Five Years After Habitat II
Successes and Set-backs

“We commit ourselves to the objectives, principles and recommendations contained in the Habitat Agenda and pledge our mutual support for its implementation.” This was the declaration of world governments and leaders when they endorsed the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda at the conclusion of the Habitat II Conference in June 1996. Five years later, it is time to review how far the commitments of the Habitat Agenda are being implemented, and to make recommendations for future action.

In June 2001, the United Nations General Assembly holds a Special Session for the review and appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda (Istanbul +5). Countries have been preparing reports on their own progress in this undertaking in preparation for Istanbul +5.

The official review process for Istanbul +5 began in October 1999 with the issuing of “Guidelines for Country Reporting” issued by UNCHS (Habitat). The guidelines were developed through a consultative process involving Habitat staff, national governments and Habitat Agenda partners. Countries were requested to compile their national reports through a consultative process using broad-based, gender-balanced national committees.

Reporting was to be done under 20 key commitments and strategies selected from the Habitat Agenda. These are grouped under six main themes of Shelter; Social Development and Eradication of Poverty; Environmental Management; Economic Development; Governance; and International Cooperation. Even though this was the beginning of the official reporting process, the reports received from countries and from some Habitat Agenda partners indicated that some countries, regional groupings and networks...
In 1996, the world’s governments gathered in Istanbul for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to deliberate on the future of human settlements in the context of a rapidly urbanizing world. Habitat II was the last in a series of United Nations Conferences held in the 1990s to deliberate on major issues related to sustainable development in the 21st century. By the time we went to Istanbul, there was already talk of “conference fatigue” and questions on what new insights could come out of this Conference. Yet the outcome was welcomed by sceptics and enthusiasts alike. The Habitat Agenda acknowledged the need to accept urbanization as inevitable, to work out strategies to maximize the economic, social and cultural benefits but also to ensure that problems associated with rapid urbanization did not result in a large part of the population being marginalized and excluded.

The new century is set to be the century of the urban revolution. It is estimated that by the year 2030 more than 60 per cent of the world’s population will live in towns and cities and that the bulk of the new urban population will be in developing countries, where already at least one billion urban residents live in life-and health-threatening conditions. It is, therefore, fitting that early in the millennium, the world will gather in New York to review the progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and to agree on further actions and initiatives.

The review process has been structured around 20 key commitments coming out of the Habitat Agenda. These have been organized under six broad themes: Shelter; Social Development and Eradication of Poverty; Environmental Management; Economic Development; Governance and International Cooperation.

This issue of the Habitat Debate attempts to capture some experiences and perspectives from around the world on each of the six themes. A comprehensive review will be presented to the General Assembly during the Special Session, which takes place from 6 to 8 June 2001. In addition, governments and Habitat Agenda partners will have the opportunity to present their experiences in the committees of the Special Session and in the events that will be held parallel to the official session.

The review process of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda has already highlighted some important lessons, such as the increasing inter-dependence of countries in the age of globalization, and the continuing value of the principle of partnership. It has also shown a continuing commitment to renew and foster political will at all levels to provide secure and improved living conditions for the urban poor; to promote gender equality and inclusiveness in human settlements development; to intensify efforts for ensuring transparent, responsible, accountable, just and effective governance and a recognition of the added significance of international cooperation in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. It is my hope that we shall come out of the Istanbul+5 process with renewed commitment to work together, to ensure that human settlements remain places of hope, prosperity and social advancement.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
Executive Director
UNCHS (Habitat)
The article “Reducing Impact of Earthquakes” by Aliye Celik (Habitat Debate, 2000, Vol. 6 No. 2) states: “The best solution is to build higher-cost structures that are more durable. However, in developing countries, in order to provide more housing, it will not be possible to provide more but safer housing unless practical and affordable solutions are found to build safe and cheap buildings.” This is absolutely correct for many countries, and not only for developing countries. For example, Turkey is a country with the highest seismic risk. 95 per cent of the Turkish population resides in seismic hazardous destructive zones. And in 50 per cent of Turkey’s territory, destructive earthquakes such as the one that occurred in Izmit in 1999 could occur any time. Developing seismic safe and inexpensive buildings is extremely important in earthquake-prone areas, especially in developing countries. In recent years, several structural systems to deal with earthquakes have been developed in Russia. These are highly reliable, safe and inexpensive. We would be willing to share these systems and cooperate with other countries interested in implementing them.

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It is not often that informal settlement residents get to read publications that they can easily understand. Global issues are often documented in technical language and most of the information does not get to the community level anyway. Habitat Debate is an exception. Keep up the good work, Habitat.

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The Ministry for Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus is grateful for Habitat Debate’s Russian version. The Russian version of this bulletin will be a valuable source of information for the Republic and will enable it to carry out its activities within the framework of the Habitat II follow-up, global reports and monitoring of urban indicators.

Mr. Gennady F. Kurochkin
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Letters to the Editor

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Habitat Debate

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of partners had already established their internal mechanisms for discussing implementation and/or monitoring progress. As of March 2001, UNCHS had received a total of 82 national reports. These have been analyzed by region and synthesized into regional reports. The regional reports were presented to the respective regions in a series of regional meetings held between September and November 2000. National reports varied widely from country to country. A few of the most obvious differences in terms of coverage included:

- quantity and quality of hard data to support general statements;
- scope and depth of coverage of all the items under the six themes;
- dis-aggregation of information to show pre- and post-Istanbul initiatives;
- evidence of a broad-based participation in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and in the formulation of the country report.

The following summaries highlight some of the main issues and trends in each region.

Africa

Legislative and institutional frameworks such as town and country planning acts and housing policies have been formulated and others reviewed to match new demands. Housing finance institutions in the region are typically small and provide a very small proportion of total housing finance.

There has been large expansion of informal settlements and lack of adequate basic services. Factors that constrain the supply of land in African countries have been identified and these include customary land rights, land speculation, lack of up to date cadastral and land data systems.

Most countries emphasized the need to target the shelter needs of both rural and urban populations. Although Africa is the least urbanized continent with only about 35 percent of its population living in urban areas, it is currently experiencing high rates of population increase and the world's most rapid rate of urbanization. Many countries have been disrupted by war and armed conflicts.

Widespread poverty and low levels of economic development in many countries of the region present a daunting challenge. Coupled with this is the rate at which HIV/AIDS infections are occurring. Twenty million Africans are already infected with the HIV virus. Most are people in the prime of their working and parenting lives.

Strengthening the role of local authorities in social development and poverty eradication has been identified as a key area of concern, as is the need to enhance the private sector, particularly those engaged in small-scale activities. Lack of capacity to implement and translate legislative reforms, especially capacity building in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming, is one of the constraints affecting many countries in the region.

African countries have also expressed the need to improve macro economic management as well as creation of enabling environment for private sector development and growth through privatization policies. Informal economic enterprises absorb over 60 percent of the workforce in urban Africa. It is the one sector that continues to show absorptive capacity and is the most rapidly expanding employment segment of the contemporary African urban economy. In the next decade an estimated 90 percent of the growth in labor demand in Africa is expected to come from micro and small scale enterprises. Levels of unemployment have escalated across urban Africa, averaging 30 percent in most cities. Public sector retrenchments and declining absorption capacity in the formal private sector are mainly to blame.

Constitutional reforms and reviews support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies are high priority issues in Africa. The relationship between central government and local authorities, however, is still poorly developed even in some countries where decentralization is enshrined in national constitutions. In addition, local authorities have low management and administrative capacity and lack resources.

The international cooperation focus on poverty eradication has allowed governments in the region to include urban poverty reduction initiatives into their poverty eradication strategies. Enhanced international cooperation and development assistance to improve local capacities and reduce poverty will be required.

Asia and the Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region is characterized by great differences in socio-economic development. South-East and East Asia saw high economic growth for several decades prior to the economic crisis of 1997. The economy of China, however, continued to grow at high rates. South Asia's development had been much slower and was less affected by the crisis.

Nonetheless, fueled earlier by economic growth, urbanization continues unabated. While population growth is expected to decrease to 1.11 percent for the period 2000 to 2010, the formation of households will continue at a much higher level (growth rate of 2.29 over the same period). This will keep housing demand in developing countries of the region at a very
high level. Industrialized countries in the region face different problems such as the changing housing needs of the ageing populations and the increase in single person households.

Among the major trends in the region is the shift of government policy towards an enabling role and more reliance on partnerships with the private sector as well as with NGOs and local community organizations. In many countries with national level organizations, self-reliance of well-organized communities is playing a significant role. This is particularly visible in the well-established democracies. More centralized states tend to move towards more inclusive shelter policies more cautiously. Policies tend to include various actors, but tend to place responsibility on the private sector to deliver shelter to all strata of the population. Some countries encourage shelter provision for the poor by a requirement for developers, which obliges them to set aside a portion of any development for low-income groups.

Eviction is the greatest threat to most existing slum dwellers in Asia. However, some countries have instituted legal measures to prevent forced evictions. For instance, in Bangladesh the High Court, in a landmark decision has declared the eviction of squatters without rehabilitation illegal. Still there are too few other examples where governments recognize slum dwellers’ rights to stay where they are unless an acceptable alternative can be found.

There have been specific measures adopted that support the participation of women in decision-making. These include legislation, such as that adopted in India before the Habitat II Conference, that a third of the seats in local councils be allotted to women. Subsequently, 800,000 women took their places in local level politics in India, in both urban and rural areas.

The rapid growth of motorization in the vast majority of cities has significantly contributed to urban air pollution. Industrial pollution of air and water quality also remains an area of major concern requiring legislative action and effective enforcement. An important development since Habitat II has been the ratification of the 1997 Tokyo Agreement or emission of carbon dioxide and setting up of Air and Environment Conservation Acts.

Widespread recognition and understanding of the negative environmental and economic development impacts of the overuse of the private automobile has been a major concern since 1996. Expanding and enhancing access to public transport and light rail transit systems have been opened or are currently under construction in Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Manila, Jakarta, Bangkok and Singapore, among others. However, the widespread use of two-wheelers or motorcycles in the largest cities in Asia are having a negative impact on emissions levels, air quality, traffic congestion and quality of life.

Economic development in the region was shaken by the Asian financial and currency crisis of 1997, which also had an impact on global growth momentum and world trade. In the region itself, the shock of the instability had unprecedented effects on the real estate sector, growth rates, inflation, unemployment, and the social and political fabric of the society.

Employment in the informal sector accounted for a large percentage of all employed persons. In the Philippines, this sector accounts for 50.6 per cent of all employed persons. In urban areas, it accounts for 36 per cent. In Korea, small companies with less than 4 staff had increased from 65 per cent in 1993 to 87 percent in 1998 and women represent 33 per cent of all businesspersons.

Effective coordination at the regional level remains constrained but sub-regional consultations have been held around the draft World Charter of Local Government, and the idea of a Pacific Habitat Agenda has been discussed to deal with the specific urbanization issues of that sub-region.

**West Asia**

Housing conditions and policies are very diverse in the West Asia region where most countries suffered serious economic setback after the Gulf War in 1991. Housing policies were, however reviewed and advanced in the majority of the countries in the region before and after the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

The characteristics of the housing stock and demand are different in the oil producing gulf countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from other countries in the region. The existing housing stock and the actual housing demand are influenced by a number of factors such as the considerable expatriate population of workers and employment seekers in the GCC area and the unprecedented flow of Palestinian refugees (particularly to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan).

Moreover, the high natural growth rates of population in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Yemen have contributed to the already existing housing crisis in these respective countries. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen have strengthened their housing delivery processes by involving and increasing the role of the private sector and the various actors of the civil society. Another important development taking place in the shelter field in the region is the strengthening of the role of women in housing and urban development as stated by the national reports from both Egypt and Iraq.

