



UN-HABITAT

June 2003 Vol.9 No.2

# Habitat Debate

## Young People in an Urbanizing World

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# A message from the Executive Director



The state of the young in any city is the litmus test for its level of sustainability and vibrancy. At the 19th session of UN-HABITAT's Governing Council in May this year, Governments formally asked UN-HABITAT to strengthen and advance our work in the engagement of youth in urban governance, address the problem of youth at risk, and to develop actions with special focus on capacity-building and poverty alleviation.

In particular, I was asked to ensure our active participation in the Secretary General's initiative on youth employment, in the framework of the United Nations Millennium Development goal of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020.

I have also been tasked with developing a *Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa*, in partnership with other relevant United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Environment

Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as multilateral institutions and private foundations, in the context of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*.

UN-HABITAT was further asked by governments to establish an interim youth consultative mechanism, and to initiate the development of a draft strategy on enhancing the engagement of youth and youth organizations.

At a time when the number of young people in the world has become the largest in history relative to the adult population, Governments at the Governing Council have made clear the necessity to support and enable the participation of youth in national and local activities related to human settlements development. This includes integrated, gender-sensitive and cross-sectoral youth policies at the local level, and supporting the development of local youth plans of action targeting vulnerable groups. We also sought the development of programmes to sensitize and educate youth in sustainable development, particularly in matters of human settlements.

While Governments have recognized the need to empower urban youth and secure them sustainable livelihoods, it is imperative that necessary financial resources are made available to address the situation of urban children and urban youth at risk. Our experience has shown that the success of urban youth programmes is dependent up on how strongly we forge our partnerships with Governments, non-governmental and private-sector organizations, and international financial institutions.

Much remains to be done, and from this issue of our flagship

quarterly magazine, readers will see what we and our partners are doing. Policy makers at all levels will see where they can help strengthen these efforts so that the next generation enjoys the same opportunities and expectations we looked forward to in our youth – even though our numbers were far fewer in the world, and even though we did not have to grow up with the dreaded scourge of HIV/AIDS or face the kind of armed conflicts that one witnesses today, let alone the tough challenges and difficult choices confronting today's new generation in such a rapidly urbanizing world.

We believe these harsh realities need to be highlighted.

Like our sister agencies in the UN system, we view young people as an asset, as the insurance for our global future, rather than as a problem. This is our approach. It is the approach we urge on everyone from governments to street level. It applies particularly to young people growing up in slums, in poverty, and in war zones. And they have some surprisingly innovative solutions, which is why we chose to give some of them a voice here.

In many parts of the world, young people are the victims of societal change and economic upheavals. At the same time, they are pioneers in positive transformation. The challenge before us is to see how we and our partners can provide young people with the tools to unlock their own creative potential for achieving improved well-being in an urbanizing world.



**Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka**  
Executive Director



**Cover Photo:**

Young people selected as representatives to the International Youth Parliament which met for the first time in Sydney, Australia, in 2000.

©Photo: Claude Sandler, International Youth Parliament, Sydney, October 2000.

**Editor**

Roman Rollnick

**Design & Layout**

Irene Juma

Martha Waiyaki

**Editorial Board**

Nefise Bazoglu

Daniel Biau (Chair)

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Lucia Kiwala

Anantha Krishnan

Jane Nyakairu

Paul Taylor

Farouk Tebbal

Rolf Wichmann

**Editorial Support**

Juma Assiago

Olayinka Ibukun

Joseph Igbiniedion

Mutinta Muniyati

Gordon Shettle

**Published by**

UN-HABITAT

P.O. Box 30030, GPO

Nairobi 00100, KENYA;

Tel: (254-020) 621234

Fax: (254-020) 624266/7, 623477, 624264

Telex: 22996 UNHABKE

E-mail: infohabitat.debate@unhabitat.org

Website: http://www.unhabitat.org/

**ISSN 1020-3613**

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UN-HABITAT

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Nairobi waste dump. Photo: © UN-HABITAT

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# The focus – Why youth and UN-HABITAT?

By Anantha Krishnan

In a world where the number of young people has become the largest in history relative to the adult population, the need to take urgent and ever more innovative approaches to the problems facing them is greater than ever.

At present, over 3 billion individuals or just over 50 per cent of the world's population are children or youth. In terms of youth alone, there are 1.3 billion young people aged between 15 and 24.\* According to the *World Youth Report 2003*, almost 60 per cent of these young people live in the developing countries of Asia. Another 15 per cent are in Africa, and approximately 10 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. About 15 per cent live in developed regions.

In today's rapidly urbanizing world, the biggest danger many of them face is exclusion and marginalisation. It is estimated that there are 66 million unemployed young people in the world.

Unemployment, crime, HIV/AIDS, neglect by higher authorities and often abandonment to their fate because of various forms of discrimination, top the list of problems towns and cities have to deal with. They are also the

most serious problems facing young people in this growing urban landscape.

This situation is especially acute in Africa, which is experiencing the world's largest rate of transition from a rural way of life to urban living. Africa's urban population is forecast to double from 295 million in 2000 to 590 million in 2020, a growth rate consistent with the most rapid urban growth rates in the world. By 2020, one half of Africa's population will be living in cities.

**Through its regional offices UN-HABITAT's youth programmes are targeting young men and women and focusing on issues of crime, violence, juvenile delinquency, employment, enablement, awareness raising, living conditions, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and conflict prevention. The countries covered include Vietnam, Cambodia and Afghanistan.**

UN-HABITAT recognizes this situation. And it regards young people as a major force for a better world. Thus their empowerment through effective and meaningful participation in decision-making is crucial. The idea of participation is based on our conviction that young people themselves are the best resource for promoting their development. They should be the architects and agents for change. In this new millennium, they can help us meet the challenges of the world's burgeoning human settlements as outlined in the *Habitat Agenda*.

Adopted by 171 countries at the 1996 City Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, the *Habitat Agenda* is a political document with over 100 commitments and 600 recommendations that set out the approaches and strategies towards the achievement of sustainable development of the world's urban areas.

It recommends a participatory approach to promote employment, training, and crime prevention. It also stresses the role of young people in the alleviation of poverty and inequality.

UN-HABITAT has a history of working with youth. Its interventions cover not only the physical aspects of

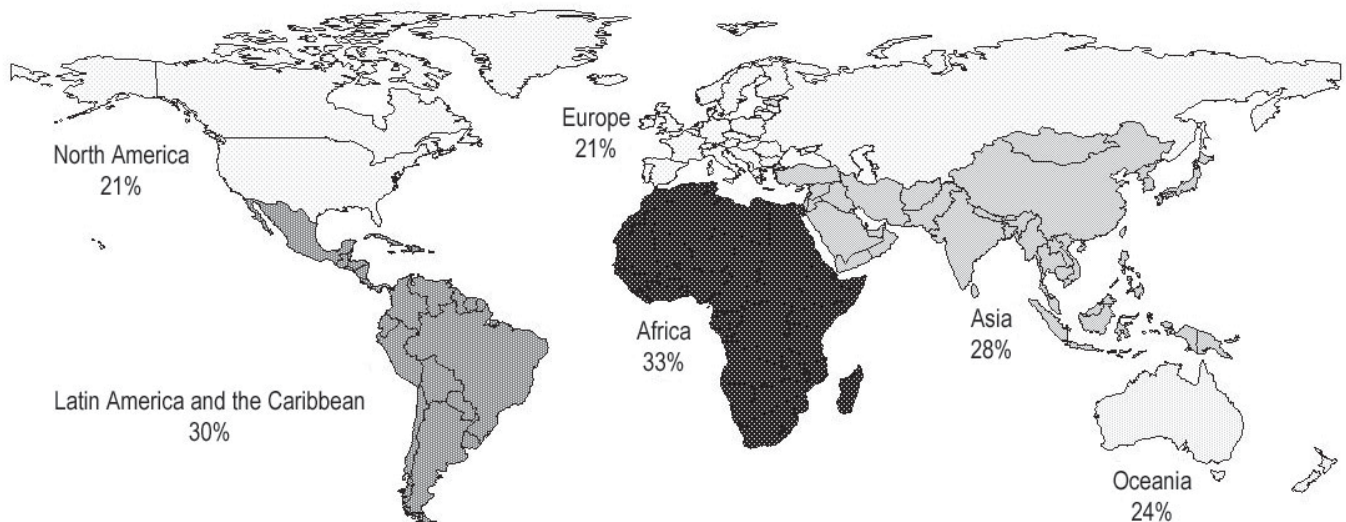


*Learning how the UN system works. Youth delegates at UN-HABITAT's Governing Council in May were given briefings on how governments negotiate thorny issues. They in turn, were asked to debate and act out a scenario which UN-HABITAT staff critiqued, explaining how best to present an argument.*

Photo: © UN-HABITAT

\*Note: The statistics on young people carried in this overview report are based on the official United Nations definition of youth which covers those in the 15-24 age group. The figures in the accompanying maps and graphics are for those aged 10-24 — the target age group of the studies conducted.

