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Evaluation of UN-HABITAT Flagship Reports

Final Report

by

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1.0   Introduction

1.1   UN-HABITAT flagship reports

UN-HABITAT has produced five flagship reports since 1986. In December 1979, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 32/114 mandated UN-HABITAT (then known as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements) to prepare the *Global Report on Human Settlements,* to be issued every five years.

Global reports produced so far are:

- *Global Report on Human Settlements 1986,* Oxford University Press, Oxford;
- *Global Report on Human Settlements 1996: An Urbanizing World,* Oxford University Press, Oxford;
- *Global Report on Human Settlements 2001: Cities in a Globalizing World,* Earthscan Publications, London; and
- *Global Report on Human Settlements 2003: The Challenge of Slums,* Earthscan Publications, London.

General Assembly Resolution 55/194 (December 2000) encouraged "Member States and Habitat Agenda partners to provide support for the preparation of the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and the *State of the World's Cities* report on a biennial basis so as to raise awareness of human settlements and to provide information on urban conditions and trends around the world". One SWC report has been produced to date:

- *The State of the World's Cities 2001,* United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, Nairobi.

1.2   Terms of Reference

The consultants, working as a two-person team, were contracted to carry out an independent/external evaluation of UN-HABITAT's flagship reports, i.e. the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and *The State of the World's Cities*. In pursuance of this, the consultants were required to undertake the following specific tasks:

1. Assess the adequacy of UN-HABITAT's overall flagship reports strategy, within the context of United Nations-wide policy on flagship publications, covering the following main issues: number of reports, frequency of publications, and choice of topics;
2. Assess the effectiveness of the practices and processes so far followed in the preparation of the flagship reports, covering the following main issues: inputs by expert consultants, use of institutional contracts, inputs by UN-HABITAT staff, global dialogue, and the proposed Global Network for Flagship Reports;
3. Assess the quality and relevance of the issues of the flagship reports so far published, including the following aspects: policy relevance of the reports so far published, validity and legitimacy of the reports' contents, conclusions and recommendations, adequacy of statistics, gender awareness and analysis, and organisation and presentation of the reports;

4.   Assess the dissemination and impact of the flagship reports, covering the following key issues: the media/publicity strategy for the reports, launching of the reports, dissemination and sales, and reader/user response;

5.   Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the resources devoted by UN-HABITAT to the preparation of the flagship reports, in comparison to practices in other UN and also within the Bretton Woods agencies, including core professional staff, support staff, and budgetary allocations;

6.   Make recommendations with respect to all of the above-mentioned issues, that is: overall strategy for the flagship reports, practices and processes in the preparation of the flagship reports, quality and relevance of the flagship reports, dissemination and impact of the flagship reports, and adequacy and effectiveness of resources for the preparation of the flagship reports.

The consultants, at the commencement of the assignment, were further required to submit a methodology proposal showing how the above tasks would be addressed. The methodology proposal would, among other things, indicate how member states of the United Nations, research institutions and non-governmental organisations (i.e. the main target audience of UN-HABITAT's flagship reports) would be consulted.

The Terms of Reference are provided in full in Appendix 1.

1.3   Methodology for this evaluation

The methodology for this evaluation was developed in accordance with the importance of the flagship reports to UN-HABITAT. Throughout the study, we have sought to triangulate the findings of different stakeholders and to share our thoughts with those we have been in discussion with. Our broad methodology in accordance with the Terms of Reference above was as follows:

- a detailed analysis of the reports;
- interviews with key UN-HABITAT staff in Nairobi to discuss the reports and the production process;
- discussions with other stakeholders, including some academics involved in the production of the reports;
- discussions in London with Earthscan, the current publisher;
- interviews in Nairobi with relevant donors and some members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-HABITAT;
- a user survey for NGOs, Ministries of Housing/Local Government and others using an email questionnaire; and
- writing of the report.

The assignment was undertaken during May and June 2004. The consultants spent twelve days in Nairobi, from 1 to 12 May 2004.

2.0   Assessment of the Relevance and Quality of the Reports

We took a two-pronged approach in our assessment of the flagship reports. In the first instance, we needed to acquaint ourselves with the reports in order to be able to evaluate them. Second, we needed to obtain the views of other (potential or actual) users of the reports.

2.1   Consultants' assessment of the reports

In order to more fully appreciate the content, style and presentation, we endeavoured to read through all the five flagship reports that have been published to date. These comprise four issues of the Global Report and the first issue of the State of the World Cities. The key features of each report are summarised in the following table, covering the production process as reported both in the report and during interviews with UN-HABITAT staff, the content of the report, and a brief assessment of the report by the consultants.

Report Title and Process of Production	Summary of the Content of the Report	Consultants' Comments on the Report
Global Report on Human Settlements 1986	The report is divided into four parts. This was UN-HABITAT's first effort to provide an account of the state of knowledge regarding human settlements conditions around the world. The first part of the report presents the concept of human settlements as it was understood at the time, emphasizing their interdependence at the global, regional, national and sub-national scale. It outlines the theoretical and practical approaches to human settlements policy and planning that had evolved during the previous decade (a time of global economic recession), including strategies for improving conditions for the poor. The second part reviews trends in population and urbanisation globally and then in developed economies and in developing countries. Policies pertaining to the provision of transport, infrastructure and services, the environment, housing construction, are reviewed. The third part of the report examines key policy issues in human settlements development: planning and management, governance, finance, land, infrastructure, building materials, and shelter (squatter and inner-city slum) upgrading policies. The fourth and final section sets out an agenda for governments that seek to provide liveable human settlements in the future: it calls for enabling settlement strategies with citizen participation.	This first global report was modelled on the format of the other, but more established, global report, the World Bank's "World Development Report". It clearly broke new ground in bringing together what was then current liberal thinking regarding human settlements and ways of improving conditions for the poor, especially in developing countries. Unlike subsequent UN-HABITAT reports, it was primarily text based with no photographs and only a few diagrams/graphs. However, the use of boxes to illustrate case studies from different regions of the world was highly effective. At the end of the report are several tables showing population, demographic, housing infrastructure and other variables by region and countries. The statistics were drawn from various UN publications. This was a commendable publication by UN-HABITAT and it is a pity that it does not seem to have received much publicity at the time that it was published. We believe it would have been well received among both policy makers and academics engaged in teaching and research in areas such as housing and urban planning.
Global Report on Human Settlements 1996: An Urbanizing World Background papers and sections of the report were prepared by various people, some staff of UN-HABITAT while others were hired consultants. One long-term external consultant was engaged as the principal author. He was responsible for collating all the inputs into a coherent report. The	The report reviews urban development and urbanisation trends in the global context and by region. The regional overviews cover regional demographic changes, urban growth and urbanisation, rural-urban migration, and problems of large cities. The report then examines urban social conditions and trends (poverty, crime and violence); environmental conditions (e.g. the health burden of poor housing, and pollution); issues of urban governance and finance. The second part of the report discusses issues of housing availability and affordability, housing markets, tenure, land markets and urban land use planning, and infrastructure delivery. The third part of the report reviews global responses to these	This is a comprehensive account of the state of knowledge regarding global urban settlement conditions and problems at the end of the twentieth century. It is well written and presented, with relevant case studies drawn from both developed and developing countries. As stated in the Introduction, the report "offers us an overview of the harsh conditions in our human settlements that urgently demand creative innovation and action" (p.xxiii). However, the length and size of the report must defeat one of its key objectives, namely to provide policy makers, private enterprise, community-based organisations and other practitioners with "practical information …on which to base

