section titled A New Role for Cities), ten different network types were identified:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy Networks seek to change the agenda or policies of governments, corporations or other institutions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diasporas pursue problem solving through kinship and ethnicity connections.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Standards Networks are non-state-based organizations that develop technical specifications and standards for virtually anything, including standards for the Internet itself.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Networks have achieved or been granted the right and responsibility of non-institutional global governance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Networks develop new thinking, research, ideas and policies that can be helpful in solving global problems. Their emphasis is on the creation of new ideas, not their advocacy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networked Institutions provide a wide range of capabilities similar to state-based institutions but with a very different <i>modus-operandi</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational and Delivery Networks actually deliver the change they seek, supplementing or even bypassing the efforts of traditional institutions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platforms create the capability for other networks to organize.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Networks create government policy even though they are not networks of government policy makers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watchdog Networks scrutinize institutions to ensure they behave appropriately.

Suitable GSN Types for a Global Parliament of Mayors

The Global Parliament of Mayors, like all governance networks, should have elements that draw on several global solution network types. As noted earlier, the GPM would primarily be a governance network. But it could also take on other roles in helping cities identify and resolve problems, making it also an advocacy network, a policy network, a watchdog network, a platform, a standards network, a knowledge network and an operational and delivery network.

Advocacy, Policy and Watchdog Networks

Since a GPM would govern from the bottom up, using a soft approach, it would also likely function at least in part as an advocacy, a policy and



a watchdog network. Once the GPM identified specific solutions, there would be a natural tendency to promote these solutions among its member cities worldwide, as well as to more senior levels of government, national governments and the UN. The GPM would propose policies to be adopted by governments, advocate for their implementation, and then serve as a watchdog to see that the policies were put in place.

Knowledge Network

As a natural venue for identifying and implementing innovative problem-solving ideas, the GPM would have elements of a knowledge network. The GPM could also take the lead in providing educational services to its members, who in turn could provide these services to their constituents. This domain has enormous potential for the GPM, enabling it to play a leading role in educating the general public about the issues cities face. It also affords an opportunity for cities to work closely together in identifying leading-edge research so that educational programs are fresh and up-to-date.

Operational & Delivery Network

Since cities engage in doing—not just research and thinking—a GPM would also function as an operational and delivery network by providing online services to its members. In the Global Solution Networks study, for example, there are many cases where third-party organizations have sprung up during emergencies to provide critical online services to cities. CrisisCommons.org is an example of a global solution network dedicated to emergency response. In its own words: “CrisisCommons is a global community of volunteers from technology, crisis response organizations, government agencies and citizens that are working together to build and use technology tools to help respond to disasters and improve resiliency and response before a crisis.” The GPM could identify innovative services like CrisisCommons.org and help them connect with a member city facing an emergency.

This is just one example of the potential of the GPM’s operational and delivery network (explored in the section on *Operating a Comprehensive Online Network*).

Platforms

A platform is a network that is developed for use by a global solution network. Because a GPM has the potential to incorporate thousands of cities and, as a multi-stakeholder network, millions of individual citizens and tens or even hundreds of thousands of businesses and citizens groups, it has the potential to grow to an enormous size. The only way to organize such a GPM efficiently would be through developing sub-networks at city and regional levels. The GPM would offer a version of its platform that could be implemented by a group of cities within a region or by individual member cities to interact with their regional and/or local stakeholders. Such interaction among today’s Internet-empowered citizens is increasingly becoming an urban priority.

This platform capability would allow the GPM to function as a network of networks. As innovative solutions are developed at the local level, they



would then be pushed up to the regional and national levels. Furthermore, intercity organizations like the C40 or a smaller organization like the World Mayors Council on Climate Change, might implement the platform for their members, which would allow them to then push their solutions globally to GPM members. In this way, the GPM could become a key technology provider to existing cities and intercity organizations.

Standards Network

Cities frequently work to create standards for a wide variety of activities. The online network will facilitate this important process, as it continues to participate in the development of both national and global standards.

The GPM can also become the catalyst for something that is sorely missing today: standards associated with how cities should be governed. Think about it. Where can a mayor, city council member, or city manager go to find standards associated with how a city should be run? The GPM has the opportunity to create a data infrastructure that houses common operational standards (explored in more detail in the section on *Operating a Comprehensive Online Network*).

Anatomy of the Global Parliament of Mayors

Given the existing city associations and regional alliances, why is there a need for the Global Parliament of Mayors? Don't entities such as the UCLG, C40 and ICLEI already do much of what a GPM would wish to do? The GPM would not compete with these organizations. Instead, it would build on them, operating as a “network of networks” in which each of these organizations continues to pursue its own goals, while creating a single global voice representing urban interests.

As explained above, the GPM would be a governance network. But like all governance networks it includes that capabilities of other types of global solutions networks. In helping cities identify and resolve problems it would also be policy network, an advocacy network, a watchdog network, a platform, a standards network, a knowledge network and an operational and delivery network. The GPM could also provide more traditional “governance functions” although it would be from the perspective of bottom-up, soft governance rather than top-down, hard governance. Basically, the GPM would establish guidelines in areas such as climate change, energy usage, pollution levels and waste management that it would encourage its members to follow.



The GPM’s *raison d’être* includes:

- Creating a channel for genuine local engagement in global decision making.
- Sharing know-how and resources to facilitate action on global challenges.
- Developing shared targets and objectives for major urban challenges to which cities could aspire.
- Globalizing the democracy associated with city governance and democratizing the globalization as manifested in a world of inescapable interdependence.
- Becoming such a force for international problem solving that the world’s nations and the international community would embrace.
- Exploring feasibility of implementing an actual regulatory function to help manage the behavior of key urban participants such as energy corporations.