## Percentage of youth in proportion to regional population (ages 10-24) in 2000



Source: The Global Urban Observatory (GUO), UN-HABITAT  
World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision (for population data)

human settlements, but also the upgrading of slums. But it does so by also looking at the social and economic upgrading of slums in which aspects for young people's social needs on inclusion, employment, and better social services can be addressed. It also examines the causes and circumstances that place young people at risk of falling into crime, offending and victimization, and how to best tackle them.

It has thus devised a youth policy aimed at integrating youth issues and concerns into UN-HABITAT's overall policy decision-making process. Its prime objective is to identify areas for youth participation and to ensure the development of a strategy for the active engagement of young people in addressing issues related to sustainable urbanization.

The idea behind our approach is to complement initiatives undertaken by non-governmental or community-based organizations, UN agencies, and others. Its role is to help nurture partnerships, lobby governments, and offer avenues for further collaboration.

Among its programmes, UN-HABITAT is addressing the issue of urban crime and violence in the context of developing the values of citizenship among the youth. Crime and violence involving young people

constitutes an increasingly evident problem that reflects a society in crisis. Research has indicated that there is no general or universal agreement on the rapidly escalating rate of youth crime and violence because it is not clearly understood.

Since the early 1990s, crime rates have begun to stabilise in most industrialised countries. However, offences committed by those aged between 12 and 25 years, and by minors of 12 to 18, have increased significantly. Since the 1980s, developing countries have witnessed the growing phenomena of street children, youth gangs, school dropouts, widespread social exclusion, and civil wars involving child soldiers. All these have served to aggravate the situation of youth crime. Youth crime has become increasingly violent and the age of entrance into delinquency has fallen to 12 years of age world-wide. Young people also suffer from a vacuum in values, and are excluded from decision-making about the present and future. This is manifested in attention-seeking activities, often with recourse to violence, destruction of public property, and other crime.

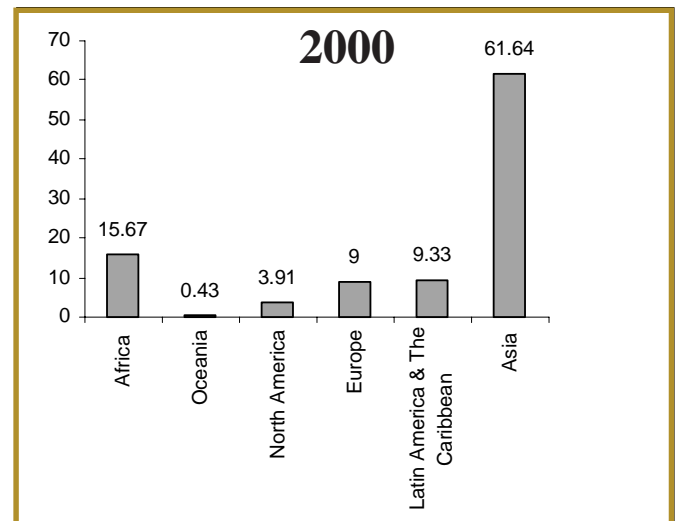
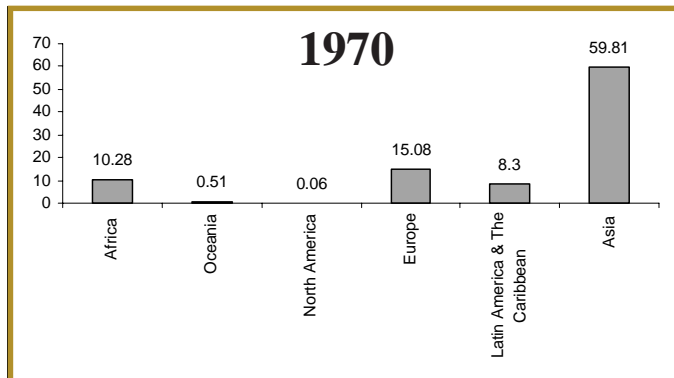
The situation is exacerbated by the fact that youth policies at the national level often exclude young people of the informal sectors, those who live

in the streets, and those who live in stigmatised, or poverty-stricken neighbourhoods. On the other hand, there is also a tendency to criminalise youth as a whole. In some countries, the first manifestations of anti-social behaviour result in legislation making it easier to put them behind bars at an earlier age. It is therefore a challenge for cities to mobilise their resources in all areas and sectors of society to address the plight of all their younger citizens so that they achieve social inclusion. Local governments need to develop and strengthen aspects of local youth policies on care, education, unemployment, leisure activities, and family support.

Through its Safer Cities Programme, UN-HABITAT is engaging local authorities and other city stakeholders in dealing with youth delinquency. To date, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Yaounde and Port Moresby are benefiting from this assistance. The agency is developing programmes with local authorities to include young people, particularly those most at risk, in civic processes at every level.

Examples of the Safer Cities Programme assistance to cities include family and community level support to help local authorities find ways of

## Percentage growth of youth population (ages 10-24) by region 1970 - 2000



Source: The Global Urban Observatory (GUO), UN-HABITAT

### Share of youth within total regional population:

In absolute numbers, the share of youth among all age groups is very high. However, over the last three decades, the proportion of the youth population as a part of the total population has decreased worldwide, except in Africa. Figures show that the proportion of the youth population worldwide has decreased from 29% in 1970, to 27% in 2000, while in Africa it has increased from 31% to 33%. Africa has high fertility rates and low life expectancy levels. This means that while the number of children being born is high, the number of older adults is relatively lower than other regions of the third world.

involving families in early crime prevention and enhancing community support for young offenders; through victim aid programmes to help young victims of crime and their local authorities with training programmes on ways of detecting various forms of distress and encouraging the victims to speak out. It also uses the education system by involving schools as channels of transmitting civic values and bringing young people into the decision-making process.

At the heart of the Safer Cities Programme approach, is the change of attitude that projects young people as “resources” rather than as a “problem”. If the process of transforming young offenders into good citizens is to be achieved, it is necessary to make them actors of their own future and that of their community.[see article on p.12]

Through its regional offices UN-HABITAT’s youth programmes are targeting young men and women and focusing on issues of crime, violence, juvenile delinquency, employment, enablement, awareness raising, living conditions, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and conflict prevention. The countries covered include Vietnam, Cambodia and Afghanistan.

Capacity building for young people and youth organizations has been identified as a must to strengthen the capacity of youth to participate in decision-making and leadership. UN-HABITAT has developed training and capacity building manuals and tools that can be used by young people. These cover a range of issues including leadership, decision-making, skill building, and training of local authorities.

The efforts are many and varied. Youth development is a crosscutting issue which most UN and other agencies are working with. The Youth Employment Network launched jointly by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization is an example of the collaboration that is required if agencies are to pool resources and address issues facing young people.

The Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa being designed by UN-HABITAT will be the test case for a new international community of agencies and organizations addressing the impact of rapid urbanization and social exclusion on vulnerable categories of young people. It focuses on urban youth at risk and urban youth employment.

How can UN-HABITAT help them achieve a sustainable livelihood? How can UN-HABITAT bring them into the decision-making process so that policies best serve their interests? How can UN-HABITAT help families, communities, countries and regions join hands to meet their needs and emergencies? What are the best practices that UN-HABITAT needs to disseminate to young people around the globe?

As the English philosopher and statesman, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), said: “Young people are fitter to invent than to judge; fitter for execution than for counsel; and more fit for new projects than for settled business.”

UN-HABITAT’s experience with young people around the world on the other hand shows that they can invent, judge, execute, counsel, that they are fit for new projects and can conduct settled business given the space, the right policy framework and resources.

Young people are not just leaders of tomorrow, they are the leaders of today who show the way for the leaders of yesterday.

Anantha Krishnan is the Chief of UN-HABITAT’s Partners and Youth Section.

