## **Report** on **Competitiveness of**

# **Cities Worldwide**

(2011-2012)

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#### **Introduction of GUCR**

The Global Urban Competitiveness Report (GUCR) is a cooperative research conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and UN-Habitat focusing on sustainable urban competitiveness, urban land and urban finance. Led by Prof. Ni Pengfei and Mr. Marco Kamiya, the project is participated by experts from CASS, UN-Habitat and well-known scholars in relevant fields. Through theoretical research and empirical investigation, the report establishes an indicator system to measure the economic competitiveness and sustainable competitiveness of more than 1,000 cities in the world. Meanwhile, it selects important issues of global urban development as the themes for in-depth studies, aiming to promote the implementation of the UN 2030 agenda through the assessment of urban competitiveness. Currently, five annual reports have been published successively, among which GUCR (2018-2019) was launched at the UN headquarters in New York City during the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, and the GUCR (2019-2020) was released in Abu Dhabi during the 10th World Urban Forum.

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Report on Sustainable Competitiveness of Cities Worldwide (2011-2012)



#### Introduction

Cities are a symbol of modern human civilization. They are regional centers of politics, economy, culture, science & technology, and education. They are places where people, capital and goods gather. They are bases of industrial development and business operations. It is in cities that we see manifestations of advanced productive forces. The sustainable competitiveness of a city refers to the ability of a city to build its advantages in economy, society, ecology, innovation, and global connections, and to seek systematic optimization to continuously meet the complex and growing demands of citizens for well-being. As urbanization and globalization accelerate, competition between cities has intensified, and new requirements have been set for the development of cities worldwide. Promoting the sustainable

development of cities is an important strategic choice in line with the inevitable development trends in our modern society, the direction of the urbanization process, and the momentum of the progress of urban civilization. Sustainable development is an inevitable choice for urban development. Based on these, we create the sustainable competitiveness index for cities worldwide based on relevant data of 2011. The index covers two indicators: high-income population increment and high-income population density. Through comparison on these two indicators, we depict where high-income people gather in the world, and rank major cities worldwide according to evaluations of their sustainable competitiveness in 2011, thereby laying a solid foundation for high-quality sustainable development of cities around the world.



#### **1** Further improvement needed worldwide; cities in Europe, Asia and North America leading the way

## **1.1 Most competitive cities for sustainable development concentrate in Europe, Asia and North America**

All of the Top 20 cities in the rankings of competitiveness for sustainable development (Table 1), as we can see, are cities in Europe, Asia and North America, especially developed countries and regions with great economic, political, and cultural strengths. For 2011, the top position on the list belongs to Tokyo of Japan and this is closely related to the high population concentration of the city.

City	Country	Continent	Ranking by high- income population increment	Ranking by high- income population density	Ranking by sustainable competitiveness
Токуо	Japan	Asia	1	10	1
New York	U.S.A.	N. America	2	46	2
Singapore	Singapore	Asia	21	1	3
Paris	France	Europe	4	42	4
London	U.K.	Europe	7	20	5
Hong Kong	China	Asia	15	4	6
Osaka	Japan	Asia	3	83	7
Chicago	U.S.A.	N. America	5	89	8
Barcelona	Spain	Europe	24	8	9
Seoul	Republic of Korea	Asia	8	70	10
San Francisco	U.S.A.	N. America	11	38	11
Stuttgart	Germany	Europe	38	5	12
Philadelphia	U.S.A.	N. America	9	66	13
Frankfurt	Germany	Europe	41	7	14
Moscow	Russia	Europe	23	28	15
Madrid	Spain	Europe	17	43	16
Boston	U.S.A.	N. America	13	63	17
Таіреі	China	Asia	32	17	18
Los Angeles	U.S.A.	N. America	6	201	19
Berlin	Germany	Europe	37	15	20

#### Table 1 Top 20 cities by sustainable competitiveness

From Table 1, we can see that, in general, cities with strong sustainable competitiveness are also the leading cities in terms of high-income population density and high-income population increment. However, most cities rank higher by high-income population increment than by high-income population density. Tokyo of Japan ranks first by high-income population increment, indicating that the high-income population in the city grows significantly. Singapore tops the list in terms of high-income population density, indicating high concentration of high-income population in the city which is a solid foundation for sustainable development. However, it is worth noting that although some cities in North American countries rank high in terms of their sustainable competitiveness, their rankings by high-income population density tend to be not as high as those by high-income population increment. This reflects that though the high-income population is growing in North America, they tend not to gather so much in cities.

## **1.2** Asian and North American cities are in the lead, while cities in Africa and Oceania rank lower

Among the Top 200 cities by sustainable competitiveness, more cities are in Asia, North America, and Europe (Figure 1). Specifically, Asia takes the lead with 61 cities on the list, followed by North America. At the bottom of the tally are Africa and Oceania, lagging far behind other continents with only three and six cities on the list respectively. More needs to be done in those regions to improve the competitiveness of cities there for sustainable development.





## 1.3 The average sustainable competitiveness still needs to be improved, and gaps are huge among cities

Observing the sustainable competitiveness of all the 1,006 sample cities (Table 2), we can see that the average score is low, at only 0.3206, and the coefficient of variation is 0.5124. There seems to be a large space for improvement, and the gap between different cities is large and needs to be bridged fast. The high-income population increment is particularly low, and the gap huge. Thus, more work should be done to enhance the attraction of cities for high-quality talents.

Table 2 Descriptive	statistics on th	e competitiveness	for sustainable	competitiveness	of cities
worldwide					

		Coefficient of		Coefficient of		Coefficient of
	Mean of high-in-	variation of	Mean of high-in-	variation of	Mean of sustain-	variation for
Sample size	come popula-	high-income	come popula-	high-income	able competi-	Global urban
	tion increment	population	tion density	population	tiveness scores	sustainable
		increment		density		competitiveness
1006	0.2121	0.6813	0.3912	0.4744	0.3206	0.5124

According to the global distribution of high-income population increment and high-income population density (Figures 2 and 3), cities with higher scores for high-income population increment are mainly in the eastern coast of North America, West Europe and East Asia. In comparison, cities in Africa, South America and Oceania see not so attractive to high-income populations. The distribution of cities with high density of high-income population are roughly the same as that of high-income population increment. Cities in West Europe, in particular, feature high density of high-income populations, bringing clear benefits for the sustainable development of these cities.

#### Figure 2 Distribution of high-income population increment



Figure 3 Distribution of global high-income population density



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