The GPM also wouldn’t replace traditional sovereign states or state-based institutions. In fact, without their support, the GPM’s effectiveness would be seriously compromised. Nevertheless, the GPM could be a catalyst for helping national governments and the international community work together more effectively.

If there were a Global Parliament of Mayors, what might it look like? What would be its key characteristics? How would it differ from existing inter-city organizations?

Key Characteristics that Make the GPM Unique

The GPM will have several key characteristics that make it unique, including:

- Operating as a multi-stakeholder network with the four pillars of society—government, private enterprise, civil organizations and individuals—as its constituents.
- Having a primary focus on governance.
- Using a bottom-up, soft governance model that turns on collaboration and consensus that emphasizes shared practices and common ground.
- Functioning primarily as a governance network as defined by the Global Solution Networks project.

A Multi-Stakeholder Network Incorporating the Four Pillars of Society

While it is called the Global Parliament of Mayors, the GPM will be a multi-stakeholder network with a membership that encompasses the four pillars of society: government, private industry, not-for-profit civil organizations and individuals—or better, individuals understood as



citizens. As such, the Global Parliament of Mayors is really a parliament of all of a city’s stakeholders. The term “mayors” is symbolic and honors the role that the mayors of the world would play in launching the GPM. Without their active support, the GPM would never get off the ground. But the Global Parliament of Mayors would not just be a mayor’s organization. It would be an assembly of cities and all their constituents.

This GPM would give intercity cooperation a new and powerful global face by acting as a keystone in the arch of already extant inter-city associations, integrating and catalyzing their separate agendas. The GPM would function as a network of networks that would allow these inter-city organizations to form a global agenda focused on city issues.

It would also facilitate global cooperation by bringing democratic legitimacy and policy efficacy to decision making on an ever more interdependent planet, and it could help shape and amplify global public opinion in supporting sustainability, diversity, cultural creativity, justice and personal responsibility—urban public goods that turn out to be global public goods as well.

A Different Type of Governance

The GPM would create a new type of global governance. It would not aspire to become a new top-down “world government” of cities displacing national and international institutions. Instead, it would operate by bringing together the world’s urban governments, private businesses, civil organizations and citizens to solve critical challenges that other institutions have manifestly failed to meet. Each city could then issue city ordinances that would put common solutions into practice, in effect opting into shared global best practices. This type of consensus would allow cities to tailor solutions to their particular circumstances, and thus meet the individual needs of stakeholders without giving up on common ground.

The GPM would also raise the democratic visibility of the world’s cities, which, in their creativity, diversity, innovativeness, mobility, opportunity and entrepreneurship, offer hope to peoples everywhere who have grown cynical about government. Cities and their public officials retain trust levels from their constituents that higher orders of government no longer enjoy. Their global voice would give the interests of urban dwellers a global impact with unparalleled local credibility.

A governance network is a network that combines a number of the different GSN types. The ecosystem that governs the Internet is a good example. It has knowledge sharing, standards, policy development, advocacy, watchdog capabilities, and it is also an operations and delivery network because it actually delivers key functions of the Internet such as the assignment of domain names. Similarly, a governance network based on cities would combine many of the ten GSN types.

The Global Parliament of Mayors is not strictly a parliament nor is it limited to mayors. We chose the name used by Professor Barber in his book because it



already has some important momentum in the world. To be clear, while it is global it is not a parliament in the traditional sense. It is also not just mayors, but includes the collected knowledge of cities.

The Imperative of the Focus on Governance

It is unclear at this point whether rulemaking and compliance enforcement are feasible or desirable for the GPM. It would be a consensus-based organization, like the ecosystem that governs the Internet. For example, the standards developed by the Internet Engineering Task Force are agreed to and implemented by all of the stakeholders on a consensus basis. But there is no enforcement. Stakeholders are free to choose whether they will comply. The reality is that they do so because it is in their interest to do so.

The imperative of governing on a global scale is an important element of the GPM. The GPM can do much more than simply share best practices or act as an advocate for cities. Existing inter-city organizations already do this, albeit on a much smaller scale. It is hoped that these organizations will use the resources developed by the GPM to participate as key members and help meet its overall goal, developing a type of global governance emanating from the collective power of cities.

The GPM’s goal is to provide cities and their related inter-city organizations with a platform that they can use to magnify their own activities while working together to further a common urban agenda. In performing this function, the GPM can play a leading role in the critical practice of helping city leaders and managers improve their own skill sets in order to have stronger, better managed and better governed cities.

The GPM is unique because of this distinction, which mayors worldwide can relate to and have begun to embrace in practice. Mayors of even small cities are typically incredibly busy to the point that they are overburdened. The GPM must be effective in order to justify the voluntary time and energy required of its participants. The GPM’s focus on governance provides that imperative because the mayors can contribute not only to governing their own cities locally, but also to the development of global governance of a kind that facilitates local governance. The GPM can be viewed as a lens that can magnify the importance of what mayors do on a global scale, making obvious the ways in which it serves their own interests to participate.

It should be clear from this portrait that the GPM is not intended to change human nature or cure its frailties. It will not end corruption or lead to a more ethical human species. Like other human institutions (as James Madison reminded the American founders), it will work only if it serves the interests of its participants and supporters. It will attract mayors only if they believe it will serve their cities and make them more efficient and successful mayors.

