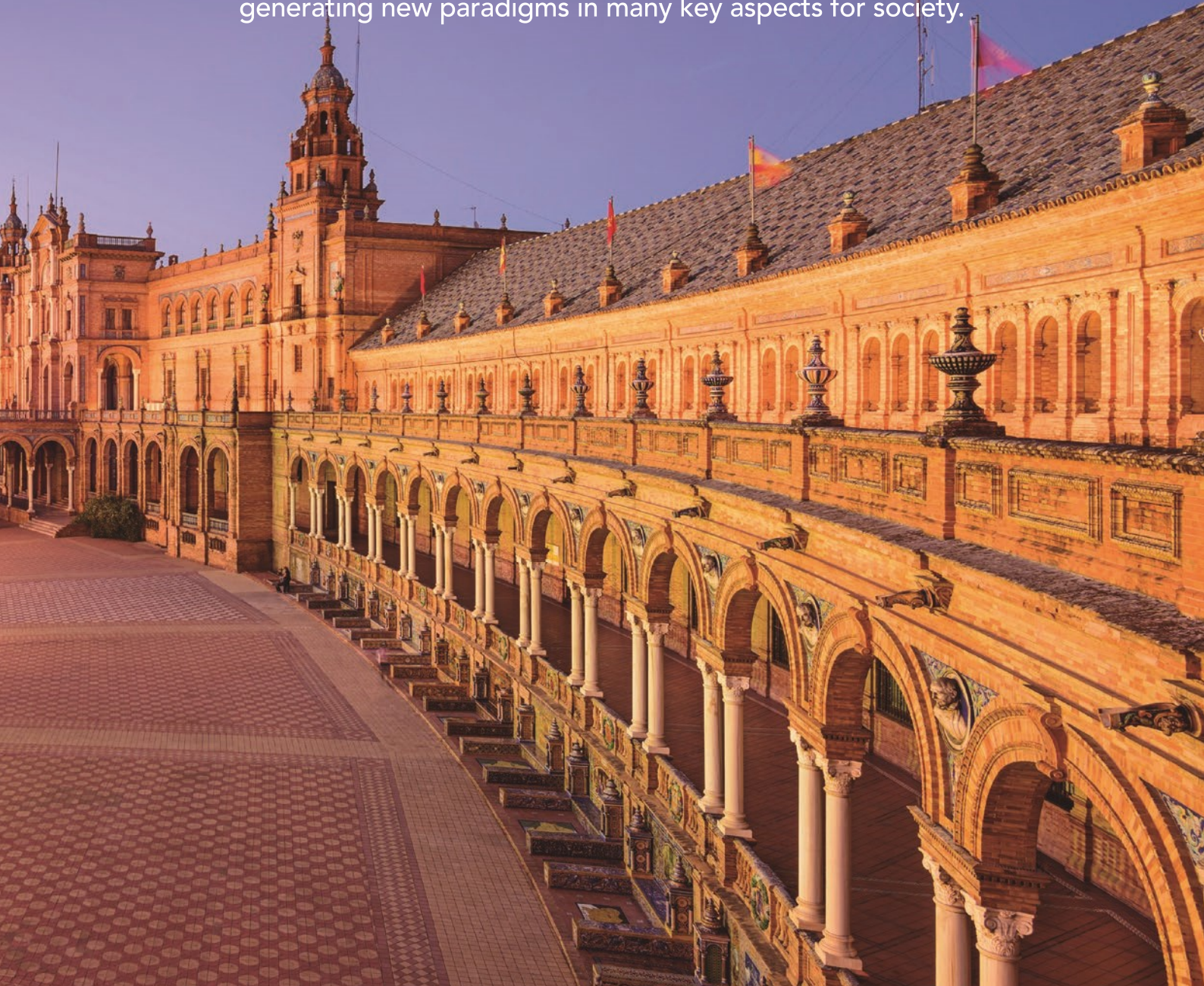


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The world is experiencing unprecedented processes of accelerated and disruptive change, in which the process of expanding and unstoppable urbanisation, the consumption of natural resources, the loss of cultural identity, the new digital technologies, the demographic challenge and depopulation are generating new paradigms in many key aspects for society.



INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) predicts that within 20 years, two-thirds of the world's population will be urban, living in cities. In Spain, this percentage has already been reached and of the country's 46,528,024 inhabitants, 80% live in urban areas, which account for just 20% of the territory. Spain is among the countries with the highest percentage of urban population in the whole European Union (EU). Of these, 25% live in urban centres with over one million inhabitants, and 17% in the largest cities. In addition, both small and large urban areas have experienced good growth rates between 2001 and 2016, which were 18.8% for small areas and somewhat lower, 16.2%, for large ones.

