

URBAN MILLENNIUM

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for an Overall Review and Appraisal of the
Implementation of the Habitat Agenda

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The Thematic Committee: a new venue for Habitat Agenda Partners

Thematic Committee

BUILDING ON HABITAT'S INCLUSION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the General Assembly decided to establish a thematic committee that will meet at Istanbul + 5. The purpose of this committee is to allow the presentation of successful case studies by Habitat Agenda partners such as local authorities and NGOs, as well as Governments, and to tell the world 'the real story of urban hope and renewal'. Representatives will assemble to share their experiences and lessons learned in sustainable human settlements development in the five years since Habitat II. Among the case studies chosen are the following. Journalists are encouraged to get in touch with the contact person listed after each project.



UNITED
NATIONS



UNCHS
(HABITAT)



AFRICA

NIGERIA: Sustainable urban development and good governance

Greater participation of ordinary citizens in the affairs of their city and town depends on the degree of decentralization and delegation of power to local authorities. After years of centralized autocratic rule under military regimes, the Nigerian Federal Government is seeking to strengthen Nigeria's 36 state governments and 774 local authorities by giving them greater political and fiscal autonomy. Benefiting from experience gained from Habitat's Sustainable Cities Programme in Ibadan, Kano and Enugu, a national Urban Development Policy has been designed. A Safer Cities Project is being implemented in Abuja. These projects support efforts to upgrade slums and squatter settlements and to institute mechanisms for citizen participation and local democracy.

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SENEGAL: Upgrading informal settlements

Over the last five years, more than one million inhabitants of slums and informal settlements in Dakar have acquired security of tenure and no longer live in fear of arbitrary forced eviction. The process that won their secure tenure centred on establishing a dialogue between those living in the informal settlements and local authorities. The success of the project has led to improvements in basic services, including water delivery and sanitation. The up-grading of the settlements provided training and employment opportunities for members of the community.

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SOUTH AFRICA: The right to adequate housing

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes the rights to adequate housing and to protection against arbitrary forced eviction. Several laws passed since 1996 enforce this constitutional provision. The national housing policy promotes a number of approaches and initiatives for realizing these rights. One of these is the People's Housing Process, organized by the Department of Housing. This programme enables individuals and communities to access land, services, and technical assistance. In collaboration with the local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the poor themselves, the People's Housing Process has been instrumental in building over a million housing units since 1994.

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TANZANIA: Environmentally sustainable urban development

Five years ago, the people of Dar es Salaam lived in a city of chaos. The streets were full of potholes, the garbage was rarely collected and half of the population lived in unplanned settlements. A maze of restrictive by-laws prohibited the local authority from entering into any private sector partnerships. Habitat collaborated with the City Council of Dar es Salaam to initiate an Environmental Management Planning (EPM) system. All participants – slum dwellers, non-governmental organizations and the private sector – were consulted by the local authority. Care was taken to ensure that input from the grass roots was considered and given due weight, and that all groups were allowed to participate in an effective manner. As a result, partnerships among public, private and community sectors have improved the delivery of services; and squatter settlements and slums have been upgraded – a contribution to national goals on poverty alleviation. Due to the success of the sustainable Dar es Salaam Programme, it has been replicated in 12 municipalities country-wide.

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WESTERN ASIA

EGYPT: Participatory urban development

Urban development in Egypt is focused on a number of priorities: more housing is urgently needed; informal settlements require upgrading; and environmental management must be improved. The Sustainable Ismailia Governorate Programme, using a participatory approach, engineered a comprehensive city development plan that included housing initiatives for the poor. Because of its success, the Sustainable Ismailia Governorate Programme is being replicated in many cities and towns in Egypt. The “Mubarak National Project for Youth” and the “Future Housing Project” are two recent initiatives in which 140,000 housing units are being built. The houses are being financed through a package that involves one-half private sector financing, with the other half being met by the residents themselves, through “soft loans”, with reduced security requirements or other concessions, such as reduced interest rates.

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MOROCCO: Urban Poverty Reduction Programme

Reduction of urban poverty requires a concerted effort by all the relevant actors in a city. Launched in 1998, the Urban Poverty Reduction Programme brings together all the stake-holders to develop, implement and monitor neighbourhood action plans to improve housing and services and to provide new economic opportunities. The poor have been trained in community management skills and have consequently developed their abilities to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives. NGO representatives have received training in how to formulate and implement projects. Local authorities have been taught how to work with partners to achieve the goals of improved housing conditions for the poor and overall poverty reduction.

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ASIA

CHINA: Comprehensive revitalization of Chengdu

In 256 BC, Hsu leader Li Bing built the Dujiangyan Irrigation System channeling the Min river through Chengdu in what is still recognized as a triumph of hydraulic engineering. But the irrigation system was neglected during the rapid industrial developments of the 1970s. Since then, the Fu and Nan Rivers Comprehensive Revitalization Plan has saved the two rivers and the city of Chengdu from severe pollution. Intensive public awareness raising and effective mobilization of multiple stakeholders have resulted in public investment and community participation in the restoration of the city. Thirty thousand households have been resettled away from the slums on the rivers' banks. Other projects dealing with sewage and industrial effluents have helped to change many undesirable areas into green zones.