Within the Western Asia region there is a marked difference in social progress and the scale of poverty between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the rest of the countries. These wide regional disparities are accompanied by disparities within countries in several cases. While the majority of people in GCC have adequate shelter, access to basic urban services, health and education, there are still gaps in meeting the needs of all sectors of the population in other countries.

Environmental issues remain paramount in the region, most of which are exacerbated by harsh climatic conditions which make resources such as water scarce. One of the major issues is the lack of potable water for cities in the entire region. Environmental pollution resulting from the proliferation of the private automobile in urban areas and coastal urban centres (ports dealing in the export of crude oil) is a cause of concern in many countries.

Progress has been made to promote governance, especially in the last decade. Legislative reforms and policies have supported an overall visible change in women’s role in the region, especially through the election of women as mayors or members of municipal councils. However, little information has been collected on transparent, accountable and efficient governance of cities.

**OECD and Transition Countries**

The main shelter issue in the region is not construction of new units, but urban renewal and conservation of historic sites and cultural heritage. Conservation, renovation and modernization of existing housing stock is probably the main area of activity in the shelter sector in Western Europe, and even...
more so in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), where the quality of many old dwellings is generally poorer than in many countries in Western Europe.

Another issue faced in all countries in the region is the ageing of the population, with its related consequences for the type of dwellings required. With growing numbers of older people, demand for smaller housing units close to services in densely developed inner cities is expected to rise. While some 20 per cent of the population in Europe was more than 60 years old in 2000, the figure is projected to increase to 26.7 per cent in 2025. Similar figures for North America are 16.3 per cent and 24.4 per cent respectively.

In countries with economies in transition where social welfare systems have declined considerably, there is a strong need to address the needs of tenants as housing markets are becoming increasingly commercialised.

Several of the countries in the Balkans and in Caucasus have experienced civil strife during the last few years, with large populations being international refugees or internally displaced persons. In these countries, the issue of securitization is of major importance. In Kosovo, for instance, the entire land registration system has to be totally recreated anew, following the destruction.

Several countries in Western Europe have been or are in the process of implementing new legislation to improve the situation of homeless people. Some countries are targeting refugees and asylum-seekers with a view to ensuring improved integration of these disadvantaged categories in local housing markets. Other policy changes include the amendments to legislation governing tenancy and the non-profit housing sector in an effort to target low-income people.

There is a worrying trend of increasing social divisions, especially in the metropolitan regions. Furthermore, the ethnic dimension in the segregation processes has become more evident. A number of countries have been involved in the promotion and improved systems that support organizations of the vulnerable and disadvantaged. The aim is to ensure the promotion of their interests and their involvement in the local, national, economic, social and political decision-making processes.

Issues related to urban transport systems are high on the agenda of many European countries. New technologies, as well as concerns and political support from a wide range of actors, have led to improving transport systems towards more environmentally sound options.

Many countries are placing emphasis on privatization and competition in the delivery of urban services. The cooperation of other sectors has shown the increase of available sources of funding, and improved quality and level of services. However, improved service delivery has increased the cost of many services, with the result that many low-income urban inhabitants no longer have access to some urban services.

Latin America and the Caribbean

This is the most urbanized region in the developing world, with 75 per cent of its population residing in urban areas. 40-60 per cent of urban residents reside in informal settlements. Invasion of land and buildings by the organized poor has been a feature of urban areas.

There is a recognition of the influence of popular urban movements and civil society in general, who play an important role in negotiating programmes for security of tenure and settlements upgrading, mainly through self-help construction. This has reduced the incidence of invasions. Many countries recognize housing rights in their constitutions and there is widespread guarantee of secure tenure for renters.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and landslides have had a serious impact on development efforts in the region. There have been regional and sub-regional level responses to disaster mitigation and management.

Decentralization has been widely accompanied by participation of civil society in local governance. The issue of gender equality in local governance and urban issues has been widely addressed in the region. For example, violence against women has been addressed through legislation and specific programmes. Gender equality has been a significant criterion in homeownership and subsidized schemes and there are significant numbers of women heading households as homeowners.

There has been a drastic reduction in bi-lateral and multi-lateral assistance to the region (only 3 per cent of such funds worldwide go to this region). This is partly explained by the high average Gross Domestic Product of the region, but the region also has very high disparities between the rich and the poor. There is also more direct channeling of aid to NGOs who are perceived to be more responsive to the poorest sections of the population. Housing is ranked low in development assistance, except for natural disasters.

Local governments are unable to directly enter into agreements with bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies due to legislative constraints. This is seen as an obstacle to effective decentralization.

This article is based on regional reports prepared by UNCHS (Habitat) in consultation with the various UN Regional Commissions and Member States.  The regional reports are part of the preparatory process of Istanbul+5, the Special Session of the UN General Assembly for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda, due to take place in New York in June 2001. The above synthesis was prepared by Wandia Seaforth, Networking/Information Officer in UNCHS (Habitat)'s Urban Secretariat.

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Did you know?
Some basic facts from UNCHS (Habitat)'s

**Shelter**
- 75% of the world’s countries have constitutions or national laws that promote the full and progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing.
- 61% of countries in the world have constitutions or national laws that protect against forced evictions.
- Households in cities of developing countries need an average of 8 times their annual income to buying a house; in Africa, they need an average of 12.5 times their annual income, while in Latin America, they only need 5.4 times their annual income. The highest rents are in the Arab States, where a household spends an average of 45% of its monthly income on rent.
- One out of every four countries in the developing world have constitutions or national laws which prevent women from owning land and/or taking mortgages in their own names. Customary or legal constraints to women owning land or property are highest in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and Latin America.
- Real estate costs are highest in Asia and the Pacific where one square metre of land for a serviced plot costs an average of US$ 3.1.
- Africa is at the lowest end of the real estate market with an average price of US$ 0.15 per square metre.
- Less than 20% of households in Africa are connected to piped water and only 40% have access to water within 200 meters of their house.

**Society**
- 5.8% of children in cities of the developing world die before reaching the age of five years.
- 29% of cities in the developing world have areas considered as inaccessible or dangerous to the police. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this figure is 48%.
- In cities of the developing world, one out of every four households lives in poverty. 40% of African urban households and 25% of Latin American urban households are living below the locally defined poverty lines.

**Environment**
- City dwellers in Africa only use 50 litres of water per person per day. The highest median price of water is also highest in Africa.
- In highly industrialised countries, almost 100% of households are connected to piped water. The average water consumption for these households is 215 litres per person daily.
- Less than 35% of cities in the developing world have their wastewater treated.
- In countries with economies in transition, 75% of solid wastes are disposed of in open dumps.
- 71% of the world’s cities have building codes with anti-cyclone and anti-seismic building standards based on hazard and vulnerability assessment.
- Buses and minibuses are the most common mode of transport in the world’s cities. Cars are the second most common mode used, while walking is the third most common mode. Travel time in Asian cities appears to be the longest with an average of 42 minutes per trip.

**Economy**
- 37% of the population in cities of the developing world is employed within the informal sector.
- 70% of the world’s cities have developed city-to-city international co-operation. 68% of these cities are affiliated to one or more international association of local authorities.
- 63% of the world’s cities have established new public-private partnerships in the last five years.

**Governance**
- 49% of the world’s cities have established urban environmental plans.
- The absolute quantity of local government income varies enormously, with total local government revenue per person in cities of highly industrialised countries being 9 times that of cities in the developing world, 39 times that of African cities and 18 times that of Latin American cities.
- 60% of the world’s cities involve civil society in a formal participatory process prior to the implementation of major public projects.
- 70% of cities in the world undertake regular independent auditing of municipal accounts. 78% of the world’s cities publicly announce contracts and tenders for municipal services. 55% of cities have laws that govern disclosure of potential conflict of interest.
Innovative Approaches to Tenure
by Geoffrey Payne

As with the weather, perceptions of the importance of tenure and property rights depend upon one’s degree of exposure. It is widely assumed that freehold titles offer the greatest protection and security. However, current research on innovative approaches to tenure for the urban poor has demonstrated that many other tenure options have proved equally effective in meeting people’s diverse shelter needs.

The research has also shown that urban land tenure and property rights are far more complex than what the conventional black and white, legal/illegal, or formal/informal distinctions may suggest. For example, millions of people in cities of the South live quite securely in settlements which lack any legal status, whilst others find that even formal titles may not protect them from eviction.

The reality is that tenure systems exist within a continuum in which even pavement dwellers may enjoy a degree of legal protection and there may be many gradations of sub-markets between those with the lowest level of recognition and the fortunate minority at the top. The vast majority in between live in a grey area whereby they can claim some degree of de facto rights through adverse possession, legal ownership of the land, if not the buildings on it, or the acquisition and development of land in areas not recognized by the authorities. The classical alternative to legal ownership through squatting is now rare in most cities, as even marginal areas attract a commercial value high enough to find a place in the land market.

Undoubtedly, globalization has reinforced these tendencies. The opening up of domestic economies to international competition has encouraged governments and private land-owners to realize the commercial potential of all urban and peri-urban land holdings. This commercialization has enabled some to acquire undreamed of wealth and encouraged those lower down the social and economic ladder to follow suit. The result is that virtually all urban land now commands a price within a range of sub-markets in which tenure status is only one of many considerations in determining values. The actual legal status may not even be clear to those involved — what matters is the perception of risk involved.

Under these conditions, lack of official documents may expose a household to a precarious existence, but if the household is surrounded by thousands or hundreds of thousands of others in the same situation, the perceived risk may prove to be negligible. Many households appear willing to pay property taxes on the basis that every piece of paper helps increase legitimacy, providing they can afford the charges, or obtain tangible benefits in the form of improved services, whilst others feel that such documentation is not an adequate incentive to meet bureaucratic requirements.

What lessons does current research suggest governments should consider when formulating or implementing an urban land tenure policy? The first is that tenure issues cannot be isolated from other related policies of urban land management. Tenure has to be seen as part of a package of policy measures intended to improve the efficiency and equity of urban land and property markets and improving the living conditions of the poor, especially women.

Secondly, it’s vital to assess the extent to which existing options have proved sufficient to encourage people to invest their own efforts and resources to improve their lives and livelihoods through housing investments and to build on what options work well.

Thirdly, it is important not to put all one’s eggs in one or two baskets, but to offer a wide range of options, so that the diverse and changing needs of households can be met on a long-term basis through competition.

How such objectives can be realized will inevitably vary from time to time and place to place. Where customary tenure exists in or around expanding cities, its role within the wider society will inevitably come under review, though its removal may be easier to legislate for than to achieve. Similarly, policies to enforce official norms may offer short term attractions, but are unlikely to address the structural imbalances between supply and demand within societies where income inequalities are substantial. Evidence suggests that certificates of use or occupancy, community land trusts and other forms of what could be called intermediate forms of tenure, provide a valuable means of increasing legitimacy and providing a valuable breathing space whilst the administrative capability to record and clarify rights is improved.

The illusion that all cities can conform to some professionally based sense of order is inevitably tempting for those involved in urban management. However, the reality suggests that people themselves have evolved responses which professionals, and particularly governments, would do well to learn from.

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Reference

1. Research was carried out in India, South Africa, Kenya, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Egypt, Russia, Botswana, Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Turkey and Thailand.

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Millions of people live quite securely in settlements which lack any legal status.
Women Reconstructing Their Lives

by Sengul Akçar

On 17 August 1999, Turkey's most destructive earthquake hit the Marmara region affecting approximately 80,000 square kilometres of a highly industrialized and densely populated area where 23 per cent of Turkey's population lives. Eighty-six days after the first earthquake, a second one struck Düzce and Bolu area and caused even more damage. According to official figures, 18,373 people died and 48,908 people were injured. Officially 352,396 houses suffered some degree of damage.

