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**Dialogue on the urban poor: improving the lives of slum-dwellers**

**Abstract**

Urban poverty in developing countries is typically concentrated in slums and other informal settlements. If nothing is done to check the current trend, the number of people living in dire conditions will rise from one billion today to 1.6 billion by the year 2020. These figures call for a revision of Target 11 of Millennium Development Goal No. 7, which aimed at “significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020”. The trends in the world’s slum population in absolute and relative terms are diverse; although North Africa and the Latin America-Caribbean regions are in relatively favourable positions, there are prospects for improvement in Asia. The bulk of the world’s slum-dwellers, in both relative and absolute terms, will be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa within the next decade or so. Instead of going against the grain of demography and urbanization, the objective must be to prevent the slum population from living in inadequate conditions through the provision of planned and serviced urban land before the slums are formed. The remedy recommended by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) – security of tenure, including an end to forced eviction – requires a fair amount of political will, as do the improvements in water and sanitation services called for under Target 10 of MDG 7. UN-HABITAT is actively involved in this area through its water programmes for African and Asian cities. These programmes boost institutional and human resources with the aim of creating a favourable environment for new investments in water and sanitation. The Water and Sanitation Trust Fund of UN-HABITAT has the same objective but has a specific focus on pro-poor water and sanitation investment and on the use of overseas development assistance in this sector.

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## Discussion points

- Urban poverty in developing countries is, typically, concentrated in slums and other informal settlements;
- Target 11 of MDG 7, which aimed at “improving, significantly, the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020”, is out of touch with ongoing trends and needs upgrading;
- Sub-Saharan Africa will be home to most of the world’s slum-dwellers within the next decade or so;
- The objective must be to prevent the slum population from living in inadequate conditions, through the provision of planned and serviced urban land *before* the slums are formed;
- In this respect, UN-HABITAT and its programmes that encourage security of tenure and deal with problems of water and sanitation (Target 10 of MDG 7) have major roles to play.

## Dialogue on the urban poor

“A simple way of beginning to rid cities of slums should be an expression of strong political will.” – First World Urban Forum, Nairobi, 2002.

### I. Improving the lives of slum-dwellers: Are we on the right track?

1. During the first World Urban Forum, participants in the discussion on the topic “cities without slums” recognized that “urban slums and informal settlements are fast becoming the most visible expression of poverty worldwide, the expressions of an increasing urbanization of poverty”. Their discussions on the best way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals produced a number of important recommendations, such as:

(a) While it is essential that the concerns of current slum-dwellers should be addressed, it is also important to curb the growth of new slums by providing affordable and appropriate new land developments;

(b) Forced evictions and bulldozers are clearly no part of the pursuit of the worthy objective of cities without slums;

(c) One simple way of beginning the job of ridding cities of slums would be by an expression of strong political will with a formal statement on the part of the authorities prohibiting forced and unnegotiated evictions.

2. Two years later, the situation may not have drastically changed for slum-dwellers – but has the message been heard? Have ideas moved on and have hearts and minds changed? Is there any evidence that major stakeholders are engaging in the right type of policies? Are participants in the discussion of the urban poor really able to consider these issues squarely and directly? As well as including some of the major issues involved in the Millennium Development Goals on slums and access to water and sanitation, the present paper sets out to formulate the terms of the debate.

#### **A. Slums: how bad is the situation?**

3. People living and often working in slums and irregular unplanned settlements constitute a growing proportion of the urban population, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In the cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America, slum-dwellers make up over 40 per cent of the total population. If we do nothing to check the current trend, experts expect the number of people living in slums and informal settlements to rise from about 1 billion today to 1.6 billion by the year 2020.

#### **B. How should we understand Target 11 of Millennium Development Goal 7?**

4. If Target 11 of MDG 7, namely, “improving, significantly, the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020”, is to be reached, it will only mean that we have attended to less than 7 per cent of the world’s urban poor population. So out of proportion is this number to the real efforts required to improve the lives of slum-dwellers that it seems to be more akin to what may be termed an “organized retreat” than to a step forward. Critics have already dubbed the target as the “misunderstanding of the millennium”. Can this figure be challenged and changed? The United Nations task force responsible for implementation of the Goals has already suggested rephrasing the wording of the target as follows (new text in italics): : “By 2020, reducing by half the number of slum-dwellers by improving *substantially* the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers *while stopping new slum formation.*”

5. Let us elaborate on the general figures referred to in section A above. The slum indicators developed by UN-HABITAT show that one third of the world’s urban population consists of slum-dwellers. Moreover, four out of ten inhabitants in the developing world are informal settlers. They experience all kinds of poverty-associated deprivation including inadequacies in housing, nutrition, education, health and other basic services, which the better-off take for granted.

