



FONDATION
PHOSBOUCRAA

OCTOBER 2019

End of the 1st International Urban Forum on City of Challenges October 2019



Laayoune, October 21, 2019 – The Phosboucraa Foundation organized the 1st **International Urban Forum on City of Challenges** from **October 17 to 19, 2019**, on the theme of **Eco-Technological Innovation**. Held at the Palais des Congrès in Laayoune, this first forum brought together more than **200 national and international participants**.

Over three days, urban planning experts, academics, representatives of the private sector and local governments, and decision-makers from 15 countries and 4 continents gathered in Laayoune to present their experiences in sustainable urban planning, share their expertise on new concepts relating to environmental ideologies.

The Forum began with local officials presenting the new development model for southern provinces. They prepared participants for the forum by telling them about the characteristics of the region and the growth of the city of Laayoune, the city of challenges. Participants then took part in roundtables and panels to discuss the best strategies for developing resilient cities. They **learned about the innovative model of the Foug El Oued Technopole along with over 40 other successful models from countries such as Singapore, South Korea, India, Colombia, the US, Nigeria, Senegal and other countries**. These concrete examples draw parallels between major international cities and the city of Laayoune and share the considerable challenge of taking on the many economic, social, and climatic issues facing future cities.

After many rich, informative discussions, the forum gave rise to some recommendations. The most important one concerns the roles of technology and nature in cities. It was concluded that **urban planning and technology could be turned into opportunities for sustainable development as long as nature and human needs are central factors**. Another of the forum's key conclusions is that **we need to move from planning to investing in action** to face the major challenges of sustainable and resilient cities. This means **integrating the real needs of city users**, ensuring **residents' participation in the development of their cities**, sustaining environmental projects through a maintenance policy that is well planned in advance, and ensuring that space is managed fairly to prevent social inequalities.

It should be noted that the African continent was featured throughout the forum. This continent, with its booming population that accounts for over 40% of the world's population, was a major focus. The recommendations all indicated the need to open up this continent to the world, to promote connections between African cities, and to define our own urban development model. The solution to urban challenges can only be local. There is no turnkey or exportable answer. Africa must capitalize on global experience and find **its own model that fits its economic, climatic, and social characteristics**.

The Phosboucraa Foundation successfully used the 1st International Urban Forum on City of Challenges to make it clear that the human aspect must now be part of the regional development process. The ultimate goal is "a shared and sustainable growth".

A second forum is planned for 2020!