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San José Mayor Liccardo to Speak at Vatican Sponsored Symposium

Mayor will Speak on Urban Inequality, Human Development, and Social Inclusion

- Both days will be live streamed on the Vatican's youtube channel: [Click here to view](#)
- They will also make available photos and we will send out that link when we receive it.
- Note: Mayor Liccardo will be part of the Mayor's invited audience with Pope Francis on July 21 from 10:45 -11:15 am Rome (1:45-2:15 am Pacific time -- Rome is 9 hours ahead of Pacific time)

San Jose, Calif. – As one of a handful of U.S. mayors invited to speak, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo will participate in a global symposium on Modern Slavery and Climate Change in Rome on July 21 and 22. Sponsored by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Mayor Liccardo will join nine U.S. Mayors in addressing issues related to human trafficking and climate change and the role cities play in this global effort.

No taxpayer money will be spent on this trip. Mayor Liccardo will travel to the Vatican to participate in a best practices summit with Mayors from around the world. The panel Mayor Liccardo is speaking on will discuss the topic of urban inequality, human development and social inclusion. Among those participating with the Mayor for this panel on July 22 are the mayors of Accra, Ghana, Stockholm, Sweden, Medellin, Columbia and Libreville, Gabon as well as Cardinal Francesco Montenegro.

"The City of San José has long embraced the challenges of sustainable development by focusing on building a community accessible to all of our residents, regardless of their socioeconomic status," said Mayor Sam Liccardo. "Building a safe, vibrant, and sustainable community that everyone can call home is chief among my priorities as Mayor and I am honored to have been invited to share how we are tackling the challenges of urban inequality and social inclusion in the most innovative way possible."

"As Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, I want to warmly welcome the mayors to the Vatican on July 21-22 for a candid and courageous conversation about ending social and environmental exploitation, two major global crises that remain pervasive and largely unmitigated," said Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo ([Bio](#) of the Main Vatican Host for July 21-22). "As the legitimate representatives of their citizens, Mayors are well-positioned to educate, empower and engage them around the world to prevent any further objectification of people and the planet. The time is now for local leadership. Given how much human trafficking and human-induced global warming is happening at the city level, we are turning to the mayors because we believe they provide real leadership, as we work together to ensure that the earth and those who dwell on it are no longer treated as expendable."

This global summit comes after the City of San José was invited by the convener, the Sustainable Solutions Development Network, to participate as a key city for their Sustainable Cities Initiative, focusing on the cities of San José, New York and Baltimore. Key cities are tasked with finding local solutions to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which will be ratified at the UN's September General Assembly. As the only key city in the West Coast, San José will be a model for cities around the world seeking to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

In September 2015 the world's governments will agree upon a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals revolve around three themes: empowering people, eradicating poverty and protecting human dignity; shared prosperity and decent, fair jobs for all; protecting the planet and tackling climate change. These 15-year goals will help guide the public's understanding of complex sustainable development challenges, inspire public and private action, promote integrated thinking, and foster accountability. SDG 11 will help establish a new agenda of global action to 'Make cities and human settlements, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

"The symposium will help cities around the world to get a jump-start on the Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted by the world's nations in September," said Dr. Jeffrey Sachs ([Bio](#) of the Main Organizer of July 22 event). "The SDGs are a moral compact for the right kind of development: inclusive, pro-poor, and environmentally sustainable. Leading mayors, religious leaders, and urban experts will share views on the way forward."

Urbanization will be a defining trend over the next several decades. Today, 50% of the world's 7 billion people live in cities, and, by 2050, this is expected to rise to around 70%. Cities are currently home to extreme deprivation and environmental degradation with around one billion people living in slums. At the same time, roughly 75% of global economic activity is urban, and as the urban population grows, so will the urban share of global GDP and investments. As one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, San José stands to benefit from collaborating with cities around the world on a framework for sustainable development and social inclusion.