With participation in the GPM a condition for good government at home, mayors could get a significant career boost from helping to solve global problems on the way to solving their own. With urban public goods and global public goods mirroring one another, those who realize the second



foster the first. That is the true meaning of a term we’ve coined—“glocality”—that describes this global nature of local activities. Glocality forms an intersection of the local and the global that can pay off within and among cities, as well as within and among the careers of urban stakeholders, including mayors themselves.

In order to meet its ambitious goals, the GPM needs one more key tool: the Internet. Both to make regular meetings of cities possible and to develop a powerful global solution network that will connect cities and their stakeholders globally, it must develop the appropriate virtual platforms.

An Online Global Solution Network

The final element in developing a GPM is a global solution network, the types of which were identified above. This comprehensive online environment will make the GPM unique. While today’s inter-city organizations all use the Internet to communicate with their members, they still primarily function based upon a face-to-face model. Their Internet activities typically involve a website, email and a blog.

The GPM will use a much more sophisticated online platform that will act as its primary form of communications with its city members and their stakeholders, and will provide for agenda-setting, collaboration, deliberation and multi-choice voting. While there will still be face-to-face meetings to assure a personal dimension to virtual relationships, they would be more to confirm decisions made online and for face-to-face networking. This online environment, including multiple uses for its underlying platform, is described later in the section on *Operating a Comprehensive Online Network*.

Sovereignty and Cooperation Issues

Cities work. There is no doubt about it. While there have certainly been some notable failures, in general, most cities get the basic job done of providing their citizens with the necessities of life. The roads get plowed in winter and repaired in summer. Electricity in industrialized cities is typically available 24/7. Water is typically clean and potable, and sanitation is relatively efficient. The people who run cities, including mayors, city council members, and city managers, are typically pragmatists with a can-do spirit based on solving problems and getting the work done—with notable exceptions, of course. In dealing with many of the problems that perplex nations in an interdependent world, cities have shown that same kind of solutions-oriented attitude—working with other cities to share best practices and to seek solutions to common problems.

While a GPM has potential to govern, it’s important to understand the limitations. Such a global network of cities will certainly not replace national governments. Sovereignty, “the quality of having an independent authority over a geographic area, such as a territory,”¹³ is the key here. Nation-states are not going away and they certainly will not be yielding sovereignty to cities. In fact, it is safe to say that without significant cooperation by national governments and the international community, the GPM would be limited in its ability to govern.



Yet cities also have jurisdictional and tax authority over their citizens, and this authority often pre-dates that of the national governments to which, over time, they became subsidiary. From this perspective, a city has legitimacy to govern, but only within its boundaries and with relation to the sovereign bodies under which it is subsumed. Their jurisdiction has traditionally been limited to local matters. But in today’s increasingly interdependent world, cities are now saddled with many of the same issues that nations have traditionally been tasked to resolve. Hence, cities naturally will seek potential solutions. And when they do it together through networks or a GPM, they are in effect sharing sovereignty through a bottom-up, soft governance approach.

Nevertheless, cities cannot and should not threaten more senior governmental structures, or usurp their sovereignty even as they play an increasingly important role in addressing global challenges. Instead, they should use the new-found power that will come from cooperating to work with nation-states and the international community to gain their cooperation in effecting change. Their new influence might also lead them to pursue a political strategy aimed at electing senior governments more in accord with their needs and norms. With a majority of citizens living in cities (up to 80% in developed democracies), it opens up a road to an “urban political party” organizing across borders to pursue common strategies enhancing their tax and jurisdictional powers. The result could be the emergence of a transnational political party with an agenda based on urban goods and priorities that are also global goods and priorities. The idea of an urban party without borders is explored in more detail later.

As cities get involved in resolving today’s pressing issues, turf wars among the players at various levels could certainly develop, especially between government agencies that see themselves as being the only ones with the authority to resolve such issues. Yet states will also be under pressure to applaud city and city-network-based solutions, especially given the likely role of today’s Internet-savvy citizens, who vote in national, regional, and local elections, and are likely to make themselves heard if they believe that senior governments are becoming obstructionist.

The bottom line: if cities succeed in cooperating to resolve important problems, senior levels of government would not want to be seen as obstructive.

What are some of the key issues cities would like to grapple with? The list would include:

- Intercity criminal and terrorist security intelligence
- Climate change
- Environmental sustainability
- Pollution control
- Labor migration (and undocumented immigration)



- Water (drought, pollution, floods)
- Agriculture and its relationship to cities
- Gun Control
- Transportation, especially containers and shipping, including security issues

While it is beyond the scope of this report to go into detail on each issue, it is not hard to see that each one is a global issue that cities can influence directly. To cite just one example, city police forces working directly together can often develop intelligence on criminal and terrorist activity in a faster, more effective manner than going up the chain of command in their respective nations and through international police agencies like Interpol.

Governance Models and Decision-Making

The Global Parliament of Mayors is at the intersection of a classic style of governance based on the traditional principles of representative democracy and of a new style of governance using modern communication tools to enhance collaboration amongst stakeholders.

The concept of representative democracy has been around since the early Greek city states and the emergence of Rome as a world power. The roots of Britain’s parliamentary system dates back to the 11th century. Over the last 200 years, however, representative democracy has spread worldwide, largely in conjunction with the rise of industrialization.

The key structures of modern representative democracies are based upon the same principle that was used to power the industrial era and the emergence of modern armies: management by command and control. In this management philosophy, organizations are structured with a clear hierarchy of control that runs from top to bottom. While representative democracies often have institutions to provide a check and balance on the exercise of power, command and control management is still paramount. The US Congress, for example, operates through a series of committees and subcommittees that draft and propose legislation. A member of the party in power chairs each committee and legislation must go through a structured hierarchy before it reaches the floor of either the Senate or House of representatives for a final vote. The parties have a structured leadership with a hierarchical chain of command.