## International Youth Parliament – Striving for an equitable, sustainable and peaceful world

By Sofiah MacKay and Sarika Seki Hussey

The International Youth Parliament (IYP) is a global network of young activists and social change agents who work at the global, national and local levels to effect positive social change. As Soraya Mentoor, 24, South African IYP Action Partner, puts it: “Youth are the leaders of today, and not tomorrow. We are assets, not liabilities. We are solutions – not a problem to be solved.”

We use the word *parliament* in our name in a symbolic sense. Parliament represents a space in which community agendas are set, strategies are developed to address key issues, and decisions made. It is a space from which young people have traditionally been excluded. As such, the IYP represents a reclaiming of that space – an active response to some of the key issues that face our world.

The three key action areas for the International Youth Parliament are conflict, breaking the poverty cycle, and cultural activism.

From neighbourhood disputes to war between countries, we must choose whether we want to let the conflict around us continue or be part of the solution, and find methods that are culturally appropriate and adapted to the specific situation.

“Sometimes I ask myself, what does peace look like, and what will happen if suddenly we have peace?” The question is one posed by IYP Action Partner Stella Matutina Herny Bagho, 29, from Sudan, a nation ravaged by decades of civil war. She was recently involved in the historical first African Youth Parliament bringing together young social change agents to develop youthful solutions for key challenges in Africa.

Elnara Babayeva, 21, an IYP Action Partner from Azerbaijan, and founder of an NGO called *Lighthouse*, is currently working on an income-generating project for displaced young Azeri women, living in camps for people forced to flee from territories of Nagorno-Karabakh held by neighbouring Armenia. “The crucial point is that I didn’t give up, when facing a lot of obstacles in my work. My strong motivation helped me to start a new organization and manage with a number of other activities.”

Young people are devising ways of breaking the poverty stranglehold. In the

view of Thanh Han Tran, 16, from Vietnam, “eradication of poverty should be more important than anything. The best strategy is education”.

Ana Maria Marin, 29, a journalist and IYP Action Partner, from Colombia adds: “Globalization is creating new boundaries and strengthening the existing frontiers. What do the so called ‘First world’ know about us? Private enterprises know about our natural resources, governments know about our debts, ordinary citizens know about our problems and failures. For many reasons we have narrow and erroneous perceptions about each other.” Ana Maria recently developed a project called *Crafts for Economy and Peace* in partnership with the NGO *Corporacion Paz y Democracia*, to ensure safe and sustainable livelihoods for 10 young female leaders, ex-combatants and victims of her country’s armed conflict. The project supported by IYP’s small grants programme, trains young women in both conflict resolution skills, handicrafts and small business skills to help them earn money.



Uniting for a better world. © Claude Sandler

In today’s rapidly urbanizing world where our cities and towns set the cultural trends, the IYP recognizes the fundamental importance of culture in the establishment of young people’s identities and their ability to contribute effectively to the future evolution of our societies.

To promote cultural activism, the IYP is working in partnership with UNESCO to produce a youth friendly version of the universal declaration on cultural diversity. Cultural diversity workshops have been held around the world to engage and inspire young people so that they discuss key issues and develop projects aimed at supporting diverse and peaceful communities.

Norma Elvira Carias Montiel, 29, a Honduran IYP Action Partner, said:

“There is no ‘Honduran’ identity, as everyone wants to behave and to be other than Honduran... It’s sad to see such things like TV programmes in my country that promote consumerism and poor values.”

Recently, the youth parliament launched a *Youth Commission into Globalization*. In a new report soon to be published, young authors will raise the issues that concern them most: Access to and privatization of education, HIV/AIDS, young workers in Export Processing Zones, the trafficking of young women, indigenous youth, vulnerability of agricultural youth, violence and young people’s security, globalization of youth activism and human rights, technology, water, and global culture and identity.

The report is intended for decision-makers in government, corporations, multilateral institutions and NGOs as well as for individuals. It will carry an action agenda with recommendations for specific changes to reduce the negative impact of globalization and enhance the positive aspects.

Ms Marin, Thanh Han Tran, Ms Babayeva, Ms Mentoor, Ms Bahgo and Norma Elvira Carias Montiel, are among the 250 IYP Action Partners who are at the heart of IYP’s global youth network. The parliament, an initiative of Oxfam International based in Oxfam Australia, was convened for the first time in Sydney in 2000 to seek youthful solutions to local and global challenges. They were selected according to their ability to effect change at home in their local environments.

They are currently enacting over 400 action plans around the world and are networked by Internet *e-lists* to support them in implementing change globally and on the ground. In a recent survey, 72 per cent of them reported their action plans to be either completed or ongoing.

What began as an action focused event, has evolved into a vibrant global network of young activists and development workers, operating under the banner of equity, sustainability and peace.

Sofiah Mackay, 27, is the International Youth Parliament Programme Coordinator.

Sarika Seki Hussey, 29, is a UN-HABITAT Associate Human Settlements Officer and IYP Action Partner from Japan.

**More information on IYP can be found on the Internet at [www.iyp.oxfam.org](http://www.iyp.oxfam.org) and their e-mail address is [info@iyp.oxfam.org](mailto:info@iyp.oxfam.org).**

# Changing the world: *with children and for children*

By Ximena de la Barra

The developing world is experiencing the largest ever generation of children and youth. Around 1 billion people – one out of every six on the planet – are between 10 and 19 years of age, 85% of them in developing countries. Because of the considerable drop in fertility rates, the children of today will constitute the largest-ever generation of active people. This is perhaps the greatest development opportunity the world cannot afford to miss.

The *Convention of the Rights of the Child* consolidates the position of children and adolescents as subjects of rights rather than objects of compassion. It also places families and states in a position of responsibility towards them, and gears adults to visualize children in relation to their potential, rather than to the demands they pose on society. They are the main source of inspiration, innovation, creative strength, new values, and of new dreams with which to build a prosperous and humane society.

The current neo-liberal, growth and export oriented development model is missing this opportunity. It is not eradicating poverty, but increasingly exacerbating the political, economic and social exclusion of the majority of the population. It fosters poverty, disparities, environmental degradation, violence, social disintegration and loss of governability as cheap labor, the absence of social benefits, the destruction of labor organizations and the relinquishment of environmental management are instrumental to this model.

Currently, the richest 1 per cent of the world's population holds as much income as 57 per cent of the poorest people. An estimated 2.8 billion people – almost half of humanity – live on less than US\$2 a day, while 1.2 billion survive on less than US\$1 a day. More than half of the poor are children, and more than half of them are urban. More than 30,000 children die daily of preventable causes and so do over 500,000 women yearly of pregnancies or child-birth related causes.

Recent improvements in child well-being have mainly benefited the middle and high-income groups, whereas disadvantaged groups have benefited less and less or have deteriorated.

Foreign debt of developing countries, initially acquired to escape from poverty, continues to spiral and is limiting the ability to invest in children. Investment in basic

services including primary health care, reproductive health, nutrition, water and sanitation, are crucial if child rights to survival and development are going to be complied with, if poverty is going to be eradicated, and if disparities are going to be reversed.

Cities are the physical expression of societies which build them and the political, social and economic interactions of their inhabitants. They reflect prevailing inequalities and manifest themselves as segregated cities, which only serve the few, excluding the many from the benefits of citizenship.

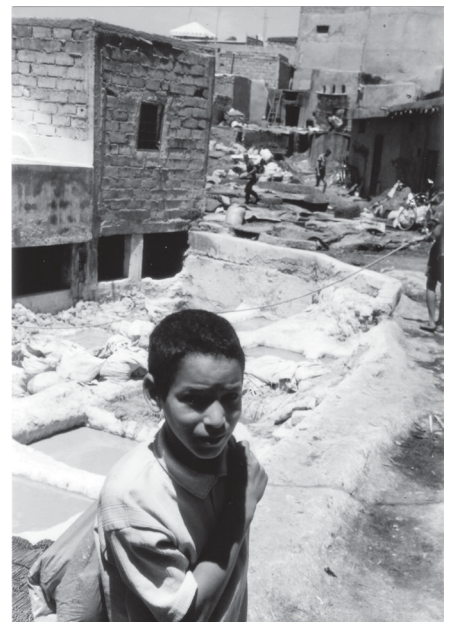
Human and child rights-based urban policies, going way beyond sound urban design, are the perfect tool to balance society and reverse disparities, guaranteeing citizens' rights of equal access to urban space and services, to decision-making processes and equal living conditions.