Never in the history of humanity have cities been as prominent as they are today. The world is urban, and so is society. Hence, global challenges of all types - social, environmental, cultural, food and health, economic and, of course, territorial - must be addressed within cities and through integrated and holistic strategies. The traditional intervention mechanisms involving both cities and the territory pose important limitations and frameworks that have been greatly outgrown. Permanent innovation also opens up new opportunities for novel ways of understanding the City and new ways of intervening in it. And we will have to rely on it.

The pressure exerted by tourism activity in many cities, the threat posed by climate change and depopulation, the intensity and speed of changes, the loss of biodiversity, the growing social inequality and the disparities and problems of conventional urban systems to offer solutions urgently require reviewing the development and growth patterns of cities because, as the UN Secretary General stated, it will be in these cities that the battle for sustainability is won or lost. This is despite the fact that the challenges and opportunities faced by cities are very different depending on their size and scale, and also on the context relevant to each.

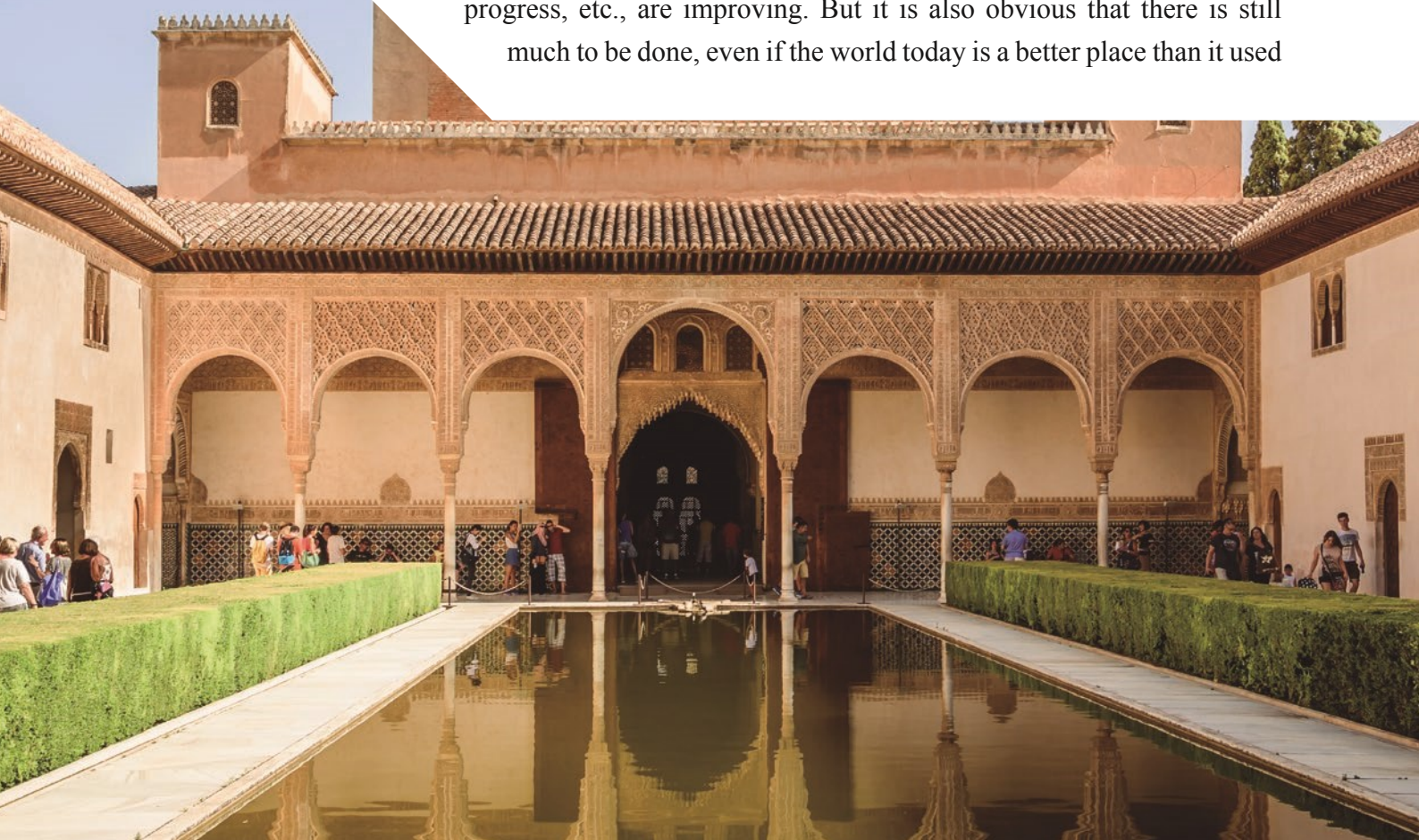
Cities in Spain conform to an urban model with very positive values that should be preserved and enhanced. It is the city that conforms to the Mediterranean model and is compact, dense, complex, medium sized, with a mix of uses, which has safe and relational urban spaces that are at the forefront of social life and that promote social diversity, all of which facilitate common development and well-being. These values, which define the DNA of the Spanish urban model that is so well known and valued, both within and outside our borders, have been ignored internally in the urban developments on the outskirts of many cities, with bland schemes, alien to their culture and lacking identity. Worst of all, they have contributed to increasing urban vulnerability, which rose by almost 50% between 2001 and 2011 (analysing the 13 largest Spanish cities, with more than 300,000 inhabitants), not as much as would seem possible as a result of the crisis that began in 2007, as the analogue of the depression of the existing city, in exchange for the apparent quality and prosperity of the new suburban areas. These have caused urban centres to lose much of their population and resources and, as shown by the studies carried out by the Ministry of Development to bring the data from the Observatory of Vulner-

