

Chapter 1: Development Context and the Millennium Agenda

The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003

Revised and updated version (April 2010)

The original version of this chapter and the full version of the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* is available at www.unhabitat.org/grhs/2003

This chapter was revised and updated in April 2010. The revision was necessitated by the need to incorporate revised operational definition of slums and update slum statistics and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) monitoring framework. It also provides an update on the progress made towards meeting the MDG targets.

In 2008, UN-Habitat adopted a revised methodology for defining slums. This, together with achievements made towards the MDG targets, has changed trends and number of slum households throughout the developing countries. With the new slum household classifiers, developed countries satisfy none of the conditions used to define slum households; hence this revised chapter provides slum data for developing countries only. A revised MDG monitoring framework, with four new targets was agreed upon by member states at the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2005. This chapter is based on statistics from this new framework, which became effective on 15 January 2008.

Disclaimer: This revised chapter has not been edited by the United Nations.

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Chapter 1: Development Context and the Millennium Agenda¹

The 20th century was a time of great change, and the greatest of those changes was in the numbers of people on the globe and where they lived. Between 1950 and 2010, humankind has endured its most rapid expansion, from 2.5 billion to 6.9 billion people. Sixty three per cent of this gain has been in urban areas, particularly in the urban areas of the developing regions, where the urban population has increased nearly seven times in only 60 years. Humanity is only about half way through this great transformation to urban living. Between the years 2010 and 2040, the global urban population will increase by more than 2 billion while rural populations will decline with almost 300 million people. The greatest impact will be felt in the developing regions and nowhere more so than throughout Southern and South-Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Between the years 2010 and 2025, many large cities in Asia and Africa will have increased their population by more than 50 per cent.²

The huge increase in urban populations amounts to a crisis of unprecedented magnitude in urban shelter provision. Every year, the world's urban population is increasing by about 70 million, equivalent to seven new megacities. These people all need to be provided with shelter, with employment and with urban services. The stretched capacity of most urban economies in developing countries is unable to meet more than a fraction of these needs, so that the informal sector is providing most of the new employment and housing in environments that have come to be known as informal settlements or slums, where more than half of the population in many cities and towns of developing countries are currently living and working.

Cities without Slums?

It has been estimated that one third of the urban population in developing countries today do not have access to adequate housing, and lack access to safe water and sanitation. These people live in overcrowded and unserviced slums, often situated on marginal and dangerous land. They lack access to public clean water, and have to pay a premium to private providers. Their waste not only remains untreated, it surrounds them and their daily activities and affects their health, especially their children's.

This situation is not new. Since humanity first began to live in cities, the problems of inadequately serviced and overcrowded urban housing, in which the poorer members of urban society live, have been recognized as undesirable aspects of urban living. The more developed parts of the world have already undergone their primary urbanization, albeit at a smaller scale and at a considerably slower pace.

The crisis that these changes engendered in society in Europe and elsewhere from the 17th to the 19th centuries has been documented in a huge literature describing slum conditions possibly worse and more degrading than those currently prevailing in the developing regions, accompanied by more profound political and social unrest.

Although modern technology, improvements in social attitudes and in organization, and the existence of a large pool of wealth in the developed countries should make it possible to weather the remainder of this global challenge under better conditions than prevailed in the first phases of urbanization, this is, in fact, not happening. The situation is being exacerbated by two factors – an almost complete lack of planning or preparation for urban growth in most parts of the world, and a rapid increase in both inequality and poverty, which is compounded by policies intended to improve growth, but which have mostly not done so because they have tried to fight the key urbanization dynamic rather than work with it.

As this report will show, it has been possible for a very few countries to urbanize without the wholesale expansion of slums and informal employment that is the norm. While this has tended to occur in political situations that are not replicable, they do show that it is possible, and that directed policy and planning can substantially improve the situation, particularly where it is applied consistently over an extended period. What is happening in most cases is the reverse: piecemeal, undirected or impractical policies that cannot be implemented or which, in practice, benefit only those in power.

The failure of governance

An important message of this report is that slums and urban poverty are not just a manifestation of a population explosion and demographic change, or even of the vast impersonal forces of globalization. Slums must be seen as the result of a failure of housing policies, laws and delivery systems, as well as of national and urban policies.

The most important factor that limits progress in improving housing and living conditions of low-income groups in informal settlements and slums is the lack of genuine political will to address the issue in a fundamentally structured, sustainable and large-scale manner. There is no doubt that the political will to achieve long lasting and structured interventions constitutes the key to success, particularly when accompanied by local ownership and leadership, and the mobilization of the potential and capacity of all the stakeholders, particularly the people themselves. Lessons from several countries underscore the importance and the fundamental role of sustained political will and commitment in improving or reducing slums.

The failure of policy is at all levels – global, national and local. At the global level, policies that have weakened national governments without any countervailing central control appear to be leading to an unrestrained globalization that is accommodating greater inequality and marginalization. At the national level, liberalization and the sectoral fragmentation of policy and analytical and institutional frameworks have failed to support the urban-rural and cross-sectoral dynamics that are critical both to sustainable economic growth and the distribution of its opportunities. At the local level, a startling lack of capacity to cope with, or manage, the situation has left many slum citizens in a no-man's land of illegality, insecurity and environmental degradation.

The *Global Report on Human Settlements 2001* was concerned largely with globalization and its effect on urban settlements. Much of the economic and political environment in which globalization has accelerated during the last two decades of the 20th century has been instituted under the guiding hand of a major change in economic paradigm – that is, neo-liberalism. Globally, these policies have re-established a rather similar international regime to that which existed in the mercantilist period of the 19th century when economic booms and busts followed each other with monotonous regularity, when slums were at their worst in Western cities, and colonialism held global sway. Nationally, neo-liberalism found its major expression through structural adjustment programmes, which have tended to weaken the economic role of cities throughout most of the developing regions and placed emphasis on agricultural exports, thus working against the primary demographic direction moving all of the new workers to towns and cities. These policies, as much as anything else, have led to the rapid expansion of the informal sector in cities, in the face of shrinking formal urban employment opportunities.

A case can be made that the primary direction of both national and international interventions during the last two decades of the 20th century has actually increased urban poverty and slums, increased exclusion and inequality, and weakened urban elites in their efforts to use cities as engines of growth. This has been partially counterbalanced by the neo-liberal recognition of self-help as an effective strategy, and a slow reduction in the persecution of the urban poor in their attempts to create a better life and environment.

It is a paradox that the greatest global challenges – urbanization and the growth of poverty, including the feminization of urban poverty – are increasingly being managed at the local level. In those parts of the developing regions that are already substantially urbanized, cities of all sizes are faced with demands and responsibilities for which they are mostly ill equipped and ill resourced. Policy and legal frameworks, regulatory authority, planning authority, human skills, revenue base, accounting and accountability are as much in demand as raw land. Lip service is paid to decentralization without providing the means to make it work. The nuts and bolts of urban governance have become a central issue of development, though generally lacking support and direction from higher levels of government where the resources actually lie.