Right after the earthquake, people lived in temporary prefabricated settlements and tent camp sites. The residents of these temporary housing settlements can be divided into three categories, based on their pre- and post-settlements can be divided into three categories, based on their pre- and post-earthquake housing tenure status and problems:

1. **Homeowners** with rights to housing aid/credit for slightly and medium damaged homes, or in the case of total destruction, with rights to construct their own homes themselves, or to wait for state constructed housing.

2. **Tenants**, including those who lived in units owned by their relatives, those without any rent contract, those who were evicted as a result of rent hikes and those who left to allow their landlords to claim ownership for replacement housing, a severe housing shortage is virtually guaranteed.

3. **People with undefined status** before the earthquake, who were:
   - paying on a house before the earthquake, e.g. as cooperative members;
   - doubled up in a relative's house when the earthquake destroyed the home or living in illegal/unrecognized shelter (slums, i.e. "gecekondu")

   This last category are outside today's government's permanent shelter plan.

   Currently, the Turkish government is undertaking the construction of approximately 40,665 permanent houses. The Public Works Ministry and the Turkish Republic's Agency for Social Housing are coordinating housing replacement with financing provided by the European Investment and World Bank. This accounts for less than half the number of units that were highly damaged or totally destroyed. Once permanent houses are allocated to legal owners, the plan is to close the prefab settlements and tent campsites and evacuate residents immediately. In light of the demand for replacement housing, a severe housing shortage is virtually guaranteed.

   Those who are not legal owners will certainly face serious shelter problems given that rents are sky rocketing and many moderately damaged buildings in the city have undergone inadequate repairs. The poorest households in this group will find it virtually impossible to find permanent housing that is affordable, adequate, and reliable, unless an alternative planning process is put in place.

   Locating Women in this Process

   It is almost a universal truth that it is women, not men, who take up the practical questions of how and where to shelter and sustain their families in everyday life. Thus it should not be surprising that displaced Turkish women sought to organize themselves after the Marmara earthquakes to enable their families to survive and function in communities spanning the provinces of Izmit, Adapazari, and Düzce. In these communities, women were assisted by the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW). FSWW is a fifteen-year-old non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to serving as an resource/partner organization that supports poor women to become economically active through grassroots women's initiatives.

   After the earthquake, the FSWW worked in partnership with governmental agencies, local municipalities, other NGOs and professionals. With funding from NOVIB and the American Jewish World Services, the Foundation built eight Women and Childcare Centres—first, under makeshift conditions in tent cities, and later in temporary housing settlements in three different provinces. The Centres, which provided a safe and pleasant environment for children and a common “public living room” for local women have also built the capacities of the women and children in the community. For example:
   - Young children are receiving quality day care and education services run by community mothers, not outside professionals.
   - Women are organized in production groups and are earning income to counter the loss of family assets. They are exploring new job opportunities and small business potential that their settlements and the region provide. They are learning new skills (e.g. carpentry, recycled paper making) to enrich the variety of their products.
   - Women are collecting and disseminating information in their own settlements; meeting and negotiating with the local administrators to get involved in the reconstruction process, and conducting dialogue meetings with local administrations.
   - Women are being supported to act as effective community outreach workers, and strengthening their networks with women from Turkey and from other parts of the world.

   Since September 1999, more than 10,000 women have been involved in the Centres’ activities. Their accomplishments in terms of information gathering, advocacy and monitoring are truly impressive and unequalled by any other community-based effort.

   Sengul Akçar works for the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW), a non-governmental organization based in Istanbul, Turkey.
Thinking about Urban Inclusiveness
by Richard E. Stren

Until recently, the question of how to respond to and how to effectively incorporate social diversity in our cities was hardly ever considered. Most urban development policies focused on the supply of basic needs, i.e. infrastructure and necessities such as food, housing and education. While diverse groups needed to be taken into account, the larger issues were “supply driven” rather than “demand driven” from the point of view of agencies and governments.

In the 1970s, the typical urban project which responded to this development logic was the large-scale “sites and services” project. Large-scale projects which needed to deal expeditiously with many thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people in one fell swoop had little ability to look at the very complex reality of how people, and small groups of people at that, organized themselves in real life. This is the problem of what James Scott has called “Seeing Like a State”.

The 1980s saw the ascendency of “urban management” essentially a technical approach to improved management of urban services. Issues of social policy did not become important until the late 1980s and 1990s. And, in the urban field, social policy issues were promoted more in Latin America than in other regions, possibly because of the more substantial importance of sociologists and anthropologists in that region in setting the agenda for research and thus, our understanding of the basic issues facing people.

Decentralization and the Opening of Political Space

As social questions began to take their place as an integral part of the development discourse, an independent, but parallel process was taking place in the field of administrative and policy reform. Beginning in the late 1980s, many countries began to adopt plans for the decentralization of important functions and powers from the national to the local level of government. By the early 1990s, most countries had begun this process. These decentralization plans varied tremendously, from new policy emphases at one extreme, to entirely new constitutions or constitutional amendments empowering local authorities, on the other. But by the end of the decade, a large number of developing countries had undergone some degree of decentralization, in the sense that their cities and local governments not only had more substantive powers to provide for their citizens, but were beginning to gain financial resources to make these powers meaningful. A substantial opening of political and economic space had taken place at the local level.

The “Seeing Like a State” problem of large bureaucracies failing to deal with the complexities and nuances of localities and small number of people was seriously undermined, as smaller local government groups (whose elected members responded to their constituents) took over important policy functions. Many of the new municipal councils, particularly those with elected mayors and councillors, where so-called democratic choice was exercised through alternative parties or groups of councillors, began to take a special interest in the plight of the poor and other vulnerable groups. This interest was strengthened by the electoral process in some countries (such as India, some have argued), and in others, reinforced by new constitutions that enjoined local governments to take their “developmental” responsibilities seriously. For example, in the current Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, article 153 states that a municipality “must…structure and manage its administration, budgeting, and planning processes, to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community”.

Another factor that has strengthened the tendency of municipalities and local governments to pay more attention to social differences and inclusivity in their policies is globalization. Whether or not it is rational to do so, cities and city-regions all over the world – in both the North and the South – must compete with each other in the international arena if they wish to prosper. They must compete for hard investments (such as industrial plants, commercial and financial centers, etc.) as well as for prestige of place. To compete in a globalization economy, cities must improve their “livability”. This includes taking care of the poor and marginalized.

Diversity and Innovation

If we expand our concern for the poor and vulnerable to the whole population, there is another general reason why cities – especially those cities concerned with their place in the larger economic system – should be concerned with inclusiveness. We might call this “the productivity of social diversity”.

Around the world, in both the North and the South, cities are more socially and economically diverse than small towns, villages and rural areas; and large cities are more diverse than small cities. Urbanization as a process brings together peoples from diverse backgrounds, together, producing, argues many economists, “agglomeration economies”, or economies which operate at a higher level of complexity and sophistication because they contain more specialized economic and social functions. Often it is particular social groups that connect with the outside world in a particular way, or develop a highly valued specialty, who lead the way economically in big cities. This process adds value to national economies, to the extent that the largest cities typically account for a very high proportion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of most countries.

Throughout the centuries, cities have been a source both of social stress and of innovation – the latter is the chief strength of the city, the former its greatest challenge. Greater social diversity brings inevitable conflict, higher and more aggressive levels of civil society organization, and more political contention. All things being equal, there is more crime and violence in bigger cities. This tension between diversity and productivity, on the one hand, and political conflict, on the other, must be managed if we are to obtain the maximum benefits from these massive social experiments we call cities.

“Socially Sustainable” Cities

With my Canadian colleague Mario Polesi, and a number of other researchers, I
Localizing the Gender Agenda
by Anne Michaud

Coming home from a week’s tour, a book, and other personal commitments, you may both cherish memories and wish to address the question of governance. As we are faced with the complex challenges of urban and social sustainability, the role of local governments becomes increasingly important. However, achieving gender equality remains a significant challenge at all levels of government. The following report aims to highlight the progress made in several countries and communities, as well as the remaining challenges.

1. The Role of Local Governments
   - Many cities have made efforts to integrate gender perspectives into their urban planning and policy-making processes. For instance, the International Union of Local Authorities Women in Local Government (IULA) has been actively working on promoting gender equality in local governance.
   - The Istanbul Declaration on Women in Local Government, adopted at the 1996 Habitat II conference, emphasized the importance of women’s participation in local decision-making.

2. National and International Initiatives
   - The Habitat Agenda, adopted at the 2018 World Urban Forum, recognizes the critical role of local governments in achieving gender equality.
   - The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) has been actively promoting global alignment on policies that support gender equality.

3. Case Studies
   - In Montreal, Canada, the Feminizes et Ville (Women and City) programme has addressed issues such as women’s safety and engagement in urban crime prevention strategies.
   - The project has been successful in reducing incidents of violence against women, leading to improved public safety and increased participation of women in community decision-making.

4. Challenges and Future Directions
   - While progress has been made, many cities still face challenges in integrating gender perspectives into their urban planning and policy-making processes.
   - To address these challenges, local governments need to strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations and promote gender-sensitive urban planning.

Anne Michaud is the Coordinator of the programme Femmes et Ville Women and City, in Montreal, Canada. She is also a member of the Huairou Commission and of the International Union of Local Authorities Women in Local Government task force.
**Habitat Debate**

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

**Democratizing the Urban Environment Agenda**

**Why Focus on the Urban Environment?**

It is now widely recognized that cities play a vital role in social and economic development in all countries. Urbanization builds diversified and dynamic economies which raise productivity, create jobs and wealth, provide essential services, absorb population growth, and become the key engines of economic and social advancement. Thus, efficient and productive cities and towns are essential for national economic growth and welfare equally, at the local level, strong urban economies generate the resources needed for public and private investments in infrastructure, education, health, and improved living conditions.

The development potential for cities is increasingly threatened by environmental deterioration. Aside from its obvious effects on human health and well-being, environmental degradation directly impedes socio-economic development. Water, air and soil pollution, for example, impose extra costs on business and industry, and on households as well as public services. Inefficient use and depletion of natural resources raises input prices and operating costs throughout the economy, and also deters new investment. Heightened risk from environmental hazards has the same effect. In terms of impact, it is usually the poor who suffer most cruelly and directly from environmental degradation, although the lives and health of all urban residents are also affected. Failing to deal with the problem today, moreover, leads to much greater problems (and costs) in the future.

For development achievements to be truly sustainable, cities must find better ways of balancing the needs and pressures of urban growth and change with the opportunities and constraints of the environment.

**Responding to Opportunities and Constraints**

Although many cities seem to have made progress in striking the right balance between finding development paths which are more effectively attuned to environmental opportunities and constraints.

Indeed, mounting evidence from cities around the world shows that the fundamental challenge has to do with urban governance: learning how to plan better and more effectively manage the process of urban development, avoiding or alleviating problems while realizing the positive potentials of city growth and change.

New and more positive approaches to urban management can help mobilize and effectively apply local resources.

**Involving Stakeholders**

A common focus of many innovative and effective approaches is a central concern with the actual process of urban environmental planning and management.

Many cities have found that successful environmental planning and management requires understanding, agreement, and coordinated action by the full range of public, private and popular sector groups and organizations (stakeholders) at various levels. Cities recognize that it is important to undertake a wide-ranging process of identifying and involving stakeholders. Cities also recognize that this process involves groups which may be outside the formal planning and management systems, such as women, private sector groups and interests, and the marginalized and disadvantaged groups, especially the urban poor, at both city and neighbourhood levels.

To identify relevant stakeholders for a specific issue, many cities around the world apply the following simple test:

- Whose interests are affected by the environment-development issue at hand or by environmental management strategies and actions that may be decided?
- Who possesses information and expertise needed for strategy formulation and implementation?
- Who controls relevant implementation instruments or has the means to significantly influence environment-development interactions?

