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and poverty reduction in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries**
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Governance and planning for slum upgrading in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries: lessons learned from global experience

I. Challenge

1.   In 2003, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) devoted its 2003 *Global Report on Human Settlements* to the challenge of slums. A key message of the report was that slums and urban poverty are not just a manifestation of population explosion and demographic change, or even of the vast, impersonal forces of globalization. Slums must be seen as the result of failed policies, poor governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, dysfunctional land markets, unresponsive financial systems and a fundamental lack of political will. Each of these failures adds to the load on people already deeply burdened by poverty and also constrains the enormous opportunity for human development that urban life offers.

2.   Contrary to common perceptions, various victimization surveys have revealed that crime impacts most on the urban poor and most vulnerable groups often living in squalor and stigmatized neighbourhoods. Such stigmatization breaks the bonds of tolerance and solidarity needed for the harmonious coexistence of urban citizens. There exists a vicious circle between the various types of risks and vulnerabilities that affect slum-dwellers: unemployment, informality and limited access to urban services are almost always associated with environmental degradation and high vulnerability to natural disasters, and these factors are combined in most cases with high incidences of crime and violence, and the weak presence of State institutions.

3.   In the *Challenge of Slums* report, it was pointed out that strategies to deal with slums need to consider much more than the provision of housing and physical services. They need to consider, among other things, questions of governance and political will; of ownership and rights; of social capital and access; and of planning, coordination and partnerships between all the various partners in urban activities. These observations resonate with overviews made by development agencies; such are confirmed by the New Zealand international aid and development agency, studies on governance in the Pacific and similar overviews relating to the situation in the Caribbean. The situation in Africa is not that different.

II. Response

4.   Tackling safety and good governance issues in slums, as with other areas, requires a holistic approach that combines spatial, institutional and social aspects. For instance, social prevention of crime covers the entire range of social programmes targeting groups at risk, ex-prisoners, stigmatized

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neighbourhoods or communities and some forms of crime, such as domestic violence or violence in schools. Social prevention is not simply the implementation of a social programme (for example, aiming to reduce or eradicate poverty), but rather implies an added value in terms of efforts to combat insecurity. In other words, in slums as in other areas, it is necessary for an explicit quest for greater security to include social integration and the improvement of the community's economic welfare.

5.   The following principles have been identified with a view to achieving safety as part of a well-governed city through urban planning, design and management:

   (a)   Integration and desegregation;

   (b)   Participation and ownership;

   (c)   Conflict and risk management.

A.   Advocacy

6.   *Awareness and political commitment:* Awareness is the first step in taking action. Governments come to recognize the existence of slums and understand the need to act because they are persuaded by the benefits of the intervention. Examples outside of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries can be referred to as best practices.

7.   For example, in the early 1990s, the Government of Egypt declared the country's slums as emergency response areas that led to the creation of an emergency budget plan for slum upgrading. Since then, the country has reduced by more than 22 per cent the proportion of slum-dwellers nationwide. Sri Lanka acknowledged the difficult conditions of urban residents living in slums, shanties and tenements and the environmental hazards linked to their poor neighbourhoods. As early as the 1970s, the country enacted legislation and housing programmes that it has since pursued during four decades of pro-poor policies. Only in the past 15 years the country has reduced from 25 to 10 per cent the incidence of slum-dwellers.

8.   In all these successful cases, awareness and advocacy are a first step towards a strategy of action that can contribute to raise high-level political and government commitment, influencing lead institutions to take clear responsibilities for implementation.

B.   Policy

9.   *Policy reforms and institutional strengthening:* It is undoubtedly more frequent to find countries and cities where priority needs and actions are not translated into policies or where policies are not supported by budgets. It is also common to see unclear and inconsistent policies that are subject to changes in leadership, Governments and development agendas, or lack clear focus or shared agreements. There are, however, some countries that are making a difference by undertaking progressive pro-poor reforms to improve the tenure status of slum-dwellers or to improve their access to basic services and better housing.

10.   Successful policy reforms share similar attributes; they have targeted investments, pro-poor focus and a clear legislation, have a long-term vision and are normally the result of consensus. The *Challenge of Slums* report has identified two types of policy responses to slum upgrading: on the one hand, stand-alone interventions where informal settlements are the main objective of the intervention, or a special component of a broader response, but still labelled as a slum operation; on the other hand, larger responses, often within national or regional frameworks of poverty alleviation and national development plans, where slum operations appear not as specific actions, but as a set of interventions that cover directly or indirectly some aspects of slums, such as access to water and sanitation.