**The richest 1 per cent of the world's population holds as much income as 57 per cent of the poorest people. More than half of the poor are children, and more than half of them are urban.**

In order to achieve it, it is necessary to address the profound causes impeding it, that is to say, the economic, social, political and environmental circumstances that violate citizens' rights and especially those of children and adolescents. The challenge is to establish participatory national and urban governance systems that will promote economic security, social justice, and environmental respect, which are those essential elements for communities, families and individuals, especially children and adolescents, to develop fully.

A child rights based city is a city where adults place children's rights as the main objective for its development and where children and adolescents' opinions are taken into account.

The result will be an environmentally healthy city, socially safe, where the principle of solidarity and social responsibility as well as the feeling of belonging prevails, where play is stimulated, and where it is fun to live.



*Working to eat – a teenage child labourer toils at a Moroccan tannery. Photo: © A.Fraser/UN-HABITAT*

Trends keeping the majority of the children in poverty and limiting their development are not irreversible since there is enough information, technology and financial resources to defeat these trends. Moreover, it has been proven that it is possible to achieve high levels of social development even without thriving economies if the right priorities are set and the political will is strong. What is lacking is the collective will to do so.

Rather than passively witnessing the destruction of the future, should we decide to defeat the current negative trends, the active population of tomorrow would be placed in a position to fulfil their own aspirations and see compliance with their human rights.

They would also be able to provide humanity with their imagination, creative energy and skills to ensure the basis for future development. But for this potential to materialise, rather than keeping children in poverty and deprived of opportunities, public policies need to be reoriented so that we have healthy, educated, happy and productive citizens of the near future.

If negative trends have been disregarded before, this is the single most important moment in history to wake up, to give up our share of power and collectively take advantage of this window of development opportunity, while fulfilling child rights.

*Ximena de la Barra is UNICEF's Regional Policy Adviser for Latin America and the Caribbean.*



# Youth are an asset - *unemployment is the problem*

By Steven Miller

There are more than 1 billion people in the world aged between 15 and 25. Nearly 40 per cent of the world's population is below the age of 20. Eighty-five per cent of them live in developing countries, where many are vulnerable to extreme poverty. And, the rate of urbanization is by far the greatest in developing countries. By 2015 it is expected that developing countries will account for over 75 per cent of the world's urban population.

The International Labour Office estimates that globally around 74 million young women and men are unemployed. They account for 41 per cent of the 180 million people in the world without jobs. Many more young people are working long hours for low pay, struggling to eke out a living in the informal economy. There are an estimated 59 million young people between 15 and 17 years of age who are engaged in hazardous forms of work. Young people actively seeking to participate in the world of work are two to three times more likely than older generations to find themselves unemployed.

World leaders resolved at the summit to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work". UN Secretary General Kofi Annan proposed the establishment of a Youth Employment Network with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

He visited the ILO headquarters in Geneva to chair the first panel of the network in July 2001 with Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, and James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank. Mr. Annan called for both immediate action and long-term commitment to achieving the millennium goal on youth employment. He also invited the panel to advise him, and asked the ILO to take the lead in organizing the new network.

Following up on the recommendations of the network, a resolution on promoting



Juan Somavia, Director-General of ILO (right) welcomes Mr. Kofi Annan to ILO headquarters in Geneva for their meeting on youth issues. Photo: © ILO

youth employment, co-sponsored by 106 UN Member States, was unanimously adopted at the UN General Assembly last December. It urges governments to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people. It also calls on the ILO, the World Bank, the UN Secretariat, and other relevant specialised agencies, to assist and support governments in their analysis and evaluation of progress.

Like Mr. Annan, the high-level panel views youth as an asset, rather than as a problem. This is an important political message, particularly in view of the relationship between civil conflict and unrest, crime, HIV/AIDS and even terrorism. Given the growing concern with the problems with which young people are confronted and especially vulnerable, it is important to focus on unemployment – and not on youth – as the problem.

***If I had one wish for the new millennium, it would be that we treat this challenge as an opportunity for all, not a lottery in which most of us will lose.***

***- UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report to the Millennium Summit in New York in 2000.***

In the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men will enter the working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, a great potential for economic and social development. The panel presents young people as a creative force today – and not only tomorrow. It thus avoids speaking of young people as tomorrow's leaders, but rather as today's partners.

Its recommendations can be summarised in four principles: *Employability* by investing in education and vocational training for young people, and improving the impact of those investments; *equal opportunities* giving young women the same opportunities as young men; *entrepreneurship* making it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men; and *employment creation* by placing employment creation at the centre of macro-economic policy.

City governments are on the front line in the battle to create and protect jobs. They are the first to feel the negative impact of unemployment, but they are often inadequately prepared to develop policies and programmes to create jobs.

The question is how to empower the prime victim of urban unemployment to provide some solutions to the problem.

There are four areas here where cities have a comparative advantage in the quest to create employment. These are the regulatory environment, the informal economy, investment policies and the ability to create local-level alliances.

City governments are in a privileged position to review and even to design regulations governing zoning, establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises, public contracts and tendering procedures, so as to ensure that economic growth results in both more and better jobs.

At the 2002 International Labour Conference of the ILO, the informal economy was a subject for discussion. Twenty years ago, when the ILO first discussed this issue, there was a sentiment that the informal sector was a transitory phenomenon, which would gradually disappear as development grew. But not only is employment in the informal economy on the rise, but the boundaries between the formal and informal economies are becoming increasingly blurred. Therefore, a strategy to upgrade youth employment in the informal economy needs to be carefully designed to exploit positive linkages and to discourage negative linkages between the two economies.

In the closely related investment area, infrastructural investments present an enormous opportunity to create new sources of employment for young people in developing countries, especially those in an urban setting where the needs for slum upgrading and infrastructural improvements are enormous.

Investments can be targeted towards urban poor neighborhoods, be they in the decaying peri-urban areas or in the inner city. Therefore, employment-intensive investment policies can be harnessed to improve *both* productivity *and* living and working conditions in the urban informal sector.

City governments have a unique perspective on the ability of local-level partnerships to foster alliances for job creation. One form of alliance can be that which is embodied in the ILO's own tripartite structure, between employers, workers and governments who all have a common interest in job creation.

*Steven Miller is the Secretary of the UN Secretary General's Youth Employment Network.*

# Young women and urbanization *trying to cope in crowded cities*

By Lucia Kiwala and Matilda Arvidsson

**D**eborah, 18, has always dreamed of a better life and better job prospects in Nairobi. But she is also discovering the grim realities of today's rapidly urbanizing world – a world in which young people like her often end up in slums that are potentially dangerous places for young women.

Driven by poverty, many young women leave their rural homes to try their luck in the city. According to a study last year by the African Population and Research Centre, slum populations in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, are growing mainly because of rural to urban migration.

The slums, lacking security of tenure, are the only places young people can find cheaper accommodation. Often sharing with friends or total strangers, they live in over-crowded and dangerous environments. Some are introduced to sex and drugs at an early age, and many find themselves having sexual relationships and babies prematurely. Others mix with criminals and drug barons and become victims as well as offenders. Not surprisingly, the study found young girls to be at much higher risk in the slums than at home in the countryside.

This is also true for young girls and women who get a formal education. Because of peer pressure and town influence, some become teenage mothers without any hope of continuing their education, and have to find their way in the world as unskilled single mothers without child-care help or support from their parents.

Some countries have revised their educational policies to allow teenage mothers to continue with their education. But in many developing countries, society does not tolerate this. Should this status quo be maintained given the level of development, modernisation and rapid urbanization?

Depending on the level of education, many young women do not fit into the formal employment system. They then have to resort to working as domestic servants, or shop and bar attendants, or market vendors, hawkers, or employees in garment factories in the free trade zones. They encounter exploitation and abuse. In many countries, they work long hours for low pay, surviving on meagre incomes which they have to share with extended families back home in the rural areas.

The long working hours expose them to the added dangers of getting to and

from work in the dark. According to Lydia Alpizar of *Elige*, a Mexican NGO, many young women, mostly working in the export processing zones have been murdered since 1993 in Mexico City. Forty per cent of the murders recorded in Mexico City were young women aged 15-19. In Mexico City, they have been the victims of the drug trade, trafficking in persons, and the human organ trade. Many criminal gangs benefit from violence against women.



*Through years of conflict, women in Afghanistan have suffered every form of discrimination and degradation. Can this mother and her daughters hope for a better future? Photo: © UN-HABITAT*

The victims of murders and other crimes are often attributed to prostitutes, thus drawing scant sympathy or understanding from the criminal justice system.