Clearly, no city can realistically expect to tackle successfully all of its environmental and development issues at once. It is important to be selective and to set priorities, so that attention and action may be focused on a limited array of problems and tasks in a strategic sequence. The criteria for prioritization have, in many cases, been worked out through a participatory process and typically derive from consideration both of the impacts associated with each environmental problem and of the local capacities to respond. Continued on pg. 21

UNDP/Emma Robson
Implementing the Habitat Agenda in AFRICA and the ARAB STATES
by Alioune Badiane

In Africa and the Arab Region, the beginning of the 21st century will be remembered not least because of the mammoth problems facing the continent: mass poverty, poor governance, civil wars, conflicts and disasters. Recognizing this challenge and the imperative for the international community to deal with these issues as a matter of priority, the United Nations Secretary General launched in 2000 the UN in Africa Initiative, an effort aimed at strengthening UN’s support for African peoples and governments towards sustainable development. In February 2001, the Presidents of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank made a joint mission to Africa where they met with various presidents of African countries and representatives of various sectors of the society. Their key message was that they wish to listen and will be guided by the continent’s logic in their concerted efforts to help Africa benefit from, and participate in, the global economy and move towards sustainable development.

Together with global, regional, national and local partners, UNCHS (Habitat)’s Regional Office for Africa and Arab States (ROAAS) is providing a crucial link to solutions in human settlements, where people live and work, where most problems are manifested and where key solutions can be provided.

A crucial part of Habitat’s immediate-term goal is to assist the African and Arab States region in implementing the Habitat Agenda. To this end, the Centre is constantly engaged in policy dialogues with all partners, assisting in the identification, formulation and execution of various projects with and/or on behalf of the various partners, and facilitating collection and dissemination of practice-derived information and knowledge. The work programme is implemented in the respective partner-countries through a team of chief technical advisers and national project coordinators as well as “anchoring institutions” from where approaches and lessons derived from the various projects are disseminated to enhance sustainability.

A crucial approach of the Centre is to develop institutional capacity in management of human settlements in Africa. Habitat believes that while providing physical infrastructure in Africa is important, procedural and methodological processes of developing, maintaining and improving such infrastructure is even more important, i.e. building institutional capacity. Unless this is done, aid and technical assistance to the continent will only serve to perpetuate dependence.

The following articles cover areas such as disaster management, poverty, diversity of interventions, urbanization, challenges of housing and implementation of the Habitat Agenda. A crucial vehicle in Habitat’s work is management of practice-derived information so as to enable cross-fertilization of experiences between countries, regions and sectors. The Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States recently launched its own web-site through which on-site practitioners can communicate not only with the headquarters but also among themselves. This facility is being developed with the aim of linking all local, national, regional and global partners in pursuit of sustainable human settlements development in Africa. We hope that our readers will find the issues raised in these articles relevant and thought-provoking, and we would like to appeal for feedback on how we can improve our work. We stand ready to always learn from our partners.

Alioune Badiane is Chief of UNCHS (Habitat)’s Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States (ROAAS).
Meeting the Challenge of Diversity in the Arab States

by Mohamed El Sioufi

The Arab States Region is a most diverse region despite the fact that it comprises only 22 States. The region includes areas suffering from ongoing conflict, areas emerging from conflicts, least developed countries, developing countries and oil-rich countries.

Consequently, the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through developmental technical cooperation in this region includes a variety of capacity-building interventions. These include post disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction (Somalia, Iraq); settlement upgrading and poverty alleviation (Morocco, Sudan); shelter policy and delivery systems (Ghana, Yemen); urban planning and management (Dubai, Libya); urban environmental planning and management (Egypt, Tunisia); and urban indicators (Bahrain). The programmatic themes addressed, funding modalities and partners are also diverse and cover a range from full donor funding (UNDP, UNCDF, the EC and bilaterals) to full government funding with cases combining both sources of funding.

In order to share the experience gained from operational activities in the Arab States Region, UNCHS (Habitat) works closely with many regional partners who share responsibilities in the implementation of activities, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned, as well as development of normative work leading to policy and capacity-building guidelines and training materials. These partners also co-organize regional conferences, workshops and seminars concerning the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

This article describes a few examples of capacity building initiatives. Setting up a platform for replication is a common theme that underlies all capacity building programmes in the region. This is achieved through involving partners at the national and local levels and building their capacities to become agents of change and catalysts for replication.

Re-building local capacities

Building institutional capacity at the local level is essential for increasing the absorptive capacity for capital investment associated with long-term development programmes and for ensuring sustainability. Local authorities are a logical partner for UNCHS (Habitat)'s activities at the municipal level, in post-conflict contexts where legitimate democratically elected national regional governments might not yet be established and the political future is uncertain.

For instance, in the self-proclaimed "Somaliland" in North-west Somalia, Habitat has worked towards building local capacities while addressing immediate needs. The "Urban Settlements Governance and Management" Programme (USGMP), funded by UNDP, the European Community, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and other UN agencies, was designed to provide technical support to several municipalities, in order to restore their institutional capacities to undertake rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. The programme has concentrated on building technical capacities of local authorities. It recognizes that the cities in the region suffered not only from the physical destruction caused by the civil war and later abandonment, but more importantly from loss of human resources and the institutional capacity to manage them.

An "Immediate Measures Action Plan" was designed to assist five municipalities in re-building local capacities by supporting local authorities to establish immediate measures action plans through participative approaches. The USGMP has helped establish immediate actions in a framework that is linked to short- and longer-term development needs and priorities.

Up-scaling National Programmes

The cities of Ismailia in Egypt and Tunis in Tunisia have been members of the joint UNCHS/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP). In the case of Ismailia, the experience of the project in its first phase has focused on capacity building of Ismailia Town local authorities in the application of the broad-based environmental planning and management techniques including holding city
As a means for improving urban governance.

This has improved decision making processes, consultations and thematic working groups. During the first phase, several priority projects were identified and feasibility studies were made through multi-sectoral integrated approaches. In its second phase the experience was replicated at the Governorate level in four smaller towns. Furthermore, based on a need for upgrading the capacities of all development partners as identified in the first phase, the project focused on establishing a training centre and a local NGO undertook training of local women’s and youth’s NGOs in income generation activities. In addition, the centre conducted several training modules on decision making and management techniques for local leaders both from the local councils and local NGOs. Several other governorates in Egypt have demonstrated interest in replicating the Ismailia experience in their own cities and towns.

Through a local-authorities support unit established in the Ministry of Local Development, policies, guidelines and capacity building tools will be developed to support the process.

Urban performance indicators

UNCHS (Habitat) is providing institutional support to the Municipality of Dubai, U.A.E., to streamline the delivery of services and to become more strategic, effective and efficient. As a result, the Municipality has instituted performance indicators for all its Departments to acknowledge and encourage excellence. Dubai has taken the initiative to strive for excellence in performance beyond its municipal boundaries to the global arena by establishing the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment”. In partnership with UNCHS (Habitat), the Municipality supports the documentation and dissemination of best practices. Every two years, 10 best practices are selected for the award which is given to those projects/programmes that have made a positive contribution to improving the quality of life in cities and communities.

In the case of Bahrain, the government through the Ministry of Housing, Municipalities and Environment with the technical support of Habitat’s Regional Office and the Indicators Programme has established the Bahrain Urban Indicators Programme. The Programme has created a formal network of focal points including national and local level institutions and civil society. Indicators were agreed upon and capacity was built within the Ministry for the collection and analysis of indicators.

Having internalised the process, the Programme has extended its activities to build capacity within the Gulf Cooperation Council members as well as within the Arab States region. The Programme furthermore provides support to newly formed governorates and local authorities and prepares citizen satisfaction survey forms to be administered by the governorates. The goal of these activities is to improve local governance as well as improve management of resources and provision of services. Indicators will be utilised to enhance the development of Bahrain and to promote its economic role in the region.

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Note

1. These regional partners include the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Arab Towns Organisation (ATO), the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI), Organisation for Islamic Capitals and Cities (OIC), the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the League of Arab States (LAS), among others.

Sustainable Dar es Salaam

by Lawrence Limbe and Martin Kitila

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania’s capital city, is the largest urban centre in the country, with a population of 2.3 million. The growth of the city has not followed any coordinated, long-term strategic plan. As a consequence, the city experiences a shortage of housing, inadequate urban infrastructure and services and a deteriorating environment.

Past planning efforts, such as the 1979 Master Plan, have not been successful in systematically addressing these problems, either because the plans were too sectoral or too ambitious. Lack of resources, insufficient investment in infrastructure, and the City Council’s inability to effectively plan, coordinate and manage the city’s operation and growth contributed to these problems.

In response to the challenges and constraints faced by the city, the Sustainable Dar es Salaam (SDS) project was launched in 1992. The project is the first demonstration city project under the Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP), a joint UNCHS-UNEP programme that focuses on capacity building through consultations and collaboration through the Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) process.

Since its inception, Sustainable Dar es Salaam’s main achievement has been its successful implementation of partnership and participatory approaches involving different stakeholders in the city. Since November 1993, more than 30 working groups have been meeting and preparing action plans from which a number of demonstration projects have evolved.

In 1997, the Government of Tanzania was requested by nine municipalities to replicate the Dar experience in their towns, which led to the launching of the National Programme for Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Development (SCP-Tanzania) supporting these municipalities to prepare their respective environmental profiles and to conduct consultations.

Lawrence Limbe and Martin Kitila are respectively Coordinator and EPM expert in Tanzania’s National Urban Authorities Support Unit within the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Authorities.
After returning from Istanbul in 1996, the Government of Cameroon undertook wide-ranging measures aimed at implementing the resolutions adopted at the City Summit. The focus was on how to take care of the extremely high rate of urban growth faced by the big cities of the country.

More critical was the fact that, in practice, the actual growth of cities and towns was taking place outside the official legislative and regulatory framework that was put in place by the government. This was again aggravated by inappropriate urban management approaches, lack of planning tools, as well as the serious deterioration of infrastructure services or the total lack of them. The government was also facing a problem brought about by the vast changes undertaken in the 1996 constitution to democratise the country and its institutions, and also to find lasting solutions to the increasing level of urban poverty.

To address this situation, the Cameroon government undertook bold steps in the political, institutional and policy sectors. At the institutional level, it made its social policy more explicit by creating three distinct ministerial departments: a Ministry of Women’s Affairs responsible for gender and development, a Ministry of Urban Affairs and a Ministry of Social Affairs.

On the policy front, several important national programmes were elaborated in collaboration with all stakeholders in development. For instance, an Urban Development Declaration and a National Programme on Good Governance that took into consideration the question of decentralization, the modernization of public institutions, improvement of the functioning of the justice and judiciary system, and measures towards the active participation of civil society in decision-making were elaborated. Other national programmes formulated were on Poverty Alleviation, the Management and Protection of the Environment, a National programme on Health, Fertility and Nutrition that was elaborated within the framework of the City Health Programme and a programme to combat urban insecurity in the country.

Within the budgetary allocations of sector ministries involved in human settlement development, provisions were made for investments towards improving the living conditions of the population, with emphasis on rural electrification, health, water, education and basic social infrastructure services.

Cameroon enjoys very fruitful cooperation with multi-lateral and bilateral donor agencies. Almost all the national policies and programmes at national and inter-regional level are supported by these agencies.

However, the government is still looking for means to overcome the housing deficit of close to 70,000 units per year and is facing serious demand by the population for services. There are also critical institutional problems, notwithstanding the fact that the country has developed catalytic real estate institutions in the areas of housing production, land management, housing finance and municipal public works financing that were created some 30 years ago. These state institutions are however presently suffering from dwindling public finances. New strategies are urgently needed for the functioning of these institutions, so as to enable them contribute fully in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

At the policy level, there is a gap and lack of a proper mechanism to finance and manage the urbanization process. Women in some regions are prevented by tradition from owning land or going to school. This has necessitated reforms in land, housing and education policies. The social and cultural prejudices that impede women in job opportunities and from accessing funding to create micro enterprises must be eliminated. Collaboration between micro projects and micro-credit management institutions remains to be improved.

