Economic and Financial Affairs Council

Sustainable Cities

JACKRABBIT MUN VI
L.B. POLY – MAY 25th, 2024

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CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTERS

Hello Delegates!

My name is Corina Frank and I am going to be your Co-Head Chair for Jackrabbit Mun VI. I found my way into Lb Poly MUN because I love educating myself on worldly topics and debating how we can make the world a better place. I personally am such a nerd for sustainable architectural design, and public transportation which lead me to the development of this room. I am very excited to meet you delegates, and I'm ecstatic to listen to your guys' intricate moderated caucuses and unmoderated caucuses about your countries stances. Some fun facts about me include that I love soccer, sushi and chocolate chip cookies (yes at least once a week I snag one from Crumbl).

I wish you all goodluck on your research and please email me for any further questions regarding our room.

Sincerely,
Corina Frank
ECOFIN | Co-Head Chair
corinafrank07@gmail.com

CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTERS

Hello delegates!

My name is Jackson Trunnelle and I'm going to be your Head Chair for the ECOFIN room in Jackrabbit MUN VI. I am currently a junior and Webmaster for our Model UN program at Long Beach Poly. MUN is a very exciting place where I have been able to explore global policy, consider new ideas, and make great connections with wonderful people who I have had the pleasure of delegating with. Outside of MUN, I play club volleyball and varsity for my high school team, as well as playing pickleball and card games in my free time. At school, I am also involved in VITA Tax Club, Poly Global Fund, and Poly Pickleball Club. Like Corina, I love cookies too (especially Christmas ones).

I am very excited to hear all of the wonderful ideas and creative solutions that will be brought forth, and how through patience, cooperation, and civility, we can strive to make the world a better place. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at my email below!

Sincerely,
Jackson Trunnelle
ECOFIN | Co-Head Chair
jctrunnelle@gmail.com

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

- Position Papers are due at 11:59 PM on **Sunday, May 19th**.
- Delegates **must** submit position papers to be eligible for **research AND committee awards.**
- Position Papers can be submitted through the google form:
    - https://forms.gle/9Y2CJygwoAwKXPmw7

- At the top of each paper, include your character/country name, first and last name, school name, and appropriate committee.

    > Country Name
    > First Last
    > School Name
    > ECOFIN

- Papers should be submitted as a PDF file
    - Please name the file [Committee_Country]
        - Ex. **ECOFIN_United States**
- Papers should be 1-2 pages in length with an additional Works Cited page in MLA format
- Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures or graphics
- Please include the following sections for each committee topic:
    - Background & UN Involvement
    - Position of your Country
    - Possible Solutions

    If you have any questions or concerns, please email one of your chairs.

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

UN ECOFIN, also known as the United Nations Economic and Financial Committee, serves as a vital organ within the United Nations General Assembly, focusing on economic development, financial matters, and global trade. UN ECOFIN was formed in 1945 with the rest of the General Assembly when the UN was established after the Second World War in 1945. The mandate of a committee is the expressed powers or topic areas that it has the jurisdiction to cover and discuss. According to the United Nations, ECOFIN functions to discuss issues relating to economic growth and development (including international trade, international financial system, external debt sustainability and commodities), financing for development, sustainable development, human settlements, poverty eradication, globalization and interdependence, operational activities for development, and information and communication technologies for development.

For this conference, UN ECOFIN will feature one topic, Sustainable Cities. Guided by this background guide you will dive into topics such as sustainable cities focused on global economic development, including strategies to promote sustainable urbanization, improve infrastructure, address climate change, and enhance resilience

in urban areas worldwide. UN ECOFIN may explore issues such as financing

mechanisms for sustainable urban development projects, international cooperation on

urban planning and governance, and the integration of sustainable development goals

into urban policies. Though your research may consist of something as simple as

public transportation or something as niche as private sectors, in the end ultimately as

your chair(s) it's our wish that you delegates learn something new about the United

Nations Second Committee, ECOFIN and our room's topic on Sustainable Cities.