Ultimately, the poor suffer most from the lack of governance and political will, as weak urban governance meets the impact of growing inequality, corruption and imbalances in resource allocation. The problem stems from a failure of national and city governments to recognize that their primary reality is one of rapid urbanization; that their primary task is to ensure that jobs, shelter and services are provided to the new generations of urban dwellers who are their national future; or even where the problem is recognized, to act in a concerted and systematic way to ensure that slum living and illegality is not the fate of the vast majority of new urban residents.

Institutional and legal failure

The urban poor are trapped in an informal and ‘illegal’ world – in slums that are not reflected on maps, where waste is not collected, where taxes are not paid and where public services are not provided. Officially, they do not exist. Although they may reside within the administrative boundary of a town or city, their local authority may well be a slumlord or mafia leader, rather than city council staff, who often no longer attempt to assert their jurisdiction or even enter the slums. As illegal or unrecognized residents, many of these slum dwellers have no property rights, nor security of tenure, but instead make whatever arrangements they can in an informal, unregulated and, in some respects, expensive parallel market.

In the majority of cases, slum dwellers exist outside of the law where they live and work. They are not able to access most of the formal institutions of society, and lacking a legal address they are often unable to access social services such as subsidized health care or education, which are largely used by the more affluent. Governments, in many cases, refuse to provide them with services on the grounds that their settlements are not legal, even though these may have been in place for over 50 years and comprise a majority of the population. Rather than helping them or trying to provide for them, governments actually hound them and restrict them in their attempts to provide the fundamentals of life – shelter and livelihood – and they live in a state of permanent insecurity and illegality.

The institutions that are failing slum dwellers are not just those of government and law, but also the private and commercial systems. Slum dwellers’ ‘life chances’ are low; they are rarely able to obtain formal-sector jobs because of their lack of social capital, including lack of education, lack of patronage and contacts, and a general exclusion from ‘regular society’ that is mediated by signifiers of social class and a lack of empowerment. Slum dwellers are also not able to access regular sources of finance to develop their own businesses. Banks do not usually have branches in slums, and if they do, the lack of legally registered collateral will exclude all but the most well-off slum dwellers from obtaining loans. Slum entrepreneurs are forced to draw on informal sources of finance at exorbitant rates and very short repayment periods.

The lack of access to finance is at its most critical in housing provision. Conventional housing finance is usually only available to higher-income groups, resulting in the highly segmented housing markets that separate informal and formal housing markets throughout the developing regions. Housing is usually available – often with high vacancy rates – at the high-quality, high-cost and high-income segment of the market. Meanwhile, the low end of the market is extremely tight, with low or no vacancy rates and a progressive increase in densities as more people occupy each available room.

The poor, low- and even middle-income majority of the population in developing countries cannot afford a loan for even the least expensive, commercially built housing units. This is why so much slum housing is built by landlords – but many of these people are often not particularly well off and cannot obtain loans at normal rates for new dwellings in slum neighbourhoods, restricting rental supply. The remaining low- or middle-income owner-occupier households build their own houses progressively over long periods, primarily starting from a makeshift base, as money slowly becomes available to permit them to extend their simple dwellings (presuming that land is available to do so). Their squatter or partly legal housing has been the main target of public harassment.³

The Millennium Development Agenda

In the face of these and other global challenges, world leaders met at the special Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000 to establish a series of goals for humanity in the 21st century, based on the key policy documents from the series of major United Nations conferences held during the previous decade, including *Agenda 21* and *The Habitat Agenda*.⁴ The summit's Millennium Declaration also outlined a wide range of commitments in human rights, good governance and democracy. At the General Assembly session following this Millennium Declaration, a Road Map was established with a set of 8 specific global goals (the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs) and 18 targets (MDG targets) for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. These were to be measured through 32 indicators (the MDG indicators).

The Millennium Development Goals, targets and indicators – as developed in 2000 – were used to measure progress towards the MDGs up to 2007. As resolved by the member states at the Sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly held in 2005, and recommended, by the Secretary-General's report of 2006,⁵ the MDG monitoring framework was revised in 2007. The new framework consists of 8 specific global goals (the MDGs) and 21 targets (MDG targets). These will be measured by 60 indicators (the MDG indicators) (see Box 1.1).⁶

The MDGs provide a framework for the entire United Nations system to work coherently towards common ends. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) will help to ensure that the MDGs remain at the centre of those efforts. The United Nations is on the ground in virtually every developing country and is uniquely positioned to advocate for change, to connect countries to knowledge and resources, and to help coordinate broader efforts at the country level.

UN-Habitat has been given responsibility for operationalizing, collecting and measuring some of the MDG targets and indicators. This is a complex task given that the assigned indicators include those that are possibly the most difficult to define and operationalize, and which are not currently part of the statistical system used by international agencies or national statistical offices.

The most important target from the point of view of this report is Target 7.D: *By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers,*⁷ which builds upon the Cities Alliance's Cities without Slums initiative. The Cities Alliance was launched in 1999 by the World Bank and UN-Habitat, and has since expanded to 26 members, including leading global associations of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, governments and multilateral agencies.⁸

Within the context of several MDGs competing with each other for the attention of policy-makers, and the world's limited financial resources for international development, it is an important political signal from the international development community to have adopted the MDG target on slums. No matter how top-down and prescriptive global goals may seem, they have proven to have enormous impact both at global and local levels because they provide a mission and unifying objective. Thus, 'measurement of universal indicators' is not just a technical exercise, but also a major political tool, in obtaining consensus and direction.

Box 1.1: Scope of Millennium Development Goals and Targets

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- A. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.
- B. Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.
- C. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- A. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- A. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- A. Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- A. Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.
- B. Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- A. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- B. Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.
- C. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- A. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- B. Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.
- C. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- D. By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- A. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non discriminatory trading and financial system. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction both nationally and internationally.
- B. Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota-free access for the least developed countries exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous Official Development Assistance (ODA) for countries committed to poverty reduction.
- C. Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small islands developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly).
- D. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.
- E. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- F. In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

Source: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Attach/Indicators/OfficialList2008.doc>.

The MDGs, targets and indicators of importance to this report, together with a brief assessment of their progress, include:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day

Indicator 1.1: Proportion of population with income below US\$1.25 a day

The proportion of people living in extreme poverty – defined by the World Bank as average per capita consumption of US\$ 1.25 a day or less – in all the developing regions, declined from 42 per cent in 1990 to 25 per cent in 2005.⁹ The absolute number of people living in extreme poverty fell from about 1.8 billion in 1990 to about 1.4 billion in 2005.¹⁰ However, this substantial reduction in poverty masks significant regional differences. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty fell from 57 per cent to 51 per cent and from 49 per cent to 39 per cent respectively.

In Eastern Asia there was a dramatic fall in poverty rates where the proportion of people living in extreme poverty fell from 60 per cent in 1990 to 16 per cent in 2005. Some 475 million people were lifted out of extreme poverty, thanks primarily to rapid economic growth in China. During the same period South-Eastern Asia reduced its extreme poverty rate further from 39 per cent to 19 per cent. The region is thus on track towards meeting the MDG target of reducing the 1990 poverty rates by half by 2015.

