



## Press Release

### International Conference on Learning Cities

Beijing, China, 21–23 October 2013

The influence of cities in national and world affairs has increased considerably in recent years. This is partly due to the growth in the number of city dwellers. Since 2008, the majority of the world's population lives in cities. By 2030, the proportion is likely to exceed 60 per cent.

As cities expand in size and population density, local governments are facing challenges associated with social inclusion, new technologies, the knowledge economy, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability.

In response, a growing number of cities are developing innovative strategies that allow their citizens – young and old – to learn new skills and competencies throughout life, thereby transforming their cities into 'learning cities'.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning – the centre of excellence for lifelong learning for all – has taken the initiative to further develop the concept of a 'learning city' and create a dynamic international platform for cities to exchange ideas and good practices on effective approaches to building learning cities.

To tackle the challenges of rapid urbanisation through building learning cities in the international community, Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, is inviting Member States to participate in an **International Conference on Learning Cities**. The focus of this conference is on 'Lifelong learning for all: Inclusion, prosperity and sustainability in cities'.

This conference is organised by UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and the Municipal Government of Beijing. It will take place in Beijing, China, from 21 to 23 October, attended by 500 mayors, city education executives and experts from all parts of the world.

The Conference will address crucial issues such as the arguments in favour of building a learning city, the building blocks of a learning city, and strategies for building a learning city. It will also develop a set of action points to guide city governments and other stakeholders in their efforts to build learning cities.

For more information, please contact the Secretariat of the Conference – [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](http://unesco.org) (Feldbrunnenstr 58, 20148 Hamburg, Germany; Tel: +49 40 44 80 41 12; Fax: +49 40 41 077 23; E-mail: [learningcities@unesco.org](mailto:learningcities@unesco.org)).