As the debate on legalising prostitution rages, the human rights of young women are grossly violated, and others are denied the fundamental right to life. The situation is dreadful, given that many are forced into prostitution.

Commercial sexual exploitation and abuse of young women and children is well documented. In its October 2000 report on *Rape for Profit*, Human Rights Watch documents the plight of young women working in the brothels in Bombay and other parts of India, brought from Nepal and other neighbouring countries.

John Frederick, author of *Fallen Angels: The Sex Workers of South Asia*, caused a stir three years ago when he

argued that most young women from the hills of Nepal were not in fact "tricked" into prostitution by crafty outsiders, or drugged and kidnapped by Indian gangsters only to wake up several days later in a Mumbai brothel. He argued instead that many villagers knowingly sold their daughters into prostitution because they had no other means of survival. In other words, prostitution in South Asia is not primarily a criminal issue, but a social problem caused by poverty and caste discrimination in a strictly hierarchical society.

Trafficking of young women and children from Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia to Europe, North America, and the Middle East is also documented, as are the links between trafficking, conflict and urbanized areas. One of the latest examples is the involvement by International Police Task Force (IPTF) officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina in trafficking, as reported by Human Rights Watch in 2002. What is being done to stop these crimes against young women? Are existing national and international laws adequate? Are the needs of young women understood and therefore addressed by most urban policies? This is the situation for young girls in an urbanizing world.

Considerably more remains to be done to sensitise the entire criminal justice system on promoting the human rights of women and children, and on general issues related to gender equality and justice. Good examples include initiatives such as UNIFEM's work in Yemen where judges, prosecutors and lawyers are trained to deal with cases of violence against women, with special attention to remedying sole reliance on tribal law.

In the developing world not much attention is being paid to international or national laws on trafficking, prostitution, sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children. But it is a fact that poverty drives parents to send their children abroad to earn money.

So addressing poverty in general and urban poverty in particular, while creating viable employment opportunities for young women and men, must be seriously considered by governments, development agencies, private sector and civil society activists engaged in planning and developing policies and programmes for urban areas.

It is imperative to understand the needs and priorities of young women and men. This would have a real impact for people like Deborah and her contemporaries in the Nairobi slums.

*Lucia Kiwala is the Chief of UN-HABITAT's Gender Mainstreaming Unit. Matilda Arvidsson is doing an internship with UN-HABITAT.*

# Young people at risk in an urbanizing world

By Sabine Ravestijn

In today's rapidly urbanizing world, the risks facing young people are varied, indiscriminate and growing, especially in the developing world.

From boys forced to take up arms by warlords in west and central Africa, and girls kidnapped to serve as their "wives" as documented in Uganda, to the child labourers of Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, there is little hope of leading a healthy life. Likewise for those who end up as street children in Cape Town or Rio de Janeiro.

The risks are greatest to those born in poverty, or in countries at war. Elsewhere, dwindling employment opportunities, rising levels of delinquency, crime and growing slums that lack basic services aggravate the situation. Those most at risk are children afflicted by war, young people in conflict with the law, victims of family violence and sexual abuse, the street children and children who have lived all their lives in slums, school drop-outs, orphans, and those without jobs.

The growth of the informal sector in our towns and cities reflects the inability

of governments, municipalities and national economies to confront their plight and create sufficient employment. And those who live on the fringes of society, in informal settlements, often face stigmatisation, and social, economic, and physical exclusion.

Poverty underlies the lives of the majority of the world's children and youth. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that about 600 million children in developing countries live below the poverty line of US\$1 per day and are thus deprived of the basic necessities of life. The proportion of families living below the poverty line in urban areas is more than 30 per cent. In many informal settlements, which shelter the majority of young people in many cities, the appalling living standards, inadequate shelter and non-existent services, rarely offer adequate social structures.

Poverty has an alarming impact on the lives of children and young people and has been associated with social exclusion. This includes a lack of adequate housing, water, transport, public safety, employment, health and education.

World-wide, estimates put the number of children out of school at 130 million – which can be read as lost social capital.

Rapid urbanization, the huge youth population, and the impacts of globalization are leading to a breakdown in norms and values. Migration from rural to urban areas, combined with economic and social hardships, is leading to changing community and family structures. The traditional nuclear family is replaced by a multitude of family types, such as single-parent families. This has weakened traditional family values, affecting early childhood education that is so crucial for social and individual development. It also threatens subsequent integration of young people into society at large.

Crime is another major risk factor because young people are the most frequent victims and perpetrators. International studies have shown that those abused during childhood are more likely to offend as adults. The formation of gangs, a phenomenon in most countries, is often a reaction to exclusion and marginalization that gives members alternative status and recognition. Rapid and unplanned urbanization appears to bear a direct relation to increased crime.

Girls and young women are often most at risk. In many societies, there are important cultural and social differences in the way girls and boys are raised, and treated by others.

In many developing countries some of these differences can be particularly stark because of customs, traditions and religious beliefs. Poverty exacerbates these problems. As a result, the social and economic exclusion of girls in many societies is worse. Some of the consequences for boys are that they are more likely to become involved in offending. In recent years, nevertheless, the numbers of young urban women involved in criminal activities have also increased.

Those most marginalized are those most at risk. And the risks faced by these young people ultimately put whole societies, economies and democracies at risk.



Those most at risk: street children in an African city with nowhere to go, no education or job prospects and no guarantee of their next meal. Photo: © UN-HABITAT

Sabine Ravestijn is an Urban Safety Consultant for UN-HABITAT's Safer Cities Programme.

# Children behind bars *inside a Cape Town prison*

By Liz Cowan

I am a social worker who spent more than a year working in the juvenile section – Medium A – in Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town, a place where Nelson Mandela was held before his release. I learnt a few things about gangs during my time there.

Just about every child told the same story. The gangs are active inside and outside schools and on every street corner from Sea Point to Woodstock, Manenberg, Mitchell's Plain, Gugulethu, Athlone and Lavender Hill, and dozens of other suburbs.

Most inmates told me they joined a gang when they were 12 to 14 years old, in Grade 7 or 8. Their role models are the gang bosses who drive BMWs and who rule supreme through fear and violence.

Initially, their "friends" in the gang gave them free *dagga* (marijuana) and later the drug, Mandrax. Many received free handguns. After a time the freebies dried up. Hooked into the gang lifestyle of violence and drugs, they soon had to start funding their drug habit, which they did through crime.

This is how 99 per cent of them get into crime. They need money to pay for the drugs that the gangs get them hooked on. It starts off with petty thieving and ends up in most cases in armed robbery and, sooner or later, in Pollsmoor or some other prison.

These children are as tough as nails on the outside. Inside they are often just like other children: they love their moms; they want a home; they want their own family one day; and they want to be good role models to their children.

They are not helped in Pollsmoor. There is no real rehabilitation in Medium A. There are two fulltime social workers and one part-time social worker to attend to 2,000 inmates. Almost a third of these have been convicted; the others are awaiting trial.

Prisoners are often released on parole without even seeing a social worker. Many are released on parole even when a social worker's report requires the inmate to attend group therapy. Even if the courts instruct the offender to attend drug counselling or a sexual offenders' programme, this is not done.

When I left Pollsmoor's Medium A section a few weeks ago, no social workers were facilitating such

rehabilitation groups – zip, none, since last year. I have never worked in a place where the level of motivation is so low.

Social workers and guards spend much of their time trying to find ways to do the least work possible. In their defence, the workload is so impossible that this is perhaps a survival mechanism. The staff-to-inmate ratio is ludicrous.

So these children are not getting any help in prison. When they are released, they go back to exactly the same circumstances they left behind: no education, gangs, drugs and no money. Except, of course, they have a prison record. Many of their family members have given up on them. They have no hope. They believe they have no life outside a gang.

They carry the gang markings on their bodies and they talk the gang lingo and do a fascinating dance with their hands when they speak, like all gangsters do. There is no turning back for these children. You can identify them a mile off.

But most of our children are not in jail. How can we help them? How can we stop gangs being seen as an attractive lifestyle for young children in the community? How do we get rid of gangs?

We need to cut off the source of recruitment for gangs. Gangs need "robots" to function – no robots carrying out orders, no gangs.

First, be ruthless in removing active gang members from school grounds and street corners. Disarm school children of all weapons. Be harsh.

Second, offer children a more favourable option. Children have to believe that they have self-worth and that there is a constructive role and future out there for them in society.

