

Some facts on urbanization

- Currently, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas.
- By 2050, about 70% of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas.
- Over 60% of the land projected to become urban by 2030 is yet to be built.
- Half of the population of Asia is expected to live in urban areas by 2020, while Africa is likely to reach a 50% urbanization rate only in 2035.
- In 1970, Tokyo and New York were the only megacities.ⁱ
- Today, there are 13 megacities in Asia, 4 in Latin America, and two each in Africa, Europe and Northern America.ⁱⁱ
- Megacities account for a small though increasing proportion of the world urban population: 9.9% in 2011 and 13.6% in 2025.
- Over half of the urban population lives and will continue to live in small urban centres with fewer than half a million inhabitants.
- In 2011, Northern America had the highest level of urbanization (82.2 percent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (79.1 percent).ⁱⁱⁱ
- The rate of urbanization is expected to be the highest in Africa and Asia over the coming decades. Over the next four decades, urban population is likely to treble in Africa and to increase by 1.7 times in Asia.^{iv}
- Of the 187,066 new city dwellers that will be added to the world's urban population every day between 2012 and 2015, 91.5 per cent, or 171,213, will be born in a developing country.^v
- In 2011, 75 per cent of the rural population were concentrated in 19 countries, mostly located in Africa or Asia (with the exception of Brazil, the Russian Federation and the United States).
- The largest rural population (853 million) is found in India, followed by China (666 million).
- Cities contribute to up to 70 per cent of the total greenhouse gas emissions.^{vi}
- Urban-based economic activities account for up to 55 per cent of gross national product (GNP) in low income countries, 73 per cent in middle-income countries and 85 per cent in high income countries.^{vii}
- Cities also generate a disproportionate amount of revenue for governments.^{viii}
- While the number of slum dwellers has increased, the *proportion* of the urban population living in slums in the developing world has declined from 46 per cent in the year 1990 to an estimated 32 per cent in 2010.^{ix}
- The world's slum population is projected to reach 889 million by 2020.^x
- It is estimated that between the year 2000 and 2010, a total 227 million people in the developing world were moved out of slum conditions.^{xi}

ⁱ http://esa.un.org/unup/pdf/WUP2011_Highlights.pdf

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/18_urbanization.pdf

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} UN-Habitat, State of the World's Cities Report 2010/2011 (Nairobi, 2010)

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Ibid.