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INDIA: City-wide sanitation in Mumbai, Pune and Bangalore

A major problem in most informal settlements is a lack of basic sanitation, which leads to a variety of health problems. In Mumbai, Pune and Bangalore, a partnership among three civil society actors – SPARC, an NGO; Mahila Milan, a women's grassroots network; and the National Slum Dwellers Federation – has worked with city and state governments to provide comprehensive sanitation to informal settlements. The activities carried out by these projects have led to the training of the poor, which has then enhanced their employment opportunities. The three organizations are also actively working with the city and state governments to provide security of tenure for the residents in these settlements.

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THAILAND: Urban Poor Community Fund

Most formal financial institutions are unwilling to provide loans for the very poor. Established by the Government and managed by the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO), the Urban Poor Community Fund provides low-interest loans for community development projects. It has helped communities and individuals in 950 community savings groups and 100 community networks through capacity-building and credit. By 2000, the Fund had extended to 53 out of 75 provinces of the country and had acquired assets worth \$45 million.

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EUROPE

FRANCE: Lyon in the 3rd millennium (Millénaire3)

The “Millénaire 3” plan is an initiative to involve Lyon’s 1.2 million inhabitants and 55 municipalities in planning for the city’s future. After three years of intense debate involving thematic working groups and various partnerships, a city strategy plan has been adopted that identifies ‘21 priorities for the 21st Century’ and provides a new vision for the city. One of the more interesting aspects has been the complete overhaul of the transportation system. In addition to providing more public transportation, the number of vehicles parked on the streets has been reduced by the creation of eight new parking lots. Each lot is unique and artistic. One boasts a laser display and another resembles Breugel’s painting of the Tower of Babel.

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POLAND: Environmental improvement in Katowice

4 million people – 10 per cent of Poland’s population – live in the Katowice region, which produces 15 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product. Unfortunately, the area has suffered from decades of uncontrolled mining and industrial pollution. By the 1980s, two-thirds of the water supply was considered too contaminated for industrial use, much less for human consumption. The sulphur dioxide, dust and carbon monoxide regularly emitted from over 4,000 chimneys led to one of the highest rates of premature birth in Europe, with many children suffering from bronchitis and respiratory diseases. Since 1996, the Union for Sustainable Development of the Municipalities of the Katowice Agglomeration has achieved visible positive results in environmental reclamation, improved housing conditions and the rehabilitation of old industrial neighbourhoods.

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SPAIN: Barcelona's economic transformation and decentralization

The transformation of Barcelona into one of the most vibrant cities in Europe has already made headlines in the international press. The challenge of transforming this city while maintaining social cohesion was met by the city authorities, who drew up the *Pacte Industrial de la Regio Metropolitana* (Industrial Agreement for the Metropolitan Area). This *Pacte* was negotiated through consultation and consensus-building among all the various city stakeholders: the private sector, NGOs, women's groups and ordinary citizens. As part of the process, and to bring public administration closer to the citizens, enhance participatory democracy and improve service delivery, the city was divided into 10 decentralized districts.

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SWEDEN: Stockholm's Sustainable Development

Many cities are faced with the problem of controlling urban sprawl. Stockholm is controlling this through innovative land policy. Urban growth is being accommodated through alteration of land uses, where former harbour and industrial areas become mixed residential-commercial neighbourhoods connected by tramways. However, in order to ensure social cohesion and acceptance of the new land policies, the local authority organized inclusive strategies for citizen participation. The designers also included large green belts and extensive areas for human activities.

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LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

BRAZIL: Social inclusion in Santo Andre

Since Habitat II, the Santo Andre Municipality in the Sao Paulo metropolitan area has been working to include those members of society who had been traditionally excluded. A citizenship programme was developed to improve communication and partnership between the municipality and its residents, particularly the poor. Among the many people who have benefited are 16,000 inhabitants of four favelas who now enjoy improved housing and better services, as well as access to credit and vocational training.

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COLOMBIA: Integrated upgrading programme in Medellin

Over the last few years, Medellin's commitment to reducing the level of urban violence and crime through community participation has paid off. Some 140,000 inhabitants of 30 inadequate settlements have benefited from physical upgrading of housing and services, including legalization of tenure. With secure tenure for the first time, the community has been able to organize social programmes for youth aimed at reducing urban violence. In addition, community participation by all actors has helped to open up areas that were previously closed to the city police force. The "Holistic Upgrading Programme for Incomplete or Inadequately Serviced Communities" of Medellin (PRIMED) brings together national Government, municipal authorities, NGOs and community organizations.

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PERU: Participatory action for poverty reduction

The city of Villa El Salvador in the Lima Metropolitan area has suffered from a history of violence and municipal mismanagement. Over the last three years, a programme of systematic consultation among all sectors of the population, including women and youth, and including a referendum involving over 48,000 inhabitants, has helped to define priorities. One such priority was to turn Villa El Salvador from a "bedroom community" (a residential suburb) into a "productive district", in order to overcome poverty and social exclusion.

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