The children in prison have never believed this. They gave up hope long ago, and unfortunately there are thousands of vulnerable youngsters out there who feel the same way as the inmates. Schoolchildren need adequate preparation towards leading a productive life. It does not just happen on its own.

They need more than mathematics and science, history and geography. We need



Teaching children about crime, drugs, decent human values and democracy begins early in the classroom, no matter how poor their circumstances. Photo: © UN-HABITAT

to instil in them a belief in a future by teaching them intensive life skills from Grade 1 up. Teach them how to communicate effectively, how to set realistic goals and how to achieve them; how to make decisions and solve problems. Help them towards learning to take responsibility for their actions and to feel proud when they do so and when they achieve a goal. Teach them anger management skills and conflict-resolution skills. Teach them the dangers of drugs and how to say no to them.

To educate school pupils and strengthen their resolve, bring former gangsters and convicts into the classroom to give first-hand accounts of the life-destroying experiences of gangs and prison. If we do this, the gangs will hold no attraction for our youngsters.

It will take a serious commitment from government to achieve this. Competent and committed life skills educators would need to be employed in all schools specifically to teach life and communication skills to children for the duration of their schooling. Policing and security on and around school grounds would have to be efficient.

Investment in a prosperous future for our children is priceless. Every cent spent on a workable, efficiently delivered preventive programme would be invaluable investment in prosperity for South Africa. Children have a constitutional right to a safe environment within which to learn and live.

It is too late for most of the youngsters already caught in gang webs and it is, of course, too late for the innocents caught in their crossfire. This government needs to act to save the others.

*Liz Cowan is a Cape Town social worker. This article is an excerpt of a longer piece she wrote for the South African daily, the Cape Times. UN-HABITAT is grateful to Ms. Cowan and the Cape Times for allowing us to reproduce it here.*

# Making a living from garbage

*She is easy to spot among the workers at the Mukuru waste dump in Dandora, 20 kilometers east of Nairobi's central business district, writes Violette Riungu.*

Although she could easily pass for just another teenager, Elizabeth Wangari is a hard-working young Kenyan, trying to eke a living from the grimy and unbearable conditions at the notorious Mukuru dumpsite in Dandora.

She is beautiful, eager, and almost impatient, showing a demeanour associated with pride. Reluctant to talk at first, after a friendly nudge from her mother, Wangari, 16, quickly warms up to a conversation.

"I am the second born, my older sister doesn't work, she stays home all day taking care of the house," she said, explaining that she started working in the dump at the age of 10 after her father's death. "My mother was not making enough money, and I had no choice but to go and fend for us all. I wake up at 5 every morning, cook breakfast, as well as get the young ones ready for school before I go to the dumpsite."

*Mukuru* is slang for remote, a cold dark place or hidden passage depending on which local language one is familiar with. It is located in Embakasi constituency, the largest of the eight constituencies in Nairobi with a population of 1 million residents.

The dumpsite is home to some 2,000 people, the most socially deprived and poorest lot in the city of Nairobi. The life here is waste scavenging. Money earned is often used in heavy alcoholism and glue sniffing. Of late, this lot has moved away from the traditional illicit brew *Changaa* to a more highly concentrated alcohol *Jet or Kiroro*, jet fuel.

However, Wangari's life is devoid of social vices. She is optimistic that the future is bright and her hard work will pay off in the end, for her and six younger siblings despite the fact that she is able to make about 100 shillings a day (equivalent to US\$1.3).

"I go to the dumpsite at eight every morning with three or four different bags, one for metal, one for bones, one for glass and the other for paper. After the hideous task of sorting, I carry the merchandise to Shabai Scrap Dealers," she says.

Her story is not unique as generations have come and gone making a living from the dumpsite as 26-year-old James Kariuki reveals.

As we converse, he wears a smile so bright on this dull, rainy, muddy day. James, a handsome young man exuding confidence and intelligence, like Wangari, started working at the site when he was 13.

James came to the dumpsite through friends. He abandoned his parents' home when they failed to pay school fees for his secondary education: "I love this work although my family doesn't know what I do for a living. It is embarrassing dirty work according to them, and, if they get wind of it, they will be ashamed of me," he said.



*Working from dawn to dusk, women scavenge for the pickings in Nairobi's Mukuru's waste dump. Photo: © Nathan Kihara/UN-HABITAT*

Married in 1998, he and his wife have a daughter of 5 and live in a flat. He says he makes 300 shillings on a bad day and on a good day he can make up to 500 shillings.

The recycling yard where James and Wangari work, was given to proprietor Joseph Kang'iri, by the Nairobi City Council in 1989. Aged 42, he has worked here since 1978 after completing his primary school education. He rose through the ranks and was able to acquire the business through experience and hard work. He employs about 40 people and makes 3,000 shillings a day.

The dumpsite is a collection point for all the garbage in Nairobi, which produces a staggering 1,600 tonnes of unsorted garbage a day. The likes of Wangari and James make recycling and waste management possible.

However, the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Local Government have plans to relocate the dumpsite from Dandora to Ruai, about 15 kilometers away. This is because of complaints by local residents about the high population density, and waste pollution.

"The move poses a big problem for those who have made the dumpsite their workplace. Most say if moved, poverty and crime will be on the rise and then where will we go?" says James. Wangari agrees.

Nairobi City Council's Environment Department strives to encourage recycling initiatives, income generation technology, public awareness and education. But the Department alone cannot meet the challenges of Mukuru.

Through similar initiatives like Wangari's and James', UN-HABITAT has played a pivotal role in the area through the Mukuru Recycling Center.

"We started our relationship with Mukuru Recycling Center back in 1995 when we were approached by the Kariobangi Catholic Church which was giving support to this low income generating group in Dandora," says Graham Alabaster, of UN-HABITAT's Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch.

"Basically, they were a group of dumpsite scavengers who obviously had very many social problems, from alcohol abuse, high incidences of rape and other sexual abuses. The idea was based on religious commitment. The church wanted to look for meaningful ways to implement income generating activities to improve lives," he said.

Through the Church, the Nairobi City Council was approached and provided land close to the dumpsite for use as a temporary project site.

High demand by recycling plants for scavenged items, such as scrap metal, glass, brown paper, plastic cans and bones, pushed up the group's membership, prompting the creation of a second group in 1995.

"The expansion of the project in 1996 included new sub-groups like composting and an urban agriculture group who recycle organic waste into compost, which is used as a soil conditioner. They also sell the compost to farmers around the city as an income generating enterprise," Mr. Alabaster said.

UN-HABITAT has for the last three years been providing technical support.

"Another interesting activity the group has started is soap production. UN-HABITAT plans to assist with additional technology and transport. I am delighted that the project continues despite lack of funding from other sources, a clear indication that the project is self sustaining. It has given back a lot of dignity to the community," says Mr. Alabaster.

Like many in Dandora, Wangari and James are determined to make it at all costs. Their work clearly requires a lot of stamina and dedication. This is what good men and women are made of.

*Violette Riungu is a Nairobi-based writer and public relations consultant.*

## Even in Vancouver, life can be tough

By Tomas Ernst

Canadian cities, like many around the world, are faced with pressures of increased urbanization, changing economic and social circumstances, mass migration and the need for more private and public investment. Even in a prosperous country like Canada not all Canadians benefit: there is persistent poverty in certain neighborhoods and the homelessness problem continues to grow.

Vancouver is our third largest city. In 1993, the big department store, Woodward's, closed down. The source of employment, food and household goods for many in the local community and beyond for over 100 years, its building has remained vacant for many years and much debate has surrounded its future. Its loss meant that life for the people in the community became worse with an increase in poverty, high unemployment and crime. This area in Canada has the highest per capita rate of HIV infected, drug users, and many citizens were demanding something be done quickly to address these growing social problems.

In September 2002, people from the community squatted outside the building to protest the different level of government's inaction. The municipal government purchased it from the Province of British Columbia and decided to bring the building back to life. The city has begun to consult with all stakeholders, including young people, in designing and planning the redevelopment of the building in a way that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

Vancouver Mayor, Larry Campbell, likely host of the 2006 World Urban Forum, understands the need to involve youth in important urban projects. "The needs, aspirations and contributions of young people also need to be reflected in the life of the city." Vancouver is one of the most progressive cities in the world in terms of youth policy. It has adopted a civic youth strategy that recognizes all citizens. The city fathers believe that involving youth in community based projects is a meaningful way of engaging young people and that building a strong foundation for their involvement today

means a legacy of youth involvement tomorrow.

