



**World Habitat Day 2013
Message of the Executive Director
Dr. Joan Clos**

Monday 7 October 2013

Urban Mobility

Every year on the first Monday of October we reflect on the state of our cities and towns and what we want the cities of our future to look like.

This year, the United Nations chose the theme Urban Mobility because mobility and access to goods and services is essential to the efficient functioning of our cities and towns as they expand.

Mobility is an important part of city design as it contributes, not only to the liveability of a city in terms of reduced congestion and pollution, but also to the economic potential, allowing the efficient movement of people and goods. Mobility is at the core of equitable access to basic goods, services and activities – such as work, education, medical care, shopping, socializing – and to enable people to participate in civic life.

Furthermore, accessible cities encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transportation and draw more and more travellers out of cars and onto trains, buses, bike paths, and sidewalks.

Over time, the collective costs of 'automobility' have become abundantly apparent – including urban sprawl, air and noise pollution, climate change, road traffic accidents, and the physical separation of people by class and race.

But mobility is about more than just the mode of transport we use. Urban planning and design should focus on how to bring people and places together, by creating cities that focus on accessibility, rather than simply increasing the length and capacity of urban transport infrastructure.

By optimizing urban densities and minimizing land zoning we start to make the city work for its citizens; proximity of goods and services takes advantage of the urban advantage and encourages investment and opportunity.

Compact, well-designed cities can also be cleaner and have less impact on their environment per resident than more spread out areas.

In an environment characterised by scarcity, this is not only preferable to our standard of living but vital if we are to grow our urban space in a sustainable and desirable way. We need to ensure the cities of the future are well-planned, sustainable and accessible to all.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Programme des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains

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