



# ROUND TABLES SYNTHESIS

## ROUND TABLE 1

### BUSINESS DISTRICTS, THE HUB OF URBAN VENTURES

- **Reconciling sustainable development, architectural coherence and accessibility**

Business district development must meet the challenges of sustainable development, without overlooking the importance of urban planning, so that everyone finds his place in this environment. By its very nature, La Défense has to strive towards ensuring that this district, along with the world's other business districts, follows sustainable planning policies that enable living space, office space, retail outlets and public areas to cohabit in harmony. Moreover, transportation policy for these districts must be matched to the flow of workers and open up the districts, so that they become accessible to all.

- **Creating live-wire districts**

Desegregation within business districts is vital, not only for daily life but also for attracting new investors. Manhattan is the most representative business district in this regard. At La Défense, a bustling promenade, lined with shops and restaurants, could create continuity between the district and Paris itself. In fact, the business district must be a lively space both day and night, thanks to the creation of cultural venues and events. We have witnessed an initial step in this direction in Paris with La Grande Arche opening the district up to other publics.

- **Sustainable development on a daily basis**

Desegregation in business districts forms an integral part of three sustainable development focuses, i.e. economic, societal and environmental. Some districts have pushed the sustainable development envelope even further. For example, the city of Seville has attempted to combine these three focuses by creating an "urban mobility project" in the city centre. In fact, almost all the streets have been transformed into pedestrian thoroughfares and the city has Spain's largest network of cycling paths. In Buenos Aires, the business district has been built in a derelict port area, with conviviality as the overarching development criterion. As a result, offices cohabit with environmental protection areas or leisure parks linked by non-polluting public transportation systems. Here again we can see that the transportation issue is fundamental to business districts where the pace of life depends on frequent journeys.

## **ROUND TABLE 2**

### **BUSINESS DISTRICTS, PILOT AREAS**

- **Business districts: role in sustainable development**

In terms of exchanges, business districts are a crossroads at several levels: national, local, international. Their economic and strategic importance requires them to be exemplary in terms of sustainable development and environmental protection. Accordingly, drafting a Sustainable Development Agreement is an indispensable step in this process. Along the same lines, their role as a change driver should not be neglected since, if a green innovation is developed in a business district, it will be developed elsewhere. At the same time, as part of economic competition among the various business districts to attract residents, sustainable buildings that optimise energy resources and render the district appealing should be encouraged. Therefore, business districts are faced with a dual challenge, i.e. promoting sustainable development to ensure they to assume their special role while, at the same time, becoming more attractive to investors.

- **A major margin for improvement**

We must optimise the organisation of existing business districts. Accordingly, in La Défense district, all journeys are made on foot or by bicycle. A maximum number of neighbourhood services must be available within districts in order to cut down on journey times and distances.

The Shanghai and Seoul business districts have been designed to remain attractive over the long term and should serve as examples, as they have placed quality of life at the heart of building developments. At La Défense, we could introduce a host of innovations, notably to improve transportation infrastructures or to install wind turbines on the roofs of the district's towers. Business districts have the capability to be pioneers in innovation.

## **ROUND TABLE 3**

### **IS A GLOBAL COMMITMENT POSSIBLE?**

- **Sustainable development, a universal commitment**

By their very nature, business districts have an international vocation as they are crossroads at local, regional and international levels. Consequently, every district has to be competitive at the world level and tomorrow's business districts will have to meet the same sustainable development criteria: care for the environment, reduced energy consumption and improved living conditions for employees and visitors. However, acceptance of these criteria and their implementation can not just be the fruit of public and private sector policies. Involvement in sustainable development by everyone, at all levels, is indispensable. Moreover, business districts play an innovation-driving role that leads them to have societal and environmental responsibilities that they must assume. All these elements taken together mean that sustainable development has to be a universal commitment.

- **EPAD Agreement: a necessity**

The EPAD Agreement is necessary due to the overarching nature of urban planning as a discipline in itself and due to the commitment required for sustainable development. This Agreement is not only a coherent and international commitment, but also the symbol of national and international political belief. Accordingly, when a business district signs up to this Agreement, its commitment is destined to be, and has to be, universal.

## ROUND TABLE 4

### MAKING LONG-TERM COMMITMENT ?

- **Sustainable development: an evolving process**

Above all, sustainable development must not be viewed as a rigid concept, but as a process that evolves in relation to situations. Implementing the sustainable development concept in a business district is not the same as in a city. In the same way, different approaches will be required in ten years' time when deploying this principle so commitments undertaken in terms of sustainable development have to be flexible.

- **The need for a lasting commitment**

Drafting an Agreement symbolises a commitment for the long haul and appears vital as business district construction is set to increase in future. Three criteria already exist to guarantee that commitments associated with sustainable development withstand the test of time: flexibility, belief and direction. These commitments must not be perceived as hindrances to innovation or development. On the contrary, by the solutions they create, they give birth to the necessity and the intent to go even further.

- **Four basic principles to guarantee EPAD's sustainable commitment**

We must abide by four principles to ensure that this commitment lasts and does not wane with time:

- Even if this commitment is positioned in a long-term context, short-term challenges and issues must not be overlooked to ensure that tangible results become quickly apparent.
- Business leaders must feel involved if the agreement is to be relevant.
- Commitment implementation must be controlled and accompanied by communication to make it visible in order to correct any possible errors.
- Commitments must take account of the business district's special societal and economic aspects and must be concrete, to ensure they withstand the test of time.