report was produced in preparation for UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in June 1996. It was published by a commercial publishing company, Oxford University Press.	various urban settlement conditions and problems, with the goal of ensuring sustainable development.	innovative policies and programmes of action… to make our human settlements… safe and liveable"(p.xxiii). Some of the discussion on rural settlement conditions could have been left out or condensed in order to reduce the overall length of the report (e.g. pp.73, 109). Likewise, the amount of historical material (e.g. in the discussion of regional urbanisation trends) could have been reduced. Overall, the report's size militates against its relevance to policy makers; it is likely to be of greater value to researchers seeking a broad overview of the issues dealt with in one volume. The current inadequacies in statistical data are evident in the gaps within the Statistical Annex. We commend the ongoing efforts by UN-HABITAT to improve the quantity and quality of statistical data through the Global Urban Observatory (GUO) and Urban Indicators programmes.
Global Report on Human Settlements 2001: Cities in a Globalizing World The report was written under the guidance of an individual consultant working with other consultants. It is not clear which event the report was directly targeted at, unlike its predecessor. The report was published by Earthscan, UK.	The report, which primarily focuses on issue of globalisation and cities, has eight parts. The first part, concerned with setting the development context and challenges, contains three chapters: (i) global development contrasts in human settlements, (ii) the urban impacts of globalisation, and (iii) setting the normative policy platforms of the 1990s. The second part of the report deals with emerging approaches to urban governance and politics at global and regional levels. The third section deals with changes in housing finance and shelter delivery systems in (i) the developing countries, (ii) transitional economies and (iii) in the industrialized countries. The forth section examines developments in the urban environment and infrastructure, covering issues of urban health in developing countries, water supply and sanitation services, urban transport, energy demands and consumption, and urban infrastructure management capacity in the context of decentralisation. The fifth section is concerned with ensuring sustainable urban development prospects through local level capacity building and strengthening post-disaster reconstruction of human settlements. The sixth section is on building a common future with chapters on strategies for providing adequate shelter for all, and addressing key urban management and social issues such as reducing corruption and increasing accountability and	This report is perhaps the nearest of all UN-HABITAT reports to having the feel of an academic reader: this is both its strength and its weakness. Thus, there are excellent individual chapters, some by particularly well known and acclaimed academics – for example Saskian Sassen who drafted Chapter 5.There are also interesting chapters on transport, energy, reconstruction and health. This is a wider canvas than might have been expected. However, there is a lack of a coherent and unifying theme which, despite the title, is not globalization. The parts are more than the parts! As reader, it is perhaps too long. Nevertheless, this report has been well received and we were informed that at least two Masters planning programmes us as a key text. It is most probably the most "academic" of all the UN-HABITAT flagship reports and has scored well in this department. It is clearly important in influencing a wider policy community. But it is probably of very little interest for front-line policy makers.

	reducing urban violence. The final section comprises a statistical annexe of both country level and city level data.	
Global Report on Human Settlements 2003: The Challenge of Slums This is the most recent flagship report produced by UN-HABITAT. It was produced by a group of external consultants managed by DPU, University College London. In the process there was a tension between the role of the consultants and the input from UN-HABITAT which resulted in some changes in the design. In addition, there were considerable difficulties in editing the diverse authors' contributions to achieve a coherent report. As part of the preparation, 35 city case studies were prepared. The report was launched on World Habitat Day in October 2003. It was published by Earthscan, UK.	The report is primarily concerned with issues of "slums". The report is divided into five sections. The first part examines the development context and the Millennium Agenda, urbanization trends and forces shaping slums, and urban inequalities and slums within globalizing economies. The second section, entitled "Assessing Slums in the Development Context" and comprising three chapters, examines the social dimensions and historical evolution of slums, issues of territoriality and spatial forms of slums, and economic dynamics of slums. The third section examines policy options and responses at global and national levels for addressing the issue of slums. Topics covered include past and present approaches to slums (e.g. eviction, self-help, participatory slum improvement) national and international actors dealing with slums (e.g. Urban Alliance, MDP), the role of civil society and CBOs, and calls for a reconsideration of development priorities. The final two sections of the report consist of (i) a summary of the city case studies (with brief highlights of 29 of the 35 city studies) and (ii) a statistical annex which contains technical and methodological notes and data tables. These methodological notes are particularly important as they support the definition of "slum" used in this report.	This report (see discussion below) has received a substantial amount of coverage from the world press. In this, it clearly vindicates the launch strategy and the preparatory work that was done in advance, in particular getting the media interested. The main media interest was focused on the estimates of the number of slum inhabitants in the world. Thus, in 2001 it was estimated that 924 million people were living in slums worldwide and that 43 per cent of the urban population in developing countries was living in slums. The figures were published only at the continental level, although UN-HABITAT also had estimates at the country level. The definition of a slum was very much based upon physical and environmental indicators. Despite the apparent data weaknesses, the report gained a lot of publicity as the first attempt to define a slum population. Ironically, in relation to this publicity, the report in fact covers a much wider canvas. The first part provides a detailed discussion of globalisation and liberalization. It is generally rather critical of the latter, in particular questioning the extent to which it benefits the poor. There is also an interesting typology of slums that is built from the city case studies. While perhaps the most successful of all UN-HABITAT flagship reports it terms of publicity, the problems of both multiple (and therefore ideologically diverse) authors remain very clear. A report building more on the slum estimates and the case studies and perhaps less on the themes covered in part one might have made for a more coherent publication.
The State of the World's Cities 2001 Unlike the four global reports above which were produced in collaboration with external consultants, this report was produced almost entirely in-house by UN-HABITAT staff. Various staff were assigned to write	The report begins with a review of urbanisation trends, region by region. This is followed by reviews of urban conditions, policies, and best practices under five main topics: urban shelter, urban society, urban environment, urban economy, and urban governance. Key issues and problems are discussed under each of the five topics. For instance, housing, security of tenure, women's property rights, access to land, housing finance, basic services and transport are discussed under the general theme of urban shelter.	If the principal audience for the flagship reports is to influence policy makers, then this report may be regarded as probably the most targeted. Unlike the Global Reports which are over 300 pages long, this report is much shorter, 125 pages in length. The seven chapters that make up the report are divided into a series of topics, with each topic covered in two pages. This enhances the report's readability for policy makers: the reader can then choose to explore particular topics in greater detail from other

sections of the report which were then collated by the principal coordinator from within the organisation. External consultants were hired only to comment on the draft report that had been prepared in-house. The report was produced in conjunction with the June 2001 Special Session of the UN General Assembly (Istanbul+5). Printing was done by a private commercial printing firm, but the report was published in-house by UN-HABITAT.

Urban environment includes discussion of issues pertaining to pollution, waste management, food and urban agriculture, heritage conservation and disasters. Issues covered under urban governance include the role of government and the need to empower local governments and capacity building, citizen participation in urban planning, finance, information, women in local government and corruption. The final pages of the report provide valuable summaries of recent legislative changes to improve women's property rights in African countries, followed by a sample of policy actions taken by governments in different parts of the world in fulfilment of the goals of Habitat II (June 1996) under the five topics covered in the report. The report concludes with a brief outline of UN-HABITAT's Urban Indicators programme, the problems of urban indicator data and the need for improved data collection. It also presents for the first time the concept of City Development Index (CDI) which UN-HABITAT hopes to develop into a counterfoil for UNDP's Human Development Index as more data is collected through its GUO initiatives.

sources. Because of the need for brevity, the lengthy historical accounts characteristic of the Global Reports are absent from this report. On the other hand, academic readers are likely to find this treatment of critical issues rather shallow. The report is well illustrated with photographs, graphs and case studies from UN-HABITAT's Urban Indicators and Best Practices programmes. A four-page glossary at the end explains to the reader some of the terminology that may be unclear. A pullout Executive Summary is attached at the end of the report. Our main criticism of the report is the absence of statistical data, and this is one of the principal merits of most UN flagship reports. Statistical data published in UN flagship reports carry a large measure of authority for use by national governments, NGOs as well as academic researchers.

2.2 Other readers' assessment of the reports

We also sought the views of readers/users on the flagship reports. This was done by means of a short questionnaire that was distributed to respondents by email. The questionnaire was sent to about 110 people worldwide. The respondents were selected from five categories of (potential and actual) readers/users, as follows:

(i) members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to UN-HABITAT based in Nairobi, and whose email addresses were available from the UN-HABITAT mailing lists;
(ii) Ministers of Housing or Local Government whose email addresses were available on the UN-HABITAT mailing lists;
(iii) individuals that had previously communicated with UN-HABITAT about ordering or purchasing one or more of the flagship reports;
(iv) non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the UN-HABITAT mailing list, and with a focus on issues of shelter; and finally
(v) individual academics known to the consultants as having research interests in issues of urban shelter, urbanisation and urban growth.