Policy measures to support the informal economy need to be evaluated and information relating to the job market must be drastically improved. The opportunities that can be achieved through decentralized co-operation still play a marginal role in the country. This must be regarded as a possible source of complementary resources for development that can be exploited by local councils. The non-formalization of the proposed law on decentralization is a constraint to local councils’ development and the participation of citizens in decision making. The necessary technical and financial means must be sought to implement the urban development and poverty reduction strategies.

Stronger efforts must still be made to sensitize the population and public institutions on issues regarding the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Not much has been achieved to put in place the local Habitat II plan of action and where policies have been adopted, they are yet to be implemented.

**Women in some regions are prevented by tradition from owning land or going to school. This has necessitated reforms in land, housing and education policies.**

George Fogwe is Urban & Regional Planner in Cameroon’s Ministry of Housing.
War and natural disasters turn back the development clock, destroying years of effort and labour and perpetuating poverty. They destroy investments, infrastructure and livelihood, draining national budgets and international development funds.

Disasters

Although natural disasters in the continent are less frequent than elsewhere, they affect a greater proportion of the population, because of a larger number of vulnerable communities. Yet disasters are rarely included within urban development strategies due to the fact that national disaster management is associated with emergency relief and rural food security needs. This means that valuable opportunities are lost to integrate awareness of the growing threat of disaster caused by rapid urbanization. The inevitable consequences of authorities allowing building on unsafe hill-sides, or in flood-prone areas, are ignored until disasters strike. The victims are almost always the poor. Large scale disasters in Africa highlight the terrible convergence of urban vulnerability and preventable natural hazards. Mozambique is the most recent case, where heavy rains and cyclones in February and March brought widespread devastation to the Central and Southern part of the country. Over a million people were affected and hundreds of thousands were left homeless.

Conflicts

In the last decade, more than 90 armed conflicts took place in different parts of the world; more than half of these conflicts arose in Africa and many of them had been underway for at least 15 years. While death and disablement are a common feature of wars and contemporary complex political emergencies, there has been a disturbing shift in the scale of suffering in that 90 per cent of casualties are civilians.

Going beyond traditional emergency intervention

In 1996, the Habitat II Conference highlighted the importance of disaster management. Early the same year, a Disaster Management Programme (DMP) was established with the express purpose of helping vulnerable communities and human settlements to cope more effectively with disasters. It is clear that conceptual gaps need to be addressed between relief and/or development and between the approach of humanitarian activities and those of recovery/development programmes.

The relief-development approach recognizes that strategies should go beyond the traditional emergency intervention, based on the following guiding principles:

a) Create a permanent link between the emergency phase and the transitional phase of development.

It is becoming more obvious that particular attention should be paid to sustainability so that actions taken during the emergency do not have long-term adverse consequences on institutions, programmes and the environment.

Displaced persons at a former school in Luena, Angola. ©UNHCR/C. Sattlberger

b) Develop a Community-Based Approach.

The strategy is based on a participatory planning approach that requires a rapid assessment conducted in a participatory manner. UNCHS (Habitat) has ROAAS experience proves that in many post-disaster countries conditions can be created to start simultaneously a process of long-term reconstruction and economic recovery while developing emergency actions.
In the last decade, more than 90 armed conflicts took place in different parts of the world, more than half of these conflicts arose in Africa and many of them have been underway for at least 15 years. A strategic partnership will contribute to develop a coherent framework.

e) Develop Productive Economic Activities

The strategy should contribute to re-establish small scale production in the affected regions, creating employment opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs and the community itself and reinforcing the local building sector. Besides the social and economic integration of targeted populations, most of the capital spent on the project is thus distributed within the local community.

f) Re-build Local Capacities

This approach adopts the “learning process” for all the actors involved in the post-disaster work:
- central authorities acquire a new perspective on how to formulate and follow projects mainly through “on-the-job experience”;
- local authorities are introduced to sustainable rehabilitation and recovery process, and effective project management;
- national professionals at different levels improve their technical skills and know how;
- communities are empowered through their active participation in the project and consequently a self-sustaining process is developed;
- women receive training in income generating activities in the construction sector and are also assisted to set up associations;
- NGOs and small building companies have the opportunity to grow and gain experience through the sub-contracts they are offered.

The Continuum from Relief to Development approach is based on the idea of creating a permanent stimulus for improving the performance of all actors and developing self-reliance in the management of the various activities of the rehabilitation project. It is indeed an “enabling” strategy, relying on many inter-related interventions.

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References
2. See note 1.

Strategic Partnerships in Somalia

The Berbera Municipal Institutional Assistance Project has facilitated establishment of strategic partnerships between the municipal authority, UN organizations, local and international NGOs as well as CBOs. The purpose of this partnership arrangement is in the first instance to enable coordination by the municipal authority of all development activities, and also enable exchange of information and experiences between the organizations. Thus, it is anticipated that the municipal authority will build its urban development coordination capacity.

Developing Economic Activities in Liberia

The Liberia Programme for the Reconstruction of Rural Housing is aimed at enabling economic regeneration, revitalization and development of micro-enterprises in construction and basic infrastructure. The expected outputs include: increased number of micro-enterprises and CBOs able to produce building materials sustainably, increased number of micro-enterprises with the ability to bid for small building contracts, increased local production of building materials such as tiles, sheets and block making machines; non-conventional credit facilities and guidelines for accessing them.

Strengthening Local Institutions in Angola

In Angola, all project activities supported by UNCHS (Habitat) are connected to the strengthening of the local institutions, NGOs and the private sector, and this has contributed to the policy of support and facilitation by the national government. Local authorities have gained valuable experience in the project through participation in the local coordination committee. NGOs and some building companies have profited from sub-contracts obtained from the project. Through the project, UNCHS (Habitat) developed a manual for rehabilitation of public works that will help local authorities to directly undertake future rehabilitation works.
Housing the Nation

South Africa’s National Housing Strategy

by David Kithakye

At the swearing in of the first democratically elected government in South Africa, President Mandela announced that the new Government could deliver, during the first five years, one million houses. This was a big challenge not only because of the enormous size of housing backlog (estimated at 2.2 million in June 1995), and the desperation and impatience of the homeless, but also because of the extremely complicated bureaucratic, administrative, financial and institutional framework inherited from the previous government.

During the apartheid era, housing was used as an instrument of segregation. The majority of black South Africans lived in the rural areas and in homelands with inadequate services. In the urban areas, the black people lived in townships characterised by high densities and inadequate services. Others lived in hostels. Simply stated, the black South Africans, were systematically inadequately housed.

The immediate task of the new government was to put in place a policy framework for all citizens, hence the slogan ‘Housing the Nation’. The approach, which started with the White Paper process, was to create an enabling environment — a partnership between various tiers of government, not only to get the houses on the ground, but also to give meaning to the notion of a people-centred development.

Overall approach to ensuring housing delivery.

The historic Botshabelo Housing Accord of 27 October 1994 bound every significant segment of society concerned with housing, both morally and politically, to a social pact that committed signatories to concerted, unified action. Botshabelo marked the end of intensive negotiations, and culminated in the acceptance of a framework of principles and points of departure to guide the development of a single, uniform, fair and equitable national housing policy and strategy that would serve the needs of a country in transition, in which a new democratic order was speedily evolving.

The strategy set out seven definite actions, some of which have already been implemented. These include:

- Stabilizing housing environment;
- Consolidating and unifying housing institutions;
- Encouraging savings for housing;
- Establishing a subsidy scheme to provide housing opportunities for millions;
- Providing housing support to communities;
- Mobilizing credit at scale;
- Making land available for housing.

Six years have passed since Botshabelo. According to the Minister of Housing, Mrs. Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele, the government has performed well beyond expectation in a very difficult and challenging environment.

The different tiers of government have been systematically involved. The Provincial level has, through the regular policy dialogue between the Minister and the Provincial Members of Executive Councils referred to as MINMEC, been fully engaged. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Housing keeps the political dimension in focus while the current Municipal Services Bill calls for Integrated Development Planning at local government levels and ensures their involvement and commitment to delivery of services and housing.

The most visible intervention of the government in meeting the housing challenge has been the Housing Subsidy Scheme started in 1994, following negotiations initiated by the National Housing Forum. The Government Capital Housing Subsidy is available to South African citizens who are over 21 years old, married or living with a long-term partner and have dependants, who have not owned a property before and whose income is below Rands 3,500 (US$450) per month.

Four main types of subsidies have been applied:

Individual Subsidies: The individual subsidy programme gives qualifying beneficiaries access to a subsidy to acquire ownership of existing property or property not located in a project approved by a provincial housing development boards.

Project linked Subsidies: Project linked subsidies provide housing opportunities for individuals on an ownership basis within housing projects approved by provincial development boards and constructed by developers. The largest number of subsidies have gone to this programme.

Consolidation subsidies: Persons who, before the inception of the Housing Subsidy Scheme, received housing assistance from the state in the form of serviced sites can apply for a further benefit from the state to improve their housing situation by building a structure on the site or upgrading an existing one.

Institutional subsidies: Institutional subsidies are available to institutions that create affordable housing stock to enable persons who qualify for individual ownership subsidies to live in subsidised residential properties with secure tenure.

People’s Housing Process

To address the housing needs of the poor who are the majority and who in most cases do not have regular incomes, and to make them eligible for the subsidies, the government has initiated the People’s Housing Process focusing mainly on the efforts of poor communities to improve their living conditions. The People’s Housing Process is based on the fact that people have always

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The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
Nigeria: An Urban Explosion

by Paul Okunlola

One of the most visible consequences of the rapid economic expansion in Nigeria, fuelled by the oil boom of the 1970s, has been the transformation of agriculture-based economies into largely service-based ones, setting off fundamental changes in the places and conditions in which people live.

The streams of people flocking into Nigerian cities from the countryside have since become a “flood”. While the country’s population grew from 30.4 million in 1951 to 55.67 million in 1963, and 88.5 million in 1991, internal migration trends indicate a nation-wide urbanization rate, which, at 5.5 per cent in 1996, was roughly twice the national population growth rate of 2.9 per cent. Records show that over the 30 years period from 1952, the population of most of Nigeria’s urban centres increased five-fold. Thus, by 1995, there were seven cities with over one million people; 18 cities with over 500,000 people; 36 cities with over 200,000 people; 78 towns with over 100,000 people, and over 5,050 towns with more than 20,000 people.

Nationally, the proportion of urban dwellers in the country rose from 30 per cent in 1985 to 39 per cent in 1994 and by 1996, it was estimated that up to 43.3 per cent of Nigerians had become city dwellers. Going by current projections, it is believed that by the end of the first quarter of the new century, up to 65 per cent — or two-thirds of the total population — will be living in cities. Lagos alone, with a current population of 10 million people, will be home to up to 24 million residents.

Unfortunately, the consequences of this highly accelerated process have contributed to
- an aggravation of inadequacy and general deterioration in housing conditions;
- a growing inadequacy and general deterioration in infrastructure facilities;
- widespread environmental decay arising from the failure of municipal waste management systems; and,
- a progressive helplessness on the part of city managers to provide solutions to the emerging problems.

But for the residents who face the impact of these problems daily, there are other consequences. For instance, households are now forced to live with the impact of social problems, such as increasing domestic violence, soaring crime wave, growing insecurity, and, deteriorating community health arising from poor sanitation conditions.

There are additional economic costs to residents and businesses alike. Poor infrastructure facilities in Nigerian cities mean households and transporters spend more money on self-provided maintenance costs for services like electricity generators and water boreholes.