TOPIC SYNOPSIS

Many cities around the world are experiencing crumbling infrastructure that does not keep up with their rapid urbanization rates. With the rise of climate change and the risk of overpopulation in high-density cities, many people are not able to access the general public services they are desperately in need of, and many people are not able to navigate their cities without great costs to their time, income, or at worst, the public environment. With broad topics ranging from transportation, food access to housing, delegates will need to decide which issues are the most imminent within their countries' in order to come to a resolution for greater sustainability for our cities. It is up to the delegates in this committee to decide through their citywide and national policies to work out solutions to the various problems presented and hopefully solve them deliberately.

BACKGROUND

HISTORY

The world's urban population continues to rise, with over half of the world's population living in urban areas and an expected 70% of the global population by 2050. Developing countries tend to lead the way in growth, with those in Sub-Saharan Africa tending to be the fastest in both population growth rate and urbanization rate. People choose to move to the city for a variety of reasons, but most fall into a category of opportunity, whether that be through employment, education, business, or other factors on how cities develop. It is important to keep in mind the unique makeup of each city and respect the role they play in providing a center for society that improves both the nations they reside in and the people that live and interact with them.

CURRENT PROBLEMS/INITIATIVES

Countries and their cities face a myriad of challenges in the wake of rapid urbanization. In India, cities like Mumbai and Delhi grapple with severe traffic congestion due to inadequate public transit systems and the growing number of personal vehicles on the road. Brazil's major cities, including Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro face a stark social inequality evidenced by a wealth gap and unequal access to

basic services. Other problems including noncommunicable diseases like heart disease, asthma, cancer and diabetes are made worse by unhealthy living and working conditions, inadequate green space, pollution such as noise, water and soil contamination, urban heat islands and a lack of space for walking, cycling and active living. According to the WHO (World Health Organization), urbanization is also linked to high rates of depression, anxiety and mental ill health. Cities with impoverished infrastructure exhibiting lack of basic necessities, poor governance, and exploitation, are in dire need of consolidation. Though these examples we've given to you of current problems in modern day cities are very surface level, it's ultimately up to you to expand and escalate your research based on your country's cities sustainability and infrastructure.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transit is often considered an important benchmark when measuring a city's sustainability. Buses and trains can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to two-thirds per passenger, per kilometer compared to private vehicles. The UN's latest climate action report says that shifting more trips to public transit is "essential" to curbing climate change.

Cities with good public transportation tend to have complex bus systems with routes having frequent service. A public bus transportation system is often the first and most foundational form of transit within many cities and metro areas, as it is the easiest to upscale or downscale for cities on small budgets, having the least permanent risk and cost if a new route or if frequency doesn't match demand. The success of bus systems in cities can, with enough demand, lead to other forms of public transportation such as light and heavy rail transit (subway, metro, etc), that have greater capacity and a far more long lasting effect on a city's identity and sustainability.

Metro, tram, or other heavy rail modes are forms of larger capacity transit systems that are connected by track lines throughout many cities. These forms of transit require a much higher demand to be economically viable and beneficial to an existing city, and without the supporting pedestrian and bus infrastructure to surround and connect its gaps, it can become a huge failure. Considering these constraints, metro systems find their greatest fulfillment and success in the country's largest cities, and are often concentrated in the most urban districts and neighborhoods. Some great examples of Metro Systems around the world include Washington DC, New York, London, Paris, Moscow, Tokyo, and Hong Kong.

SMOG POLLUTION

Smog pollution is a worldwide issue that can have detrimental effects to human health as well as the natural environment. Smog pollution increases the risk of chronic lung and cardiovascular diseases within nearby human populations. Smog pollution also negatively disrupts ecosystems and agriculture which can disrupt and weaken the economy. Photochemical smog is produced when sunlight reacts with nitrogen oxides and at least one volatile organic compound (VOC) in the atmosphere. Nitrogen oxides come from car exhaust, coal power plants, and factory emissions. China, India, and Pakistan are among the most affected because of their coal based economy, highly condensed cities, and rapid industrialization, with the air quality index in some parts of China being as high as 500 to over 900 parts per million of CO_2. Most businesses and factories run on combustion reactions, which release harmful gasses into the air, that then react with each other to form smog, and while this is a problem in many