We do not claim that this was a representative sample at all. The aim was simply to obtain the views of potential or actual users/readers about the flagship reports. The questionnaire sought the respondents' views on the three most recent reports, namely

- *Global Report on Human Settlements 2003: The Challenge of Slums*,
- *Global Report on Human Settlements 2001: Cities in a Globalizing World*, and
- *The State of the World Cities 2001*.

For each report, the respondents were asked (i) if, and how well, they had read the report; (ii) their assessment of the particular report regarding such issues as relevance for policymakers, researchers and academics, the content and depth of analysis of the issues, adequacy of the statistics contained in the report, sensitivity to gender issues, the structure and organisation of the report and its presentation, and the publicity that had accompanied publication of the report; (iii) for what category of persons/readers they thought the report was most appropriate; and (iv) if they had any other comments on the particular report. They were then asked if they had any general comments on the flagship reports produced by UN-HABITAT. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

In all, 15 people responded to the questionnaire, most of them academic researchers. Perhaps disturbing was the fact that at least half the respondents were unaware of any of the three flagship reports that they were being asked to assess. This can be taken as an indication of inadequate dissemination of the reports to a significant segment of their potential readership. On the other hand, most of the respondents that were aware of the reports said they had read them quite extensively. They use them primarily for research leading to policy recommendations. Others use the reports for teaching at tertiary level.

The respondents that had read the reports were asked to assess each of the three most recent reports on a number of criteria. With respect to the 2003 report "*The Challenge of Slums*", opinion varied from Good to Very Good on most criteria, notably relevance to policy makers, relevance to researchers and academics, depth of analysis of issues, appropriateness of recommendations and conclusions, structure and presentation of the

report, as well as the publicity accompanying publication of the report. However, the adequacy of statistics in the report was rated as Poor to Fair by the respondents, as were the report's range of issues covered and sensitivity to gender issues.

General comments made by the respondents on the report, while mostly complimentary, are also informative. One respondent described the report as a *"great contribution… undoubtedly the most comprehensive study on this topic"*. On the other hand, some of the readers felt that the report had failed to address adequately the root causes of slums, and had, instead, focused too much on slum problems *per se*:

> *"I was looking for broad coverage of regional/rural/urban settlement policy and found an over concentration on slum problems which I consider fails to deal with root issues."*

Said another respondent:

> *"The issue of land tenure is poorly dealt with – and this is one of the most complex problems of African cities".*

Another commented at some length:

> *"Though it has more in-depth analysis on selected issues, I expected more factual information on the current conditions and an analysis of factors that have caused them. Because it takes a broad sweep of the whole world, the report becomes out of focus and less relevant to any specific region. Demographics and institutions and economic performance vary considerably. The recommendations reflect the broad solutions on which a consensus seems to exist e.g. participatory development. But they don't provide policy makers in a given country a handle to formulate policies. Where did they go wrong? How can the errors be corrected? Can HABITAT-related issues be dealt with in isolation from the macro-economic or global context? The issue of government capacity and governance does not receive sufficient attention. How much emphasis should be placed on matters that shape the urban slums and how much on direct measures?"*

The 2001 *"Cities in a Globalizing World"* report was assessed by those respondents that had read it as Good to Very Good, notably with respect to its relevance for both policy makers and researchers/academics, structure and presentation. Several of the respondents rated the report as only Fair with respect depth of analysis of the issues, appropriateness of its recommendations and conclusions, and sensitivity to gender issues.

The third report that the respondents had been asked to assess was *"The State of the World's Cities 2001"* report. Again, those who had read it generally rated it favourably on most criteria. It was assessed as Good to Very Good with respect to relevance to both policy makers and researchers/academics, the range of issues covered, appropriateness of its recommendations and conclusions, structure and presentation. One respondent specifically complimented on the introduction of the City Development Index (CDI) in this report for the first time. Areas that were rated as Poor to Fair included the depth of analysis of issues, adequacy of statistics, sensitivity to gender issues and the amount of publicity accompanying the publication of the report.

Commenting on *"The State of the World's Cities 2001"*, one commentator raised a wider issue pertaining to UN-HABITAT's focus on cities while giving little attention to wider regional development policy issues and how these affect city growth. The respondent wrote:

> *"This was an innovative and path breaking report but this report, like others of UN-HABITAT, does not grasp the nettle of maximising regional development policy potential before putting all its eggs into slum upgrading. It hides how much preventing slums can be encouraged by reducing rural-urban migration. Trend growth of global cities is misrepresented as*

policy. How much should we aim to bend the trends to reach MDG (Millennium Development Goals) targets? Global cities debate hides the extent these cities are just mega city sprawl.”

The respondents were also asked to comment on the UN-HABITAT flagship reports in general. Three key points emerge from the comments made by the respondents, namely

- UN-HABITAT should have only one flagship report and, therefore, *“The State of the World Cities”* reports should be a part of the *“Global Report on Human Settlements”* series;
- creating greater visibility for the flagship reports among academics and institutions of higher education and making them more readily available, especially in the developing countries; and
- improving the statistical annexure in the reports.

3.0   Observations Arising from the Assessment of the Reports

Our assessments of the flagship reports, together with responses to the emailed questionnaire and the discussions with UN-HABITAT staff in Nairobi, lead us to comment on several issues regarding the publications.

3.1   The reports are of a high academic standard

Broadly speaking, the reports are of a high academic standard. They are comprehensive and reflect a good stock-take of the state of knowledge on the specific subject considered in each volume. This observation particularly applies to the Global Report on Human Settlements (GRHS) series. The individual chapters have been drafted by authors with high international standing in the academic world. This observation was also confirmed in our discussions with the publishers, Earthscan Publications, who noted that the reports usually got very high academic ratings.

3.2   The GRHS reports are too long even by normal academic standards

The GRHS reports are more than the normal standard university level book length. This is certainly the case with the 1996 GRHS (*An Urbanizing World*) which is over 550 pages in length. Although the two more recent reports are shorter, they are still over 300 pages long. Furthermore, there is substantial repetition in some sections of the reports. The length of the reports tends to discourage readers, especially in non-academic audiences.

3.3   The reports suffer from internal inconsistency caused by the use of external consultants

One of the difficulties with the reports comes from the way they are produced. This has involved the use of external academic consultants to prepare the drafts of the chapters and case studies. Although UN-HABITAT provides guidelines/instructions to authors, inevitably individual draft chapters will contain variations in style, length and approach. It is then left to UN-HABITAT staff to edit these disparate drafts into a coherent whole. The degree to which this editing process succeeds in producing a coherent report primarily depends on two factors, namely the extent to which the consultants have written to their terms of reference, and secondly the amount of time[1] and human resources that UN-HABITAT can devote to the task.

3.4   The State of the World's Cities Report provides a different model to the GRHS in terms of style and readability

The State of the World's Cities 2001 (SWCR) was an exception to the production process discussed above. It was produced almost entirely in-house, but under considerable time pressure. It is a consistent report in terms of style and content. It is also readable, short and accessible for policy makers. Each topic is covered in a double page spread, which makes for easy access to a concise overview of the issues.

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[1] This is not simply a question of resources, but is related to publication deadlines coinciding with key launch events (e.g. UN-HABITAT Day or major conferences).

3.5   How good is the data on which the reports are based?

The provision of reliable, accurate and up-to-date statistical data is a common feature, and major selling point, of all UN flagship reports. UN-HABITAT has a unique responsibility of collecting and disseminating data on human settlements at international and national levels. UN statistical data is particularly valued, being viewed as neutral and authoritative. Other agencies (e.g. World Bank) and representatives of governments that we interviewed recognise UN-HABITAT as the foremost source of data on urban issues. The organisation is taking new initiatives to collect data on urban settlements around the world. These initiatives include the Global Urban Observatory (GUO) and the recently established Global Research Network. While these are welcome, it is important to recognise that there remain substantial weaknesses in the current global data collection system. It is important for UN-HABITAT to recognise this, as comparisons will inevitably be made with other UN flagship reports (e.g. UNICEF) which are reputed with accurate, up-to-date and relevant data for their fields. In many cases, the reports are obtained primarily for the statistical data that they contain rather than for their textual contents. This is also the case with the World Bank's annual flagship report, the *World Development Report.*

3.6   The recent success of *The Challenge of Slums* report was based to a large extent on UN-HABITAT's own data

Despite the weaknesses in data collection mentioned above, there seems little doubt that it was the estimates of slum populations provided by the GUO that provided the major selling point of the recently published (November 2003) GRHS report, *The Challenge of Slums.* This particular GRHS was well received by the international media. The majority of the media reviews led with the numbers of slum populations and their projections provided in the report.

