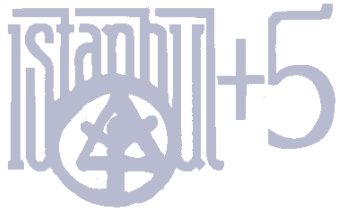


URBAN MILLENNIUM

Special Session of the General Assembly
for an Overall Review and Appraisal of the
Implementation of the Habitat Agenda

NEW YORK, 6 - 8 JUNE 2001



Best Practices Database and Other Habitat Resources

UNCHS (HABITAT)'S BEST PRACTICES DATABASE shows that there are many excellent examples of how life in cities, towns and villages can be improved. This searchable database can be accessed from Habitat's website www.unchs.org (under programmes) or at www.bestpractices.org. Once within the website, journalists should link to the 'DATABASE SEARCH' and when asked for the access code, they should type in 'gen25'.

The Best Practices database contains over 1100 proven solutions to the common social, economic and environmental problems of an urbanizing world. Case studies from more than 120 countries demonstrate practical ways in which communities, Governments and the private sector are working together to improve governance, eradicate poverty, provide access to shelter, land and basic services, protect the environment and support economic development. Recent examples include the following:

Organizations of the urban poor in cities such as Mumbai, Cape Town and Manila are adopting a 'self-help' approach that relies on the strength of networks of women's savings groups to provide their own shelter and basic services. A key element of their strategy is to negotiate with city and state governments to reduce the number of forced evictions and to provide security of tenure to the urban poor.

In Fukuoka, Japan, public awareness campaigns have reduced water waste by encouraging the public to install water flow

reducing devices in faucets and using reclaimed waste water for flushing toilets. These strategies have resulted in a wastage rate of just 5 per cent, one of the lowest in the world.

Improving municipal financial management is seen as important not only to increase local revenue generation, but also to attract foreign investment. Cities such as Bangkok, Thailand and Mirzapur, India, are using geographic information systems to improve tax collection.

In a number of countries, greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds has been achieved through the use of the Internet for procurement (Mexico, Korea and Austria), 'integrity pacts' (Buenos Aires, Argentina), citizen report cards (Bangalore, India) and 'participatory budgeting' (Porto Alegre and Bara Mansa, Brazil).

In Chattanooga, USA, an alternative-fuel bus service is provided free of charge in the city centre to reduce motor vehicle traffic within the city, thereby improving the city's air quality and reducing traffic congestion.

To make cities safer for women, cities such as Montreal, Canada are including women in meetings to design and plan urban facilities and infrastructure. This has led to safety audits indicating that the city is a much safer place for women.

In Malawi, a national programme to supply piped water to peri-urban communities was greatly improved when women were put in charge of managing the water pipes; cost recovery is in place and the revenue is being used for maintenance.



UNITED
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Habitat Debate

UNCHS (Habitat)'s quarterly publication, *Habitat Debate*, serves as a forum for dialogue and debate on human settlements issues. Since its inception in 1995, the periodical has covered a wide range of themes related to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Each issue carries feature articles on urban conditions, trends and policies worldwide plus viewpoints and news from a wide range of partners.

(Website address: <http://www.unchs.org/hdebate.html>)

Global Report on Human Settlements

While the main human settlements trends and challenges since 1996 are being reviewed, it has also become necessary to assess the extent to which policies and programmes implemented during this period have succeeded in improving the living and working conditions within cities, towns and villages all over the world. As part of this exercise, Habitat is preparing the third issue of the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2001*, 'Cities in a Globalizing World', which will contain a comprehensive analysis of human settlements development in recent years. This issue of the *Global Report* highlights the important role of cities as agents of globalization. While recognizing that the benefits and costs of globalization are unevenly distributed among and within cities, the Report also describes policy frameworks and strategies that can mitigate globalization's adverse consequences.

State of the World's Cities Report

The *State of the World's Cities Report 2001*, the first published edition in Habitat's biennial series, contains concise narrative summaries on a full array of urban problems and issues, regional differences and policy responses. Drawing on the *Global Urban Indicators* database, the *Best Practices* database, human settlements statistics and other sources of information internal and external

to Habitat, this report addresses the current state of urban affairs in five subject areas: shelter, urban society, urban environment, urban economy and urban governance.

Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics

The *Compendium on Human Settlements Statistics* contains a wide range of national and city level human settlements statistics collected through the national census of member countries. The forthcoming sixth issue – the *Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics 2001* – contains data on over 90 countries and 250 cities. The *Compendia* are a joint product of Habitat and the UN Statistical Division. These *Compendia* are an extremely valuable tool for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda because they provide a comprehensive and detailed picture of the prevailing human settlements conditions and trends both at the national and city level.

Urban indicators

Habitat's Urban indicators database consists of a set of 20 policy-relevant core indicators which correspond to the 20 main chapters of the Habitat Agenda. Data collection for the Urban Indicators database is conducted through local, national and regional urban observatories, as well as through selected regional institutions that have experience in urban data collection and compilation. These institutions were also instrumental during the first phase of the programme, which consisted mainly of training and capacity building for the collection and interpretation of urban indicators data. Currently, indicators on more than 200 cities, covering 1998 data, are being compiled in the second global urban indicators database. The second phase of the programme will consolidate and strengthen the data collection network by building on existing capacities in countries and cities with a view to increasing data collection frequency.