different parts of the countries, it is most prevalent in larger industrialized cities. On the other hand, countries like Switzerland and Finland, who have focused on policies specifically

targeting industrial emissions, enforcing strict automobile regulations, and pushing for more electric vehicles, have some of the best air quality in the world. In recent years, many countries, such as Sweden, have worked to set goals to lower emissions by slowly transitioning on to and investing in more sustainable transportation and energy sources.

NOISE POLLUTION

With urban development and high population density, noise pollution has become a major concern for a growing proportion of city-dwellers. It has led to the development of long lasting health effects, of which can include hearing loss, disruption in sleep, heart disease, physical impairment, or even premature death, which accounts for 12,000 annually worldwide. The way we look at the soundscapes of cities and encouraging sustainable noise levels will do much to benefit the quality of life of people living amongst the noise. Implementing green infrastructure does majorly help to free up space in the midst of congestion, and it allows for natural barriers to absorb and distribute sound far better than a plethora of concrete buildings could ever accomplish.

WEALTH INEQUALITY

Wealth inequality has long affected the growth and developments of cities. Urban sprawl and the divide between affluent suburbs and poor urban communities have led the economic growth and profits of urban development to fall into the hands of a particular group while other marginalized groups get left behind in the process. Additionally, practices such as redlining, which outlines certain areas good or bad for investment and loans along racial and socioeconomic lines, have historically contributed to decades-long entrapment of minorities in poorer, more disadvantaged neighborhoods with fewer opportunities to climb the socioeconomic ladder. In order for all communities of a city to see benefits of sustainable development, the resources and programs need to be implemented equitably across the socioeconomic spectrum, both poor and wealthy neighborhoods. All need equitable access to greenspace, housing, utilities, schools, and extracurricular programs, so that all citizens of a community can feel empowered to take part in a city they pride themselves in and happily live under.

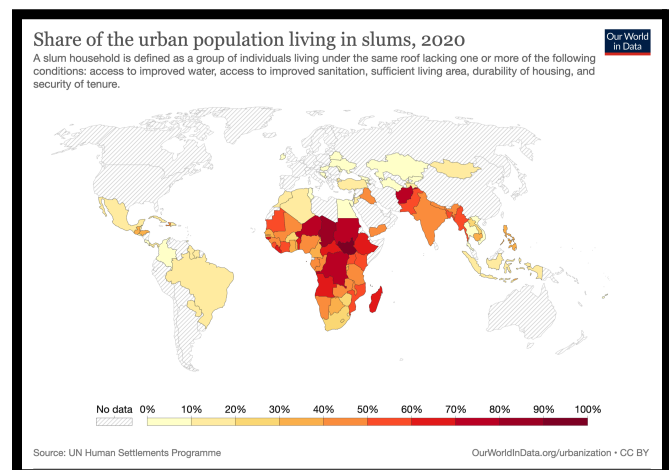**WALKABILITY AND TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

Walkability and transit-oriented development refer to the accessibility and relationships between various urban areas, such as housing, office buildings, or

recreational centers. Both have many positive environmental impacts and are key ideas for the future of sustainable cities. Walkability encourages safety and comfort for pedestrians to participate in physical movement to reach the different destinations in their urban communities, reducing the use of personal vehicles-and, as a result, also reducing the number of greenhouse gas emissions that are released into the environment. Similarly, transit-oriented development serves as a compact model of urban development, designed to integrate and connect public spaces together, locating them closely to public transportation. In contrast to urban sprawl (low-density urban communities that are located far away from each other), transit-oriented development minimizes the distances between different buildings and areas, and decreases the amount of traffic congestion.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

While growth and migration to cities has been on a general rise for decades, a large portion of the current global housing infrastructure is not able to keep up with the rapid influx. This has led to 1.1 billion people living in slums or

Share of the urban population living in slums, 2020
A slum household is defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking one or more of the following conditions: access to improved water, access to improved sanitation, sufficient living area, durability of housing, and security of tenure.