3.7   Are the flagship reports relevant to policy makers?

We have already noted the difference in format and presentation style between the GRHS and the SWCR. In our opinion, the latter is more amenable to reading by senior personnel in local authorities and central governments. The former, in our view, is too long and too academic for policy makers. However, it is appreciated by the academic and NGO audiences. Underlying these observations – and how the reports are assessed - is the issue of who is the primary audience of the two flagship reports in their current format. There is a distinct recognition within UN-HABITAT that the principal audience for the flagship reports, especially the GRHS, are policy makers in national and sub-national governments. But it is our impression that the reports are missing their primary target audience, despite the fact that the reports are often widely distributed to these officials at international conferences. Even where a particular report advocates a new development paradigm, it will fail to influence debate on policy alternatives if it remains unread. An additional factor is the absence, until recently, of a clearly targeted communication strategy for launching and publicising the reports. These factors can only diminish the policy impact of the reports.

3.8   Using academics "on the cheap" is a rational strategy

The current authorship arrangements for the GRHS are an important point and should not be dismissed in an enthusiasm to reach a different target audience. UN-HABITAT

has developed a cost-effective model which uses well known and respected academics. This is a very rational strategy, given the budgetary and human resource constraints which the agency faces. UN-HABITAT has been able to effectively use the prestige of being a UN agency to get respected academics to provide inputs – chapters, background papers and sometimes synthesis and editing functions - relatively cheaply[2]. This has allowed the agency to maintain a relatively high standard of report as noted above, and to have a commercial publisher who is happy to do the production and marketing.

3.9   How sustainable is this resource?

However, this external resource is to some extent limited. The study of urban issues (housing, poverty, crime, governance) is a relatively small academic field with a limited number of internationally respected practitioners. One issue is the extent to which this small resource base can be used continuously and sustainably. We were given the strong impression that, because of the difficulties arising from working for UN-HABITAT - the bureaucracy, the fragmented project culture of the organization and the relatively low fee rates – some contributors felt that it was a "one off" experience. This could be rationalized as their personal contribution to the UN agency, as well as being an addition to the CV. There are two very important issues here. First, a majority of these resource persons have tended to be based in the North. Second - given some of the above considerations - there are major concerns with the extent to which UN-HABITAT can maintain the existing high standard of the reports if their frequency is increased as this implies a greater use of this limited academic resource.

3.10   What is the territory of UN-HABITAT's flagship reports?

There can be no question that there has been a major increase in global reports generally in recent times. A recent (March 2004) report from UNDP's Office of Development Studies, *Global Reports: An Overview of their Evolution*, highlights the dramatic increase in global reports. From the 1940s to the 1980s, there were less than ten new reports issued in each decade. In the 1990s, the number increased dramatically to 44 new global reports in a single decade. Two issues immediately arise from this increase. First, is anybody reading all these reports? Or put another way, is the market not saturated? A second, and related, issue is the degree of overlap in these reports[3]. Analysis of the 118 global reports listed in the UNDP report shows that there are very few which directly overlap with UN-HABITAT's mandate. In other words, there are currently no other reports which explicitly cover global housing and/or shelter issues. While fear of overlap may be a problem for other UN flagship reports, in our judgement it is currently not a problem for UN-HABITAT's reports.

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[2] Writing/drafting a chapter for a UN agency, even in today's apparently cynical world, has a degree of cachet; thus the agency is able to "flatter" academics.

[3] This issue of overlap should not necessarily be seen as a problem. In many cases different agencies are actively seeking to make different interpretations. Thus UNICEF's focus on under-5 mortality as an indicator of development is very much in reaction to the World Bank's emphasis on GDP per capita – and more recently one dollar a day - as indicators. This is surely a healthy debate which should be welcomed.

4.0 Dissemination and Impact of the Flagship Reports

4.1 Is UN-HABITAT sufficiently aggressive in disseminating its reports?

Both in our discussions with staff of UN-HABITAT and in the comments received from some of the respondents to the questionnaire, it is clear that the organisation has not been sufficiently aggressive in publicising its flagship reports until recently. Several respondents to the questionnaire confessed that they had not been aware of these reports until now when they were being asked to comment on them. Yet these are people, whether policy makers or academics, who would normally be expected to be aware of the reports, given the nature of their work and/or research interests.

The lack of visibility probably goes beyond UN-HABITAT, and may extend to other UN agencies that are supposed to facilitate information dissemination for the entire UN family. It is our understanding that UN-HABITAT's flagship reports are also distributed to UN Information Centres (UNIC) in all the member countries. Libraries across the world are also on the mailing list for UN-HABITAT's publications. But some of the respondents to the questionnaire were apparently not aware that they could access the reports within their countries through the local UNICs or from local university libraries and national depositories.

Staff interviewed at UN-HABITAT acknowledged that, for a long time, they have been so engrossed with the production of the reports while the marketing and distribution side was largely ignored. It was claimed that UN-HABITAT as an organisation is production oriented and not geared towards marketing of its reports.

In the past, some of the reports have been published to coincide with major UN conferences on human settlements attended by government officials and representatives of civil society and non-governmental organisations. This strategy serves to ensure that the publications actually go out to the target audience. But it does not guarantee that the recipients will actually read them. Instead, there is a real possibility that the reports become part of the massive collection of paper that one usually associates with such international conferences.

4.2 "The Challenge of Slums" was very well received

If UN-HABITAT is to improve visibility of its flagship reports, there is a lot of merit in the approach that was used to launch the *"Global Report on Human Settlements 2003: The Challenge of Slums"*. As with the flagship reports of the World Bank and UNDP, *The Challenge of Slums* was launched simultaneously worldwide on World Habitat Day with much media publicity. Press conferences were organised during the same week in several key cities, in London, New York, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, Brussels and Geneva. Management and senior staff of UN-HABITAT gave radio and television interviews to international broadcasters. The Media and Press Relations Unit of UN-HABITAT had prepared 2000 press kits in both English and French for distribution to the media worldwide as part of the launch.

Another contributory factor for the successful launch and wide publicity received by this report was the theme of the report: slum housing. This was a topic with a lot of public appeal and was guaranteed to receive the attention of the media in both developed and developing countries.

The Media and Press Unit has compiled a file of the media coverage received at the launch, including both newspaper articles and reviews of the report. Publication of the report was covered in major newspapers in at least 26 countries worldwide, in North America (USA and Canada), Europe (e.g. UK, France, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy), Asia (Thailand, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), Africa (South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria), and Oceania (Australia). A major item that was picked by the media was the number of slum dwellers given in the report and the projections for the future. Some reports then proceeded to examine the slum problem within their national and regional context and to examine local housing problems and initiatives. (Other newspapers focused on water and sanitation in urban areas, the theme of another UN-HABITAT report that was being launched simultaneously with *The Challenge of Slums*.)

It is evident that, at least for a few weeks in October 2003, UN-HABITAT had raised global awareness of the problem of shelter worldwide. While the topic itself and numbers of slum dwellers reported may have contributed towards this media interest, UN-HABITAT itself had, for once, gone out of its way to publicise its flagship report. This can only be described as a worthwhile investment.

4.3   Earthscan's views of UN-HABITAT's flagship reports

For the last two GRHS reports, UN-HABITAT has used Earthscan Publications of the UK as its publisher. The views of Earthscan were sought as part of this evaluation. First, it should be noted that in this relationship, Earthscan only provides a production function; it does not have control over the content. In this sense, it has less involvement in the production process than it would be the case with a normal authorship contract.

