Amman: An engine of economic growth

Date: 18th April 2019, 17:00
Location: Columbia Global Centers | Amman
Address: 5 Moh'd Al Sa'd Al-Batayneh Street | King Hussein Park – Amman, Jordan

About the event

Over the last 15 years, the population of Amman has more than doubled from around 1.94 million citizens to an estimated 4.2 million today. Through increased density and the creation of productive clusters, the process of rapid urbanisation offers the potential to stimulate economic growth as well as increases pressure on infrastructure and services. This leaves city planners and policymakers at a critical juncture, where inaction could obstruct growth or, where well-implemented, evidence-based policies could unlock a process of sustainable and inclusive development.

The "Amman: An engine of economic development" event, organised by the International Growth Centre (IGC), and co-hosted with the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) and Columbia Global Center, will focus on the economic and social challenges Amman faces as a fast-growing city as well as the opportunities to leverage its potential as a growth pole for Jordan. The event will bring together high-level academic experts, policymakers, and practitioners to confront their understanding of economic and urban challenges and investigate how current policy approaches succeed or fail to achieve greater productivity and liveability in the city.

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Programme

17.00-17.30	Registration and coffee	
17.30-17.35	**Welcome Remarks**	**Jonathan Leape** (Executive Director, International Growth Centre)
17.35-17.45	**Keynote Speech**	**HE Yousef Shawarbeh** (Mayor of Greater Amman Municipality)
17.45- 18.15	**Presentation on the challenges and opportunities of rapid urbanisation**	**Nick Tsivanidis** (Research Programme Director for Cities, International Growth Centre; UC Berkeley)
18.15-19.10	**Panel Discussion**	Chair: **Astrid Haas** (*Cities that Work* Manager, International Growth Centre) Speakers: **Susan Razzaz** (Economist, ERF) **Heike Harmgart** (Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, ERBD) **Yusuf Mansur** (Chief Executive Officer, EnConsult) **Edward Glaeser** (Research Programme Director for Cities, International Growth Centre; Harvard)
19.10-19.30	**Q&A and Closing Remarks**	
19.30-20.30	Reception	

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Speaker bios

H.E. Yousef Shawarbeh is the 40th and current mayor of Amman, Jordan. Previously, he was the Chairman of the Amman Municipal Committee. In 2016, he was appointed Minister of Political and Parliament Affairs. Shawarbehwas Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) Deputy Mayor between 2013 and 2016 and a member of GAM Council since September 2013. He holds a PhD degree in the constitutional law.

Jonathan Leape is the Executive Director of the IGC and an Associate Professor of Economics at the LSE. He was the founding director of the Centre for Research into Economics and Finance in Southern Africa, which was established at LSE in 1990 as an initiative of the Commonwealth Heads of Government to support the democratic transition in South Africa. Leape has advised a number of African governments, with a focus on tax and regulatory issues, and he served as Chief Academic Advisor on Taxation to the UK Government Economic Service.

Astrid Haas is *Cities that Work* Manager at the IGC and Senior Country Economist for IGC Uganda. Prior to joining the IGC, she worked for Innovations for Poverty Action as the Interim Deputy Country Director for Uganda as well as a Program Manager for Evidence Action, which included work in Uganda, Rwanda, and Malawi. Astrid has also worked as an analyst on a large-scale agriculture project in South Sudan and as an Overseas Development Institute Fellow in the Ministry of East African Community in Kenya.

Nick Tsivanidis is a Research Programme Director for the IGC's Cities Programme. In Fall 2019, he will join the University of California Berkeley Haas School of Business and Department of Economics as Assistant Professor.Tsivanidis is currently International Economics Fellow at Dartmouth College. His recent research includes examining the impact of Bus Rapid Transit on productivity and inequality in Bogotá, using satellite imagery and artificial intelligence to understand the dynamics of slums in Mumbai, and understanding the impact of the refugee influx on Amman.

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Susan Razzaz is an economist based in Amman. She is currently working with an inter-ministerial committee representing the ministries of planning, education, health, labour, and social assistance to develop Jordan's National Social Protection and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Susan recently retired from the World Bank where she worked in Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt,Yemen, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Her work for the World Bank covered macroeconomics as well as labour markets, poverty issues and the economic role of refugees.

Dr. Yusuf Mansur is Chief Executive Officer of Envision Consulting Group (EnConsult). Dr Mansur is former Minister of State for Economic Affairs and he served as Member of the Prime Minister's Economic Policy Advisory Committee.

Dr Mansur holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Oklahoma.

Dr. Heike Harmgart is heading the activities of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development in Jordan since the beginning of the Bank's expansion to the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Region. With the launch of EBRD's activities in the West Bank and Gaza (May 2017) and Lebanon (September 2017), Heike became the Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Prior to joining the EBRD, Heike worked several years for the Economist Group, mainly on emerging markets in the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). She holds a PhD in Economics from University College London (UCL).

Ed Glaeser is a Research Programme Director for the IGC's Cities Programme. He is the Fred and Eleanor Glimp Professor of Economics at Harvard University, where he also serves as Director of the Taubman Center for State and Local Government and the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston. He also edits the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.Glaeser studies the economics of cities, and has written several papers on urban issues, including the growth of cities, segregation, crime, and housing markets.