11.   *Harnessing the drivers of change:* Fortunately, in a number of countries and cities in the developing world the number of slum-dwellers is declining, as are slum growth rates. Governments are taking slum-related issues seriously, thereby making a real difference in the lives of slum-dwellers.

12.   Policy evidence drawn from the experience of 23 countries analysed by UN-Habitat in 2005–2006 and another survey of 52 cities from 21 countries conducted by UN-Habitat and the Cities Alliances demonstrates the formula of success, which can be summarized as follows: Governments recognize the existence of slums; make commitments backed by innovative actions or bold policy reforms; adopt planning measures; implement effective actions that they check and revise, set up conditions to learn from the experience; and replicate the adopted system at the country level. In simple terms, Governments take the responsibility squarely on their shoulders by committing, planning and acting, checking, learning and acting again on a massive scale.

13.   Policy and institutional analysis of responses to survey questionnaires demonstrates that six key elements can explain the reasons for positive change in this strategy. When Governments harness these elements together the possibility of success is higher. In some cases, however, responses are limited to two or three of these elements. These ingredients are as follows:

(a)   Awareness and commitment;

(b)   Policy reforms and institution strengthening as already described above;

(c)   Effective policy implementation;

(d)   Setting up monitoring and evaluation systems;

(e)   Harnessing the drivers of change;

(f)   Scaling up of actions.

C.   Programmes

14.   *Effective policy implementation*: "Delivery" is the key word in effective implementation, but this supposes the existence of a sound policy that is transmitted into practice. There are, however, serious and often neglected issues about how policies and programmes can be effectively implemented locally and what needs to be in place for this to occur. Frequently, there is a plethora of initiatives from various agencies that appear disconnected rather than coherent. There are also "too many players and at the same time none", as a senior official from Malawi qualified government interventions. In various locations institutional relations are dysfunctional or disabling, rather than productive and empowering; national and local Governments lack clear financial, legal and technical criteria for intervention.

15.   In addition to this sort of organizational turbulence, there is a lack of experts and technicians not only in local administrations but also at the ministerial level; thus "decisions are taken by persons with limited knowledge in the area", as one of the respondents to the questionnaire said. Public consultations are, in many countries and cities, merely formalities, quite often sporadic and without clear methods that ensure their replication.

16.   Effective policy implementation in fact starts upstream at the level of decision-making through processes that are transparent and involve key stakeholders; it continues with the definition of priorities and the setting of targets that are realistic and commonly agreed, and are presented as part of a common vision; it is followed by an implementation strategy that has clear financial and human resources allocated; and it concludes by producing the intended results or outcomes. Fortunately, some countries and cities are performing well in reducing and preventing the existence of slums following these implementation steps at various levels. In general terms these countries and cities are implementing policies in a transparent, pro-poor and well-coordinated manner.

17.   *Setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms:* Although the practice of monitoring and evaluation of urban policies and programmes is not new, few countries and cities are systematically evaluating them, and when they do do so, the evaluation process rarely goes beyond the traditional ex-post approach. Since monitoring and evaluation is not part of the policy cycle, it is difficult for many countries to identify successful elements of previous policies; it is also difficult to improve policy and programme implementation, to learn from the process and even to identify the impact of policies and programmes.

18.   Fortunately, countries and cities are demonstrating strong commitment to evaluation. They are creating or revising objectives, outputs and targets and are also setting benchmarks, helping them to increase the potential for effective policy formulation and implementation. It is therefore unsurprising that these countries and cities are more successful in the delivery of basic service and housing improvements. For example, South Africa is making concerted efforts to develop long-term action plans for slum upgrading and urban poverty reduction by setting clear targets and establishing monitoring systems and institutions to ensure that these policies are implemented.

D.   Capacity-building

19.   *Scaling up actions*: In most countries, financial, human and institutional resources are unavailable to support large-scale efforts for slum upgrading. The revenue base is extremely weak and other stakeholders do not consider implementing these policies and programmes priorities. There are also weak human and technical resources of the various implementing institutions. When some Governments embark upon scaling-up activities, they do not assess the potential to do so, or do not implement modifications to existing policies and programmes that they wish to replicate. Frequently,

they scale up some programmes too quickly, without the necessary proof that the new approaches genuinely lead to other positive benefits and results. In some cases, local or regional policies and stakeholders inhibit large-scale initiatives that have some potential for success simply because they come from other political orientations or because they do not fit with their own interest. Successful scale-up operations require political will on the part of policymakers and other stakeholders. They also require leadership and commitment and the capacity to bring together various people and institutions.