The following points raised by the publisher are relevant. Firstly, the books "sell better and more extensively" than similar academic texts; secondly, they are considered of a high academic quality; and thirdly, it was implicitly noted that academia was the market/target audience. Earthscan's only concern was that the high academic standard of the reports should be maintained, although it recognised that it had no control over this issue.

4.4   Issues to be addressed under the new publications policy

UN-HABITAT is currently formulating a new publications policy. The publications policy aims, among other things, to:

- provide for an enhanced publications management system, including improved accountability, coordination, control and planning of publications; and
- introduce a sales and marketing strategy aimed at maximising circulation of the publications to the right target audiences and recovering publication costs.

We hope that the new policy will address some of the problems that were raised by the staff during our discussions with them as well as comments received from respondents to our questionnaire. At the very least, the existence of a functioning and effective publications management system should bring about some organisation-wide systematic thought to the content, frequency and marketing of the flagship reports. In the following paragraphs, we examine the issues raised by staff during our discussions with them.

4.4.1 Staff time is divided between report production and divisional duties

Some of the staff in UN-HABITAT were unhappy about the amount of time they were called to commit to the production of the reports, especially when they were coming from other divisions/units within the organisation. There is apparently no formal recognition of the time they spend in the production of the reports. In instances, they are still expected to undertake their duties within their respective divisions/units. At the end of the year, they are evaluated on the basis of their performance within their divisions/units by their respective supervisors who may take little regard of their involvement in the production of a report. For this reason, it is sometimes difficult to obtain the full commitment of staff to the production process, whether in terms of writing background papers, collecting statistics or reading through drafts of a report.

4.4.2 Should the reports provide a broad overview or adopt a thematic approach?

During our discussions with the staff, it became apparent that there is currently disagreement as well as low-level debate within UN-HABITAT regarding whether its flagship reports should continue to provide broad overviews of the state of knowledge on human settlements or whether they should increasingly follow a thematic approach.

In our view, the issue whether the reports should provide a broad overview of the state of knowledge or follow a thematic approach may be a false dichotomy. The real issue seems to be whether the reports should take a broad overview/thematic approach on the one hand or become more policy prescriptive than they have been hitherto. Given the current production constraints, the apparent failure to reach and to make a direct impact on policy makers, the continuing reliance on academics to do much of the draft preparation ending in a high quality product: all these arguments persuade us in favour of continuing with the current mix of overview/state of knowledge/thematic approach. The success of "*The Challenge of Slums*" bears testimony to the visibility that a popular theme can bring.

4.4.3 The report production process

Over the years, several models have been used in the production of the reports, ranging from almost entirely in-house production as in the case of *"The State of the World Cities 2001"* on the one hand and the use of external consultants to varying degrees in the production of the GRHS on the other. Each model has presented problems during the production process, some of which were raised with us by the staff.

Staff in favour of in-house production argued that the use of external consultants (usually academics) tended to make the reports too academic and difficult to read for policy makers. Furthermore, external consultants did not always write to the Terms of Reference or the topics they will have been given. UN-HABITAT staff then spend a lot of time re-writing what should have been done by the external consultants. To them, in-house production provided greater control of the process, content and output.

On the other hand, some staff argued that in-house production conflicts with their other duties within the organisation and places heavy workloads on them in order to meet tight publication deadlines. They felt it was better to sub-contract the writing to external consultants, while retaining control over the content, schedule and style of the report.

4.4.4 Marketing and distribution of the reports

Up to now, UN-HABITAT has largely neglected the marketing and distribution of the reports. This was illustrated in some of the email correspondence made available to us between the agency and some readers who wanted to place orders for publications during the past year. On a number of occasions, readers were complaining about unclear payment procedures, delays in the delivery of books they had ordered, or confusion between the role of the publishers Earthscan and UN-HABITAT in fulfilling orders. As noted by some of the staff, the organisation has been production focused, with little attention given to marketing and distribution of its publications.

The draft publications policy seeks to address this shortcoming by significantly increasing the marketing profile of UN-HABITAT's publications. Several strategies are being proposed to raise public awareness of the organisation's publications. These include UN-HABITAT participating at major international book fairs, appointment of a sales agent to market the publications around the world, advertising the publications prominently on its website, preparation and distribution of publications catalogues, and given the recent experience with *"The Challenge of Slums"*, major press coverage when launching flagship reports.

5.0   UN-HABITAT and the Production of Reports

In this section, we shall discuss some of the generic issue associated with the production of UN-HABITAT flagship reports.

5.1   Recognise the relatively under-resourced environment in which UN-HABITAT produces its flagship reports

While it is widely acknowledged that the status of UN-HABITAT and its resource base have increased significantly since the late 1990s, the fact remains that, by other agency standards, the organization is relatively small. This was by emphasised during the interviews with staff members who frequently noted that activities "were being done on a shoestring". The issue here is that, for the short to medium term, any suggestions made must work within this constraint. It is also worth noting that UN-HABITAT has developed effective strategies to work relatively successfully within this environment. This is best exemplified by the fact that the current budget for its flagship reports is less than USD500,000 while other agencies have annual budgets in excess of several million dollars for their global reports.

5.2   It is difficult for UN-HABITAT staff to devote time to report preparation

We have already noted that staff within UN-HABITAT assigned to work on the flagship reports have other responsibilities within their respective divisions/branches. A second issue is the tendency towards a "project culture" whereby individuals are more concerned with the particular project they are working on rather than the organisation as a whole. This is partly a function of the agency's previous financial weakness and the donor community only being prepared to fund activities on an earmarked/project basis. The situation is improving but still remains a substantial issue in the organization. A third factor is that UN-HABITAT, as might be expected of an international/inter-governmental organization, has a formal and rigid hierarchy with a relatively large number of internal divisions/sections. This makes working collectively across branches/divisions difficult. These issues may inhibit the production of reports – which by their nature are often crosscutting and require easy and flexible team formation[4].

We were informed that it was quite difficult to persuade the agency staff to undertake tasks that were outside their normal responsibilities. Ideally, the production of a flagship report requires inputs from a cross-section of staff in the various branches of UN-HABITAT. It is worth noting that creative report production is best carried out in organizations characterized by flat hierarchies and internal flexibility, for example, in "think-tanks" and university departments.

5.3   There are problems with using and editing the inputs from external consultants

UN-HABITAT has characteristically used external consultants to write the preliminary drafts for sections and/or chapters of the GRHS. Staff within UN-HABITAT then have the responsibility to edit and pull together the various contributions into a coherent

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[4] In this context, it is worth noting that most academic institutions and/or "think tanks" whose primary task is the production of reports and/or knowledge are usually characterised by internal structures which allow for high levels of flexibility.

report. Sometimes this is a relatively easy task, but sometimes it is very difficult and time-consuming. There are at least three issues in this process: (a) effective team building amongst the consultants and UN-HABITAT staff to ensure that everyone fully understands the overall project as well as their specific tasks, (b) managing the consultants and ensuring that they produce relevant and usable outputs, and (c) the amount of time and resources devoted to editing and ensuring that the report has internal coherence.

5.4   There are advantages in producing reports in-house

There are clearly advantages in producing reports in-house. Firstly, unlike using external consultants, UN-HABITAT is directly able to control the process and the timing. This was clearly seen in the case of *The State of the World Cities 2001* report which was successfully produced to a very tight deadline. Another advantage of producing a report in house is that it can provide a unifying factor for UN-HABITAT staff. This is an important internal benefit, given the potentially negative aspects of the prevailing project culture in UN-HABITAT which should not be underestimated.

5.5   The relationship between data collection and report frequency

The dissemination of accurate statistical data is an important element of any flagship report within the UN system. Given the current relative weakness of UN-HABITAT's data collection particularly in terms of coverage, there are concerns about (a) the lack of global coverage in the data, (b) the appropriateness of having an annual report repeating the same data, and (c) linking the data collection process to the production of flagship reports so that each report has new information to disseminate to the world. One suggestion was that the most useful cycle for the reports to relate to is the ten-year census cycle.

