

THEMATIC SESSION 3: The power of the Informal Economy

Session organized by the City of Johannesburg

Date: 18 July 2013
Time: 14:30 – 16:00
Venue: Ballroom 2

PROGRAM

Opening

Facilitator **Dr. Tami Mazwai**, Resident Executive, Witwaterstrand Business School

Speakers

- **Prof. Om Prakash Mathur**, Professor of Urban Economics, India National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), New Delhi
- **Caroline Skinner**, Senior Researcher, Urban Policies Programme, African Centre for Cities (ACC), Cape Town
- **Dr. Tania Zack**, Urban Planner, Johannesburg
- **Khalifa Ababacar Sall**, Mayor of Dakar
- **Joan Trullén**, Vicepresident of strategic planning of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona

Summary of key issues by facilitator

Panel discussion and questions from audience

SUMMARY

In developing countries, the majority of people are actually entrepreneurs, albeit illegal ones, albeit poor ones. Today, 85% of all new employment opportunities around the world occur in informal economy. In developing city contexts, young people living in slums are most likely to work in the informal sector than their non-slum counterparts. Between the years 1999 to 2000, the informal economy accounted for 42% of 23 African countries gross national product. The informal economy has emerged as a powerful force shaping cities. Seen as a pariah of the formal economy, new evidence shows how intricately the informal economy is linked to the formal economy. Little is known about cities and the informal sector. We require new knowledge and tools to plan for this economy.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

- What are the tools and new knowledge required to plan for informality?
- How can cities facilitate the growth of informal entrepreneurs in this economy?
- The informal sector in a city is a social, political and economic-transformation issue – how should a caring city address this in planning and in terms of inclusion?