6. To reiterate, today approximately one billion people are classified as slum-dwellers. In the developing world, 43 per cent of the urban population live in slums, compared to 6 per cent in developed regions and 78.2 per cent in the least developed countries. In 2001, Africa had the largest proportion (60.9 per cent) of slum-dwellers among its urban population. The Asia-Pacific region came next with 42.1 per cent and Latin America and the Caribbean ranked third with 31.9 per cent. In relative terms, Oceania had the lowest proportion, with 24.1 per cent of slum-dwellers among its urban population.

7. In absolute numbers, the Asia-Pacific region dominated the global picture with a total of 554 million informal settlers in 2001 (excluding China), accounting for 63.3 per cent of the total slum population in the developing world. Africa had a total of 187 million slum-dwellers (or 21.39 per cent of slum-dwellers in the developing world); Latin America and the Caribbean had 128 million (or 14.6 per cent) and Oceania only 5 million.

8. It is generally assumed that the majority of slum-dwellers in the developing world are concentrated in capital cities. A rule-of-thumb calculation in low-income economies shows that the larger the city, the higher the proportion of slum-dwellers. That said, however, a selective review of those African and Asian countries where the incidence of slums is high (i.e., more than 80 and 50 per cent, respectively) reveals that slums can proliferate both in the primary conurbation and in intermediate cities.

## **C. First priority for attainment of Target 11 of Millennium Goal 7: security of tenure**

### **1. Insecurity of tenure**

9. Insecurity of tenure further exacerbates poverty. Slum-dwellers lack any legal document or formal agreement with the authorities that gives them the right to reside in the settlement. In some cities, people have lived in informal settlements for generations and have come to feel secure because they have never experienced the threat of eviction. In such cases, informal settlements have essentially become established and residents enjoy de facto security of residential tenure. While de facto tenure may reduce the threat of eviction, it does not provide the rights associated with the formal, de jure tenure. In cases where the authorities do not recognize informal settlements, residents are denied access to basic urban services. Slum-dwellers are innovative and often adopt highly creative survival mechanisms, but at a high cost.

10. Insecurity of residential tenure has many negative consequences. Large sections of the world's urban population are not entitled to basic human rights. In addition to housing rights, they are denied the right to organize, to make claims on public resources or to participate in decision-making processes that have a direct impact on them. They are denied the right to citizenship and almost denied the right to exist at all. Because slum populations live close to water mains, schools and health centres, it is assumed they have better access to these amenities than rural dwellers have. But as those populations find out, proximity does not necessarily mean access.

### **2. Things that should not be done**

#### **(a) Forced evictions**

11. Many of those living in slums and informal settlements are under constant threat of eviction without due process, and do not enjoy the relative security of de facto tenure. The Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) has documented over 7 million persons in 60 countries who were forcibly evicted from their homes in 2001–2002. These evictions are often accompanied by severe violence, with victims on many occasions detained, arrested, beaten, tortured and, in some cases, even killed. Women undoubtedly suffer most from forced evictions, as do other marginalized groups such as the aged, the disabled, migrants and children. The phenomenon of so-called “street children” is clearly linked to the practice of forced evictions.

12. The practice of forced evictions constitutes a gross violation of human rights as set out by international standards; specifically, the right to adequate housing. Although more than 120 United Nations Member States are signatories to the Covenant on Political, Cultural and Economic Rights, which unambiguously declares the rights of persons to be protected from forced evictions, many of those States do not comply with those international agreements to which they have committed themselves.

13. The central failing in the practice of unlawful forced eviction is that it does not work. Evicted populations, be they owners or tenants, tend to return to the same location, or an adjacent area. If the authorities seek to get rid of people in the hope that they will just pack up and go back to where they came from, then the use of eviction is clearly ineffective.