5.6   The importance of having a dedicated UN-HABITAT staff member or team working on a flagship report

In relation to the above discussion it is important, as far as possible, to have a UN-HABITAT staff member(s) dedicated on a flagship report. At present, this is not the case and those responsible for the recent flagship reports have had to do the work alongside their other responsibilities. The quality of the reports produced is to a great extent a tribute to the individuals who have had to do this work while juggling other activities. The idea could be extended further by having a dedicated team working on a particular report.

Our suggestion is that the agency should have dedicated staff (who are relieved for the time-being from other duties) for particular reports. Furthermore, the evidence from other agencies and from our discussions point to the importance of having a two-year lead in time for any important report. While these suggestions might create some administrative difficulties for UN-HABITAT, it should also be noted that flagship reports are the single most important public output of the agency. The recent success of *The Challenge of Slums* clearly illustrates this point.

6.0 Comparison of UN-HABITAT Flagship Strategy with other Agencies

UN-HABITAT was, unfortunately, unable to provide sufficient resources to enable us to conduct a more systematic comparative analysis with the flagship reports of other UN agencies and to consult with them directly. We were only able to consult with UNEP in Nairobi on its publications. What follows in this section of the report are some broad observations based on our discussions in Nairobi, comments made by readers known to us and other sources.

6.1 Some comparisons with other flagship reports

The table below summarises details of the flagship reports of other UN agencies and the World Bank with respect to frequency of publication. Generally, the older flagship reports were established on a one-year cycle and they have maintained that cycle over the years. More recent reports have tended to be more generous in their publication cycles, the trend shifting towards a two-year cycle.

Agency	Report title and frequency
FAO	"State of Food and Agriculture", started in 1947, published annually
World Bank	"World Development Report", started in 1978, published annually
UNICEF	"State of the World's Children", started in 1980, published annually
UNDP	"Human Development Report", started in 1990, published annually
UNESCO	"World Education Report", started in 1991, published every two years
UNESCO	"World Science Report", started in 1994, published every two years
WHO	"World Health Report", started in 1995, published annually
UNEP	"Global Environmental Outlook", started in 1997, published every three years
UNDP	"Poverty Report: Overcoming Human Poverty", started in 1998, published every three years

Of particular relevance for UN-HABITAT is the debate within UNESCO a few years ago regarding the number and publication frequency of its global reports. During the two-year period 1998-1999 alone, UNESCO had published five global reports, bringing its total for the decade 1990-1999 to 12 reports. An evaluation undertaken in 2000 had found that "measured against the major flagship reports of other United Nations institutions, UNESCO's world reports stand out in number and in size, but not in policy impact" (UNESCO, 2000) . The recommendation was then made to publish a single UNESCO flagship report every two years. In many ways, UN-HABITAT finds itself in a similar predicament as shown in this report.

6.2 It looks like UN-HABITAT's reports represent good value for money

First, there is wide consensus that a flagship report requires a two-year lead in time. Second, our consultations indicated that there might be systemic problems with global reports in relation to (a) their recent proliferation, (b) their frequency, (c) the extent to

which they are actually read, and (d) the extent to which they are able to influence policy. In this respect, UN-HABITAT's concern regarding the role and future directions of its flagship reports is part of a more general debate. (At the time of our visit to Nairobi, there was an ongoing debate on some of these issues of flagship reports via the internet). These concerns add weight to the argument for one flagship title in a two-year cycle for UN-HABITAT. Third, although we did not have the actual data, our discussions throughout suggested that the amount of resources UN-HABITAT devotes to its flagship reports in terms of time and money is very substantially less than other agencies[5]. Following from this, given that UN-HABITAT's reports stand up well with those of other UN agencies in terms of quality; it seems reasonable to state that the agency is getting very good value for money.

6.3   Towards a typology of flagship reports

In the following section, we have suggested a simple typology of global reports. It is hoped that this typology may help focus debate within UN-HABITAT on the possible future directions of their flagship report strategy.

Global report type	Commentary
A review of the current state of academic understanding in a particular field	UN-HABITAT's current *Global Report on Human Settlements* series is the model of this type of global report. The GRHS is really a detailed review of the current state of academic knowledge in the field. The report's approach is essentially "backward looking" or stock taking in nature with only a relatively small amount of space devoted to policy recommendations and advocacy.
A reference of data and knowledge	UNEP's series, the *Global Environmental Outlook* (GEO) provides the clearest example of this kind of global report. The emphasis is on providing a reference and a stocktaking in a particular field. It is distinguished from the above model by its emphasis on an empirical update rather than a theoretical approach. As above, there is a relatively small amount devoted to policy recommendations
A report that argues for a particular policy approach	*World Development Report* (WDR) produced annually by the World Bank is the most well known flagship report of this type. Each report identifies a particular theme which is then analysed with policy suggestions. The report is almost evenly balanced between analysis (of a broadly academic nature) and policy recommendations.
A report which advocates/lobbies for a particular policy approach	UNICEF's *State of the World's Children* is the clearest example of this kind of global report that advocates for a particular policy approach. The report essentially considers one fairly narrow theme and then argues/lobbies for its importance and adoption as a policy instrument.

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[5] We were given some "ballpark" figures for UN-HABITAT and UNEP but there are many problems of comparability such as how to account for in-house work on a flagship report in terms of time and money. Our judgement is that such data might be misleading and might lead to erroneous conclusions.

7.0   Future Options for UN-HABITAT's Flagship Reports

In this final section, we consider future options for UN-HABITAT's flagship reports. These are given as both clear recommendations of the consultants, but also as areas for consideration by the agency.

7.1   Reconsider the target audience

One of the major concerns to emerge from this study has been the lack of clarity about who is the target audience/market for the flagship reports produced by the agency. There is a tension between the stated intention that the reports are for use by policy makers, yet their high academic standard inherently shifts them to an academic audience within which they already enjoy a high reputation. There is a paradox here in that if the reports were "marked" against an objective of use by, and relevance to, policy makers, we would give them a low mark. However, for a more academic audience, we would give them a very high mark.

A possible suggestion for reconciling this tension is not to think in terms of policy makers and/or academics as distinct categories, but to think more in terms of a loose and wide network or community that has a role in policy formulation, both directly and indirectly. The suggestion here is that there is an exchange of ideas between academics, researchers, consultants, civic society, donors and government officials (policy makers). Policy is changed through a complex, uncertain and often incremental process rather though a simple linear input[6].

In this conception, UN-HABITAT can be seen to more closely meet its stated target group. At the minimum, it is suggested that the agency understands that its current reports may be influencing policy makers, but in a more indirect fashion.

In theory, the identification of the target group/market should drive any discussion of future options for the flagship reports. However, in practice any suggestion for future options must start from the existing situation.

7.2   One flagship title and one report every two years

The second major conclusion of this study is that UN-HABITAT should focus on maintaining the present quality of its flagship reports. The implication of this is that it should seek to produce *one global/flagship report under one title every two years*. It is considered that, given (a) the small size of the agency and the limited resources, (b) the need for a two-year lead time for a high quality report, (c) the lack of something new to say every year, (d) the paucity of data, and (d) the importance of not overusing the potential collaborating resources/partners, all very strongly point to a biennial report. This was also the almost universal opinion of the staff and stakeholders consulted. This is the most important and strongly supported recommendation of this study. A commitment to producing reports at a more frequent interval runs the risk of undermining the very high academic reputation that UN-HABITAT has currently achieved[7].

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[6] Recent research supports this rather untidy model of policy change rather than viewing it as a simple input.

[7] In relation to this observation, it is worth noting that it is much easier to lose a reputation than it is to create and maintain a good one.

7.3   Flagship report style

The real challenge for UN-HABITAT is to make the flagship reports more accessible, but without losing their academic quality and reputation. We recommend that the flagship reports should continue with the current content mix, straddling between providing an overview of the state of knowledge and a thematic approach. The formula has worked well to date and enables the agency to produce highly rated publications. Whether a report leans more to the overview type or takes a thematic approach will depend on the issue(s) covered in the particular publication.