20. Once Governments are aware that pilot or preliminary interventions are functioning well, they need to document, define and refine successful approaches. Countries that are succeeding in this field are setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that enable them to determine the effectiveness of their approach at any time in the project cycle. Countries such as Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and Thailand have developed a vision to scale up from the beginning of the project, using a method that has been designed, pre-assessed and tested for large-scale coverage. Other countries decided to expand slum upgrading and prevention operations once they were aware that the initial results were successful.

21. For the scaling-up process to be sustainable, Governments need to support institutional and system development to meet new requirements that result from a larger volume of operations. They also need to develop partners' capacity to implement the programme, particularly by strengthening local authorities' organizational responses to carry out the works. Contrary to common perceptions, up-scaling is not a matter of replicating good results, but of replicating the approach and the method and expanding partners and funding mechanisms. This entails building consensus among all participants in the programme.

22. Lastly, success in scaling up slum upgrading interventions requires multifaceted responses merging various products and tools and targeting various social groups. This may include, for instance, government interventions for self-help construction programmes; financial mechanisms to enable slum-dwellers to have access to domestic private capital; social housing policies and financial packages that collect a levy on real estate development with a clear pro-poor orientation in its use. Often through well-tailored capacity-building activities these approaches, tools and skills can be internalized and ease the development of adequate responses.

III. Key issues, players and roles for effective implementation of good governance approaches in the context of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme

23. *Policies that work in managing slum growth:* Success in managing slum growth is not accidental. It requires strategies, policies and procedures that are clear, concise and easy to follow. It also requires innovation in institutional performance and inclusive policies. Unfortunately, in many countries and cities in the developing world managing slum growth has seen limited success and in some cases it has proved a failure. Normally, it is easier to explain fiasco in policy responses than the reason for success.

24. The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme aims at strengthening urban management and governance systems. This is to be achieved through three components of the approach:

(a) Through a thematic analysis: assessing the urban governance and safety sector and measuring good governance based on indicators;

(b) Through applying participatory urban planning approaches: by undertaking consultations, mini-group consultations with innovative tools and facilitation techniques

(c) Through involving various urban stakeholders and establishing ownership of the programme activities at the city, national and regional levels.

25. Throughout the process participation and ownership are key. Measures should be taken at the local level, including within slums, so that the dynamics of a participatory approach are fully used to strengthen ownership by local communities and help to create sustainable results. Planning by itself does not ensure the achievement of neither sustainable urbanization nor sustainable urban safety, but needs to also include governance and management. Civic engagement and participation is critical to responding to needs. For example, community participation in crime prevention initiatives fosters a sense of solidarity, and collective social development, providing a more sustainable response to insecurity.

26. The Programme also includes a conflict and risk management component. The prevention approach seeks to reclaim space and offers tools to mediate in conflicts of uses and functions in slums

and other areas**,** and also advocates for inclusive approaches to the management of urban spaces and neighbourhoods, which are based on consultations between the local authorities, formal and informal sector users and communities. Respect for by-laws, coupled with innovative participation-oriented management approaches, can assist in controlling conflict, managing risk, and, for example, in a maximized use of personal, semi-public and public spaces.

27.   The Programme includes a strong capacity-building component relating to urban decision makers at the local and national levels, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, in addition to academics and the private and informal sector, with a view to contributing to better civic engagement and participation, participatory decision-making and conflict management.

28.   In both phases, national institutions implement programme activities and thereby become empowered and linked to all urban stakeholders. Often the process results in an established urban forum in which participatory governance approaches are applied in the long run, experiences exchanged and possibly scaled up.

IV. Conclusion

29.   Notwithstanding the alarming trend in the proliferation of slums worldwide, positive experiences have demonstrated success in either arresting their further expansion or even eliminating them. Common among the approaches used are awareness and political commitment; sustainable systemic reforms and the institutional strengthening; and an effective capacity to implement policy objectives at all levels. Other factors include embedding a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation, a framework for scaling up, in addition to the incorporation of a safety component that is holistic, participatory and has an ability to mediate conflicts of uses and functions.

30.   The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme incorporates these lessons learned and accords participating countries the opportunity to exchange experiences acquired at all levels and tackle urban poverty reduction in a holistic and participatory way while practising good governance approaches.

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