able Neighbourhoods up to date, have raised the rates of inequality in cities as a whole.

The urban policies implemented on the basis of this model not only fall short of the sustainability targets contained in the international commitments that Spain has been taking on in recent years, they in fact pose real threats to said targets. These commitments include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contained in 2030 Agenda 2030, those included in the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations and the Urban Agenda for the European Union, both approved in 2016 (Quito Declaration and Amsterdam Pact, respectively), and those recognised at the Climate Summit, also known as the Paris Agreement.

Still, it is beneficial to learn from mistakes, to find best practices and success stories, including international ones, and to try to bring them to a good conclusion. And in this objective, the Spanish Urban Agenda can become an excellent opportunity to re-incorporate into the development of our cities not only the code of traditional values, which yielded such good results, but also a new one code consisting of principles, strategic goals, lines of action, rules and procedures, protocols and plans and any other elements that, in keeping with the reality of the moment, allow us to address the collective challenge of a model that is able to combine economic and social development, with a sustainable vision that combines economic prosperity, increased social welfare, a reduction in poverty, the best use of natural and technological resources, lower pollution, a cleaner environment and the preservation of cultural values.

It is evident that, on a global scale, most of the indicators related to health, food, education and culture, quality of life, peace, rights and freedoms, scientific progress, etc., are improving. But it is also obvious that there is still much to be done, even if the world today is a better place than it used



to be. Society's code of values is constantly evolving and being updated. We cannot deny advances such as environmental sensitivity (although the risk is also very high), the increasingly relevant role of women in society, the various improvements in the quality of life and the holistic view of housing - not only as a traditional and typical space devoted to physical accommodation, but as a space comprising a suitable environment that contains social welfare, health, education, communication and infrastructure services, companies and employment, etc. Perhaps the greatest risk facing the world is that, as Yuval Harari summed up, "For the first time in history, society does not know how the world will be in the next 25 years". And that is true, but the current generations have it within their power to make sure that this world is better and that, in any case, the opportunities of future generations are not compromised to find the route that, in the best way possible, will allow them to meet their own needs. That is, in essence, at the heart of the concept of sustainability.

This is why we need to be aware of global aspects from a local perspective. This places cities in a dominant position to be major players in their own sustainable development, and with it, of the development associated with each country and the planet itself. But they will not be able to do so by themselves. Governments at every level, civil society, the private sector and academia have much to say and contribute to this paradigm shift.

The Spanish Urban Agenda wants to play a modest but relevant role in this endeavour. Its planning is in keeping with the challenges posed and with the strategic vision of the two international Urban Agendas signed in 2016. It also falls within SDG 11, which seeks sustainable, inclusive, safe and resilient cities, as shown in section III, which identifies how each of its ten strategic goals is linked to the goals, objectives and lines of action of the three aforementioned international Agendas. It defines an urban model or vision that provides the desirable key aspects and it relies on a series of common principles that seek to generate a true "Operating System" for Spanish cities. It does not ignore the towns and the predominantly rural territories, which also play an important role in development and which live under the constant threat of depopulation. It also does not forget their ties to the urban areas on which they depend and which, on occasion, can threaten them. All this is set in a context that is perfectly consistent with many other SDGs that involve cities, that promotes all possible synergies, increasing with them the chances of success in the specific area of SDG 11 itself.