7.4   Disseminating findings of the flagship reports to policy makers

It is also important to provide a vehicle through which information published in the flagship reports is made accessible to policy makers. We therefore recommend production of a shorter, user-friendly and more readable policy-oriented summary of each flagship report. The summary would contain only the key findings in the flagship report, and highlight their policy relevance, but excluding the historical and theoretical materials to the main report. The format used for *The State of the World's Cities 2001* provides a good model in terms of style, length, and use of illustrations. This proposed shortened version of the global report would take the place of *The State of the World's Cities* report.

7.5   Report production process

After serious consideration, it was difficult not to conclude that contracting out the major task of writing the flagship reports is a rational strategy for UN-HABITAT. It is difficult to see how the current quality could be maintained through any other method. In this context, we make the following recommendations:

- UN-HABITAT needs to spend more time in creating ownership, team building and coherence from the inputs of the consultants that it uses;
- there should be a dedicated UN-HABITAT team to drive the production of each report;
- the agency needs to understand and recognise the importance of flagship reports to the agency's overall mandate: this means putting adequate resources into the activity from core funds.

7.6   Consolidate the publicity strategy

The experience gained in the launch of *The Challenge of Slums* provides valuable lessons for increasing the visibility and impact of the flagship reports. It is our recommendation that the strategy used in the launch of the report in 2003, combined with the proposed publications policy, should be built upon and consolidated in order to improve public awareness of the reports. At the same time, we believe that UN-HABITAT should pay more attention to potential readers (academics) and researchers in the developing countries when launching the reports. A starting point could be mailing the agency's publications catalogues to university departments running academic programmes in urban and regional planning, geography, housing, public policy analysis, public administration and others.

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Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

CONSULTANT ON EVALUATION OF UN-HABITAT'S FLAGSHIP REPORTS

1.	Project Title	Global Research Network for Flagship Reports
2.	Functional Designation	Consultant on Evaluation of UN-HABITAT's Flagship Reports
3.	Executing Unit	UN-HABITAT Policy Analysis, Synthesis and Dialogue Branch
4.	Type of Contract	SSA
5.	Duration of assignment	1.5 Months
6.	Dates	Between 16 February and 30 April 2004
7.	Remuneration	Lump sum equivalent to 1.5 months at D1 level

A. Background

Monitoring and reporting priorities relevant to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda fall into three broad, though not mutually exclusive, categories: firstly, monitoring urban conditions and trends, including progress towards realization of Habitat Agenda and United Nations Millennium Development targets on slums, water and sanitation; secondly, improving understanding of emerging urban conditions and issues in a globalizing and urbanizing world; and, thirdly, evaluating the effectiveness of past and present urban policies adopted by Governments and their partners in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

The major instrument for monitoring the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development targets on slums, water and sanitation is the Global Urban Observatory, set up by UN-HABITAT during the early 1990s. UN-HABITAT's research-based flagship reports, the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and the *State of the World's Cities* report (published biennially) are the main vehicles for global reporting and dissemination of the results of both monitoring and substantive research. General Assembly Resolution 32/114 mandated UN-HABITAT to prepare periodically the Global Report on Human Settlements as a vehicle for monitoring and reporting on human settlements conditions and trends. In addition, General Assembly Resolution 55/194 encouraged "… Member States and Habitat Agenda partners to provide support for the preparation of the Global Report on Human Settlements and the State of the World's Cities Report on a biennial basis so as to raise awareness on human settlements issues and to provide information on urban conditions and trends around the world."

The research on substantive issues and policies required for the preparation of the flagship reports is based on partnership with research institutions all over the world. To date, such partnerships have been formed around each issue of the Global Report on Human Settlements, with the composition of each partnership changing from issue to issue and from topic to topic. Each issue represents a synthesis of the results of extensive and global review of relevant research. Both the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and the *State of the World's Cities* report have also benefited from research activities carried out within UN-HABITAT for different work programme purposes, especially for the preparation of technical publications (policy and strategy

reviews, as well as planning and management guidelines and manuals) covering both shelter and broader sustainable urban development issues. Results of research carried out during the implementation of technical cooperation programmes and projects (such as baseline surveys, as well as monitoring and evaluation reports) have also been fed into the flagship reports.

So far, four issues of the Global Report have been published. The first, released in 1986, reviewed general human settlements conditions and trends by region (including population growth and urbanization, shelter, water supply and sanitation, solid waste disposal, transport, environment and regional development and decentralization). It then focused on key policy areas requiring the attention of national and sub-national governments (national development and its relationship to human settlements, resource mobilization, institutional needs for human settlements development, settlements management, building materials and construction technologies, management of land resources and shelter delivery). The second issue of the Global Report was published in 1996 and was titled "An Urbanizing World". This issue also reviewed general human settlements conditions and trends by region and then examined global policy responses, focusing on policies for sustainable human settlements development, especially the enabling approach and partnerships. The third issue of the Global Report was published in 2001 and was titled "Cities in a Globalizing World". As reflected in its title, this issue reviewed the impacts of globalization on cities, highlighting emerging patterns of inequality within cities and new policy responses in the areas of governance, shelter delivery and urban environment and infrastructure. The 2003 and fourth issue of the Global Report, titled *The Challenge of Slums*, focuses on urban slums, as one of the most visible manifestations of urban poverty. This issue assesses, globally, the total number of slum dwellers and their distribution by region and reviews, within the context of general human settlements conditions and trends, the nature and extent of slums (including their relationship with urban poverty), as well as policy responses to the problem of slums.

The State of the World's Cities Report is much more recent and only one issue has so far been published, in 2001 (though the very first issue was submitted as an official document to the UN Commission on Human Settlements in 1999 - now the Governing Council of the UN Human Settlements Programme - and was never published). The first published issue was essentially based on data from two key programmes of UN-HABITAT, i.e. Urban Indicators and Best Practices. The report first reviewed urbanization trends by region, then focused on review of urban conditions, emerging policies and best practices covering five main topics: urban shelter, urban society, urban environment, urban economy, and urban governance. The 2004 issue of the Report will focus on *Globalization and Urban Culture*, including urban cultural transformation and integration, metropolization, international migration, transparency in urban governance and the impact of urban civil society.

In an attempt to improve the process of the preparation of its flagship reports by involving research institutions and researchers from all over the world, UN-HABITAT has recently decided to establish a long-term Global Research Network for the Flagship Reports. The purpose of the Network would be to provide a global mechanism for channelling expert advice to UN-HABITAT on the substantive content of its flagship reports and, generally, to increase global collaboration and exchange of

information on human settlements conditions and trends and on progress in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

More specifically, such a network would, firstly, ensure adequate regional coverage in the global review of human settlements conditions and trends and of progress achieved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Millennium Development Goals. Secondly, it would enable UN-HABITAT to be continually in touch with researchers and institutions engaged in cutting-edge research on human settlements issues. Thirdly, the Network would also enable UN-HABITAT to have access to the results of past and on-going human settlements research all over the world as inputs to the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and the *State of the World's Cities* report.

The proposed Global Research Network, which is envisaged to be in place by the end of May 2004, would be long-term and would be involved in the formulation and execution of the research required for each issue of the flagship reports. As both reports are published every two years, the idea is to have a lead period of at least three to four years during which the research necessary for each issue of the reports would be carried out. For each issue, relevant institutions and researchers from within the Network would be invited to carry out the necessary research. Topics that have been selected for future issues of both the *Global Report on Human Settlements* (2005 and 2007) and the *State of the World's Cities* report (2008 and 2010) are: "Financing Shelter and Urban Development" and "Urban Safety and Security".

B. Assignment

Reporting to the Chief of the Policy Analysis, Synthesis and Dialogue Branch, the consultant, who shall work as part of a two-person team, will carry out an independent/external evaluation of UN-HABITAT's flagship reports, i.e. the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and *The State of the World's Cities*. In pursuance of this, the consultant will be required to undertake the following specific tasks:

1. Assess the adequacy of UN-HABITAT's overall flagship reports strategy, within the context of United Nations-wide policy on flagship publications, covering the following main issues: number of reports; frequency of publications; and choice of topics.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the practices and processes so far followed in the preparation of the flagship reports, covering the following main issues: inputs by expert consultants; use of institutional contracts; inputs by UN-HABITAT staff; global dialogue; and the proposed Global Network for Flagship Reports.
3. Assess the quality and relevance of the issues of the flagship reports so far published, including the following aspects: policy relevance of the reports so far published; validity and legitimacy of the reports' contents, conclusions and recommendations; adequacy of statistics; gender awareness and analysis; and organization and presentation of the reports.
4. Assess the dissemination and impact of the flagship reports, covering the following key issues: the media/publicity strategy for the reports; launching of the reports; dissemination and sales; and reader/user response.
5. Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the resources devoted by UN-HABITAT to the preparation of the flagship reports, in comparison to practices in other UN

and also within the Bretton Woods agencies, including: core professional staff; support staff; and budgetary allocations.