How successful has management by command and control been? It has led to radical changes that have transformed our world in the last 150 years. To see it clearly, imagine a world with no trucks or automobiles, no automated



public transportation, no electricity, no modern mass sanitation systems and so on. Management by command and control has made them possible.

While management by command and control has been extraordinarily successful, it still has issues. Its hierarchical structure, for example, is rightly criticized for creating organizations that are slow to respond to changing conditions. Today’s Internet-based communications networks can bypass an organization’s hierarchical structure to reach faster and more accurate decisions. The Internet Governance Network is a good example. Instead of having traditional top down management, the IGN operates using a philosophy that can be called management by collaboration and consensus.

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), for example, develops virtually all of the Internet’s standards, yet has no formal membership and recognizes only individuals and not corporations or governments. If you want to participate, you just participate. The standards, moreover, are not developed in accord with any kind of voting structure. There is no equivalent of a congress or parliament that votes on the standards after they have been developed at the committee level. The standards are developed in working groups that have the motto of “rough consensus and running code”—a phrase coined by MIT scientist David Clark.¹⁴

This doesn’t mean that the IETF has no structure. It does, and the structure is very detailed. But its aim is to achieve rough consensus and working technology. Instead of establishing functions like setting the agenda, driving the process and making all the key decisions, the leaders foster a collaborative environment and steer the discussions so that all participants can work together to reach a decision. The result from the working group then moves on to become an Internet standard without having to pass through another round of formal voting by an IETF congress or parliament. (For more information on management by collaboration and consensus, see our report entitled “The Remarkable Internet Governance Network” at gsnetworks.org).¹⁵

At the Intersection of the Old and New

The GPM sits at the intersection of two management philosophies. The word “parliament” suggests it will have elements of a traditional parliament. At the same time, because it can only succeed if it becomes a global solution network, it will necessarily adopt the elements of a successful GSN.

So what might a GPM do? Stick to the tried-and-true and adopt a management by command and control structure, which would be familiar to all of the cities that would be participating? Or should it jettison the old and create a structure that is based on the new world of management by collaboration and consensus? Can it create some type of hybrid structure as an alternative? These questions must be considered closely by those planning the GPM.

It seems clear, however, that the collaboration and consensus model fits well with the soft governance model. The GPM will not be able to force



laws upon anyone and member cities will always be free to leave. These considerations make it prudent for the GPM to have a strong element of collaboration and consensus not just in developing its solutions, but also in its operational structure. Collaboration and working to reach consensus gets everyone involved and gives them a stake in the results.

It is important to keep in mind that the meaning of consensus is itself open to interpretation. The type of consensus that would work well in the GPM’s environment is based upon finding common ground on the various issues and using a variety of techniques, including voting, to identify consensus.

Soft Governance Models

Whatever management style is adopted, it will be imperative that the GPM operate with a model of soft governance: it will not be making top-down laws that are binding on its member cities. How far could it go? It could require cities to adopt certain ordinances in order to retain membership, although it is not likely that it would go even that far.

While it will likely start with a soft governance model, if it is able to solve or at least alleviate global problems, it could evolve into something less “soft,” in time playing a more top-down role in global governance.

In our interview with former UN official Nitin Desai in the Internet Governance Network project, he discussed a concept he calls “fuzzy law.” Desai, who was instrumental in creating the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) at the UN,¹⁶ says that fuzzy law allows countries to have “a margin of national interpretation” instead of being forced to adopt international laws word-for-word. In relationship to the GPM, the concept might become “fuzzy policy” instead of fuzzy law. The GPM could try to reach a broad common-ground consensus on key issues and perhaps recommend a model city ordinance associated with each issue; but it would then allow each city to develop policies or ordinances tailored to its particular circumstances.

“You need to look for something that isn’t as definite,” Desai says. “There need to be margins of interpretations. We must focus more on things that require cooperation...If we go for fuzzy law as distinct from hard law, it is possible to make a lot of headway.”

Developing Real Laws

Could a GPM enact actual laws? It would hardly be able to legislate in domains outside its jurisdiction. As we have seen, however, it could adopt city model ordinances that could be adapted by its own members to meet local conditions, and hence have tremendous influence on surrounding suburbs and metropolitan regions as well. If it adopts a “fuzzy policy” approach, allowing individual cities to adapt general ordinances to their needs, it could have enormous impact by saving cities costly staff time and legal expenses. This is a significant issue. Having the resources to develop workable ordinances is a problem that most cities face, especially since their ordinances must also meet state and national legal requirements. Simply by



providing well-thought-out model ordinances on a variety of local issues, the GPM would be providing its members with a practical and cost-saving service, especially since cities could share insights on how the ordinances were customized to meet their own specific situations.

The Role of Voting

The role of voting in a GPM is an interesting issue, grounded more in the structure of the organization and where the voting takes place than in the voting process itself. Consider a congress or parliament. Typically, the work of both bodies takes place in committees that draft the laws and then send them to the congress or parliament for a vote. Typically, those doing the final voting are not those who draft the law.

When representatives who did not work on the specific proposed law do the voting, the process can be influenced by partisan politics. Far too many of the representatives either vote based upon party lines or on a reciprocal basis (I'll vote for your bill if you vote for mine) instead of the measure's actual merits. If the GPM moves in this direction, it risks introducing partisan and personal politics into the process.

Although cities do not tend to interact in zero sum games as states and nations do (which will tend to ameliorate the worst features of representative voting) the risks remain. The only thing that may mitigate this is the fact that the committee process only involves a subset of the participants, which is why all legislation will need to be voted on by the entire body.

