7 November 2018

HEALTHY HABITATS INITIATIVE

The HABITAT Research Center is a new transdisciplinary platform at EPFL, aiming at exploring urban phenomena and producing visions, strategies and projects to address emerging questions related to the ongoing urbanisation of the world. The launch of the Healthy Habitats Initiative coincides with the launch of the activities of the center on the topic of health and well-being in cities. Healthy Habitats is one of the center’s four Interdisciplinary Research Clusters aiming at federating specific EPFL’s research excellences related to the urban phenomena (the others are Digital Habitats, Landscape Habitats, Productive Habitats).

The preservation and pursuit of “quality of life” in cities represents a fundamental challenge for the future. Urban space will need to guarantee healthy, secure and comfortable places to live/work, where clean air and water, access to fertile soils and healthy food, social/territorial connectedness, accessible public transportation systems, and the use of sustainable and safe building materials are secured. Today, the relation between urban form and health stands open to investigation. Developing visionary and innovative solutions requires an understanding of various socio-spatial, economic and environmental determinants of well-being in cities, and calls for an integrated, interdisciplinary research agenda.

The Habitat Research Center is launching its activities on this theme by bringing together researchers in Switzerland working on various aspects of health in urban contexts with the ambition of fostering collaboration, exploring future perspectives, and creating new research synergies. On 7 November 2018, following the presentations in the first part, a panel discussion in the second part of the afternoon will invite the researchers to exchange their views about the validity and potential of an ambitious interdisciplinary research on the theme of walking, as a fundamental component of a healthy city.
I.

14:00 Paola Viganò  
HABITAT Research Center, EPFL  
Introduction, “HABITAT, a future-oriented and transdisciplinary design and research platform”

14:10 Nicola Cantoreggi  
Institute of Global Health, University of Geneva

14:30 Emanuele Massaro  
Human Environment Relations in Urban Systems (HERUS), EPFL

14:50 Yves Delacrétaz  
School of Management and Engineering Vaud

15:10 Stéphane Joost  
Geographic Information Systems Laboratory, EPFL

15:30 Ola Söderström  
Institute of Geography, University of Neuchâtel

Coffee Break 15:45 – 16:00

II.

Keynote Speech

16:00 Carlos Dora  
World Health Organisation, Geneva

16:45 Discussion Panel “Walking Saves Lives”  
Research perspectives and new synergies