6. Make recommendations with respect to all of the above-mentioned issues, that is: overall strategy for the flagship reports; practices and processes in the preparation of the flagship reports; quality and relevance of the flagship reports; dissemination and impact of the flagship reports; and adequacy and effectiveness of resources for the preparation of the flagship reports.

The consultant will, at the commencement of the consultancy, be required to submit a methodology proposal showing how the above tasks would be addressed. The methodology proposal should, among other things, indicate how member states of the United Nations, research institutions and non-governmental organizations (i.e. the main target audience of UN-HABITAT's flagship reports) would be consulted.

C. Outputs and Delivery

The consultant will be required to deliver a written evaluation report. The report should be between 40 and 50 pages in length (on A4 paper and in single spacing), including illustrations, tables and references. A draft of the report should be submitted as an e-mail attachment to UN-HABITAT by 26 March 2004. A final draft of the report addressing all comments and observations made by UN-HABITAT on the draft report should be submitted by 30 April 2004.

D. Expenses and Payment of Consultancy Fee

1. UN-HABITAT will pay the cost of air tickets and DSA for travel related to this assignment. Such travel shall be approved in advance by UN-HABITAT.
2. 50% of the consultancy fee shall be payable to the consultant upon submission of the draft evaluation report to UN-HABITAT.
3. The remaining 50% of the fee shall be payable to the consultant upon submission, and approval by UN-HABITAT, of the final draft of the evaluation report.

E. Qualification Requirements

Education	A PhD in a discipline relevant to human settlements development, such as urban and regional planning, urban and regional economics, human geography, urban sociology and architecture.
Knowledge and skills	Substantial knowledge of and demonstrable research skills in human settlements related issues, as evidenced by relevant and significant refereed publications.
Experience	The consultant should have a minimum of 15 years of relevant research and publication experience.
Languages	Excellent command of the English language, both written and spoken.

Appendix 2: Persons Interviewed by the Consultants

A.   UN-HABITAT, Nairobi

Don C.I. Okpala, Ag. Director, Monitoring and Research Division; Chief, Urban
        Economy and Finance Branch
Dr. Nefise Bazoglu, Chief, Monitoring Systems Branch
Dr. Jay H. Moor, Special Advisor to the Executive Director; Chief, Strategic Planning
        Unit
Dr. Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, Chief, Policy Analysis and Dialogue Branch
Iouri Moisseev, Human Settlements Officer, Policy Analysis Branch
Joseph Maseland, Human Settlements Officer, Regional Office for Africa and the Arab
          States, Regional & Technical Cooperation Division
Dr. Christine Auclair, Human Settlements Officer, Monitoring and Research Division
Jane Nyakairu, Chief, Information Services Section, Office of the Deputy Executive
        Director
Zahran Hassan, Media Liaison, Media and Press Relations Unit, Office of the Executive
        Director

B.   UNEP, Nairobi

Munyaradzi Chenje, Africa Regional Coordinator, Division of Early Warning and
        Assessment (DEWA)

C.   Committee of Permanent Representatives, Nairobi

H.E. Bernd Braun, Ambassador, Federal Republic of Germany
H.E. Rosalinda Valenton-Tirona, Ambassador, Philippines
John Virgoe, British High Commission

D.   Other Stakeholders

David Satterthewaite, International Institute of Environment and Development, London,
        United Kingdom
Prof. Patrick Wakely, Development Planning Unit, University College, London
Jonathan Sinclair Wilson, Earthscan Publications, London, UK (now Jones and Jones)

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Distributed to Selected Respondents

Dear Sir/Madam,

We have been commissioned by UN-HABITAT in Nairobi to conduct an evaluation of its "flagship" reports, the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and the *State of the World's Cities*. We would like to obtain the views of readers/users on the three most recent reports: (a) the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2001*, (b) *Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* and (c) the *State of the World's Cities 2001*. We are therefore requesting your support in the evaluation by completing the following brief questionnaire on the three reports.

Please send your completed questionnaire to Lovemore Zinyama by email at lmz@africaonline.co.zw or fax (number 263-4-793 054) by Friday 21 May 2004.

If you require further information on the evaluation, please contact us or Dr Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza at UN-HABITAT (email: naison.mutizwa-mangiza@unhabitat.org).

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Philip Amis: Birmingham, UK (email: P.Amis@bham.ac.uk)

Prof. Lovemore Zinyama: Harare, Zimbabwe (email: lmz@africaonline.co.zw)
_____

Organisation to which you are attached	
Country of residence	

A. *GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS 2003: THE CHALLENGE OF SLUMS*

1. We would like to know whether or not you have read this report (tick the appropriate box)

Have read the Executive Summary only	
Have only glanced through the report	
Have read some of the chapters	
Have read the report extensively	
Have seen but not read the report*	
Have not seen/not aware of the report*	

    * If you have not seen or not read the report, please proceed to review the other two reports.

2. How do you assess the report with respect to the following?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Un-decided
Relevance for policy makers					
Relevance for researchers and academics					
Range of issues/content in the report					
Depth of analysis of issues					
Adequacy of statistics					
Appropriateness of recommendations and conclusions					
Sensitivity to gender issues					
Structure/organisation of the report					
Presentation of the report					
Publicity and dissemination of the report					

3. For which category of readers/users do you think the report is most appropriate? (tick up 2 boxes)

Policy makers in central/local government	
Academics and researchers	
NGOs	
Donor organisations	
Other stakeholders (please specify)	

4. Any other comments on this report?

5. Any comments on the flagship reports in general?

B. ***GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS 2001: CITIES IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD***

1. We would like to know whether or not you have read this report (tick the appropriate box)

Have read the Executive Summary only	
Have only glanced through the report	
Have read some of the chapters	
Have read the report extensively	
Have seen but not read the report*****	
Have not seen/not aware of the report*****	

   * If you have not seen or not read the report, please proceed to review the other two reports.

2. How do you assess the report with respect to the following?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Un-decided
Relevance for policy makers					
Relevance for researchers and academics					
Range of issues/content in the report					
Depth of analysis of issues					
Adequacy of statistics					
Appropriateness of recommendations and conclusions					
Sensitivity to gender issues					
Structure/organisation of the report					
Presentation of the report					
Publicity and dissemination of the report					

3. For which category of readers/users do you think the report is most appropriate? (tick up 2 boxes)

Policy makers in central/local government	
Academics and researchers	
NGOs	
Donor organisations	
Other stakeholders (please specify)	

4. Any other comments on this report?

C. *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CITIES 2001*

1. We would like to know whether or not you have read this report (tick the appropriate box)

Have read the Executive Summary only	
Have only glanced through the report	
Have read some of the chapters	
Have read the report extensively	
Have seen but not read the report*****	
Have not seen/not aware of the report*****	

* If you have not seen or not read the report, please proceed to review the other two reports.

2. How do you assess the report with respect to the following?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Un-decided
Relevance for policy makers					
Relevance for researchers and academics					
Range of issues/content in the report					
Depth of analysis of issues					
Adequacy of statistics					
Appropriateness of recommendations and conclusions					
Sensitivity to gender issues					
Structure/organisation of the report					
Presentation of the report					
Publicity and dissemination of the report					

3. For which category of readers/users do you think the report is most appropriate? (tick up 2 boxes)

Policy makers in central/local government	
Academics and researchers	
NGOs	
Donor organisations	
Other stakeholders (please specify)	

4. Any other comments on this report?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Please email the completed questionnaire to lmz@africaonline.co.zw by Friday 21 May 2004.