No data 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Source: UN Human Settlements Programme   OurWorldInData.org/urbanization • CC BY

slum-like conditions worldwide, with an expected 2 billion in the next 30 years.

Affordable housing relies on cheaper materials to build efficient housing that

maximizes density to house the most people for the greatest benefit with the least cost.

Additionally, it can empower communities through recreational centers or art to have

a sense of pride and purpose as part of their affordable housing community (ex: Quinta

Monroy Housing Project, Chile).

HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

Heat islands are urbanized, metropolitan areas with much higher, warmer

temperatures than the rural areas surrounding them. Due to the pavement and

concrete structures that absorb more heat and reflect less sunlight, they produce

higher daytime temperatures, less cooling at night, and higher air pollution levels,

which contributes to climate change. In addition, the warmer temperatures increase

the demand for air conditioning, which, as a result, also increases the energy

consumption levels. As well as causing these harmful effects for the environment, heat

islands also affect public health and can lead to respiratory issues and heatstroke.

SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), buildings and the construction

sector combined are responsible for over one-third of global final energy

consumption. And they account for 40% of total direct and indirect CO2 emissions each year. Main areas of focus for sustainable architecture not only include the typical "green design" but also going beyond that technical sphere with cooling, ventilation, heating and lighting systems, water consumption, and supplying power initiatives. To tackle the supply of renewable energy, architects are integrating deployment of solar photovoltaic systems on rooftops and facade cladding, the supply of wind energy, and solar-assisted water heaters and heat pumps into their propositions. With this site analysis can be employed to optimize the use of local environmental resources such as daylight and ambient wind for heating and ventilation alongside passive solar building design, allowing buildings to harness the energy of the sun efficiently without any active solar mechanisms. Sustainable architecture often incorporates the use of recycled or second hand materials such as reclaimed lumber and recycled ore like copper. These eco-friendly materials reduce the demand of finite resources as well as creating a low environmental impact. Construction in poor countries like Burkina Faso or Rwanda presents major challenges to architects. The quality of life of local people is to be improved, but this is to be done without impairing architectural functionality. One example of improvement of human life is sustainable buildings looking for ways to conserve water. There are green roof international programs that are being supported

by UN–HABITAT, Sustainable Urban Development Network and the World Bank in order to advance these water conserving initiatives.
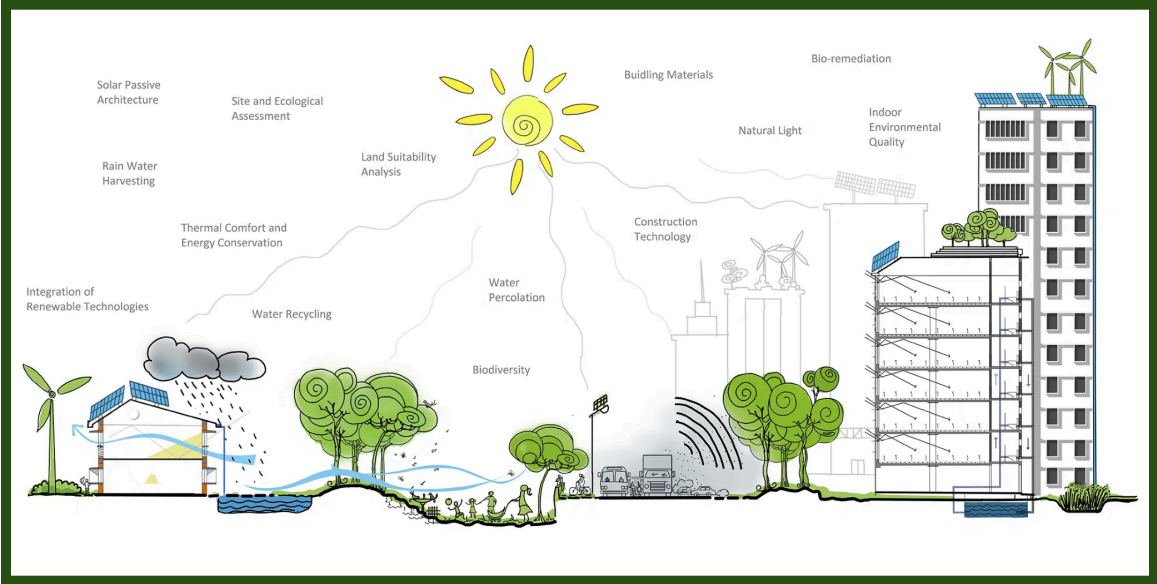
UNITED NATIONS INVOLVEMENT

