NARRATOR
Previously on life…

Robert Reich
The dangers of the new global economy essentially are to split societies.

James Wolfensohn
It’s a challenge certainly to developing countries but it’s also a great opportunity.

Carol Bellamy
It seems really appalling that this disparity seems to get greater at a time when there is so much wealth in the world today.

NARRATOR
On the streets of Sao Paulo, they greet her like a film star, though the only dream she’s selling is of a better city. She’s fifty-five, a mother of three, a professional psychoanalyst and a 21st century Mayor.

Marta Suplicy
My city has lived ten years of abandon, corruption and I thought I could help. I could be a fresh new thing there that could help mainly the people excluded from everything that we have in the city.

NARRATOR
Marta used to give advice about sex on Brazilian TV, but she’s also a politician, and last October on a wave of goodwill she was elected Mayor of Sao Paulo, the world’s fourth largest city.

Steve Bradshaw
Do you share the nightmarish vision that many people have of the great science fiction mega-city of the 21st century?

Marta Suplicy
We have that already - I don’t have nightmares on the future I have nightmares on the present! The challenge is exactly to change that.

NARRATOR
Sao Paulo: the city Marta runs, where over ten million people live their own dreams and nightmares. This summer, Marta and politicians from across the world will meet to review progress since the United Nations City Summit five years ago. Their theme and ours in this series of ‘Life’: how to run the cities of the 21st century? The cities where in the next ten years, most people in the planet will live.

Anna Tibaijuka
If you look at the last four hundred years what has happened, you know, we started with empires mostly in the 19th century; we came to the nation states of the 20th century; and believe me, through globalisation now we are entering, this is the century of cities.
It is a trend which cannot be stopped. It is an economic trend, it is just a matter of time and all predictions now show that people are marching onto cities. Even in the developing countries.

And the challenge therefore facing, er facing us in this century is how to make cities a better place for, for the majority of the people.

**NARRATOR**

There are winners and losers in the globalised economy and Sao Paulo is a winner. Its Stock Exchange bring in capital from across the world,

It has a big stake in the knowledge economy. It’s a city of the educated, the professionals who work downtown.

**Vox Pop 1:**
I like it very much. It’s a very nice city…

**Vox Pop 2:**
I find it a very good city to be living because you have everything you want to do here…

**Vox Pop 3:**
The city is wonderful!

**Vox Pop 4:**
I like the culture of Sao Paulo.

**Vox Pop 5:**
I like Sao Paulo. There’s a lot – there’s work here.

**NARRATOR**

This Sao Paulo that could be any great global metropolis - London, New York, Tokyo.

And just like any World City, prosperous new élites are re-making whole neighbourhoods in their own image. It's been called the Glamour Zone.

**Saskia Sassen**

The urban glamour zone has fine restaurants, state of the art office buildings, state of the art residences. It has it all: beautiful streets, private security, world class culture. Outsiders can traverse it.

It’s a space that can be consumed as an experience, as an afternoon’s event etc. I would say the defining mark is the ascendance of design. You have the design lamp, design food, design people - you know, like they go to the health clubs they’re in perfect shape!

The glamour zone is for a minority but it is enormously important, it’s about 20% in Sao Paulo in Bangkok in Bombay. So I think it is very different from the old rich who have always had you know their space in the city.
NARRATOR
This is the high-profile Sao Paulo that’s prospering in the global economy. Down on the streets, though, easy to forget the more lowly-paid workers making their own contribution to the city’s service industries.

Saskia Sassen
If you take the financial industry, it’s highly globalized but it needs cleaners, it needs all kinds of low wage service workers, it needs truckers to drop off the software - and the toilet paper, you know they also need that! There is a whole set of jobs, types of workers, types of firms that are part of the globalised sectors in these cities but they don’t look like it, they’re not recognized as such, they are not, you know, valued as such.

Keith Bradshaw
Isn’t there a danger in the 21st century that the élites of the big cities of the world um have more in common with each other? The lawyer in New York has more in common with the lawyer in Sao Paulo and Paris than the lawyer in Sao Paulo does with the, the own workers, the people who wash his car…

Marta Suplicy
That happens, that happens. It’s already happening for so many time.

Steve Bradshaw
What can you do about that?

Marta Suplicy
The challenge is to change that!