An alternative to a representative voting system is to allow the work to be done by the committee or group working on the issue, including the voting—although such groups generally work by consensus rather than by formal votes. When that work is completed, it may undergo a review by an independent body of the organization, but when the review is completed, the committee's result becomes policy. If there is any vote by a formal ruling group, it is almost always perfunctory because all the real approval work has already been done.

There is one requirement for this process to work properly. The committee or working group must be truly representative of stakeholders. The Internet governance network benefits from such legitimacy in developing its standards and policies. The IETF works exclusively in this manner. When working groups are established, their charter is publicly “debated” and ultimately has the support of the entire IETF through an established leadership process, with stakeholders developing a consensus position. There is no formal voting, although there are numerous and sometimes heated arguments and challenges. Collaboration does not mean that strong opinions aren't debated nor does consensus mean that everyone has to agree. (For more on how Internet standards are developed, go to the Internet Engineering Task Force at ietf.org.)



GPM's Structure and Voting Policy

While the actual structure has to be determined by the GPM's founders, it makes sense to avoid a traditional parliamentary process where representatives not engaged in developing specific policy recommendations take final votes to adopt policies recommended by the working groups (committees). Instead, working groups need to be populated by stakeholders, so that GPM members know that their own interests were carefully considered.

An infrastructure reflecting these concerns might have the following features:

- A headquarters organization whose main responsibilities are administration, education and advocacy. It might also include a technology group to develop and operate the organization's network.
- A parliament with a mix of elected city officials and stakeholders to establish the GPM's charter and guide overall operations. The parliament would not necessarily vote to approve specific working group recommendations other than to certify them for legal purposes.
- An oversight organization to ensure that working-group recommendations represent the membership accurately. If recommendations were found to lack representation, the body could send them back for further consideration. It's important to note that this body would not be substituting its opinion for the working-group's opinion, but evaluating how well the group represented the overall membership. This oversight function, incidentally, is a characteristic of a global solution governance network and is used extensively within the Internet Governance Network.
- Working-groups that would prepare the agenda and policy recommendations for the organization. Leaders would assure that groups are representative of the membership and that they act in a collaborative manner to reach a genuine consensus. They might also indicate when and why consensus cannot be reached. Inter-city organizations, such as the C40 or ICLEI, would be expected to play strong supporting roles and might even participate by contributing working-group leaders.



Operating a Comprehensive Online Network

The Global Parliament of Mayors will rely heavily on the Internet. While it would necessarily have a face-to-face meeting component—a widely recognized condition for successful on-line meetings—its main business would be conducted online to keep costs down and to facilitate wide participation.

The GPM would need a series of online applications and capabilities, including:

- A **central portal** to keep everyone informed of the GPM’s activities.
- An **administrative component** to enroll new members, and to conduct a variety of business operations, such as placing ads throughout the network to help fund the GPM (obviously optional), selling GPM-branded items and specialized information reports or providing educational services.
- A robust **collaboration and consensus building** capability to be used by the working groups.
- An effective **deliberation** component that assures broad debate and the airing of all viewpoints.
- An online **document development** environment that allows world-wide participation.
- A **knowledge base or wiki** that would be a data base of best practices and solutions.
- A **custom search engine** that would search across all of the GPM-related sites worldwide.
- A **digital “brainstorming”** system to encourage innovative thinking.
- A **learning management system (LMS)** to train members in using the network’s components and inform them about the GPM’s work.
- A **“network of networks”** component so the GPM system could be used by other intercity organizations and also by cities to communicate with their stakeholders.

The Central Portal

It will keep members informed of the GPM’s activities and could be used by the general public and experts interested in learning more about the GPM. From a technical perspective, the portal would likely incorporate some type of Content Management System (CMS) to handle updates.



The key capabilities of the CMS would be to:

- Support tens of thousands of users while also providing customizable levels of security for its varied users.
- Allow the development of a powerful administrative component through the availability of third party applications that could be plugged into the CMS.
- Integrate with a robust collaboration system, a document development environment and a digital “brainstorming” system.

Administrative Component

The administrative component would be used to conduct the GPM’s business operations and to perform key tasks like signing up new members efficiently and effectively. A flexible and robust system for creating a wide variety of membership types is critical. For example, a basic member may only have the ability to read content on the portal and to sign up for a working-group with read-only capability, while a contributing member may have the ability to read portal content and also make comments. Other categories might include an editing member with the ability to create content on certain areas of the portal.

The administrative component would be able to add applications—for example, a voting application to reach decisions about business matters online or an e-commerce app which would permit the GPM to sell branded clothing or specialized information reports.

Collaboration and Document Development Environments

There are numerous online collaboration systems as well as document development environments that could support online meetings. The collaboration environment needs to have forum capabilities, including the ability to support multiple levels of topics, to attach files to topic descriptions and comments, to allow voting either to help identify consensus or to take formal votes and to provide working group leaders with the tools to moderate discussions. Chat capabilities and a shared space with online meeting capacity would let participants communicate in real time.

The document development environment should allow people to work on shared documents and could be grounded in a robust wiki or a shared document environment such as Google Docs.

A Knowledge Base, Wiki and Data-Driven Governance

The online knowledge base and/or wiki would capture best practices and other important resources and might be coordinated with extant knowledge networks such as CityProtocol. A knowledge base is typically associated with customer service and help functions, while a wiki is more like an encyclopedia of knowledge developed by many participants. The GPM could



benefit from both, but also add the concept of a series of standards for city operations. Think of it as an International Standards Organization (ISO) for city operations. Such a knowledge base and/or wiki would become one of the most important and practical data bases in the world, and would be the start of the important concept of data-driven governance.