Where alternative services need to be provided at a larger scale, for instance, with corporate organizations, the costs are naturally passed on to the consumers, who, in most cases are already struggling to cope with the burdens of low incomes. Besides, other factors like transportation delays further contribute to increased production costs and lower “affordable incomes” for city dwellers.

Among the most major challenges facing Nigeria in the new millennium is that of transforming its ever-growing number of cities into functional entities that can cope with the rising demands of contemporary urban life. Essentially, this will involve devising ways of:
- raising urban infrastructure to functional levels, so that less money is spent by the users on maintenance and production costs;
- getting city residents to develop a sense of ownership in their cities through inclusive or participatory democratic practices;
- harnessing the huge untapped potentials, which exist within the city in the provision of infrastructure and services to the public.

And fostering competition and improving efficiency to attract investments in this age of globalization.

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The Urban Environment Forum, established in 1996 during the Istanbul Conference, is supported by UNCHS (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These organizations play a facilitating and catalytic role in mobilizing an ever-widening range of cities and international support programmes in focusing their collective energy and know-how on concrete improvements in the living environment.

Hopefully, this global network will be one of the primary means through which our collective knowledge will continue to deepen, and through which the successes of cities will be made known — and replicated — in a larger number of cities and countries.

Improving the Urban Environment in Chengdu

In 1990 Chengdu, with a metropolitan population of 10 million and located in the poorer western region, was one of the most severely polluted cities in China. Surrounded on four sides by two rivers (Fu and Nan), industrial effluent, raw sewage and the intensive use of freshwater deteriorated the rivers' waters and silted the rivers causing annual floods during the rainy season and dryness during the dry season. Slum and squatter settlements proliferated on the banks of both rivers, exacerbating the social, economic and environmental problems of the city. In 1993, further to a petition by school children to the Mayor, Chengdu started the Fu and Nan Rivers comprehensive revitalization plan.

The primary objective of the plan was to harness the river, prevent future flooding, restore the ecological balance and flow of the rivers and improve water quality. To achieve this objective, several other objectives had to be pursued in tandem. These included:

(i) finding alternative housing solutions for the 100,000 inhabitants of the slums and squatter settlements bordering the rivers;
(ii) relocating, retrofitting or closing down over 1000 enterprises and factories to reduce or eliminate industrial effluent and emissions;
(iii) implementing a comprehensive waste water collection and treatment system;
(iv) adopting the necessary policies that would enable all of the above to be implemented in a transparent and accountable manner.

Owing to the quantity of capital investment required and the number of people and communities affected, the Municipal Government of Chengdu adopted a strategy of partnership and participation. This resulted in significant gains in environmental awareness and the revitalization of central and provincial governments, domestic and foreign investors and the general public. A gearing ratio of one part central government finance to two parts local government finance to three parts private sector investment was established.

Over 30,000 households previously inhabiting the slums on both banks of the two rivers have been rehoused in new, fully equipped housing estates. The vacated land has been used to create a continuous green space replete with parks, gardens, recreational and cultural facilities. The two rivers have been desilted, widened and their ecological flow restored, reducing flood vulnerability to a 200 year risk. A series of concomitant projects dealt with solid waste, sewage collection and treatment, industrial effluent, road infrastructure, transport and communications, and parks and gardens.

Chengdu today is a clean and green modern city boasting a buoyant and much more diversified economy. The natural flow of the river has been largely restored and the lessons learned in participatory planning and partnership are being transferred in an unique setup whereby staff involved in the project have been seconded to surrounding towns and districts. Chengdu's efforts were recognized in March 2000 when the city won the International Centre for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Local Initiatives Award in the category of fresh-water management.

Source: UNCHS (Habitat)'s Best Practices database.
Enabling the Informal Sector

by Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza

The informal sector has long held the promise of propelling developing world economies towards full-fledged industrialization through the development of indigenous entrepreneurship and the transformation of small-scale informal enterprises into modern and more formal ones. Unfortunately, interest in the informal sector as an object of urban planning and policy seems to have waned in many countries, especially in Africa. While some governments and local authorities have adopted supportive policies and strategies, others have reverted to irrational harassment, as if nothing at all has been learnt during the last thirty years about the positive attributes of the urban informal sector.

In spite of the resurgence of repressive policies in some countries, the informal sector continues to play a very significant role in poverty reduction, providing the only opportunity to earn an income for millions of people in many developing world cities and towns. (See box.)

The earlier and simpler conceptualisation of the informal sector as being characterised by ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership of enterprises, small scale of operation, labour intensive and adapted technology, skills acquired outside formal education/training systems and unregulated and competitive markets has been replaced by a deeper understanding of the complexity of the sector, and this has significant implications for policy. It is now clear that entry into the informal sector is very often not easy, that some enterprises are dependent upon imported technology and inputs, that many enterprises often employ non-family labour, that some activities (especially illegal and others such as shoe shine boy networks) may be on quite a large scale, that some enterprises (such as taxi operations) use capital-intensive technology, that skills employed are very often acquired in the formal education system and in the formal industrial sector, and that informal sector markets may be controlled by monopolies.

Incomes earned also vary a great deal and are, in some countries, identical to, or even higher than, formal sector incomes. In addition, middle and upper income classes are increasingly entering the informal sector, either as a way of supplementing declining formal sector incomes or of increasing profit margins. The latter rationale also underlies the linkages that frequently exist between informal and formal enterprises, with the former subsidising the latter through very low-cost inputs produced by poorly paid workers.

In light of this, and of the emerging phenomenon of “urbanization of poverty”, understanding the evolving nature of the informal sector and facilitating its growth and transformation becomes even more important. This resurgence of interest in the informal sector is part of UNCHS (Habitat)’s move to place greater emphasis on the economic dimensions of urbanization, including urban poverty, employment and unemployment, municipal and housing finance, as well as urban-rural linkages.

It is clear that enabling frameworks need to be put in place by city authorities in order to provide enough space for the operation of the informal sector: urban street vendors and hawkers and small-scale informal industries.

The most direct ways in which cities in the developing world have tried to support the informal sector have included: (a) amending restrictive urban regulations; (b) making land-use standards more realistic and meaningful to the majority of the population; (c) providing adequate land for the location of enterprises and markets; and (d) developing basic infrastructure specifically for the benefit of informal enterprises. Habitat intends to revisit these policies, assessing, globally, achievements and limitations and identifying directions for the future.

From the point of view of urban planning and management, infrastructure improvement is particularly important. The installation of electricity, for example, often spurs informal sector productivity to levels hitherto unattainable. At present, many urban local authorities are paying a great deal of attention to infrastructure support for the urban formal sector, as part of their response to globalization forces, including through the creation of export processing and free-enterprise zones. Perhaps equal attention and support should be paid to the urban informal sector.

Other broader, public economic policies employed to encourage development of the informal sector that need to be revisited and improved include: (i) improving...
access to credit through effective micro-financing mechanisms; (ii) improving access to appropriate, or better, technology; (iii) enhancement of technical and management skills through training programmes designed for specific types of informal operations, and (iv) improving access to markets, including at the international level.

Unfortunately, many such policies are still lacking in terms of serious political commitment and are thus often disjointed and patchy, in both time and space. As a rule, national governments and local authorities should avoid employing universalistic policies and strategies. Instead, they should aim at developing a variety of policies and strategies designed specifically for the many types of enterprises that exist within the informal sector.

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Shanghai’s Economic and Technical Development Zones

The provision of a minimum package of well-maintained infrastructure consisting of transport, telecommunications, water and power is essential for urban economic growth and expansion of employment. Shanghai, China, is one of the cities that most significantly illustrate emerging responses to globalization through urban infrastructure improvement.

As part of the open policy, Shanghai established the Economic and Technical Development Zones (ETDZ) of Minhang, Hongqiao and Caohejing in 1984. The major objectives were to attract foreign investment, to introduce advanced technology, modern equipment, and management skills, and to develop international economic and technological cooperation.

Minhang, located about 30 km south of the central city, is Shanghai’s first industrial satellite town. The settlement has excellent linkages with Hongqiao International Airport and can be reached by ships and can fully utilize all the harbour facilities in the central city. In the northwestern part of Minhang, an ETDZ has been set up in close proximity to existing industrial sites. There is an underground sewage system and supply lines for water, gas, and electricity. The zone also has other facilities such as wharves, waterworks, a sewage treatment plant, and natural gas storage.

Hongqiao, the second Economic and Technical Development Zone of Shanghai is located in the western urban fringe of the city. Its suburban setting provides a pleasant environment, and the range of services will facilitate further urban development. The various urban land-use types in the zone are as follows: land for buildings (46.6 percent), recreation and green space (29.7 percent), and roads (23.7 percent). The entire planned area is divided into three subareas with 34 building sites, designated for the construction of high-rise office buildings (such as the Foreign Trade Centre), hotels, apartment blocks, foreign consulates and offices, banks, insurance companies, supermarkets, shopping centres, department stores, sports facilities, parks, schools, medical clinics, and care parks. These facilities are designed to make foreigners feel at home while conducting business in the zone.

Another ETDZ was established at Caohejing to the southwest of Shanghai. Caohejing was the first high-tech development centre among the coastal ETDZs approved by the State Council in June 1988. It is expected that foreign capital investments will make significant contributions to the zone’s development.

In addition, there are four new development zones, initiated in the early to mid-1990s, located in the Pudong New Area. These are the Lujiazui Finance and Trade Zone, located in the central area of Pudong; the Jingqiao Export Processing Zone, also located in the central part of Pudong New Area; the Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, located at the estuary of the Yangzi River, 20 km away from the city proper; and Zhangjiang High-Tech Park, situated in the central part of Pudong New Area.

Source: Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World: Shanghai and Guangzhou, China, (UNCHS, Nairobi).
GOVERNANCE

Building Capacity to Improve Urban Governance
by Joris van Etten and Leon van den Dool

From Urban Management to Urban Governance

The term “governance” has become an integral part of the “aid vocabulary” used today. However, it is interpreted differently by different development practitioners. Urban governance differs from the broader governance agenda (which has tended to concentrate on macro-levels), in that it focuses on the meso-levels. It also differs from the urban management perspective of operation and maintenance of infrastructure and services, because urban governance acknowledges that one should not ignore the complex social and political environments in which these services are being managed. At the city level, good governance is not only concerned with good urban management but also with interactions between all stakeholders in the city. Therefore political, contextual, constitutional and legal dimensions need to be considered.

The Habitat Agenda advocates transparent, responsible, accountable, just, effective and efficient governance of towns, cities and metropolitan areas through enabling local leadership and the promotion of democratic and participatory processes. It stresses that public authorities should use public resources in all public institutions to further these objectives. It further stresses the need for participatory approaches in human settlements development and management. Since the Habitat II Conference in June 1996, several initiatives have been undertaken by various programmes to promote the concept of good urban governance. Among these is UNCHS (Habitat’s) Global Campaign on Urban Governance. (See box on p.25.)

Elements of Good Urban Governance

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) describes good governance as a process that includes the following elements:

- Participation: all men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interest. Local democracy and decentralization are prerequisites for participation;
- Strategic vision: leaders and the public should have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance, human development and the development of their city along with a sense of what is needed for such development;
- Rule of law: legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the law on human rights;
- Transparency: processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to all stakeholders, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor governance processes;
- Responsiveness: institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders;
- Consensus orientation: different interests are mediated in order to reach a broad consensus on what is the best interest of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures;
- Equity building: all men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being;
- Effectiveness and efficiency: processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources;
- Accountability: decision makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. A future challenge is to translate each component into practical tools and have benchmarks for each component. For instance the quality of civic engagement in the decision making process, the responsiveness of local governments towards its citizens and the respect for basic human rights are some of the benchmarks for good governance performance of cities.

Capacity Building for Good Urban Governance

Inadequate human and organizational capacities and unfavourable institutional environments can inhibit good urban governance. Capacity building for the promotion of good urban governance should be directed to improve the performance of local as well as national stakeholders for the elements listed above.