### **3. Things that should be done**

#### **(a) Provision of security of tenure**

14. There is no quick-fix solution to ensure that all residents of a city enjoy security of tenure. This is especially so in cities with large slums and those experiencing intense, rapid expansion of irregular, unplanned settlements such as is the case in most of sub-Saharan Africa. Rapid regularization of informal settlements may even have detrimental consequences for slum-dwellers if measures are not taken to ensure a sustainable process; such measures could include improving incomes, strengthening legal instruments and enhancing the institutional framework.

15. Legislation against the practice of forced evictions is essential for security of tenure. Laws that prohibit eviction and demolition without due legal process provide a legal basis for the protection of citizens and the accountability of public officials. As slum-dwellers throughout the world are painfully aware, however, legislation does not necessarily ensure full protection and accountability and should not be considered as an end in itself. Legislation must be backed up with measures to educate public officials, the courts and private developers in the knowledge that eviction is an unacceptable practice. These measures could include advocacy, campaigning and related awareness-raising activities. For advocacy to be successful there must be determination on the part of the Government, strong, organized movements of the urban poor and partnership between those movements and the local authorities.

16. UN-HABITAT has launched its Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, which takes up this issue as part of a rights-based approach. Many countries have adopted legislation that not only protects people from forced eviction, but also ensures that they be relocated as a last resort and are entitled to affordable shelter and basic services (Brazil, India, the Philippines and South Africa are a few examples). There should be a strong emphasis on the protection of women's rights in this process. In this regard UN-HABITAT, in its campaign, is highlighting the issue of women's equal rights to ownership and inheritance. Several countries have already included such rights in their legislation.

17. Governments must neither be complacent nor condone unlawful evictions, but should rather take responsibility and seek to uphold the rule of law. In municipalities where governance structures are weak or government bodies fail to assume their responsibilities, urban poor households must assert themselves. To reiterate, they must organize, make people aware of their rights, and increase their capacity to engage with government bodies with a view to improving transparency and accountability.

#### **(b) Fighting evictions through monitoring and suggesting alternatives**

18. In line with the principles of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, UN-HABITAT has recently established an advisory group on forced evictions to monitor, identify and promote alternatives to forced evictions. This is an important initiative that should help ensure that the poor are not arbitrarily evicted. The ability of the advisory group to offer alternatives to forced evictions will be a measure of its success. It will also report, periodically, on urban populations facing forced eviction and will propose counter-measures. As the terms of reference of the group specify, "It is then the role of the UN to remind our partners of their obligations and see that they fully comply with those international agreements to which they have committed themselves." The group's remit also includes fighting for the rights of rental tenants who are often subject to unfair and illegal evictions by unscrupulous landlords.

#### **(c) Access to affordable land as the next step**

19. Informal settlements exist and expand because of inadequate provision of land, speculative investment patterns, a tendency towards over-regulation, and a regulatory framework that is at best indifferent and – more likely – hostile to the needs of the urban poor.

20. In addition to legislation and advocacy, designed to curb unlawful forced evictions, Governments can ensure security of tenure by promoting flexible land tenure arrangements. Some countries, for example Namibia and Sri Lanka, are doing this through the use of block titles to entire sections of informal settlements. These block titles enable city authorities to incorporate parts of the city that were previously excluded and begin the process of registering, and eventually titling, individual

holders of land within these parts of the city.

21. Governments can also pass into law other flexible alternatives such as permanent or temporary occupancy rights, lease agreements, community land trusts, adverse possession rights, anti-eviction rights, etc. Flexible tenure systems are favourable to tenure security because they do not place unrealistic demands on local governments.

22. Registration of land holdings and the establishment of a municipal cadastre including informal settlements are other important components of any additional approach to securing tenure.

**(d) Slum upgrading: only part (although an important one) of the process**

23. The task of “significantly improving the lives of slum-dwellers” can be achieved by supporting those slum-dwellers to buy, rent or build better quality accommodation. Once tenure is secure, slums can be improved in a sustainable manner for the greatest benefit of the residents. Conversely, legal tenure is a regular feature of upgrading programmes. In many informal settlements, the brokering of agreements between original landowners and residents can be a complex and conflicting process. Thailand’s Community Organizations Development Institute has provided specific support for this process, paving the way for the country’s ground-breaking nationwide slum-upgrading programme.

**(e) Examples showing the effectiveness of slum upgrading in mobilizing the urban poor around sustained saving schemes**

24. The programmes in force in India, Namibia and the Philippines are founded on community-based savings and credit schemes which support employment opportunities as well as helping their members to cope with sudden drops in income or sudden needs for expenditure. The Community Organizations Development Institute in Thailand supports community-managed revolving funds that can provide grants or loans to members.