Custom Search Engine

Numerous websites have a search engine from a major provider that indexes its web pages. The GPM needs to go one step further and develop a custom search engine that will index the GPM site and regional and local member sites. Such a combined knowledge and wiki base will make the entire network of GPM sites a valuable repository of information on how cities operate and, in particular, on best practices and urban problem-solving.

Digital “Brainstorming”

There are a number of innovative applications that are focused on helping larger organizations identify fresh ideas and stimulate thinkers. A digital “brainstorming” system would be valuable in its own right and it would help attract new members.

Learning Management System

The GPM must not overlook the need to educate its members, stakeholders and the general public about its work. Adding an LMS to the central portal in the GPM would allow it to develop innovative educational programs. Such programs could be offered to public schools within member cities as a practical way of getting students interested in the critical issues facing cities.

The LMS could enable certification programs for city officials, including mayors, city council members and city managers. As the GPM started developing operational standards for cities, it would be a natural complement to develop certification programs based on those standards.

Network of Networks

The GPM would not just develop a network relevant to its own needs. Its city members have a need to communicate with stakeholders and citizens. Because many other organizations such as the C40 and ICLEI have limited online capabilities, they would benefit from the kind of robust network that the GPM could develop. With this in mind, the GPM might make a subset of its network available to its city members as well as to other city organizations.

An RFP and Funding

The online environment required by a GPM will be a costly proposition. While the technologies are not particularly expensive *per se*—many are free open source systems—customizing the technologies into a branded GPM environment that enables effective and democratic debate, deliberation and decision-making involving thousands of cities



will require significant evaluation, development and programming time, as will training its users. It will require administrative, content creation, programming and customer-service personnel.

Estimating a rough cost of developing and operating such a network will require a significant elaboration (and “concretization”) of the ideas put forward here. Ideally, it would involve a tech partner from the private sector engaged in the idea of a GPM and willing to undertake and underwrite the relevant tech platforms. A next step might be to develop an RFP (based on an elaboration of this report) that systems-development organizations and tech companies could use to offer proposals and a cost estimate for developing the various technologies that form the overall platform. The winning proposal would bring in a partner (or partners) to establish the technical platform(s) for the GPM.

Achieving Legitimacy, Measuring Effectiveness and Overcoming Legacy Models

Can Cities Provide Legitimate Leadership?

Legitimacy is a complex topic. In Don Tapscott’s overview paper for the Global Solution Networks program, “Global Solution Networks: Understanding the New Multi-Stakeholder Models for Global Cooperation, Problem Solving and Governance,” he defines several criteria that stakeholders and observers may use to determine whether a GSN is legitimate:

- Is there a clear definition of the mission?
- Is there a coordinating structure to ensure the network operates within the mission?
- Does it operate with openness, collaboration and transparency?
- Does it have a clear process for rule-making and decision-making?
- Does it meet contemporary moral and ethical standards?
- Does it have the “right” stakeholders to achieve legitimacy?
- Is it effective?



How might these criteria apply to a GSN of cities?

Clear Definition of Mission

Cities would have a clear definition of their mission. The GSN would identify solutions to the common problems facing cities that other institutions such as nation-states are not addressing effectively. The GPM could play a significant role in global governance.

Is There a Coordinating Structure?

The coordinating structure would be the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) itself, the potential structures of which are identified in this document.

Openness, Collaboration and Transparency

An effective GPM would need to be open, collaborative and transparent. Such principles are especially relevant to a GPM as an assembly of cities, constrained to confront global problems in a setting of multiculturalism and diversity.

That cities are rooted in multiculturalism, openness, creativity, diversity, pragmatism, interdependence and citizenship, rather than in nationalism and sovereign independence, makes this difficult task easier. While monoculturalism is a feature of most nations that often interferes with international cooperation, multiculturalism and diversity are features of the city that promote and facilitate cross-border cooperation. Cities are built on (and as) nodes of transportation, on cross-roads of every kind, whether river valleys or coastal ports. Nearly 90 percent of major cities are on water—rivers, lakes, seas or oceans. They're all about exchange—cultural exchange, trade exchange, currency exchange, labor exchange, tourist exchange—and they are natural engines of trade, interactivity, networking and communication. This makes them more appropriate as cooperative bodies than nations are.

Clear Process for Rule-Making and Decision-Making

The GPM will “govern” using what we have described as a bottom-up consensual, opt-in, soft governance approach, and not a hard, top-down, command-and-control form of governance. It would embrace Nitin Desai's concept of fuzzy law, which gives cities the flexibility to tailor ordinances or policies to their specific situations.

Meeting Contemporary Ethical and Moral Standards and Avoiding Corruption

People generally act in their own interest, if not often also with a lust for power, dominion and greed. Some, like James Madison, argue that self-interest must be at the center of a viable political system. Others think it can hobble and paralyze nations, preventing them from solving common problems. Will a GPM be any different when it comes to tough questions of property, money and power? Will money and special interests eat away at inter-city collaboration and cooperation in the same way they have eroded national governmental decision-making?



There are good reasons to think not. Most importantly, cities are not defined by borders and do not engage in as many zero sum games in the way nations typically do, except when competing for investment and economic development projects. In a zero sum game, one party benefits, while the other party has a corresponding loss. When Russia annexes Crimea, the Ukraine is diminished. When Germany grows larger as it did in the 1930s, Poland grows smaller. But Kiev and Moscow can thrive and Berlin and Warsaw can flourish without diminishing each other. Their very lack of sovereignty facilitates interaction and cooperation on numerous activities. To cite one example, while cities in California, Arizona and Texas might compete head-on to win manufacturing plants and corporate headquarters, they can also cooperate on the day-to-day operational challenges that they share.