NARRATOR
But there are others who don’t have any stake in the global economy at all - those who can’t even find jobs as clerks or cleaners, who’ve fallen on hard times or drifted into crime. Over half a million Paulistas live in so-called ‘beehives’ a few blocks from the glamour zone. The crowded tenements of the excluded.

Sheela Patel
The most important thing I think which makes people excluded in cities is the sense of isolation in the midst of all this. It’s such a contradiction that you are in the midst of this huge megacity, you’re part of it and yet you’re excluded from it. And I think that’s the real crises today in all, all cities.

Its citizenship is not universal: it’s like we and they and the poor are there and there’s confusion about whether they are citizens.

NARRATOR
These are the people who live where the railway doesn’t work anymore, where they seem like refugees in their own country.

These are the slums people drive past, or drive over, on their way downtown. The worst of these mean and murderous streets have been called the War Zone.
Saskia Sassen
An urban war zone for me is a part of the city that has been neglected in terms of investments, that has been neglected in terms of basic public services such as garbage collection, er renewing the pavement on the streets, etc., et c. - I mean very elementary things.

It’s a zone where you have a sense of a surplus population, you have a sense of, who needs these people?

And also a sense that they have been robbed of something so that they cannot even invent their own project as to why they are there. We’re talking about something very bad.

NARRATOR
Today Marta, the Peoples Mayor, has come to the War Zone. She wants to do something about poverty, the inequalities that go with globalisation but what most people care about right now is not so much social justice as basic services - like the state of the streets.

Professor Ed Glaeser
The difficulty with any mega-city is the twin dilemmas of attempting to deal with providing basic services and attempting to deal with the massive amount of poverty that plagues so many of, of the mega-cities of the world. So at one point - you know, on one hand the Mayor of Sao Paulo has to focus on providing basic services, has to focus on primarily safety, public transportation, clean streets, clean water: key er, key services. At the same time there’s a massive er, human desire to actually right the wrongs of the world as, as embodied by er, the thousands - and in Sao Paulo’s case, millions - of er disadvantaged youths who are growing up there. And I think the greatest challenge facing er as leader of the city is how do you balance those two, those two needs.

NARRATOR
What’s brought the millions of disadvantaged to cities like Sao Paulo is rural poverty and the elusive promise of urban prosperity. They’ve just turned up and built shacks here on the edge of the city.

Anna Tibaijuka
No matter what happens in these large growing mega-cities of the developing countries, people- there is a high rise of what we call spontaneous settlements. Some people- popularly known as slums but slums are nothing but spontaneous settlements. People come, they need a place to sleep - you know there is no flat to which they can get, if there is a flat they don’t have rent, they can’t pay rent - so they put up their own you know little place to stay. Normally by squatting on land.

NARRATOR
Over 400,000 families in Sao Paulo lack what the city authorities call even minimally decent housing. In neighbourhoods like Guananases, Sao Paulo has built better homes. But the new housing meant altering the flow of the river and the altered river flooded the homes of those who hadn’t been chosen to live in the new houses.
Glaucia
When the flood happened, everything inside the house was ruined - we and the kids were inside and we had to climb over the walls. There was a flood on Friday and again on Sunday, on Sunday we had time to run outside but everything was flooded again, and now the house is cracking up.

NARRATOR
Scenes like this in a relatively prosperous country lead some to argue decent housing should be a human right.

Peter Marcuse
The world I think is rich enough today internationally, globally to provide decent housing as well as decent food and decent health care to everyone on the planet. I think the resources are there, the question is how they are used. And the idea that it should be the right of the citizen of any civilised country to have a standard of housing that’s commensurate with maintaining decent health, maintaining the possibilities of getting ahead in, in life, I think that possibility is there and ought to be recognised everywhere.

NARRATOR
Out here in the illegal city are whole neighbourhoods that lack not just decent housing but most basic services. Often they’re beyond the reach of the law and of government. Last year we filmed with The Posse, a group of young people trying to organise some of the services middle class neighbourhoods expect the city to provide. Most of the Posse are in their twenties, here in the illegal suburbs that’s old.

Marta Suplicy
People who come to the city they have, for the last decade, been living in the borders of the city and this place we, we found out probably about eleven regions of the city that don’t have any presence of government.

And these regions are the regions that have growth-grow more like a hundred percent in ten years! And half of the population is less than eighteen years old.

NARRATOR
The Posse have their own rap band. They sing about young criminals and young victims. Easy to find in a city that can see fifty murders in a weekend.