The key question is how to build the capacity required for better urban governance in the most effective way. Capacity building is more than training. Training of individuals does not automatically result in the envisaged change in the organizations to which the individuals belong. Besides, improved capacities of cities more often than not require major changes in the institutional context of urban governance, e.g. local-central government relations and the legal framework for urban development and partnerships with civil society, community based organizations and the private sector. It is important to link human resource development with the other two main dimensions of capacity building: organizational development and capacity for network management.

Capacity building efforts are fraught with challenges, some of which are listed below:

- Capacity building is more than an assistance phase. Capacity building is a means to an end, and should not become an end in itself. This implies that the objectives of a capacity building strategy need to be clearly specified before interventions can be determined.
- Capacity building for good urban governance is a complex process which demands major efforts over extended periods of time. Quick and tangible results are difficult to achieve so commitment and support of all those involved in the capacity building process is of key importance in achieving results. This has implications for both the process of designing a capacity building strategy as well as the duration of such a strategy.
- Capacity building should be demand-based and rooted in well-defined capacity requirements. Since translating development goals into capacity requirements has proven to be very difficult, there is a great need to develop methodologies and approaches that can link the demand and supply sides of capacity building. Interventions should also be planned for organizational and institutional development.
Many donor agencies are promoting capacity building. However, it is expected the funding will fall short of the resources required to respond adequately to capacity building requirements. This implies that national and local governments need to recognize the need for capacity building as well as make local resources available. On the other hand, it also should be stressed that not all capacity building interventions, e.g., organizational or institutional changes, require major investments in monetary terms.

Good urban governance requires attitudinal change, which is difficult to achieve in general. Firstly, attitudinal change is needed for local government since their roles are changing from the main actor to a special actor in a complex network of stakeholders. Secondly, attitudinal change is needed because many components of good governance refer to attitudes.

There is a lot of scope for increasing the impact of capacity building efforts. Experience shows there are four main conditions that need to be met to make a successful capacity building effort: (1) there must be a strong conviction by management and elected members that the results are worth the investment; (2) efforts should be focused on the issues that need to be tackled in a city or community; (3) the costs, duration, and timing of the efforts should be in such a way that it allows people to participate; (4) capacity building needs to be continued in order to have impact in a constantly changing situation.

Impact assessments are important. Better understanding of the full impact of capacity building efforts, be it successes, failures or limitations, and the factors behind this, can assist in improving these efforts, and thus increasing their impact.

Towards Norms of Good Urban Governance

UNCHS (Habitat)’s Urban Governance Campaign is engaging cities, partners and the international community in a vigorous debate on what exactly constitutes good urban governance. Habitat has initiated this debate by arguing for the following definition of urban governance:

“Urban governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens.”

Based on international legal instruments, commitments at major UN Conferences and operational experience in cities, the campaign proposes that good urban governance is characterized by the following seven interdependent and mutually reinforcing norms.

- **Sustainability** in all dimensions of urban development
- **Subsidiarity** of authority and resources at the closest appropriate level
- **Equity** of access to decision making processes and the basic necessities of urban life
- **Efficiency** in the delivery of public services and in promoting local economic development
- **Transparency and Accountability** of decision makers and all stakeholders
- **Civic Engagement and Citizenship**
- **Security** of individuals and their living environment

These norms are supported by a wide range of operational principles, which are based on lessons of experience and reflect regional conditions. Their implementation must be grounded in the local reality of urban planning and management.

The debate on norms of good urban governance is currently intensified through networks of the Campaign’s global and regional steering group members, through national campaign launches in all regions and through inter-agency consensus building within the UN family.

Joris van Etten and Leon van den Dool, both working for the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, are involved in projects, research and training in the field of good urban governance.
Decreasing International Cooperation Since Habitat II

In his report to the General Assembly (paragraph 185 of document A/54/2000), the Secretary-General of the United Nations recalls that “development assistance has been in steady decline for several decades…, despite recent increases by five countries”. Mr. Kofi Annan also notes that “while it is true that private investment flows have increased significantly, many poor countries are not yet fully equipped to attract such investment.”

In the last few years, many countries have experienced unprecedented economic growth, driven by cities and the new employment opportunities which they offer. As a result, most demographic growth occurs in urban areas. Largely for political reasons, however, public infrastructure investment continues to bypass cities in many countries, and public expenditure barely covers the cost of maintaining existing infrastructure. In this era of urban neglect, many cities suffer disproportionately from reduced fiscal and financial resources despite their major contribution to national development. The combination of accelerating urbanization, long-neglected infrastructure and weak urban funding over many years has resulted in increasing urban poverty with the urban poor now representing up to 50 per cent of the urban population in many developing countries.1 Including industrial countries, the total number of urban poor currently stands at about 1.1 billion.2

Drastic social conditions also affect the ability of a city to attract domestic and international investments. In this regard, the mobilization of international capital investments has not succeeded in significantly improving access to basic services for the poor, in particular in least developed countries, due to inadequate capacities to supervise privatization processes and the generally poor competitiveness of many cities when it comes to attracting investors. One of the most important factors in attracting private investment is for a city to function. To that end, in order to achieve sound and inclusive planning and management of cities, it is essential to ensure appropriate investment in urban infrastructure and services, as well as in capacity-building. In most least developed countries, however, in contrast to the acknowledgement of the need for an integrated approach to rural development, urban issues were not considered as a priority and specific sector when strategic frameworks for poverty reduction were recently established.

Dwindling Assistance to the Urban Poor

The lack of willingness to address the urban challenge both at national and international levels results in a continuous reduction of international development assistance to this sector, in terms of amount and percentage of total official development assistance. For example, Sweden, one of the most supportive countries with official development assistance representing 0.72 per cent of its gross domestic product, reports that only 7.5 per cent of its total funds allocated for bilateral cooperation goes to the urban sector.

However, many countries report increased and new improved forms of cooperation, in particular decentralized cooperation. For example, in its report to the special session for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Habitat Conference, France states that more than 5,200 projects amounting to about US$ 220 million were funded by French local authorities in 114 countries. This region-to-region and city-to-city cooperation should be encouraged and supported by Member States.
The need to set up strong advocacy initiatives is at the core of the development of UNCHS (Habitat)’s Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance (adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventeenth session). The strategic principle to strengthen coordination with all partners, including legislators, national associations of local authorities and their global networks, non-governmental organizations and community-based organization networks, also forms part of the UNCHS (Habitat)’s advocacy strategy.

Evidence suggests that donors and external support agencies are becoming more involved in playing the role of mediator and facilitator of policy dialogue and reform. Interventions include ex ante involvement in brokering partnerships and participation and assistance to ex post monitoring and evaluation. The provision of seed capital is also a growing trend where the major responsibility for implementation lies with local agencies, including civil society organizations. This advocacy role, with a strong emphasis on capacity building and access to information, reveals an increasing preoccupation with process and participatory decision-making. One new development that has been observed since 1996 has been the transfer of best practice experience. Transfers initiated by city associations and umbrella non-governmental organizations have shown that decentralized city-to-city and community-to-community transfers can benefit enormously from best practices.

The Potential of the United Nations System

Due to scarce financial resources, major bilateral and multilateral development agencies are progressively retreating from capital investment projects to concentrate on upstream capacity-building activities and knowledge management services. There is a strong rationale to reinforce all forms of coordination between international partners to ensure that upstream support effectively generates additional capital investment projects with a better social impact. The capacity-building of all partners in developing coordinated and enabling strategic frameworks at national and all local government levels is a key factor in the mobilization of domestic and international investments for improving the living conditions of the poor and fostering social integration, gender awareness, local democracy and the observance and protection of human rights.

In this regard, the Cities Alliance initiative launched in 1999 by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the World Bank is a good example of support to the upstream City Development Strategies, an operational vehicle established to enhance local coordination capacities, integrate multisectoral approaches, mobilize capital investments in urban services, and address more effectively the needs of the urban poor.

The Cities Alliance also fully illustrates the recent trends in international development cooperation to focus attention increasingly on support to local-level action in the context of urban participative governance.

As part of this approach, the former South African President Nelson Mandela joined national and local government leaders in launching an operational component of the Cities Alliance initiative: the Cities Without Slums action plan. The plan calls for increasing investments aimed at the provision of basic services to the urban poor through a worldwide effort to move from pilot projects to city-wide and nation-wide upgrading policies. At the global level, the Alliance attracts a broad-based constituency of development partners and associations of local authorities, by adopting a comprehensive urban strategy in line with the Habitat Agenda. The Cities Alliance is one of the international development cooperation initiatives which has recently demonstrated the potential of the United Nations system for coordinated action in improving international support to the goals of the Habitat Agenda.

International opportunities for mobilizing additional significant international resources for the worldwide implementation of the Habitat Agenda on a sectoral basis, i.e., for housing programmes, remain extremely limited. Prospects are closely linked to overall progress in the implementation of poverty reduction strategies, including initiatives to reduce or cancel the debt of heavily indebted poor countries. Increased attention should be paid to improving the coordination of international aid programmes for the sake of ensuring a global impact on urban poverty reduction. There is still no mechanism to ensure the integration of Habitat Agenda action plans for international cooperation into coordinated international initiatives, such as the World Bank’s comprehensive development framework and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, or into country strategy papers and national poverty strategy papers prepared by Governments in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Five years after the Habitat II Conference, the efforts of UNCHS (Habitat) to disseminate guidelines and introduce human settlement issues into these initiatives seem to have had limited success.

The Habitat Agenda Task Manager System

In line with this direction and supporting recommendation made by the Istanbul+5 Preparatory Committee at its first session in May 2000, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to consider adopting a Habitat task manager system to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda by the United Nations system, and to streamline reporting to the Commission on Human Settlements and the Council.

The Habitat task manager system will address the gap in the information and reporting framework, developing an information-sharing system for documenting and analysing international support and cooperation, lessons learned and opportunities of collaboration. It will also establish information and communication protocols and working modalities to strengthen mechanisms and means of cooperation and collaboration. A first step would be to address information and reporting within the United Nations system. Once the system is developed and fine-tuned, it would expand to include other international partners, in line with the partnership principle of the Habitat Agenda.


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Decentralization Does Not Always Lead to Democratic Participation

Lessons Learned in India

by Minar Pimple and Lysa John

The articulation of urban governance in India dates back to the introduction of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992 (74th CAA) when the significance of local bodies in the administration of cities was recognized for the first time. Important mechanisms for devolved urban planning and participation were also introduced. Notwithstanding that the agenda for urban governance was largely overshadowed by its preferred rural sibling, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the 74th CAA is historic as it prescribed the requisites for decentralization and participation across the country.

In the implementation of this unequaled proviso, however, tells a different story.

Efficiency & Equity: Contradictions in Local Governance

As advocated by UNCHS (Habitat)’s Global Campaign on Urban Governance, the promotion of local autonomy and the devolution of powers to the level closest to the people is desirable for good urban governance. The 74th CAA has stressed the need for promoting such autonomy in the functional and financial contexts of cities. The Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution lists the responsibilities of the local government which include environmental planning and addressing the needs of the poor.

However, this initiative seems to have been overridden by an increasing trend towards the privatization of amenities and services with the purported intention of reducing the administrative and financial “load” on municipalities. The poor are at a particular disadvantage in accessing services in such an arrangement which shifts the control of public resources outside the purview of the local authority and the larger community. The entry of national and international corporations into the arena of public services provision is oriented towards full cost recovery with insufficient accommodation for the needs and capacities of the poor. In cities like Mumbai, the dialogue on the privatization of basic services, such as solid waste management, does not strategically include or involve the poor.