The legacy of “Boss Tweed” is alive and well. Nevertheless, many cities are focusing on inter-city collaboration and are far more likely to eschew corruption and to settle differences peacefully. Where city officials are indicted for corrupt activities, they are typically under close oversight supervision, where transparency makes it easier to detect and root out corruption. Nowadays the web is often a source of “leaks” or whistle-blowing and hence a check on governmental abuse.

Are the “Right” Stakeholders Involved?

The GPM will bring together stakeholders such as business organizations, civil society associations, church groups, citizens’ networks and individual citizens. Though such comprehensive urban networks may seem unwieldy, other global solutions networks, including the Internet itself, have shown that such networks can operate effectively. (For more on the Internet’s governance network, see the Global Solutions Network project report, “The Remarkable Internet Governance Network.”¹⁷)

How Might A GPM Stack Up as a Legitimate Governance Network?

While there are many questions about the capacity of nations to solve/address global problems, there is no question about their legitimacy, at least when they are constitutionally grounded and democratic. Legitimacy, however, is not efficacy. Cities may lack the foundational legitimacy of the nation state (or have it through their subsidiarity to a legitimate constitutional body). Yet they not only have an indisputable efficacy in problem-solving but efficacy can in time endow them with a certain legitimacy, at least within their jurisdictional boundaries. A GPM could develop a significant degree of legitimacy if it were able to:

- Operate with an open, collaborative, and transparent structure.
- Include a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Avoid boundary conflicts and zero sum games and instead focus on pragmatic problem-solving.

To be sure, there is a subjective quality associated with legitimacy, which is in part a function of perception. Legitimacy, like beauty, appears to be to a large extent in the eye of the beholder. As such, there is really no definitive



way to “prove” a GPM’s putative legitimacy. But a GPM that generates innovative ideas and makes headway in solving global problems would be widely viewed as legitimate.

Can a Global Parliament of Mayors Be Effective?

In the final analysis, the most important factor is whether a GPM would be effective as a global problem-solver, especially in areas where nation-states have failed. When talking about whether the Internet governance network was legitimate, Internet pioneer Vint Cerf said, “It works, okay... This is a meritocracy. It doesn’t have anything to do with land grabs or anything else or declaration. It is flat out a meritocracy. If your stuff works, you get legitimacy. If it doesn’t, you don’t.” In sum, then, legitimacy does not seem to be an obstacle to success for a GPM; indeed, its success is likely to be the condition of its legitimacy.

Civic Citizenship

Online Citizens

We are seeing the rise of a new type of citizen in the 21st century. During the 20th century most citizens did not have the time, inclination or tools to become involved in urban politics. But today’s citizens have personal computers, tablets and cell phones that use the Internet to give them access to an unprecedented amount of information, instruction and guidance. These tools allow citizens to stop being passive observers and become active, engaged, participating doers. Not only are they demanding greater openness and transparency in local government, they increasingly take part in deliberating and even making decisions (e.g., participatory budgeting). It was once primarily business and not-for-profit civic organizations that influenced city government, but today the citizenry (not just a few individuals) is engaged as well.

It behooves city governments to engage active citizens to forestall the “culture of complaint” and to take advantage of allies to get things done. By offering a platform for debate both to city officials and to stakeholders, the GPM will provide city governments with a platform for their ideas and involve stakeholders, particularly the newly empowered citizen, in their work.

Development of a Global Urban Political Party

If one imagines the defining agenda of cities in helping to establish a just and sustainable world—regulating immigration, encouraging diversity, controlling climate change, regulating “wild capitalism” in its anarchic global form, preempting crises and terrorism, establishing economic and social justice—it turns out that the urban agenda is at one with the global agenda. The public goods and the rights of the city are also the public goods and rights of the planet. In addition there are a number of goals cities share that strengthen city governance: for example, redefining old cities around new metro-



region boundaries that give city government access to a broader tax and jurisdictional base, and prevent suburban “free riders” from exploiting city services without paying for them.

Such an urban agenda would be greatly aided if urban citizens were to forge a global Urban Political Party. This party would represent a massive network of citizens acting locally, regionally and globally to solve urban problems. As their common interests developed globally, they would constitute an inter-city party network that could cut across traditional liberal and conservative party lines. “Cities of the world unite: you have nothing to lose and a sustainable world to gain!” Such a party could serve as a powerful force supporting public, business and civic officials who promote urban interests.

Development of a Global Public Interest

Can a clear urban public interest become a clear global public interest? Consider that more than 50 percent of the world’s population and up to 80 percent of the developed world’s population now live in cities. A GPM underwritten by a Global Urban Party could play a critical role in creating the consciousness of interdependence through which city dwellers will develop a shared mindset.

Candidates for mayor and city council often run without political designations and are expected to focus on the issues facing them without reference to partisan political platforms. City governments already turn on coalition, compromise and pragmatism. A Global Urban Party could catalyze that tendency and turn the GPM into a major agent of political change, magnifying shared urban interests and taking them to scale globally.