The Agenda is a strategic document, non-regulatory in nature, which is imbued with pragmatic approaches that are intended to be useful and, of course, consensual. It is committed to a desirable urban model for the future and seeks to set the standard for a new vision of Urban Planning, one that could be called 1.0. It will be imperfect and will undoubtedly require successive improved versions, 2.0, 3.0, etc., and this will be possible as long as the various public and private stakeholders incorporate effective implementation processes and mechanisms and reveal how much and which of its content is improvable and desirable. The flexibility of the document itself, its constantly updated content and the goal of integrating highly different sectoral views, aim to be three of its main advantages.

In any case, it is true that the new urban model does not emerge from nowhere. It is part of the urban planning tradition referred to earlier and seeks to address the main problems and challenges posed through innovative proposals.

To this end, the **Diagnosis** document - which is contained in section 02 - is particularly useful as it provides an objective analysis of the current situation. It analyses from a wide variety of aspects (ranging from demographic changes and depopulation to mobility, urban metabolism, governance and other issues) the main problems that threaten the sustainability of the Spanish urban model.

However, the central element of the Agenda are the sections devoted **to the city model** that is proposed based on the **code of values** that is reflected in the definition of the **strategic goals and lines of action** and that will be used to achieve them, in whole or in part. Each strategic goal in turn contains a series of specific goals that relate to one another and to the lines of action themselves, and which are provided as guidelines to show the way to the possible paths to take.

There is also a **system of indicators** to facilitate their implementation and the definition of a series of guidelines that will be used to **monitor and review their content**. As mentioned earlier, the Agenda seeks to be dynamic, and with good reason. Within this system, two different types of indicators stand out. On the one hand, the purely descriptive ones, which should help regional governments mainly to prepare their own Diagnoses of the situation and that will be provided by the national government; and on the other, evaluation and monitoring indicators, which are truly relevant in order to measure how effectively the Agenda is being implemented.

Finally, the **Action Plan** will be decided by the government agencies themselves, each within its own purview, and by the private sector, civil society, academia, NGOs, etc. All of them within the framework of their needs, capacities and expectations. All are, in short, the stakeholders in this Agenda, whose sole but ambitious objective is to achieve an urban model for our cities that is more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and safe, as specified in SDG 11, through a joint effort with the other SDGs related to it, all in a coordinated, conscientious, committed and voluntary fashion. Furthermore, as an internal commitment, the Urban Agenda seeks to improve the quality of life of citizens, because they are the real drivers who must promote any development policy. After all, the aim is to improve the quality of life of each individual, without forgetting that the possibility of having them share in the Agenda's advantages and gaining their enthusiasm will be an essential requirement to the Agenda's success.

In short, the Spanish Urban Agenda seeks to remedy the needs of a different era, the Anthropocene era, the age of technology, of global risks, of intense changes in how we live, of the awareness that sustainable urban development is more than a concept and that it must be reflected in how our cities are, how they are designed, what their everyday development strategies are, and what effects they

have on social cohesion and the needs of people. It is not a city planning document, but an urban document that conveys basic concepts that have international support and that takes into account the demands of citizens. But most of all, it is a document that must be implemented locally, in keeping with the territorial context of each town and city, that facilitates decision-making by officials and creates awareness among the citizens of the relevance of the urban agenda.

In short, it is a document with an inspirational and horizontal dimension that seeks to preserve the best version of our towns and cities of old, our architecture and culture and our ways of life, but improved and updated for the society of the 21st century.

SPAIN



RESIDENT POPULATION

46,528,024 inhabitants

80% live in urban areas (20% of the territory) and 18.7% are over 65 years of age.

AREA

505.944 km²

ARTIFICIAL LAND

3,9%

European average: 4,13%

DENSITY

92,02 ha/km²

GDP PER CAPITA

25.000 euros

17 AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES

2 AUTONOMOUS CITIES

8.125 MUNICIPALITIES

PLANNED CITIES

82.03% of the municipalities have a general urban planning plan.

HOUSING STOCK

25,2 million

RENTAL POPULATION

22,9%

European average: 30%