25. In many countries there are examples of new housing and settlements developed by organizations formed by low-income dwellers based around community-managed savings and credit schemes. The Global Campaign for Secure Tenure is currently documenting examples from Asia (Cambodia, India, Philippines and Thailand) as well as from Kenya, South Africa and Latin America that show impressive progress in community mobilization and great improvement in the lives of slum-dwellers.

## **II. Slum dwellers: Who are they? Where are they? What happened over one decade?**

### **A. Global trends**

26. More than 200 million new slum-dwellers were added to the world’s cities in the decade between 1990 and 2001 (table 1), a 28 per cent increase in absolute numbers. The ratio of slum-dwellers to urban residents remains unchanged at an average of one to three, but the magnitude of the problem has grown. Demographic projections suggest that, by 2020, there will be 1.4 billion slum-dwellers, most of them in developing countries. This number far exceeds the Millennium Goal of 100 million slum-dwellers.

27. These figures are not surprising given population increases and the irreversible drive towards urbanization, which means that there will be large numbers of people living in slums. Consequently, the aim is neither to curb urban migration nor to check natural population increases in urban settlements. Instead, the policy measures suggested here take as given the dynamics of demography and urbanization. The objective must therefore be to improve the lot of the slum population by providing planned and serviced urban land before the actual formation of slums.

28. Most of the increases in the number of slum-dwellers occurred in developing countries, although the overall share of the slum population in cities declined from 47 to 43 per cent during the decade. The

only marked reductions took place in North Africa and East Asia. In 2001, sub-Saharan Africa still had the highest proportion of the world's slum-dwellers, at 72 per cent, and South Asia the highest absolute number. Forecasts are that, by 2020, sub-Saharan Africa will rank first in both relative and absolute numbers.

29. Despite the vast increase in numbers of slum-dwellers, their proportion of the total urban population has remained the same since 1990, as the overall population has increased at the same pace as the urban population. Since, however, Target 11 of MDG 7 is defined in absolute terms, it is more relevant to focus on the size of the slums rather than their proportion in terms of urban population.

#### **B. Sub-Saharan Africa: Rapid growth of slum population**

30. In 2001 as in 1990, 72 per cent of the region's urban population was living in slums, implying rapid growth (66 per cent) in slum population. Indeed by 2001 the slum population had reached 166 million or nearly two-thirds more than in 1990 (101 million).

31. In most sub-Saharan African countries, more than 80 per cent of the urban population live in slums. Some settlements in Ethiopia, Chad and the Central African Republic could be called slum-cities. Indeed, over the last decade of the 20th century, the slum population in the region has increased by 4.53 per cent per year on average, meaning that there will be a two-fold increase by 2005. This is a significant increase in the region's contribution to the world slum population, which it will dominate by 2020. In 1990, only 14 per cent of the world's slum-dwellers resided in the region. This figure rose to 18 per cent in 2001 and will probably have reached 27 per cent by the year 2020. By that time, one out of every four slum-dwellers will be living in sub-Saharan Africa, or the same proportion in a more populous south-east Asia.

32. Although the proportion of slum-dwellers in cities is not expected to increase rapidly, the slum population will continue to grow because in many sub-Saharan countries (including Nigeria, Mauritania and Mali) the urbanization process is not yet completed. The prevalence of civil strife and unfavourable terms of trade for Africa's cash crops and industrial products will continue to draw poor peasants or refugees into cities. Despite all this, the region can boast a number of success stories. Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe have made significant strides in participatory slum upgrading, although their proportion of slum-dwellers has not radically changed. In post-apartheid South Africa, the massive provision of low-cost housing has helped reduce both the numbers of slum-dwellers and their proportion of the total urban population (from 46 to 33 per cent).

#### **C. North Africa: current decline in slum populations**

33. North Africa is the only region where the absolute number of slum-dwellers and their proportion in the urban population decreased significantly. The majority of the population now lives in urban areas (52 per cent in 2001, as against 49 per cent in 1990), of which 28 per cent live in slums compared to 38 per cent in 1990 (tables 1 and 3). North Africa's urban population is set to increase slowly while the slum population will decrease over time. Whereas by 2020 the slum population of sub-Saharan Africa will quadruple if nothing is done, in North Africa it is expected to contract to 95 per cent of its 1990 level. The adoption of best practices in slum upgrading in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco has contributed to the region's good performance against Target 11 of MDG 7. Over a single decade, Egypt and Morocco have reduced the proportion of slum-dwellers in their urban populations from 57 to 42 per cent and from 37 to 33 per cent respectively. Tunisia has also reduced both the absolute and relative numbers of slum-dwellers, and performed well in general poverty elimination policies.