During the 1990–2005 period the proportion of people living in extreme poverty fell in all developing regions of the world except in Western Asia. The increase in average incomes since the year 2000 has enabled many people to lift themselves out of poverty and has reduced the depth of poverty of those who remain poor, with the current projections suggesting overall poverty rates in the developing regions will fall further. Overall, the progress towards meeting this target is slow, but if current trends are maintained, the developing regions are on track to achieve this MDG target. The recent slowdown in the global economy, as well as high food prices may, however, leave these regions and many countries short of the target or even reverse the favourable trends.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Indicator 7.8: Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source

During the 1990 to 2006 period, significant progress towards access to improved water sources was achieved. Eighty-seven per cent of the global population now uses improved drinking water sources, as compared to 77 per cent in 1990.¹¹ In the developing regions, improved drinking water coverage rose from 71 per cent in 1990 to 84 per cent in 2006. During the period, Eastern Asia stood out for increasing its drinking water coverage from 68 per cent to 88 per cent. Despite the improved coverage, Sub-Saharan Africa – home to more than a third of those using unimproved sources of drinking water – is making the slowest progress. During the 1990 to 2006 period, its access to improved water sources coverage improved from 49 per cent to 58 per cent only.

Between 1990 and 2006, 926 million people gained access to improved drinking water sources. At the same time, however, the urban population without improved drinking water sources increased from 107 million to 137 million people, with the majority living in urban areas of the developing regions.

Although rural areas have seen greatest improvements in coverage – from 63 per cent to 78 per cent – compared with urban areas – from 95 per cent to 96 per cent – they remain poorly served, containing 84 per cent of the world population using unimproved sources of drinking water. The overall progress seen in the 1990 to 2006 period indicates that the world is on track to meet this component of the water and sanitation target.¹²

Indicator 7.9: Proportion using improved sanitation facility

Between the years 1990 and 2006, the percentage of the world population with access to improved sanitation increased from 54 per cent to 62 per cent. Some 1.1 billion people in the developing regions gained access to toilets, latrines and other forms of improved sanitation. South-Eastern Asia and Eastern Asia contributed to the highest improvement with 67 per cent and 65 per cent coverage, up from 50 per cent and 48 per cent respectively. Sub-Saharan Africa registered a dismal progress from 26 per cent to 31 per cent. However, looking at absolute population numbers, Southern Asia poses the greatest challenge, with 580 million people still living without improved sanitation. Based on the current trend, the total population without improved sanitation in 2015 will have decreased only slightly since 1990; hence the world will not be able to achieve this component of the MDG water and sanitation target.¹³

Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Indicator 7.10: Proportion of urban population living in slums

During the period 2000–2010, slum dwellers throughout the developing regions have not only experienced significant improvement in their day-to-day lives, but millions have also ceased to be slum dwellers. During the last decade a total of 227 million people in the developing regions moved out of slum conditions. In other words, countries have collectively exceeded the MDG target by at least 2.2 times. Although experienced throughout all developing regions, the success varies. Asia experienced the greatest improvement, with a total of 172 million people moving out of slum conditions, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (30 million) and Africa (24 million).¹⁴

Despite an estimated increase in the world slum population in the last decade, lives of significant numbers of slum dwellers have not only improved, but the proportion of urban population living in slums throughout the developing regions is estimated to have significantly decreased. During this period, the proportion of people living in slums fell from 45.8 per cent to 35.0 per cent in Southern Asia; and from 39.6 per cent to 31.0 per cent in South-Eastern Asia (See Table 1.4). The marked improvement in the two sub-regions is attributed to expanded access to water and sanitation in India and increased use of improved water supplies and sanitation services in China, respectively.¹⁵

Despite reduction in its estimated slum population from 65.0 per cent in 2000 to 61.7 per cent in 2010, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest slum prevalence in the world, with an estimated 200 million people still living in slums, compared to 145 million in 2000. Western Asia is the only developing region where the proportion of slum dwellers increased. During the 2000 to 2010 period, the proportion of slum dwellers in the Western Asia region rose from 20.6 per cent to 24.6 per cent (see Tables 1.3 and 1.4). This was largely attributed to deteriorating living conditions in Iraq and Lebanon after years of conflict and political instability.¹⁶

General improvements have been made in slums worldwide; however the current housing and energy crises may slow progress in developing regions, and, in some cases, reverse the trends.

The world is making important progress toward achieving the MDGs and has many successes on which to build – but it is uneven and too slow. Progress towards the goals is being threatened by sluggish – or even negative – economic growth, diminished economic resources, fewer trade opportunities for the developing countries and possible reductions in aid flows from donor countries. Effects of climate change are becoming more apparent, with increasing negative impacts on developing as well as developed countries.¹⁷ A large majority of countries will reach the MDGs only if they get substantial support – advocacy, expertise and resources – from outside. The challenges for the global community, in both the developed and developing regions, are to mobilize financial support and political will, re-engage governments, re-orient development priorities and policies, build capacity and reach out to partners in civil society and the private sector.¹⁸

Political assessment suggests that progress must be made on a much broader front, otherwise the ringing words of the Millennium Declaration will serve only as grim reminders of human needs neglected and promises unmet.

It was estimated that meeting the MDGs would cost an additional US\$50 billion in annual aid.¹⁹ At the International Conference on Financing for Development, convened in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, the US pledged to increase aid spending by 50 per cent, or US\$5 billion a year, and the European Union promised an additional US\$7 billion a year. Efforts to achieve the MDGs have been further boosted by additional targets and initiatives launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. These include a target to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation, and to match the MDG target of halving the proportion of those without access to clean water. At the Group of Eight (G8), Gleneagles summit in 2005 and at the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly later that year, donors committed to increasing their aid, to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs.

Understanding Slums²⁰

The term ‘slum’ is used in this report and in the MDGs in a general context to describe a wide range of low-income settlements and/or poor human living conditions. These inadequate housing conditions exemplify the variety of manifestations of poverty as defined in the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (convened in Copenhagen in March 1995).

‘Slum’, at its simplest, is ‘a heavily populated urban area characterized by substandard housing and squalor’.²¹ This definition encapsulates the essential characteristics of slums: high densities and low standards of housing (structure and services), and ‘squalor’. The first two criteria are physical and spatial, while the third is social and behavioural. This spread of associations is typical, not just for the definition of slums but also of our perceptions of them. Dwellings in such settlements vary from simple shacks to more permanent structures, and access to basic services and infrastructure tends to be limited or badly deteriorated.

The definition of the term ‘slum’ includes the traditional meaning – that is, housing areas that were once respectable or even desirable, but which have since deteriorated as the original dwellers have moved to new and better areas of the cities. The condition of the old houses has then declined, and the units have been progressively subdivided and rented out to lower-income groups. Typical examples are the inner-city slums of many towns and cities in both the developed and the developing regions.