On the other hand, existing provisions to discuss the resources and priorities of the local government have not been made available to the larger public. The 74th CAA makes the chief executive, the Municipal Commissioner, responsible for publishing a “Subsidies Report” of the city which describes the concessions granted for the distribution of basic services across the city. Several groups believe that the pattern of subsidies distribution exposes a fundamental inequity in the facilitation of costs provided to those who can afford to pay (the well-to-do, commercial establishments, etc.) as opposed to the poor whose settlements and enterprises are not recognized as entitled to receive the services of local authorities.

Decentralization & Participatory Democracy: Who Decides to Decide?

The 74th CAA instituted “Wards Committees” which effectively introduce the process of consultation and participatory planning at the smallest administrative unit of the city, namely the ward. For the very first time in the history of the Indian Constitution, communities are provided with a space for direct intervention with administrative and elected representatives of the city in assessing and meeting their needs.

However, this provision has been received with much substance across administrative and political ranks. The former stated their fear that their political counterparts would usurp the forum to promote their political and economic interests, as a reason for restraint. The political groups were equally unwilling to initiate a move that may reduce the hierarchical nature of political control over decision making and fund distribution in the city.

Reflect, the issue of plan estimation was prolonged till 1999 when Maharashtra was “forced” to institute Wards Committees by a Public Interest Litigation filed by Youth for Voluntary Action (YUVA). Mumbai and a handful of other cities have constituted Wards Committees. To date, none have instituted civil society representatives as “Statutory partners” to their functioning.

Decentralizing the Vision of Cities

How then do we ensure that our optimism for responsive and progressive cities is not dampened by the reality of power politics and apathy? The most obvious lesson in the exercise of institutionalizing democratic participation has been that it takes more than an legislative goodwill to pry open spaces for decision making from the stronghold of established centres of power. We realize that strong vested interests are involved in preserving the existing hierarchies of control in the city. Moreover, civil society actors appear poorly equipped to play their part in an arena and on terms from which they have been traditionally excluded.

As simple as it may sound, the outstanding factor for exclusion continues to be a lack of awareness of the 74th CAA itself, much less the spirit of good governance that it embodies. In stark contrast to the national spotlight on the 73rd CAA, there appears to be widespread ignorance of the 74th CAA among elected representatives, particularly those from smaller cities, women councillors or representatives of the poorer sections of the city, civil society organizations and the larger public.

Most importantly, there is a singular lack of initiative to build a “vision” that represents the needs and aspirations of all sections of the city. Such a vision is critical if the agenda of urban governance is to be interpreted in a dynamic and effective manner. The lack of vision has reduced creative intent into bureaucratic fantasy. In other words, our aspiration for an inclusive city could well remain the exclusive discourse of a few.

Minar Pimple and Lysa John are respectively Executive Director and Project Coordinator of Governance at Youth for Voluntary Action (YUVA), a non-governmental organization based in Mumbai, India.
Commission on Human Settlements Increases Contributions to Habitat Foundation

The 18th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements was inaugurated on 12 February 2001 in Nairobi by H.E. the President of the Republic of Kenya, The Hon. Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi. Over 500 delegates including Ministers responsible for Human Settlements, Mayors, Parliamentarians, representatives of local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations assembled in Nairobi to attend the 18th Session.

The Commission on Human Settlements acts as the governing body of UNCHS (Habitat) and comprises of 58 member states. This UN body acts as the custodian of the Habitat Agenda, a practical road map to an urbanizing world that was adopted by 171 governments at Habitat II in Istanbul in 1996.

The 18th Commission elected H.E. Sid-Ali Ketrandji, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Algeria to Habitat, as the Chairman of the 18th Session.

A message from the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, was read to the delegates by Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The Secretary-General pointed out that a range of commitments were made by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in New York last year. Many of these development goals will contribute to progress in the area of human settlements.

In her opening address, Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka stressed the urgent need to manage the problems of urbanization and called upon the Commission to help establish a culture of solidarity and inclusiveness in our cities and human settlements. “Cities will not be revitalized until we learn to practice the forms of traditional solidarity found in villages where everyone provides for each other. A billion people, without adequate shelter and basic services, is not the end of the road for the Commission on Human Settlements and their international community to commit resources to managing human settlements.”

Increases Contributions to Habitat Foundation

The Commission was presented with the work programme of UNCHS (Habitat) and the proposed budget for 2002 – 2003. Dialogues were held to present reports on Habitat’s Campaign for Secure Tenure and Urban Governance. Other issues discussed included the need for greater international cooperation and the role of local authorities. Also discussed were lessons learned from best practices and the need for partnerships in achieving adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development.

The need for partnerships was reinforced by Mr. Klaus Toepfer, the Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. As stated in his opening speech “there can be no global environmental sustainability without the sustainability of human settlements.”

Donors showed their confidence in UNCHS (Habitat) by increasing their pledges for the general purpose funds of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation.

Three main donors substantially increased their contributions to the core funding of the Centre for 2001. The Government of the United Kingdom tops the list, with its pledge of one million pounds sterling (US$1,445,600). Second came the Government of Sweden, which pledged SEK 7 million (US$728,100). The other two countries have increased their contribution by up to 50 percent. The Government of Norway has also pledged 5 million NOK (US$61,800) to the core budget. This is the first time the Norwegian Government has contributed non-earmarked funds to the Centre’s Foundation Budget.

Developing countries also showed considerable support and pledged more than ever before. The commitments range from US$100,000 from the Government of India to the most recent contribution of US$15,000 from the Government of Madagascar, a least developed country.

“Our forecast for contributions to the Foundation Budget stands at US$8 million with about US$3.2 million already having been committed. In the past we have annually given an amount that is one-fifth of this,” said Mrs. Anna Tibajuka. “I am grateful to all our donors, large or small, in the confidence they have shown in the Centre. I am committed to continuing the ongoing process of the revitalization of Habitat and to making Habitat a centre of excellence in the field of human settlements development.”

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WORLD HABITAT DAY

World Habitat Day will be held on Monday, 1 October 2001.

The theme this year is “Cities Without Slums”.

The official inauguration of the Day will take place in Fukuoka, Japan.

WORLD HABITAT AWARDS

Call for Entries 2001

Projects are sought in both developed and developing countries, which offer sustainable futures to residents and which provide practical and imaginative solutions to current housing problems. All innovative housing solutions are welcome, large or small, urban or rural. Prizes of £10,000 plus individually designed and crafted silver trophies are given to the two winners.

Preliminary submissions should reach the address below before 1st July 2001.

Further details are available from Building and Social Housing Foundation.
Email: bshf@compuserve.com
Web: http://www.bshf.org
Second and Final PrepCom for Istanbul+5 Concludes Successfully Despite Initial Set-back

The Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee for Istanbul+5 successfully completed its work on Friday 23 February 2001. Its primary duty was to set the agenda for the five-year review conference known as Istanbul +5, the Special Session of the General Assembly that will take place in New York from 6-8 June 2001. The Special Session will evaluate progress made and obstacles encountered and formulate new initiatives to further the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Key tasks the Preparatory Committee completed included the preparation of a draft “declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium” and consideration of a draft report submitted by UNCHS (Habitat)’s Executive Director, Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

Negotiations on the text of the draft declaration proceeded well, although delegates found it necessary to work late into the night more than once, and the drafting committee was split into two groups in order to expedite the process. The text adopted at the session calls upon representatives of Governments to renew and reconfirm their commitment to Istanbul+5, the General Assembly passed a resolution on the forthcoming discussions among the various Habitat Agenda partners, including local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It was decided that these partners would participate in a new entity — a Thematic Committee — which is to meet five times during the Special Session. Its designated purpose is to “tell the important story” of the development of human settlements through presentations of case studies and dialogues. It is hoped that, by the end of the session, participants will have acquired practical knowledge and formed a basis from which they can network and initiate projects.

A problem arose in the first few days of the session concerning the rules under which the Preparatory Committee was to function, particularly as to the participation of local authorities and NGOs. Special sessions of the General Assembly function under different rules than those applied at various world conferences. When the drafting committee decided to bar NGOs and representatives of local authorities from its sessions, NGO representatives protested strongly. In the interests of maintaining a positive atmosphere conducive to a good working relationship with its “valued partners”, a compromise arrangement was agreed upon whereby the NGO representatives were allowed to sit in all the sessions of the drafting committee as observers. Habitat Agenda partners were also allowed to make their presentations at “public sessions” as determined by the committee.

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The Habitat Debate

COUNTDOWN TO ISTANBUL+5
The central challenge of the 21st century will be how to make both urbanization and globalization work for all the world’s people, instead of leaving billions behind. Cities in a Globalizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 2001 is a comprehensive assessment of the world’s cities in the context of globalization. The Report argues that globalization and urbanization have created an apparent paradox where polity — the condition of civil order — is simultaneously becoming more global and more local.

For instance, globalization has nurtured, rather than destroyed, the organizational capacity of the poor. The Report shows that while the urban poor may have little influence over global economic forces, they are taking an increasingly active role as agents of their own development. In some cases, the formidable strength of organized movements of the urban poor has managed to influence national and international policies.

**Divided Cities**

However, Cities in a Globalizing World cautions that technology-driven options for growth and development — which spur globalization — have led to more lines of stratification between people, places and groups.

In other words, the costs and benefits of globalization are unevenly distributed between and within cities. Homeless people are living in cardboard boxes on sidewalks of gleaming corporate skyscrapers whose budgets exceed those of many countries. Enclaves of “super-connected” people, firms and institutions — with their increasing broadband connections to the world via the Internet, mobile phones and satellite dishes — exist cheek-by-jowl with large numbers of people who have never even made a phone call. The social and economic cores and peripheries of the global information age and the global economy are not only continents apart but can now also be found geographically adjacent to each other in individual cities.

**Cities Localize Democratic Processes**

On the other hand, the impact of globalization is most acutely felt in cities. The global economy has changed the structure of employment and altered the demographic makeup of cities. Globalization has also placed cities in a highly competitive framework of inter-city linkages and networks.

**Cities in a Globalizing World**

Globalization has changed the structure of employment and altered the demographic makeup of cities. Globalization has also placed cities in a highly competitive framework of inter-city linkages and networks.

**New Ways of Managing Cities**

Cities in a Globalizing World acknowledges that existing approaches do not effectively address urgent problems of access to adequate housing, infrastructure and basic services and recognizes that many current developments are not only harmful to the poor but are also detrimental to the long-term sustainability of cities. It, therefore, calls for new ways of managing and governing cities. The Report identifies four new elements of urban governance that have emerged in the last decade. These are:

- **decentralization** (devolution of power and resources from central to local governments);
- **civil society participation in policy-making** (e.g. city consultations with urban stakeholders);
- **multi-level governance and partnerships** (public, private and civil society institutions joining forces to resolve urban problems); and
- **process-driven and territorially based decision-making and policies** (the development of regional blocs and area-based initiatives).

One of the key messages of the Report is that social justice and environmental sustainability in cities can only be advanced if cities are viewed not as “engines of growth”, but as “agents of change.” This requires new political strategies for urban livability and new forms of governance. The change would involve reconstituting relationships between the public and private sectors and civil society through the formation of broad-based cooperative partnerships. The challenge is to ensure that the fruits of globalization are shared more equally.

Notwithstanding the so-called “hollowing of the state”, the Report underscores the importance of central governments in ensuring sustainability and equity in cities. Central governments hold crucial powers, not only in terms of setting development goals and agendas, but also in strategic planning. While national governments must facilitate the functioning of global markets and forces, they must also take responsibility for social cohesion, equity and conflict resolution in cities. In the long run, concludes the Report, governments have the ultimate responsibility of managing the benefits and mitigating the risks of globalization.

Cities in a Globalizing World, the third in a series produced by UNCHS (Habitat), is an authoritative assessment of the two most significant forces shaping the world today. It is essential reading for all those interested in ensuring that urbanization and globalization are positive forces of development in the 21st century.