Marta Suplicy
When people are astonished at the kind of violence we are having in a big city like Sao Paulo I’m not astonished: if you have half of the population in these poor sections, that have less than eighteen years old, and they have no access to an education, no perspective and they cannot see a light in the tunnel.

Steve Bradshaw
No prospects.

Marta Suplicy
Their prospects are nothing. How can you think they are not going to be violent or delinquent?
NARRATOR
Posse member ‘Du’s been coming downtown to the glamour zone to work. He’s sad but not surprised others come here to rob.

Edu
If we had a fair distribution of wealth the kids from the suburbs wouldn’t come downtown to steal a few dollars.

NARRATOR
‘Du’s as keen as anyone the new Mayor makes Sao Paulo safe.

Professor Ed Glaeser
One thing that can be done - er talking specifically about Sao Paulo or the Brazilian example which is a local phenomenon - it’s very important for the welfare of the poor is actually providing safe streets. And if you say it’s sort of a basic service but if you think about, you know, what are sort of basic rights that we think kids are entitled to? Security of property rights, security of life is really way up there. And if we think about the things that are actually barriers to investing in skills: having unsafe streets, having a flourishing drug trade that distracts you from actually going to school is a tremendous handicap that poor people face. Solving the problems of local crime are absolutely mayor’s responsibilities.

NARRATOR
For the young people in the suburbs, education is more than a basic need. It’s a vital priority if they’re to have any chance of a stake in the global economy. But despite the good work in the Posse’s local school, one out of three Paulistas have trouble reading and writing. The teachers’ boss knows their city has to do better.

Marta Suplicy
Sao Paulo is a, is such an important city in Latin America, that we have to have qualified people,

For the young people in the suburbs, education is more you know for service because it was an industrial city at the beginning of the century and now is more and more a service city.

In order to have service city you have to have er very qualified people and still we don’t have as many as we need. So the biggest challenge to make Sao Paulo “globalised” in a good sense for opportunity for the citizens of Sao Paulo, we have to have education and that’s something that I have put a big effort to acquire.

NARRATOR
But kids can’t study if they’re sick. The clinic at San Miguel treats age-old problems and the special illnesses of the city.

San Miguel Mother
I know a lot of babies and two and three year old kids - and older ones – suffering respiratory problems, because of the pollution.
Marta Suplicy
Hospitals of Sao Paulo, they’re the best of the country.

But sometimes the pollution of the air and the quality of life er that’s distressing and all that that makes it worse for health.

NARRATOR
Infectious waterborn diseases are another big city health hazard. This morning they’re checking vaccination cards. Providing the basic services that can prevent illness is another of the new Mayor’s priorities.

Sheela Patel
The most fundamental issue of, say health, er requires that certain basic essentials are provided to the whole city.

You need to create access to clean water for everybody, you have to get rid of everybody’s solid waste.

You have to clean garbage. You can’t say I’ll only clean garbage here and not here because the flies don’t know boundaries. So things like that have to be planned for the whole city.

NARRATOR
Marta knows that for many women in Sao Paulo domestic violence is also a serious health issue. Today she’s visiting a shelter that helps battered women. Men have abused the women here, the city has helped them.

Woman in Shelter
This house for me is like a mother and I would like to pass it on to all women. In this house I was reborn and educated for another life. Today I am a new woman, thanks to the professionals working in this shelter.

Marta Suplicy
Violence is very great here and there are very few places where a woman can go for help, physical help and psychological counselling.

Many times a woman is spanked and she doesn’t go for help and knowing that place like that exists helps her to come.

NARRATOR
The success of the shelter - and of the woman who’s visiting - are signs that even macho cities like Sao Paulo can become places of opportunity for women.

Saskia Sassen
The space of the city is actually enabling women and this represents a radical departure from a very common image that the space of the city is dangerous for women - remember that, I mean, novels from the eighteen hundreds already were full of that.
And I think that’s what the last twenty years are showing especially the last ten years is that the space of the city begins to enable women and they can emerge as political subjects that in a way that they did not twenty years ago, thirty years ago.

And they do not I think still in small towns and in suburbs.

**Marta Suplicy**
The, the 21st century is ours. No doubt! I don’t think even in a machista country like Brazil, being a woman today er is something that goes against you, at least for me, it has helped several times. Because I think people think women are more honest and also they respect women in the sense of dealing with money...