Endnotes

- ¹ <http://sassec.asia> and <http://caelis.ca/index.php/projects/sassec>
- ² While the WHO and various governments typically get the credit for eradicating polio, the initial effort came from a non-governmental organization, Rotary International, which also recruited the Gates Foundation to join the campaign. For more, go to <http://www.polioeradication.org>
- ³ http://www.who.int/gho/urban_health/situation_trends/urban_population_growth_text/en/
- ⁴ https://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM_PopDist/Moreno.pdf
- ⁵ http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/urbanization/urban_world
- ⁶ Richard Florida, *Who's Your City? How the Creative Economy is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*, Basic Books, New York, NY, 2009, Kindle location 575.
- ⁷ <http://gsnetworks.org/featured-research/>
- ⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Thermopylae
- ⁹ <http://www.uclg.org/en/organisation/about>
- ¹⁰ For more detail on the C40, please see the “C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group” lighthouse case study published in the Global Solution Networks project.
- ¹¹ Julia Roloff, “Deliberative Multistakeholdernetzwerke: Informelle Kooperationen Zwischen Unternehmen, Zivilgesellschaft Und Staat,” *Forum Wirtschaftsethik* 13, no. 5 (2005): 6–19.
- ¹² Part I of the report has a detailed section beginning on page 16 that discusses the attributes of management by consensus and collaboration. Go to <http://gsnetworks.org/featured-research/>
- ¹³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty>
- ¹⁴ <http://www.ietf.org/tao.html>
- ¹⁵ <http://gsnetworks.org/featured-research/>
- ¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Governance_Forum
- ¹⁷ <http://gsnetworks.org/featured-research/>



About the Authors



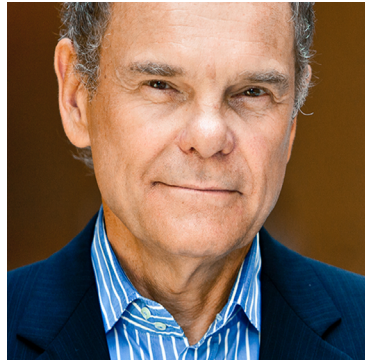
Benjamin R. Barber is a Senior Research Scholar at The Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society of The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, the President and Founder of the Interdependence Movement, and Walt Whitman Professor of Political Science Emeritus, Rutgers University. An internationally renowned political theorist and the author of 18 books including the classic *Strong Democracy*, the world-wide best-seller *Jihad vs. McWorld*, and the influential new work on which this project is founded (and forthcoming in ten languages), *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*, Dr. Barber brings an abiding concern for democracy and citizenship to issues of politics, globalization, culture and education in America and abroad. He consults regularly with political and civic leaders in the US (President Clinton, Howard Dean) and around the world (Germany, UK, Libya, Italy).



Richard Florida is recognized as one of the world’s leading urban studies theorists and is the author of several global best sellers, including the award-winning *The Rise of the Creative Class* (“one of the best business books of all time”—800-CEO-READ). He is a senior editor for *The Atlantic*,



where he co-founded and serves as Editor-at-Large for “Atlantic Cities,” the world’s leading media site devoted to cities and urban affairs, and also appears regularly on CNN and other news broadcasts and is a regular contributor to the oped pages of major newspapers and magazines. *TIME* magazine recognized his Twitter feed as one of the 140 most influential in the world. He previously taught at Carnegie Mellon University and George Mason University, and has been a visiting professor at Harvard and at MIT.



Don Tapscott is Executive Director of the Global Solution Networks program. As one of the world’s leading authorities on innovation, media and the economic and social impact of technology, he advises business and government leaders around the world. He is CEO of the think tank The Tapscott Group and has authored or co-authored 14 widely read books. In 2013, the Thinkers50 organization named him the 4th most important living business thinker. He is adjunct professor of management for the Rotman School of management and the Inaugural Fellow of the Martin Prosperity Institute, both at the University of Toronto.

Special thanks to principal researcher **Steve Caswell**, one of the early pioneers of the digital age. He was the founding editor of the *Electronic Mail and Message Systems* (EMMS) newsletter in 1977 and the author of the seminal book *Email* in 1988. As an expert in online environments, he has worked on numerous online projects, and is presently working on an Asian Development Bank project designing community portals for the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program in Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India and Bangladesh as well as an online forum for the school system in his hometown of Simi Valley, CA.



About Global Solution Networks

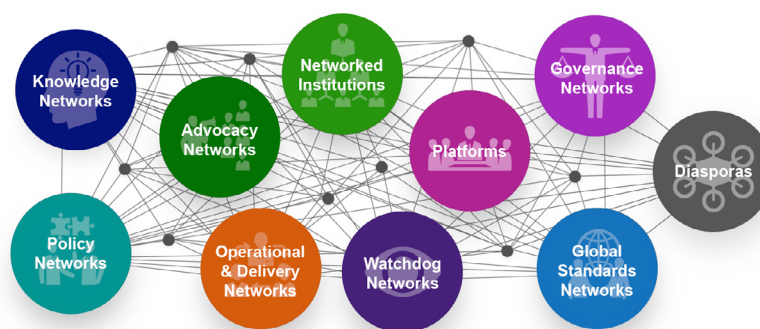
The Global Solution Networks program is a multi-million dollar investigation into new, networked models of solving global problems and governing important global resources and capabilities. The program is offered through the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto and is funded by a dozen of the world’s leading corporations as well as by the Rockefeller Foundation and several governments. This report is a deliverable from one of 40 projects that constitute the GSN program.

Program Management

Don Tapscott, Executive Director
Dr. Joan Bigham, Managing Director
Anthony Williams, Executive Editor

GSN Program Membership

Membership in the Global Solution Networks program offers unlimited access to gsnetworks.org program deliverables including project plans, research publications and multi-media presentations, all posted for member use, review and feedback. Webinars on current research are held quarterly. Please visit our web site at www.gsnetworks.org or contact info@gsnetworks.org for information on participation.



Ten Types of Global Solution Networks