#### **D. Asia: lower proportion, higher numbers**

34. In all the subregions of Asia the proportion of slum-dwellers decreased, even if marginally, between 1990 and 2001, but absolute numbers have increased.

35. Eastern Asia (excluding China) and western Asia are the most urbanized regions (77 per cent and 65 per cent respectively in 2001). In 1990, they also had the lowest proportion of their population living in slums (25 per cent and 32 per cent respectively). In the Republic of Korea, programmes

supplying mass low-cost housing to new urban settlers paid dividends. Over the same decade China reduced the proportion of slum-dwellers from 44 to 38 per cent and absolute numbers by as many as 40 million. Urban planning and population controls, combined with high-growth policies and provision for the urban poor contributed to the turnaround.

36. In south Asia, the proportion of slum-dwellers shrank from 64 to 59 per cent, but absolute numbers increased by 43 million. India, not surprisingly, contributed heavily to the overall trend in the region. While the proportion of slum-dwellers in India's urban population decreased from 61 to 56 per cent between 1990 and 2001, the actual numbers grew from 131 to 158 million. India's housing savings programmes in Mumbai, Calcutta and other cities have proved to be a success and are already being emulated by slum-dwellers and local governments in the region, including Nepal and Cambodia. India's problem, however, is one of scale; even the most effective programmes do not seem to target more than a small fraction of the slum population.

37. In south-east Asia, the proportion of slum-dwellers shrank from 37 to 28 percent in a decade, but actual numbers increased by nearly 8 million. Compared with the increases in south Asia, this represents only a negligible addition to the world slum population. The most dramatic decline, nearly tenfold, was experienced in Thailand over a single decade, thanks to very high growth rates and a determined commitment (starting with the King himself) to eliminate slums.

38. In west Asia, the number of slum-dwellers increased by approximately 12 million over the past decade, while their share in the total urban population increased marginally from 34 to 35 percent. In a region largely made up of small countries, the slums of Turkey, Yemen and Iraq contributed substantially to the total increase.

39. Overall, Asia will continue to house a majority of the world's slum-dwellers for years to come, as the sheer size of the continent defeats strategies that are normally effective in rehabilitating and upgrading slums.

#### **E. Latin America and the Caribbean: rampant urbanization and shrinking slums**

40. Latin America and the Caribbean is a highly urbanized region, with 76 per cent of the population now living in urban areas, compared with an average 74 per cent in developed countries. The region's proportion of slum-dwellers, however, remains moderate and even decreasing (32 per cent in 2001 against 35 per cent in 1990), although the absolute number of slum-dwellers increased by 17 million. This implies a growth in the slum population of 15 per cent during that period, or an annual average of 1.28 per cent (table 2).

41. The proportion of slum-dwellers in Brazilian cities declined from 45 to 37 per cent, although physical numbers rose by two million. São Paulo and other cities have enforced excellent participatory budgeting and slum-upgrading programmes. Similar trends prevail in Mexico, with decreasing proportions but slightly increasing numbers of slum-dwellers. In Colombia, the decrease in proportion of slum-dwellers is not significantly steep but both local and central authorities have made great strides in preventing slum formation. In Bogotá, effective city development and management strategies (including a strong network of innovative public transportation and other infrastructure investments) have eased the integration of slum-dwellers. The capital has also been very effective in implementing forward-looking low-income housing plans, complete with housing credit schemes and serviced land. One reason why the Latin American region performs better when dealing with slum formation is that slums have been in existence there for four or five decades, whereas in the sub-Saharan countries this is a more recent phenomenon.



### III. Monitoring and implementation of the Target 10 of Millennium Development Goal 7 for water and sanitation

#### A Global trends

42. One of the most significant urban changes has been the unprecedented growth in urban population. Between 1950 and 2000, the world's urban population increased more than fourfold and now, close to 50 percent of the world's population live in urban centres. Levels of urbanization in certain regions increased dramatically between 1950 and 2000, as shown in table 1 below. For instance, from 15 to 37 per cent in Africa and from 17 to 37 per cent in Asia. Particular subregions had even greater changes. Western Asia, for example, went from 27 to 65 percent over these 50 years and eastern Europe rose from 39 to 68 percent. Meeting the water and sanitation needs of fast-growing cities can be extremely challenging.

