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BUILDING PROSPERITY

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



PRESS RELEASE

DEVELOPING WORLD URGED TO USE INTERMEDIATE BUILDING TECHNIQUES

Because of high rates of unemployment or underdevelopment, most developing countries should consider adopting appropriate intermediate building methods if they are to meet their growing housing needs, the author of a book launched today says on the subject.

In her book, *Building Prosperity: Housing and Economic Development*, Anna Tibaijuka, sets out to show the many aspects of investment in housing. One of those suggests adoption in the use of intermediate building techniques as best suited for developing countries. This is because the level of technology allows for a mix of locally-produced and imported building materials; thereby saving money, jobs as well as nurturing local industries.

“The main advantages of intermediate technology are the low cost, small scale and use of relatively simple productive methods,” Dr. Tibaijuka, who is the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, says in her book published in 2009.

In 2007, for the first time in the history, the world’s urban population exceeded its rural population. UN-HABITAT estimates that by 2030 this will reach 4.9 billion. Getting better shelter for the world’s estimated 1 billion slum dwellers alone is already a major task for most governments in cash-strapped developing countries.

Developing countries need huge investments to bridge their current housing deficits and enhance economic growth. The extent to which home-building can do these largely depends on factors such as the standard of house and building technology used. High technology is thought inappropriate because of the large amounts of money and imported material needed in building these high-priced homes. Low- and middle-income people can ill-afford the unit sale price. Moreover, these high-tech building techniques are unable to absorb the army of unemployed – rife in developing nations. A study in Sri Lanka, for example, showed that jobs created out of building (low-technology) traditional homes almost doubled those from luxury housing activities.

Housing requirements to accommodate increments in the number of households, 2005

Increments in the number of households over a 25-year period	877,364,000
Average size of annual increments	35,094,000
Per day	96,150
Per hour	4,000

Source: UN-Habitat (2005, p5)