Slums have, however, also come to include the vast informal settlements that are quickly becoming the most visible expression of urban poverty in developing regions cities, including squatter settlements and illegal subdivisions. The quality of dwellings in such settlements varies from the simplest shack to permanent structures, while access to water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services and infrastructure is usually limited. Such settlements are referred to by a wide range of names and include a variety of tenure arrangements.

Although the term ‘slum’ is considered an easily understandable catch-all, it disguises the fact that within this and other terms lie a multitude of different settlements and communities. However, slums can be divided into two broad classes:

- 1 *Slums of hope*: ‘progressing’ settlements, which are characterized by new, normally self-built structures, usually illegal (e.g. squatters) that are in, or have recently been through, a process of development, consolidation and improvement; and
- 2 *Slums of despair*: ‘declining’ neighbourhoods, in which environmental conditions and domestic services are undergoing a process of degeneration.

Unfortunately, the history of inner-city slum areas in Europe, North America and Australia has shown that, in the absence of appropriate interventions, slums of hope may all too easily yield to despair, a self-reinforcing condition that may be maintained for a very long time. A more detailed typology of slums, including their origins, age and legal status, is given in Chapter 5.

The notion of slums

Since its first appearance during the 1820s as part of the London cant, the term ‘slum’ was used to identify the poorest quality housing and the most unsanitary conditions; a refuge for marginal activities including crime, ‘vice’ and drug abuse; and a likely source for many epidemics that ravaged urban areas – a place apart from all that was decent and wholesome.

During the major part of the 19th century, the word appeared in the written language in quotation marks mostly as ‘back-slum(s)’. At the end of the 19th century, slum meant ‘a street, alley, court, situated in a crowded district of a town or city and inhabited by people of a low class or by the very poor; a number of these streets or courts forming a thickly populated neighbourhood or district where the houses and the conditions of life are of a squalid and wretched character... a foul back street of a city, especially one filled with a poor, dirty, degraded and often vicious population; any low neighbourhood or dark retreat – usually in the plural, as Westminster *slums* are haunts for thieves.’²²

The housing reform movement in England during the 1880s changed a popular word that once described an awkward phenomenon to a general operational concept as ‘a house materially unfit for human habitation’, and made possible the delimitation of ‘slum areas’ on city maps for planning purposes. It became a common word in the Anglophone world, used, for example, in India in order to designate without distinction the *bustees*, *chawls* or *cheris* of Mumbai, Delhi or Chennai.

The 20th century made the word obsolete in contexts requiring more precise and rigorous terms, such as ‘tenement house’, ‘tenement district’ and ‘deteriorated neighbourhood’, because of legislation from the 1890s and 1930s authorizing the eradication of the so-called slums, and imposing technical and legal definitions and standards for such actions. At the same time, the social movement generated new words, such as ‘neighbourhoods’ or ‘communities’, to qualify the designated slums in order to ‘rename’ the socially stigmatized slum areas. As with most euphemisms, alternative terms were eventually subsumed into the argot and served to maintain rather than counteract the negative prejudices against slum dwellers. The polite ‘neighbourhood’ has become shortened to ‘hood’, a badge of youthful ‘attitude’ in Los Angeles.

Today, the catch-all term ‘slum’ is loose and deprecatory. It has many connotations and meanings and is banned from many of the more sensitive, politically correct and academically rigorous lexicons. It can also vary considerably in what it describes in different parts of the world, or even in different parts of the same city.

In developing countries, the term ‘slum’, if it is used, mostly lacks the pejorative and divisive original connotation, and simply refers to lower-quality or informal housing. Large, visible tracts of squatter or informal housing have become intimately connected with perceptions of poverty,

Box 1.1: Terms in use in Manila

If Eskimos have many words for snow, some languages have many words for poor accommodation. In Manila the majority of the housing stock would be regarded as of poor quality and inadequately serviced. 'Slum' has no direct equivalent in the local language, and slums are better referred to in descriptive Tagalog words, such as:

- *iskwater* (a physically disorganized collection of shelters made of light and often visually unappealing materials where poor people reside);
- *estero* (narrower than sewers and associated with a bad smell);
- *eskinita* (alleys that fit only one person at a time);
- *looban* (meaning inner areas where houses are built very close to each other and often in a manner not visible to the general view of the city);
- *dagat-dagatan* (areas frequently flooded);
- "Bedspacer" (subtenant occupants of bunk bedding rental accommodation, four or six to a small room, usually young women who have come to the city looking for work).

lack of access to basic services and insecurity. Terms such as slum, shanty, squatter settlement, informal housing and low-income community are used somewhat interchangeably by agencies and authorities. The coverage of settlement types is even more complex when one considers the variety of equivalent words in other languages and geographical regions:

- French: *bidonvilles*, *taudis*, *habitat précaire*, *habitat spontané*, *quartiers irréguliers*;
- Spanish: *asentamientos irregulares*, *barrio marginal*, *barraca* (Barcelona), *conventillos* (Quito), *colonias populares* (Mexico), *tugurios* and *solares* (Lima), *bohíos* or *cuarterias* (Cuba), *villa miseria*;
- German: *Elendsviertel*;
- Arabic: *mudun safi*, *lahbach*, *brarek*, *medina achouaia*, *foundouks* and *karyan* (Rabat-Sale), *carton*, *safeih*, *ishash*, *galoos* and *shammasa* (Khartoum), *tanake* (Beirut), *aashwa'i* and *baladi* (Cairo);
- Russian: *trushchobi*;
- Portuguese: *bairros da lata* (Portugal), *quartos do slum*, *favela*, *morro*, *cortiço*, *comunidade*, *loteamento* (Brazil);
- Turkish: *gecekodu*;
- American English: 'hood' (Los Angeles), *ghetto*;
- Southern Asia: *chawls/chalis* (Ahmedabad, Mumbai), *ahatas* (Kanpur), *katras* (Delhi), *bustee* (Kolkata), *zopadpattis* (Maharashtra), *cheris* (Chennai), *katchi abadis* (Karachi), *watta*, *pelpath*, *udukku* or *PELLI GEWAL* (Colombo);
- Africa: *umjondolo*, (Zulu, Durban), *mabanda* (Kiswahili, Tanzania).

In Karachi, the local term *katchi abadi* (non-permanent settlements) is used, as well as the English 'informal subdivisions of state land.'²³ Terms such as *villa miseria* are specific to Argentina, *favelas* to Brazil, *kampungs* to Malaysia and Indonesia, and *bidonvilles* to France and Francophone Africa – describing precarious settlements made out of iron sheets and tins (*bidons*).

In Egypt, the term *aashwa'i* is the only one used officially to indicate deteriorated or underserved urban areas.²⁴ It actually means 'random' on the basis that these areas are unplanned and illegally constructed. The areas are not necessarily slums, although being informal/illegal, they tend to be the least well served in terms of infrastructure and public services, and they suffer from poor accessibility and high levels of overcrowding. Both government officials and the local press ascribe to *aashwa'i* settlements various social problems of crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

Some authorities have attempted to address the damaging effect of prejudice against slums. In Peru and other Latin American countries, in an attempt to do away with the pejorative connotations associated with the word *tugurio*, official terminology has tried to popularize terms such as ‘young settlements’ (*pueblos juvenes*).