**Table 1: Distribution of the world's urban population by region, 1950–2010**

Region	1950	1970	1990	2000*	Projection for 2010
<b>Urban population (millions of inhabitants)</b>					
World	751	1,357	2,286	2,862	3,514
Africa	32	82	197	295	426
Asia	244	501	1023	1376	1,784
Europe	287	424	521	534	536
Latin America and the Caribbean	70	164	313	391	470
Northern America	110	171	213	243	273
Oceania	8	14	19	23	26
<b>Percentage of population living in urban areas</b>					
World	29.8	36.8	43.5	47.2	51.5
Africa	14.7	23.1	31.8	37.2	42.7
Asia	17.4	23.4	32.2	37.5	43.0
Europe	52.4	64.6	72.1	73.4	75.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	41.9	57.6	71.1	75.4	79.0
Northern America	63.9	73.8	75.4	77.4	79.8
Oceania	61.6	71.2	70.8	74.1	75.7
<b>Percentage of the world's urban population living in:</b>					
World	100	100	100	100	100
Africa	4.3	6.1	8.6	10.3	12.1
Asia	32.5	37.0	44.8	48.1	50.8
Europe	38.3	31.3	22.8	18.7	15.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	9.3	12.1	13.7	13.7	13.4
Northern America	14.6	12.6	9.3	8.5	7.8
Oceania	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8

Source: Statistics drawn or derived from United Nations (2002), *World Urbanization Prospects; 2001 Revision; Data Tables and Highlights*, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, ESA/P/WP/173, New York, 181 pages.

43. Meeting the competing demands made by commercial, domestic and industrial users puts great pressures on freshwater resources. Many cities have to go ever deeper into groundwater sources and ever farther to distant surface water sources, at costs that are ultimately unsustainable in both economic and environmental terms. About 1.2 billion urban dwellers rely on groundwater and 1.8 billion on surface water sources. They are increasingly in competition with the rising demands for water from peri-urban agriculture and rural regions.

44. Many urban residents, especially the poor, have intermittent water supplies or even none at all, and no sanitation. For the urban poor, this lack of access to safe water and basic sanitation causes widespread ill-health that further limits their productive capabilities. Between 1.5 and 2 million children still die each year from water and sanitation-related diseases, and many more are debilitated by illness, pain and discomfort – primarily from diarrhoeal diseases, intestinal worms and various eye and skin diseases and infections related to insufficient water for washing. Although insufficient and unsafe water supplies and sanitation affect people of all ages, children’s health and well-being is particularly compromised. Approximately 84 percent of the global burden of diarrhoeal disease is experienced by children under five; 74 percent of the health burden from helminth (worm) infections affects children between 5 and 14.

**Table 2: Mortality rates for infants and young children in the informal settlements of Nairobi**

Location	Neonatal mortality rate	Post-neonatal mortality rate	Infant mortality	Under five mortality rate	Prevalence of diarrhoea*	Prevalence of diarrhoea with blood*
<b>Nairobi informal settlements (average)</b>	30.4	60.9	91.3	150.6	30.8	11.3
<b>Nairobi informal settlements in:</b>						
<b>Central</b>	24.5	43.5	68.0	123.1	34.6	13.6
<b>Makadara</b>	34.1	52.2	86.3	142.7	20.4	40.0
<b>Kasarani</b>	19.2	58.2	77.4	124.5	30.8	9.2
<b>Embakasi</b>	111.1	52.5	163.6	254.1	27.6	9.1
<b>Pumwani</b>	16.3	56.3	72.6	134.6	26.7	12.5
<b>Westlands</b>	23.1	79.9	103.0	195.4	30.4	12.2
<b>Dagoretti</b>	0.0	35.0	35.0	100.3	26.0	10.5
<b>Kibera</b>	35.1	71.1	106.2	186.5	36.9	9.8
<b>National**</b>	28.4	45.3	73.7	111.5	17.1	3.0
<b>Rural**</b>	30.3	45.7	75.9	113.0	17.1	3.1
<b>Nairobi**</b>	21.8	16.9	38.7	61.5	12.9	3.4
<b>Other urban**</b>	16.9	39.8	56.6	83.9	19.4	1.7

\* Percent of children under three years of age with watery diarrhoea and diarrhoea with blood during the two weeks preceding the survey.

