



**- Panel Four -
Heaven or Hell:
Sustainable urbanisation and public services**

The world is currently undergoing the fastest urbanisation in history, as people move from rural areas to cities in search of jobs and a better life. Whether urban expansion creates wealth and opportunities or poverty, disease and misery depends on the choices we make about how we run our cities.

The absorption of new city dwellers can create vibrant communities, thriving with diversity, energy and innovation. Inclusive political systems, quality public services, good planning and decent jobs underpin social and economic success. Without them, cities slip towards polarisation between gentrified oasis and ghettos that dehumanise individuals and their communities.

The difference lies in how well authorities provide public services and whether these communities are enfranchised in the political, social and justice frameworks of their cities.

This requires adequate municipal finance, inclusive governance, progressive taxation, fair policing, a sustainable human-friendly eco-system and universal access to quality education, health, housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport. None of this is possible without dedicated, well-trained and remunerated staff, drawn from the community and treated with dignity at work.

When these services are missing, or left to the private sector, and when public sector workers are not valued or denied their rights at work, everybody pays the price.