Defining and measuring slums

The problem with measuring slums starts with the lack of an agreed definition. As a result, enumeration of slums has not yet been incorporated within mainstream monitoring instruments, such as national population censuses, demographic and health surveys, and global surveys. Some surveys provide proxies or related variables, such as ‘proportion of unauthorized housing’ or ‘proportion of squatters’. Participatory poverty assessments in many least developed countries (LDCs) generally provide only qualitative information on urban poverty. The generic definition suggests that a slum is:

*...a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognized and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city.*²⁵

Other similar definitions are provided in many policy documents; for example the Cities Alliance Action Plan describes slums as follows:²⁶

Slums are neglected parts of cities where housing and living conditions are appallingly poor. Slums range from high-density, squalid central city tenements to spontaneous squatter settlements without legal recognition or rights, sprawling at the edge of cities. Slums have various names, favelas, kampungs, bidonvilles, tugurios, yet share the same miserable living conditions.

These general definitions meet the common perception of what a slum is; yet, as it stands, they are not associated with operational definitions that would enable one to ascertain whether or not a particular area is a slum.

In practice, what has happened when it has been necessary to operationalize the concept is that areas have been designated specifically as slums, usually by planners making impromptu surveys or following popular usage.²⁷ This was the case during the housing reform in the UK, and subsequently in many other countries.²⁸ More recently, definitions developed in 1993 in India use housing conditions and availability of facilities as the main basis for defining areas as slums – areas with dense, poorly built or mostly temporary housing, with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities.²⁹

Clearly, it would be better for a number of purposes to have a more universal and objective definition – particularly when global measurement and MDG targets are involved. Yet, the most important indicators associated with UN-Habitat work – slums, insecure tenure and poverty – are terms that do not have clear or universally agreed definitions.

Efforts to propose a more ‘quantitative’ definition of slums have only recently been started, not only because of divergent opinions as to what constitutes the key determinants of slums, but because of several features of the concept:

- *Slums are too complex* to define according to one single parameter.
- *Slums are a relative concept* and what is considered as a slum in one city will be regarded as adequate in another city – even in the same country.
- *Local variations* among slums are too wide to define universally applicable criteria.
- *Slums change too fast* to render any criterion valid for a reasonably long period of time.
- *The spatial nature of slums* means that the size of particular slum areas is vulnerable to changes in jurisdiction or spatial aggregation.

What is agreed is that slums, like poverty and insecure tenure, are multidimensional in nature. Some of the characteristics of slums, such as access to physical services or density, can be clearly defined, and others, such as social capital, cannot. Even with well-defined indicators, measurement can be very problematic, and acceptable benchmarks are not easy to establish.

Characteristics of slums

A review of the definitions used by national and local governments, statistical offices, institutions involved in slum issues and public perceptions reveals the following attributes of slums.

Lack of basic services

Lack of basic services is one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of slum definitions worldwide. Lack of access to improved sanitation facilities and improved water sources is the most important feature, sometimes supplemented by absence of waste collection systems, electricity supply, surfaced roads and footpaths, street lighting and rainwater drainage.

Substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structures

Many cities have building standards that set minimum requirements for residential buildings. Slum areas are associated with a high number of substandard housing structures, often built with non-permanent materials unsuitable for housing given local conditions of climate and location. Factors contributing to a structure being considered substandard are, for example, earthen floors, mud-and-wattle walls or straw roofs. Various space and dwelling placement bylaws may also be extensively violated.

Overcrowding and high density

Overcrowding is associated with a low space per person, high occupancy rates, cohabitation by different families and a high number of single-room units. Many slum dwelling units are overcrowded, with five and more persons sharing a one-room unit used for cooking, sleeping and living. Bangkok requires at least 15 dwelling units per rai (1600 square metres).

Unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations

Unhealthy living conditions are the result of a lack of basic services, with visible, open sewers, lack of pathways, uncontrolled dumping of waste, polluted environments, etc. Houses may be built on hazardous locations or land unsuitable for settlement, such as floodplains, in proximity to industrial plants with toxic emissions or waste disposal sites, and on areas subject to landslip. The layout of the settlement may be hazardous because of a lack of access ways and high densities of dilapidated structures.

Insecure tenure; irregular or informal settlements

A number of definitions consider lack of security of tenure as a central characteristic of slums, and regard lack of any formal document entitling the occupant to occupy the land or structure as prima facie evidence of illegality and slum occupation. Informal or unplanned settlements are often regarded as synonymous with slums. Many definitions emphasize both informality of occupation and the non-compliance of settlements with land-use plans. The main factors contributing to non-compliance are settlements built on land reserved for non-residential purposes, or which are invasions of non-urban land.

Poverty and social exclusion

Income or capability poverty is considered, with some exceptions, as a central characteristic of slum areas. It is not seen as an inherent characteristic of slums, but as a cause (and, to a large

extent, a consequence) of slum conditions. Slum conditions are physical and statutory manifestations that create barriers to human and social development. Furthermore, slums are areas of social exclusion that are often perceived to have high levels of crime and other measures of social dislocation. In some definitions, such areas are associated with certain vulnerable groups of population, such as recent immigrants, internally displaced persons or ethnic minorities.

Minimum settlement size

Many slum definitions also require some minimum settlement size for an area to be considered a slum, so that the slum constitutes a distinct precinct and is not a single dwelling. Examples are the municipal slum definition of Kolkata that requires a minimum of 700 square metres to be occupied by huts, or the Indian census definition, which requires at least 300 people or 60 households living in a settlement cluster.

Table 1.1 shows how slum areas may vary in their disadvantages, in different parts of the world or even within the same city.

Table 1.1: Attributes of selected slums

| Example of a slum | 'Slum' parameters | | | | Poverty and exclusion | Security of tenure |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | Services | Structure | Density | Location | | |
| Ibadan, Bodija Market | Poor | Fair | High | Hazardous | Poor | Secure |
| Dhaka railways | Fair | Poor | High | Hazardous | Severe | Insecure |
| Karachi invasion of state land | Poor | Fair | High | Not hazardous | Severe | Secure |
| Karachi <i>ad-hoc</i> settlements | Poor | Poor | High | Hazardous | Poor | Insecure |
| Cairo highrises | Fair | Good | High | Not hazardous | Poor | Secure |
| Durban 'Informal' settlements | Poor | Poor | Medium/low | Not hazardous | Severe | Secure |

Source: adapted from UN-Habitat, 2002b.

The experience of 'living in a slum', according to slum dwellers, consists of a combination of these multiple dimensions, not only one. Many slum areas may show only a few of these negative attributes, while the worst may have them all. The 'worst type of slum household' is prone to all of the above disadvantages, which, to an extent, also constitute some of the main obstacles that have to be overcome in realizing the right to adequate housing: one that has no services, has poor-quality housing on fragile land, does not have secure tenure, and where the occupants are poor, marginalized and belong to a vulnerable group. Less badly affected households may carry one or more of these burdens.