**Steve Bradshaw**
But cities are built for men, aren’t they? Built by men for men.

**Marta Suplicy**
That’s true, but poverty - who does most with poverty are women.

**NARRATOR**
But back in poverty-stricken Guananases, they remember how the council’s well-intentioned schemes caused so much damage. Here even the women are cynical about their new Mayor’s promises.

**Maria Do Socoro Da Silva**
To be quite honest I do not believe any of it anymore because every time a new government starts they make lots of promises. First there was Maluf, he promised lots but never delivered, then there was Pitta and now it’s Marta. It’s only the beginning for her but I don’t believe it anymore, here in Brazil it’s all just plans and promises.

**Ester Herminio Da Silva Pereira**
I don’t feel like a citizen of Sao Paulo, I feel like an animal - an animal that nobody feels sorry for. The government, Mayor, the local politicians, they never come around unless its election time. They are just worried about our votes.

**NARRATOR**
With cynicism so ingrained, the new Mayor of Sao Paulo may need all the encouragement she can get from the colleagues and experts she’ll meet at the UN’s conference on cities this summer.

**Steve Bradshaw**
What do you think would be the biggest challenge confronting someone starting to run a city like Sao Paulo?

**Anna Tibaijuka**
Well I think that her biggest challenge will first of all to reach out with the stakeholders of Sao Paulo. I’m sure you have the financial magnates of Sao Paulo, you have the industrialists of Sao Paulo, but you also have the poor of Sao Paulo, the homeless. So my message, my advice, my humble advice, if I could would be that first of all to get to know the people and to listen to them - what are they saying?
Because you see the poor of the cities they are not just passive objects. Most often they are solving their own problems. These people are taking care of themselves actually. They are putting up, as I said, their own spontaneous settlements, they are taking care of their living environment.

So if you listen I think er, er, that’s why I am talking about participatory governance that if the Mayor of Sao Paulo I believe if he or she would sit down with the constituents and listen most of the problems would be solved by the people themselves. They are the key - the people of Sao Paulo are the key to the problems of Sao Paulo.

Sheela Patel
I think everybody has the right to hope and I think most people who come into cities come to, to transform the lives of their children if not for themselves.

And in most cases if you talk to even the poorest person who lives in the city, they will tell you that ten years of living in the city has transformed the choices for their children –

Even if there are many more steps to go. So I think whether you are rich or you’re poor, cities provide you that opportunity and everybody has a right to explore that option.

Steve Bradshaw
So do you look to these great sprawling 21st century cities as being a-a nightmare or-or symbols of hope?

Sheela Patel
Definitely symbols of hope.

Professor Ed Glaeser
I certainly don’t think you should despair, I think Sao Paulo does have a huge amount of promise – absolutely.

There are some cities - and I would classify Sao Paulo as one of them - that basically exist for sound economic principles. It doesn’t mean that the poverty that these mega-cities have brought to light isn’t distressing, it doesn’t mean that we don’t need to, don’t need to address that, but putting a halt to its growth is not the right answer. The right answer is a national policy to lift the poor everywhere not to block the movement of the poor to the employment opportunities of Sao Paulo.

Peter Marcuse
I think Sao Paulo is a wonderful city, I think it’s got a range of opportunities, a range of offerings, a variety, a diversity that is very rich and that can be – it could be a wonderful place, and is for many a wonderful place to live.

Steve Bradshaw
Can be true in other 21st century cities too?

Peter Marcuse
Yes, yes I think so.
NARRATOR
In the Parisopolis favella, schoolkids try and persuade their neighbours to recycle plastic bags. Their new Mayor’s hope is she can harness the spirit of these children and turn the residents of the glamour zone, the war zone and the illegal city into residents of one community.

Marta Suplicy
Something unique has happened in my city.

The city was in such a state of corruption and abandon that people from all social levels are giving their hands and saying we want to help. You can see that in a janitor, you can see that in the big – the entrepreneur.

So if I do right and if I articulate right all this effort, all these people, all this emotion that can go as far as that, I think we can make a difference in this city.

Even with all the limits we have, if we have a competent administration, honest administration, that really cares for the people we can do it.

NARRATOR
Marta has four years to make a difference before she faces re-election.

In this series of Life we’ll be looking at the challenges which face the world’s other cities - big and small - and the three billion people who live in them.