\*\* Based on the 1998 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey.

Source: APHRC (2002), *Population and Health Dynamics in Nairobi’s Informal Settlements*, African Population and Health Research Center, April, 256 pages.

45. Ironically, the urban poor groups not only pay a higher proportion of their total incomes for water and sanitation than higher income groups but they often pay much higher prices per litre for water and for access to sanitation – and this is so even when provision is much worse than for richer groups. Table 3 below shows differentials within cities in the cost of water. Water costs are particularly high for most of those that use water vendors – with the price for water from vendors ranging from 10 to 100 times the unit price for house connections.

**Table 3: Examples of differentials in the price of water within cities**

	Price of water (US \$)	
	150 litres	600 litres
<b>Kampala:</b>		
Kiosks	0.23-1.1	0.9-4.2
Bicycle water vendors	0.81-1.6	3.24-6.5
<b>Lima:</b>		
Water trucker	0.36	1.44
Utility	0.042	0.17
<b>Average price in East African urban areas:</b>		
Vendors	0.7	2.7
Households that lack piped water	0.3	1.2
Households with piped connection	0.15	0.6
<b>Dar-es-Salaam:</b>		
Standpipes drawing from mains	0.23	0.9
Handcarts delivering to homes	0.5-1.13	2.1-4.5

Source: UN-HABITAT (2003), *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Actions for Global Goals*, p. 71.

46. Many urban water systems are poorly maintained, and it is not unusual for half the water to be lost in distribution. At the same time, revenue collection for much of the rest is poor, further restricting operation, maintenance and investment funds for expansion.

47. New ways are being explored of responding to rapid change and creating a sustainable urban environment, especially through improved management and pricing of services greater participation of community groups and women, and creative partnerships between public and private sector enterprises. The success of these initiatives, however, is dependent on the institution of better management of urban water, otherwise the degradation and depletion of freshwater resources will threaten the very livelihood of cities and the sustainability of economic and social development.

## **B. UN-HABITAT monitoring of Target 10 of Millennium Development Goal 7**

48. The need for large-scale expansion of water supply and sanitation networks, as well as for better water management, deserves special attention from the international community for two main reasons. One lies in the relationship between water supply and sanitation, on the one hand, and human health, overall economic development, and equity, on the other. The second reason is that there is a common understanding enshrined in many international human rights instruments that people have shared responsibilities to one another. At the Millennium Summit the world's Governments agreed to halve "the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by the year 2015". The monitoring of progress towards achieving this target is essential for maintaining and putting into practice the political commitment to provide water supply and sanitation both on the part of the international community and of national Governments.

49. As a member of the United Nations Millennium Task Force, UN-HABITAT has carried out the first ever assessment of the state of water and sanitation in the world's cities. This comprehensive and authoritative report, *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, published during the third World Water Forum, held in 2003 in Osaka, also suggests how the problems can be tackled. The report sets out, in detail, the extent of the inadequacies in the provision of water and sanitation. It describes the impact on health and economic performance, showing the potential gains of remedial action; analyses the immediate and underlying causes of inadequate provision; identifies information gaps affecting the allocation of resources; outlines the consequences of further deterioration; and explains, finally, how resources and institutional capacities – public, private and community – can be used to deliver proper services through integrated water resource management.

## C. Areas for priority action

50. In the report, UN-HABITAT highlights three critical areas for priority action:

(a) First, policy-makers must wake up to the true magnitude of the urban water and sanitation crisis. At present, statistics often do not reflect the reality of the situation. In the cities of many developing countries official statistics show that 96 per cent of urban residents have access to so-called “improved” sanitation. The real picture is often very different: in many such cities, a single public toilet may be used by as many as 150 persons per day. The typical slum-dweller in the South is forced to rely on private water vendors and to pay five to seven times more for a litre of water than the average North American. The impact of these service deficiencies on public health and the economy can be very costly to a country in the long run;

(b) The urban water crisis is essentially a crisis of governance – of weak policies and poor management – rather than a crisis of scarcity, at least in the short term. Cities need sound policies and the political determination to back them up; stronger institutions and trained managers to run them; a responsible private sector and an enlightened public sector that can work hand-in-hand; and finally, a public that is aware of the problem and communities that are prepared to participate actively, drawing upon the vast resources of civil society. In short, the cities need an enabling environment, which would allow all stakeholders to pool their resources together to meet their needs;

(c) The majority of cities in developing countries experience an alarming decline in per capita investment in water and sanitation. The annual flow of resources to this sector will have to increase all round – at the very minimum they should be doubled – if the Millennium Development Goal targets are to be reached. One significant obstacle in the way of increasing the flow of investment in water and sanitation has been the reluctance of authorities to put in place realistic pricing policies that could stimulate conservation, discourage waste and ensure cost recovery.