Operational definition of slums

The operational definition of a slum is arrived at through grouping and interpreting available household data. The operational definition was originally based on recommendations of a United Nations expert group meeting held in 2002. The definition has since been reviewed and was revised by UN-Habitat in 2008. In the revised definition, UN-Habitat modified two of the slum indicators – access to improved water and access to improved sanitation facilities.

Based on the revised definition, the proportion of urban population living in slums is the proportion of urban population living in slum households. A slum household is defined as a household lacking one or more of the following:

- Improved water;³⁰
- Improved sanitation;³¹
- Sufficient living area;
- Durable housing; and
- Secure tenure.

Table 1.2: Indicators and thresholds for defining slums

| Characteristic | Indicator | Definition |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access to water | Improved drinking water sources (MDG Indicator 7.8) | A household has improved drinking water supply if it uses water from sources that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • piped water into dwelling, plot or yard; • public tap/ stand pipe; • tube well/borehole; • protected dug well; • protected spring; • rain water collection. |
| Access to improved sanitation facilities | Improved sanitation facilities (MDG Indicator 7.9) | A household is considered to have access to improved sanitation if it uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flush or pour flush to piped sewer system, septic tank or pit latrine; • Pit latrine with slab; • Composting toilet; • Ventilated improved pit latrine. • The excreta disposal system is considered improved if it is private or shared by a reasonable number of households. |
| Durable housing | a. Location | A house is considered durable if it's built on a non-hazardous location. Hazardous sites includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geologically unstable areas (landslide/earthquakes and flood areas); • Garbage dumpsites; • High industrial pollution areas; • Unprotected high risk zones (e.g. railroads, airports, energy transmission lines). |
| | b. Permanency of structure | Permanency of a housing structure is determined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of construction (materials used for wall, floor and roof); • Compliance with local building codes, standards and bylaws. |
| Overcrowding | Sufficient living area | A house has sufficient living area for household members if not more than three members share the same room. |
| Security of tenure | Security tenure | Households have secure tenure when they have effective protection against forced evictions through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of documentation (formal title deed to either land or residence or both); • <i>De facto</i> or perceived protection against eviction. |

Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

The absence of each of these components is categorized as shelter deprivations. A slum household is classified based on the presence of one (or more) of the above five shelter deprivations. Four of these five deprivation indicators (lack of improved water, lack of improved sanitation, overcrowded conditions and non-durable housing structures) measure the physical manifestation of the slum conditions. They focus attention on the circumstances that surround slum life, depicting deficiencies and casting poverty as an attribute of the environments in which slum dwellers live. The fifth indicator – security of tenure – has to do with legality, which is not easy to measure or to monitor, as the tenure status of slum dwellers often depends on the presence (or rather absence) of *de facto* or *de jure* rights. The indicators and thresholds shown in Table 1.2 are based on the MDG indicators, where possible.

Defining ‘slum’ at the household level presents a compromise between theoretical and methodological considerations. The agreed-upon definition is simple, operational and pragmatic: it can be easily understood and adapted by governments and other partners; it offers clear, measurable indicators, provided as a proxy to capture some of the essential attributes of slums; and it uses household-level data that is collected on a regular basis by governments and non-governmental organizations, that is accessible and available in most parts of the world. However, this definition lacks the spatial component of slum as well as the type of shelter deprivation.

No mechanism currently exist to monitor secure tenure as part of the slum target, as household-level data on property entitlement, evictions, ownership, and other indicators of secure tenure is not uniformly available through mainstream systems of data collection, such as censuses and household surveys.

Number of slum dwellers: estimations and projections

Slum dweller estimations, like any other estimations, depends on data availability as well as on criteria established. In computation of slum estimations, it is preferable to use population and housing censuses and national household representative surveys that contain information on all the five above listed slum deprivation indicators.³² The same standard questions are being promoted for inclusion into other survey instruments. National-level household surveys are generally conducted every 3-5 years in most developing countries, while censuses are generally conducted every 10 years. National statistics offices usually carry out censuses and are often involved in carrying out nationally representative sample surveys.

Based on the above surveys and estimations, the latest and most reliable slum estimates from the developing regions³³ have been computed. These revised slum estimates are presented in the section below.³⁴

Trends in numbers of slum dwellers

Sustained urban population growth has resulted in continued urbanization, that is, in increasing proportions of the population living in urban areas. Over the past decade, the level of urbanization has increased in all the major geographical regions of the world, with the proportion of the population living in urban areas increasing from 46.6 per cent in 2000 to 50.6 percent in 2010. During the same period the urban population of developing countries increased from 40.1 per cent to 45.3 per cent. The urban population of developing countries is expected to reach 50.5 per cent in 2020.³⁵

Available data from developing regions, show that, global efforts to reduce urban inequality and the international community’s efforts towards meeting MDG and associated targets has yielded positive results. Despite an increase in the absolute slum population from 767 million in 2000 to 828 million in 2010 (see Table 1.3), the proportion of the urban population living in slums in the developing regions declined from 39.3 per cent to 32.7 per cent during the same period (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.3: Trends in urban slum population

| Major region | Urban slum population, estimates and projections (thousands) | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 |
| Developing countries | 656,739 | 718,114 | 766,762 | 795,739 | 827,690 |
| Africa | 122,319 | 141,627 | 159,411 | 180,223 | 211,376 |
| Northern Africa | 19,731 | 18,417 | 14,729 | 10,708 | 11,836 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 102,588 | 123,210 | 144,683 | 169,515 | 199,540 |
| Asia | 428,300 | 464,820 | 491,697 | 504,905 | 504,994 |
| Eastern Asia | 159,754 | 177,063 | 192,265 | 195,463 | 189,621 |
| Southern Asia | 180,449 | 190,276 | 194,009 | 192,041 | 190,748 |
| South-Eastern Asia | 69,029 | 76,079 | 81,942 | 84,013 | 88,912 |
| Western Asia | 19,068 | 21,402 | 23,481 | 33,388 | 35,713 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 105,740 | 111,246 | 115,192 | 110,105 | 110,763 |
| Oceania^a | 379 | 421 | 462 | 505 | 556 |

a. Trends data are not available for Oceania. A constant figure does not mean there is no change.

Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

Table 1.4: Proportion of urban population living in slums

| Major region | Estimates and projections (%) | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 |
| Developing countries | 46.1 | 42.8 | 39.3 | 35.7 | 32.7 |
| Africa | 60.0 | 57.2 | 54.0 | 51.6 | 51.3 |
| Northern Africa | 34.4 | 28.3 | 20.3 | 13.4 | 13.3 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 70.0 | 67.6 | 65.0 | 63.0 | 61.7 |
| Asia | 47.3 | 43.3 | 39.1 | 34.9 | 30.6 |
| Eastern Asia | 43.7 | 40.6 | 37.4 | 33.0 | 28.2 |
| Southern Asia | 57.2 | 51.6 | 45.8 | 40.0 | 35.0 |
| South-Eastern Asia | 49.5 | 44.8 | 39.6 | 34.2 | 31.0 |
| Western Asia | 22.5 | 21.6 | 20.6 | 25.8 | 24.6 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 33.7 | 31.5 | 29.2 | 25.5 | 23.5 |
| Oceania^a | 24.1 | 24.1 | 24.1 | 24.1 | 24.1 |

a. Trends data are not available for Oceania. A constant figure does not mean there is no change.

Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

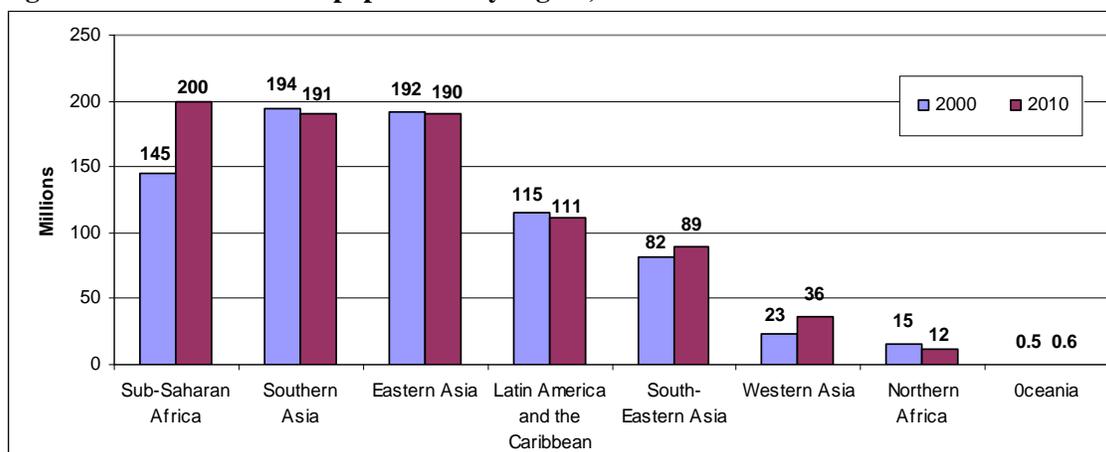
Table 1.5: Distribution of slum dwellers by region

| Major region | Estimates and projections (%) ^a | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 |
| Developing countries | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Africa | 18.6 | 19.7 | 20.8 | 22.6 | 25.5 |
| Northern Africa | 3.0 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.4 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 15.6 | 17.2 | 18.9 | 21.3 | 24.1 |
| Asia | 65.2 | 64.7 | 64.1 | 63.5 | 61.0 |
| Eastern Asia | 24.3 | 24.7 | 25.1 | 24.6 | 22.9 |
| Southern Asia | 27.5 | 26.5 | 25.3 | 24.1 | 23.0 |
| South-Eastern Asia | 10.5 | 10.6 | 10.7 | 10.6 | 10.7 |
| Western Asia | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 4.2 | 4.3 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 16.1 | 15.5 | 15.0 | 13.8 | 13.4 |
| Oceania^a | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |

a. Trends data are not available for Oceania. A constant figure does not mean there is no change.

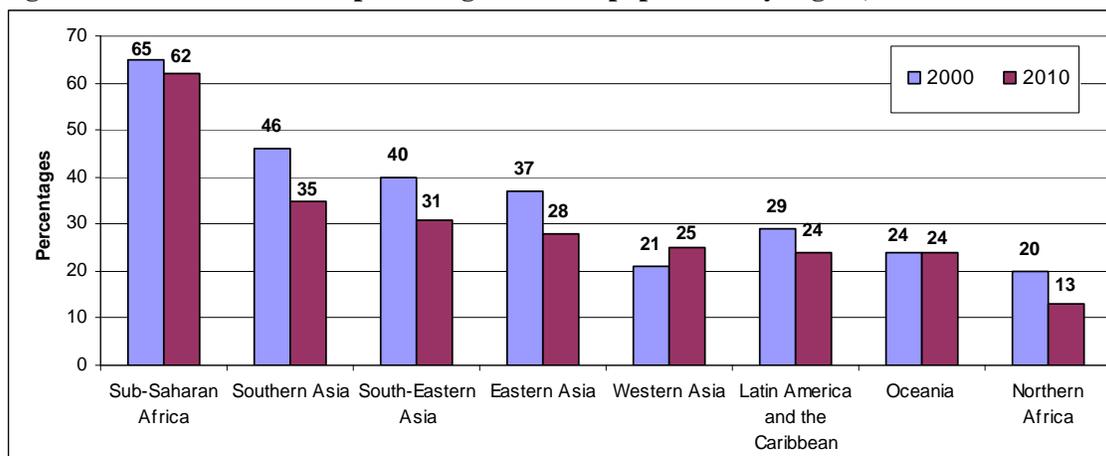
Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

Figure 1.1: Trends in slum population by region, 2000 and 2010



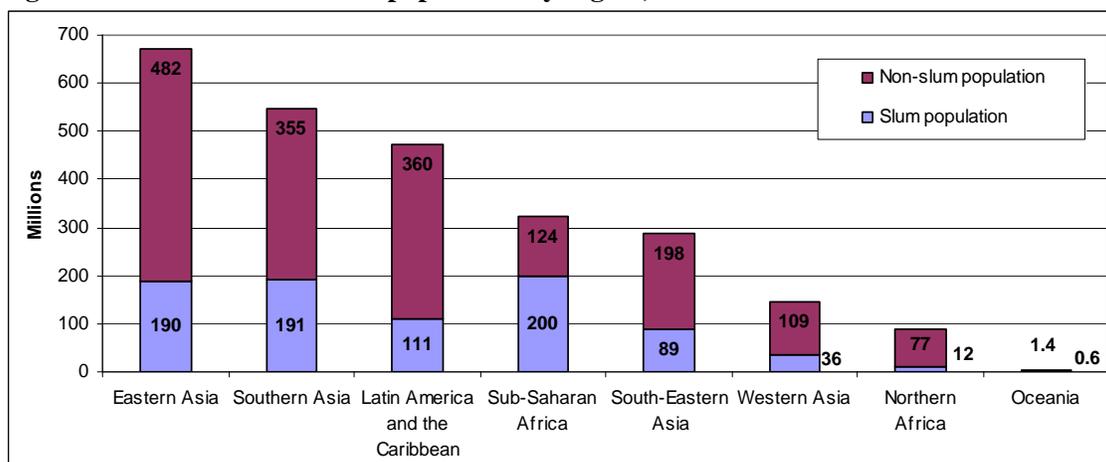
Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

Figure 1.2: Slum dwellers as percentage of urban population by region, 2000 and 2010