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11

By 2030, the UN aims to make sure that all people have access to affordable and safe housing and services, including roads and public transport. It also advocates for access to more safe and inclusive green open spaces. The UN has been working towards providing more sustainable urban development through Goal 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which advocates for greener environmentally-friendly areas and minimizes the impacts of air pollution, water-borne diseases, and the urban heat island effect through the implementation of renewable energy infrastructure and low-emission transportation. For example, many cities, including London and New York City, have further advanced this objective by enforcing congestion pricing. Congestion pricing is a policy that aims to discourage methods of transportation that contribute to traffic along with air pollution and instead, promote the use of public transit, electric-powered vehicles, walking, and driving.

Moreover, the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) has partnered with many countries to achieve Goal 11. In 2021, through the Retrofit Electric Motorcycles Project, the UNDP collaborated with the Rwandan government to transition from

petrol-fueled motorcycles to electric vehicles, with an aim to reduce 4.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide by the year 2030. Recently, the UNDP and government of Japan have also supported the country of Malawi by providing thousands of households with reliable and renewable solar energy for electricity and water irrigation, as well as biogas plants for cleaner cooking fuels, where only twelve percent of the population had access to electricity before. Canada has been taking big steps in order to meet Goal 11 throughout the past decade. Canada has invested over one hundred billion dollars into building a safer, more sustainable economy, investing heavily into clean public transportation (33.5 billion dollars) and The Net Zero Accelerator initiative (8 billion dollars). In recent years, cities in Asia have undergone massive economic growth and urbanization. This development has caused a surge in immigration causing the population to skyrocket. However, the rapidly increasing population has been putting stress on unprepared cities causing rising poverty rates, environmental degradation, and lack of basic services such as sanitation and sufficient water supplies.

To address these issues, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, has worked with member states to achieve sustainability goals such as SDG.11. UNEP has invested heavily into housing and basic services, sustainable transport systems, sustainable urbanization, sustainable buildings, access to public spaces, per capita

environmental impact of cities, and creating policies on climate change, resource

efficiency and disaster risk reduction.

BLOC POSITIONS

AFRICAN BLOC

The African Union adopted AGENDA 2063 and it's Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development. Part of that is an urban agenda, it's designed to address the unique challenges and opportunities associated with urbanization on the African continent. Key components of this urban agenda include sustainable urban planning, housing and slum upgrading and resilience and disaster risk management. Cape Town has a dedicated energy and climate change unit developing affordable and secure energy access for their city while Cocody said it will cut carbon emissions by 70% by 2030 as part of its Green City Plan and Dakar wants 15% of its local electricity production to come from renewables by 2035.

EAST/SOUTHEAST/SOUTH ASIA BLOC

The East Asia bloc has recognized that sustainable urban development is increasingly recognized as a critical aspect of regional development and is often discussed within the broader context of sustainable development goals and initiatives. Specifically,

nations such as China, Japan, and South Korea strongly participate in various forums, partnerships and initiatives where sustainable urban development is addressed. Japan has been actively involved in providing technical assistance, capacity building, and financing for sustainable urban projects in other East Asian countries through organizations like the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). To hone in on certain solutions, Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei have extensive public transit. This comes from high public funding into transit systems of all kinds. In 2019, Japan invested 44.5 billion dollars into construction and maintenance of public roads. As well as transportation, the protection of people has been prioritized with the implementation of flood management strategies, coastal protection measures, and the integration of green infrastructure to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events and rising sea levels.

PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS BLOC

Pacific Island nations are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and coastal erosion. They heavily value the protection of their cultural heritage and traditional practices in urban development. Pacific Island nations are investing in sustainable infrastructure solutions to address critical needs such as water supply, sanitation, energy, and
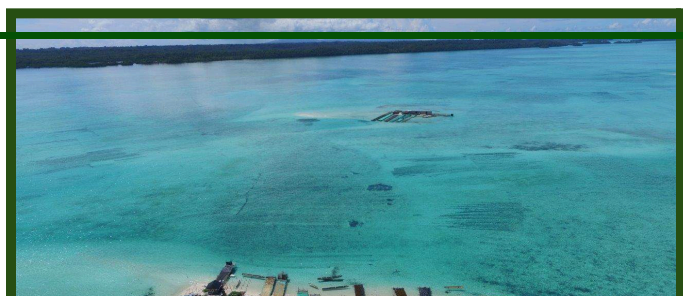
transportation. Through initiatives such as community-based disaster risk

management, participatory planning processes, and capacity-building programs.

EUROPEAN BLOC

Of all regions, Europe contains the highest ranked sustainable cities, as well as the

most. Europe engages in the SCI (Sustainable Cities Initiative), which is a

multi-country initiative to work for more sustainable development of cities. It uses

renewable energy, improved urban transit, better waste management, and community

inclusion. Those were made based on historic successes in developing European cities.

Not only is this mainly in Western Europe, but rather, the entirety, with Eastern

Europe participating in similar programs to improve cities. For example, Poland's

plans to further move away from coal with the goal of reducing urban pollution or

Moscow's plans of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 18% from 2000 to 2018. But

overall, it's not just what has been done but the rest of the outlined plans to holistic

goal for sustainability.

MIDDLE EASTERN BLOC

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, are investing in smart city

initiatives to enhance urban governance, improve service delivery, and optimize

resource management. With Initiatives such as LEED certification, green building codes, and sustainable urban design guidelines, they're developing environmentally friendly construction and architecture. As well as using solar power plants, wind farms and other renewable energy projects contributing to sustainable urban development by providing clean and reliable energy sources for urban areas. Dubai, Riyadh, and Doha have developed extensive metro systems, bus rapid transit (BRT) networks, and integrated transportation hubs to improve mobility and accessibility for residents, thus reducing needs for individual vehicles.

LATIN AMERICAN/CARIBBEAN ISLANDS BLOC

Bogotá, Curitiba, and Mexico City have implemented Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, bike-sharing programs, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to promote sustainable transportation alternatives. Medellín, Quito, and Valparaíso have transformed former industrial sites, waterfronts, and slums into vibrant, cultural, recreational, and residential hubs, fostering economic development and social inclusion. That also includes social housing programs, slum upgrading initiatives, and participatory housing projects. For the issues of environmental encroachment initiatives such as the Ecological Corridor in São Paulo and the Bicentennial Park in Santiago. Cities like Rio

de Janeiro, Guayaquil, and Cartagena are implementing adaptation strategies to address sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and water scarcity. With small island nations in the Caribbean, they have heavier struggles and higher standards for a lasting city. The Inter-American Development Bank has highlighted Port of Spain, Montego Bay, and Nassau to have bright upcoming futures for sustainability compared to other cities in the world. The majority of Latin American countries have in-depth and public action plans for sustainability. Overall, Latin America is prioritizing climate resilience in urban development to address the impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, hurricanes, and coastal erosion.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How can cities incorporate sustainable development into their communities in a way that is equitable for different ethnic and socioeconomic groups?

2. How can countries implement sustainable development in a way that acknowledges their current economic situation and financial priorities?

3. What issues are the most imminent in your country or region when it comes to urban sustainability?

4. Who is responsible for providing support for city infrastructure? Local governments? Nationally? Is foreign assistance necessary?

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