51. The report also draws attention to many inspiring examples, from all over the world, of innovation and ingenuity at the local level. Many of these cases are located at a very modest level but could be expanded to provide city-wide solutions and be replicated elsewhere. The analytical work in this report and its central finding – that local solutions are crucial to achieving global goals – provide a valuable input to the work of the Millennium Task Force.

## D. Target 10 of Millennium Development Goal 7 and the UN-HABITAT programmes

52. As part of the implementation of Target 10 of MDG 7, UN-HABITAT is involved in regional water and sanitation programmes aimed at increasing coverage and water and sanitation services to the urban poor through practical projects. Examples of these programmes are described below.

### 1. “Water for African Cities” programme

53. This is the first comprehensive effort to improve water management in African cities. Together with UNEP, UN-HABITAT launched this in 1999 with a \$2.25 million grant from the United Nations Foundation. The programme soon made a significant impact in Africa through its awareness campaigns, advocacy and educational initiatives. The World Bank and the Governments of Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden supported the programme in subsequent years. With a strong focus on demand, the programme has established a flexible framework for regional cooperation and inter-agency collaboration, using the modest core funds to attract total outlays of more than \$10 million in the seven participating countries: Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia. Enhanced institutional and human resources have created a favourable environment for new investments in water and sanitation. The United Republic of Tanzania has now joined the scheme and several other countries expect to participate soon. The second phase of the programme was launched at the Pan-African Partnership and Implementation Conference for the Water Sector and will serve 16 countries.

## 2. “Water for Asian Cities” programme

54. As several Asian countries were eager to build on the experience of African cities, UN-HABITAT launched the “Water for Asian Cities” programme during the World Summit for Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. With support from the Asian Development Bank and the Government of the Netherlands, the programme will initially provide \$10 million in grants and \$500 million in so-called “fast track” credit to improve investment in the water sector in Asian cities, specifically geared towards the poor. The programme will focus on strengthening political commitment and raising public awareness on water and sanitation issues, and will put in place wide-ranging demand management measures in the participating countries to improve the productivity of existing investments. In several Asian countries, including China and India, work has already commenced. Regional consultations in the Mekong region and central Asia will begin shortly. Ten ministers of education attending a meeting in Brunei Darussalam recently adopted an action plan for value-based water education in Asian cities.

## 3. Water and Sanitation Trust Fund

55. The purpose of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund is to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal target for 2015. Its role is to create an enabling environment for investment in water and sanitation in the cities of developing countries (specifically geared towards the poor), thus providing a vehicle to improve significantly the volume and effectiveness of official development assistance investment in this sector.

56. The Fund supports cities and communities with a proven commitment to work for the promotion of investment in water and sanitation specifically targeted at the poorest of the poor, especially in Africa. Special consideration is also given to initiatives that could reduce the burden of women and children in gaining access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

57. The Fund supports the following major activities:

- (a) Mobilizing political will through advocacy and exchange of information;
- (b) Public awareness-raising on the social, environmental and economic aspects of water and sanitation;
- (c) Supporting the development of information and knowledge-based networks of city managers, non governmental organizations and research institutions for the sharing of information on best practices;
- (d) Creating a new ethic among children and community through water, sanitation and hygiene education;
- (e) Developing urban water management frameworks to facilitate investment targeted at the poorest of the poor;
- (f) Strengthening regional, country and city-level capacities for integrated water and sanitation management;
- (g) Demonstrating and guiding fresh and innovative approaches to service provision for the urban poor; and
- (h) Monitoring progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals for urban water and sanitation.

The Trust Fund primarily supports existing programmes. As it gathers momentum, it will implement new programmes in response to initiatives proposed by partner countries. The Trust Fund has received support from Canada, Norway and Poland.