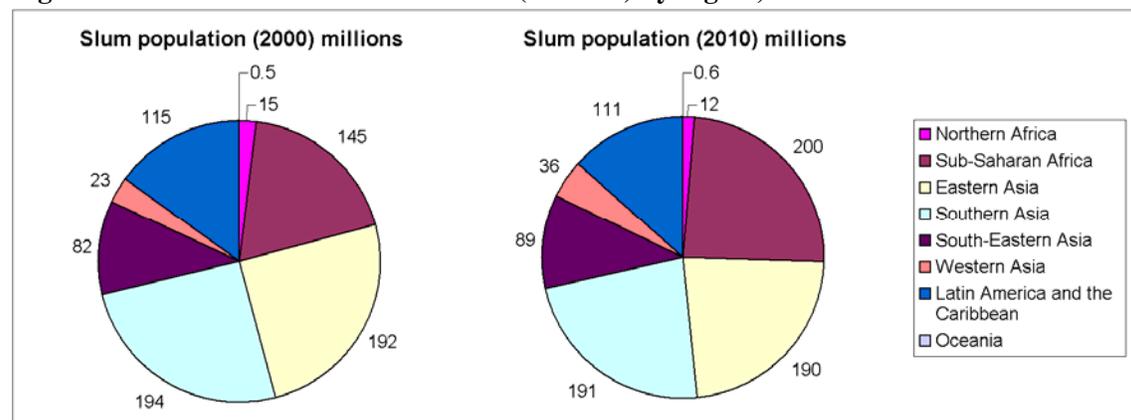
Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

Figure 1.3: Slum and non-slum population by region, 2010



Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

Figure 1.4: Distribution of slum dwellers (millions) by region, 2000 and 2010



Source: UN-Habitat GUO data, 2010.

Between 2000 and 2010, the increase in the absolute number of slum dwellers was due to increases in Sub-Saharan Africa, South-Eastern Asia and Western Asia (see Figure 1.1). All other major regions experienced a declining number of slum dwellers. In relative terms, all developing regions, except Western Asia, experienced a reduction in the proportion of urban population living in slums, with the most significant reductions occurring in Southern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Eastern Asia, as indicated in Figure 1.2.

Throughout the 2000–2010 decade, Northern Africa was the most successful region in both absolute and relative terms, with only 13.3 per cent of its urban population estimated to be still living in slums.

In terms of sheer numbers, Asia dominates by being home to 61.0 per cent of the world’s slum dwellers. Africa hosts 25.5 per cent of the slum dwellers while Latin America and the Caribbean is home to 13.4 per cent of all the slum dwellers (see Table 1.5 and Figure 1.4).

During the 2000 to 2010 period, regional differences in addressing the slum target are quite evident, with some 227 million people moving out of slum conditions.³⁶ However, current estimates confirm that the progress made towards achieving the slum target has not been enough to counter the growth of informal settlements in the developing regions. The efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate. A considerable urban divide is still evident, as the numbers of slum dwellers continue to rise.³⁷ Nearly a third of the urban population in developing regions still lives in slums.

All of these issues are discussed more fully in succeeding chapters and are the key to understanding what is happening globally. Accuracy in global estimates can most easily be obtained by focusing on areas with the greatest concentration of slums and the fastest urbanization – especially in Southern and South-Eastern Asia, where nearly half of the world’s slums are located and where improvements are beginning to occur.

Finally, it should be noted that estimation of a complex concept such as ‘slum’ will always be somewhat arbitrary and definition driven. Nevertheless, by using the same, consistent slum definition in the same places at different points in time, genuine changes may be observed – particularly when broad averages are ‘drilled down’ to examine the underlying changes in real conditions in individual cities.

Notes

1. This chapter draws primarily on outcomes of the workshops and expert group meetings organized by UN-Habitat during the period of January to October 2002, the 2007 revision of the World Urbanization Prospects (UN, 2008), background papers prepared for the report by core group of consultants and staff of UN-Habitat, and updated slum data provided by the Global Urban Observatory of UN-Habitat in February 2010.
2. UN, 2008.
3. Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989.
4. UNCHS, 1997.
5. UN, 2006.
6. The revision implied the inclusion of four new targets within goals 1, 5, 6 and 7; and the merger of one target from goal 8 with target 1.B in goal 1. For details, see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/About.htm>.
7. UN-Habitat, 2002a; 2002b. The goal refers to improvement *in situ*. Slum dwellers are also improving their own situation by moving to better locations.
8. See <http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/our-members>.
9. Based on 2005 US\$ values at purchasing power parity.
10. World Bank, 2009.
11. The MDG indicator sets an extremely low standard that is likely to be automatically observed in urban areas. In fact, there has been a very substantial improvement in urban water supply, as Chapter 6 shows.
12. UNICEF and WHO, 2008.
13. UNICEF and WHO, 2008.
14. For more details, see UN-Habitat, 2010.
15. UN, 2009.
16. UN, 2009.
17. UN, 2009.
18. The UNDP coordinates the MDG campaign and country level monitoring activities, which include practical assistance in support of country priorities; country and global-level monitoring; research leadership; and advocacy.
19. In a report prepared in 2001 for the Secretary-General by a panel headed by former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, and including former US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin (Zedillo et al, 2001).
20. This section draws on papers prepared by Joe Flood, Nefise Bazoglu, Patrick Wakely, Harvey Herr, Guenther Karl, Christine Auclair, Martin Raitelhuber and slum data prepared by UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatory (GUO).
21. Merriam-Webster, 1994.
22. Simpson and Weiner, 1989.
23. Hasan and Mohib, 2003.
24. Sims, El-Shorbagi and Séjoumé, 2003.
25. UN-Habitat, 2002c.
26. Cities Alliance, 1999.
27. One example is the infamous 'windscreen survey' in Melbourne, Australia, during the 1960s, when two planners drove around and designated particular streets as slums for demolition without getting out of their car.
28. In fact, administrative fiat may not be an unreasonable procedure if socially negotiated: areas in a number of countries are designated as urban or rural in this way.
29. Bhatt, 2003.
30. In the revised slum definition, households using bottled water are only considered to be using improved water when they use water from an improved source for cooking and personal hygiene.
31. In the revised slum definition, pit latrine as a slum household classifier has been broken into two categories, 'Pit latrine with slab' and 'Pit latrine without slab'. Only the first is considered as improved.

32. Nationally representative household surveys, which typically collect information about water sanitation and housing conditions, include Urban Inequities Surveys (UIS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic Health Surveys (DHS), World Health Surveys (WHS), Living Standards and Measurement Surveys (LSMS), Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaires (CWIQ), and the Pan Arab Project for Family Health Surveys (PAPFAM).
33. Households from developed countries were found to fulfill none of the conditions used identify and define slum households; hence slum statistics used in the chapter are from developing countries only.
34. These estimates should be seen as an outcome, at a particular stage of a continuous process of improvement, towards more accurate and reliable estimates of slum dwellers. Global monitoring and national estimates are still undergoing refinement.
35. The regional groupings used in the slum estimates are identical to those used by the United Nations for MDG reporting purposes; see UN, 2009, p.55. The category 'developing regions' thus includes all countries listed as 'less developed regions' in the Statistical Annex of the Global Report on Human Settlements 2003 (p.231), excluding: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (data on which are thus excluded from the 'Western Asia' region (GRHS 2003, p.234)); and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (data on which are not reported, thus the use of the term 'Southern Asia' rather than 'South-Central Asia' (GRHS 2003, p.234)).
36. UN-Habitat, 2010.
37. UN-Habitat, 2010.

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