Expanding from the local level is the involvement of grassroots organizations, such as the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA), also based in Vancouver. EYA is a major employer of young people at risk. In partnership with Redwire Native Youth Media, it also publishes a quarterly magazine called *Redwire*, which is distributed to over 40,000 aboriginal youth, activists, teachers and students. Written and edited by aboriginal youth, *Redwire* works to empower and educate its readers. It recently asked readers about their hopes for the future. Shannon Johnny, a young aboriginal woman, replied: "To feel supported and empowered, to be able to walk with pride and dignity, to feel successful and to feel proud to have beautiful brown skin."

Yet, even with awareness creating magazines such as *Redwire*, the reality is that the majority of Canadians still have no clue about the harshness of life on Reserves, the inadequate shelter and clothing provided to the homeless to brave the intolerable Canadian winters and the increase in air and noise pollution as a result of the rural exodus.

But let us not lose hope. National organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) are looking to mobilise youth involvement in municipalities across Canada. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada, has invested heavily in youth exchanges between Africa and Canada to promote good governance in priority areas, such as health and education. The tools are there. We just need to get out there and do it.

*Tomas Ernst, 24, is Canada's representative on the UN Environment Programme's Tunza Youth Advisory Council*

***In a world that so often decries the apathy of its youth, we can open our arms for the millions of adolescents eager to contribute their new ideas and bounding enthusiasm.***

— former South African President Nelson Mandela.

## *In Swaziland, problems of education and growing slums*

By Siphesihle Pearl Nhlabatsi

There is a major need for the local governments in Swaziland to provide forums where all young people will be brought together and all the development issues are discussed. Also the local government should then support the youth organizations in all their projects. This can help in bringing about changes that will benefit society at large.

Schools in Swaziland do not teach young people about sustainable development issues. Schools often do not teach young people to be self reliant. There is a great need for the Ministry of Education to provide all schools in Swaziland with facilities like computers so that schools are able to produce technically competent personnel and also enable youths to get as much information as possible.

There is a problem of urbanization in Swaziland. The situation is even more pronounced in the hub of the country, Manzini. Many young, able-bodied men and women migrate from rural areas into urban areas to look for jobs. Like in many developing African countries, employment is scarce. Unfortunately, these people do not return to the rural areas. They remain in the towns and cities, which have many adverse effects on the urban areas, such as increased crime. Young people take to crime to get money for food, and, more distressingly, to buy drugs.

With the rapid urbanization comes the growth in slums on the city outskirts. Sanitation in these slums is very poor. There is inadequate water and electricity. Social services are very poor. This is because the local government cannot handle the pressure caused by the mushrooming of slums.

There is still a lot to be done. Progress is possible if the local and state governments invest in the most valuable resource, which is the youth.

*Siphesihle Pearl Nhlabatsi, 17, is a pupil at the Evelyn Baring High School in Nhlangano, Swaziland. A member of a group of 15 young people aged up to 25, called Nhlangano Youth, she visited UN-HABITAT headquarters in Nairobi as a youth delegate to the 19<sup>th</sup> Governing Council in May 2003.*

## India's new youth policy

By Jehangir Merwanji

“According to the World Health Organization, 33 per cent of India's total population of over 1 billion people is between 10 and 24 years of age. India is not only one of the most heavily populated countries, it is also one of the poorest.

Despite their demographic importance, the majority of young people in India have been neglected. A National Youth Policy was formulated in 1988 and later revised into a new draft, which aims at strengthening young Indians' cultural identity and opening their minds to scientific curiosity. But even before its official release, the policy had already been criticized for its vagueness.”

— Jehangir Merwanji is a journalist based in Mumbai, India.



Making a living at a Nairobi dumpsite. Photo: © NathanKihara/UN-HABITAT

### Children and youth: a new on-line resource

Readers interested in free access to research articles, field reports, book reviews, information resources, an extensive bibliography, and a calendar of events can consult the journal, *Children, Youth and Environments*. The current issue includes papers on street children in many countries, displaced and war-affected children, and a community-based approach to building inclusive and sustainable schools. The Directory of Organizations offers profiles of and links to about 200 organizations in 36 countries.

Users are invited to contribute papers and share information. The site is supported by the National Science Foundation and the University of Colorado, USA. See: <http://cye.colorado.edu>. E-mail enquiries to Willem van Vliet at [cye@colorado.edu](mailto:cye@colorado.edu)

## HIV/AIDS in Tanzania

“AIDS is not a challenge and obstacle to development for my country alone, it is the world's worst crisis. Scientists are yet to find a cure and in the meantime, prevention is our only weapon against the disease. It is an established fact that the most important prevention initiative is to educate society and raise awareness. However, the reality is that Tanzania's most educated youth, the university students, are also those most affected by the disease. Is the information given not sufficient? Is the increase of awareness not the solution?

It is high time we looked at the real challenge, a new form of ignorance. A person can be educated, and still remain ignorant. Ignorant, in that one has information which one does not use or disseminate. More importantly, ignorant in that one refuses to realize that if that person, an educated youth, is not fully aware of AIDS, who is? In fighting the deadly pandemic, we must employ every means. There is no way we can put an end to this, if we do not change our political, social and traditional ways of thinking.”

— Faraja Kotta, 18, of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

## Jobs in Cameroon

“Why don't educated youth get good jobs? What is the fate of young graduates? What about young people unable to go to school – what opportunities do they have? Then, we are surprised to see that crime and insecurity are escalating in our towns and cities, that corruption, prostitution, homelessness, and slum dwellers are increasing, that diseases such as AIDS and malaria are spreading at unprecedented rates, that the youth are enthralled by the easy life of the new sector and the *feymanian* (sophisticated fraud)... All these factors contribute to the passivity of the youth in the socio-economic life of Cameroon.”

— Tamoifo Nkom Marie, 17, of the Green Youth Association of Cameroon and Youth Delegate to UN-HABITAT's Governing Council.



Youth delegates at the 19th session of UN-HABITAT's Governing Council. Photo: © UN-HABITAT

### Zambia and the computer age

“Information and Communication Technologies, while they facilitate interaction and world globalization, are not well established in Lusaka, Zambia. The infrastructure and initiatives are in place, but there is a need for more cooperation. The local government has to meet with stakeholders and see how each can contribute to improving the city's information and communication services.

“As e-commerce and e-learning reach the city, the local government needs to plant seeds for future programmes that will empower the city's residents. People should be prepared for the future. We, the young people of Lusaka, are already contributing. So far, we have managed to connect Internet in schools, to train teachers and to encourage local involvement. We would be willing to do more for our future if given the chance.”

— Shalala Oliver Sepiso, 26, of the Rescue Mission, Zambia

### Benin's urban-rural divide

“In Porto-Novo, Benin Republic, one has to differentiate between the old crop and cattle farmers of the suburban zone, and the salesmen and industrial working-class of the urban zone. The former group's social and economic situation is not as stable as that of the latter. They live in dark houses often built with fragile materials and their children seldom go to school. Today, the two categories live side by side. The rise of youth delinquency explains why girls become mothers prematurely, while the boys who father their babies still live under their parents' roofs. Sadly, the situation is becoming generalized.”

— Josiane Honvou, 22, of Porto Novo, Benin, Youth Delegate to UN-HABITAT's Governing Council.

*The voices series was edited by Olayinka Ibukun*

### Cambodia and Drugs

“It is incredible that Cambodia today is known for producing and trafficking all kinds of drugs in alarming quantities. Drugs are exported from Cambodia to the Western World, while only a couple of years back, the route was the reverse. Drug-trafficking is spreading very fast, especially among the youth. According to the National Authority Against Drugs, 69 per cent of Cambodia's drug-users are students in secondary schools and universities.”

— Phearun Ros, 22, of the Khmer Youth Association, Cambodia, Youth Delegate to UN-HABITAT's Governing Council.

### Information please!

“A lack of information has led to the inadequate participation of youth in development projects. Hence, their skills, ideas and creativity are left untapped. This affects the general development of the country. There is a great need for the local government to disseminate information to the most valuable asset of a society, its youth.”

— Siphesihle Pearl Nhlabatsi, 18, of Swaziland, Youth Delegate to UN-HABITAT's Governing Council.



## Getting down in a Rio favela –

### A meeting with one of Brazil's most popular hip-hop men

By Roselyne Mburu and Nicholas You

**M**V Bill, one of Brazil's most popular hip-hop artists, was born in the western part of Rio de Janeiro in 1974. The letters in his name, MV derive from *Messageiro de Verdade* or messenger of truth. His real name, he keeps a close secret.

The Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme (BLP) interviewed MV Bill in Rio in May as part of its collaborative effort with the Universal Forum on Cultures - Barcelona 2004 - to identify people and practices worldwide involved in promoting conditions of peace, cultural diversity and sustainability.

"Although much of my music is against many things and against specific trends and issues, I rap about positive things, and try to promote positive change. I use my music to communicate," he says. "Controversy still lingers over the music video I made on Soldiers of the Favelas, released in 2000. It shows images of gunshot victims and orphans living in dilapidated slums. The video showed me with actual drug dealers and gangsters, holding various firearms and firing assault rifles. Because of these scenes, I was indicted on criminal charges."

He has not sang that song since the indictment. "But I did get a documentary made with one of the girls featured in the video talking about herself and her life in the favelas. The documentary was expanded to include the lives of 16 kids who work in the drug trade. Of those 16 kids filmed in 2000, only one remains alive today," he says. "I made the documentary because I have lost three brothers and sisters to drugs and violence and I wanted to show kids that death is real, and to encourage them to take a critical look at their lives and their situation. I also wanted to raise awareness of the situation of youth at risk and to open up a dialogue between people living in the favelas and the government."

MV Bill is not alone in his mission. In neighbouring Colombia, *La Ethnia* is a multiracial group that sings about ethnic pride and dignity. From Europe to Africa, and from Greenland to New Zealand, hip-hop is a new international *genre* in local *lingo* that gives a voice to underprivileged youth. Indeed, it is fast becoming the most popular form of pop

music in the world. Experts agree that there is a general hip-hop trend across the globe. In contrast to the American hip-hop scene focusing on sex, flashy cars, clothes and bad language, in poorer countries the young artists rap about problems in their communities.



*Pondering the future of Rio de Janeiro's grim slums, MV Bill raps for his people. Photo: © N.You/UN-HABITAT*

Much of African hip-hop informs the public about AIDS and corruption. Gidi Gidi Maji Maji's number one hit in 2002 *Unbwogable* raps about the political scene and played an important awareness building role among Kenyan youth in ensuring free and fair elections in 2002. In Algeria, members of the group MCLP use rap to denounce both sides of the ongoing strife between Islamic fundamentalists and the government.

In New Zealand, Maori groups rap about cultural identity and being proud of one's heritage. The same goes for *Nuuke Posse*, an Inuit rap group in Greenland, credited with bringing back pride in the Eskimo way of life.

Much like in the United States which set the trend, rap music in Brazil was created by marginalized groups and is regarded as the voice of the disenfranchised. To fully understand hip-hop in Brazil, one needs to understand the larger social-economic context and the situation found in urban settings.

Of a total population of 169 million, close to 50 per cent are of African or partially African descent. Most of them live in the *favelas* with poor access to utilities and basic services. Today, there are more than 600 *favelas* in Brazil. Violence is the order of the day, with most *favelas* run by drug lords.

Publicly, many Brazilians champion their supposedly harmonious race relations. Those of African heritage have, however, almost no social mobility and very little representation in the government or the media. After centuries of oppression and decades of mockery of the idea of African aesthetics, most Afro-Brazilians chose not to acknowledge their African heritage.

The revolution, as MV Bill calls it, seeks to deconstruct the myth of racial democracy and to present the real face of racism, poverty and social exclusion.

MV Bill now devotes the better part of his time to TUFAs, the Centre of the Songs of the *Favelas*.

"It is a centre dedicated to the development of youth in the slums. Most kids in the favelas sell drugs and walk around with firearms. But they could become doctors, lawyers or poets. Our centre provides training for 4,000 youth at any given time. They learn how to read and write, as well as other skills. With their interest in the music scene, we teach them how to record music and make videos. All the people working in the centre are volunteers and we receive no money from the government," he says.

"My biggest wish is for black culture to become part of the mainstream culture in Brazil, and for our kids and our people to become empowered."

*Roselyne Mburu, is a consultant with UN-HABITAT. Nicholas You is chief of the agency's Best Practices and Policy Section and coordinator of its Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme.*

The first Universal Forum on Cultures will be held in Barcelona, May to September 2004. Best Practices will form part of this vast event of concerts, conferences and exhibits to celebrate human ingenuity and resourcefulness in tackling critical social, cultural and environmental problems. A group of hip-hop artists will be brought to Barcelona to talk about these and other issues. They will participate in the world's first inter-cultural Best Practices rap-jam session.

## Empowerment in Brazil

This initiative empowers young black youth (aged 14-21 years) from low-income families by training them as Afro-Brazilian Beauty Specialists. The objective of the initiative is to generate alternative sources of income for young black girls, thus reducing poverty levels from communities on the periphery of Rio de Janeiro. The process not only provides the women with technical skills, but also builds their self-esteem as a minority group.

Resources were provided by the “Solidarity Community Programme Support Association (AAPCS)” and the federal government. The programme, which runs for 6 months, has expanded its trainee-base from 30 in 1996, to over 900 in 1999. Students train for 720 hours and cover courses in world issues, critical thinking, administration, aesthetics, black culture, gender and ethnicity. In addition, the modules provide opportunities for discussions on women’s reproductive health, chronic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, education, sanitation, environment, etc.

Girls graduating from the programme are absorbed into the mainstream labor force in salons in Rio, or in their own neighborhoods, thus meeting the needs of the Afro-Brazilian clientele.

Results have shown that with the increasing employment opportunities, the girls are able to support their families, re-enrol in higher education, afford better housing in well-serviced neighborhoods, and increase their self-esteem.

## Caring in Canada

The Alberta Teachers’ Association’s (ATA) *Safe and Caring Schools* (SACS)

Project is a not-for-profit, comprehensive, violence-prevention and character-education endeavour designed to encourage socially responsible and respectful behaviour. It addresses the root causes of violence and crime through social development. The SACS project takes a holistic approach emphasizing the critical role played by parents, teachers and other important adults in a child’s life and by stressing the significance of the entire community in nurturing children and youth. The Project, which has a

strong research base, is collaborative in nature involving dozens of organizations and agencies with like aims. It focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to living respectfully and responsibly, developing self-esteem, respecting and valuing diversity, preventing prejudice, managing anger, dealing with and preventing bullying and harassment, and managing and resolving conflicts peacefully.

The project empowers vulnerable children and youth and fosters inclusive, caring and supportive behaviour among their peers and the adults who are viewed as important role models. Over 500 volunteers are trained to deliver programmes locally which builds capacity and sustainability at the school and community levels. They use more than 46 resources in print, video, workshop and Internet formats, developed by the Project for students, teachers, parents and other adults.

Evaluations show reductions in violent and disruptive behaviour, increased academic achievement, and enhanced feelings of belonging among students, deeper appreciation for diversity and more caring toward others.

## Women and Parks in Austria

Women sociologists and planners adopted an environmental behaviour research to make a Vienna park safer and more pleasant for girls. A public participatory process involving the girls, local and external experts resulted in a gender sensitive re-design of Einsiedler Park and St. Johann Park.

The strategy adopted incorporates the girls’ interests in games, sports activities and leisure preferences in the use of public spaces. This develops a sense of ownership for public and social outdoor spaces, and results in a more balanced distribution between male and female users of public parks.

Both park visitors and planning agencies are encouraged to be more sensitive to girls’ use of open spaces by introducing appropriate design elements such as those propagated by *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CEPTED) techniques. These design considerations, such as proper lighting of park trails, increased visibility, clear open spaces, multi-functional play areas, etc., have improved many park

users’ sense of safety, particularly adolescent girls and the elderly.

## ... an American Park

Take Back The Park, initiated in 1987, represents a creative departure from previous youth programming in that it was the first project of its kind in New York City that gave young people – all high-risk youth – a lead role in motivating peers and adults in reclaiming community recreational space from drug dealers. Since its inception, *Take Back the Park*, has every summer been mobilizing youth leaders and volunteers one or more New York City neighbourhoods to reclaim a local park that has been taken away from the community by drug dealing, vandalism, and/or substance abuse.

The programme mobilizes and trains community coalitions, including representatives from youth, police, parks department personnel, community-based agencies, tenants associations and community boards in collaborative community planning. Skilled and experienced youth work with neighbourhood young people to design and coordinate *Take Back the Park* activities, conduct neighbourhood needs assessment surveys, and develop networking between community youth and community police officers. Participating youth are provided with 25 hours of youth leadership and community organizing skills training, including topics such as programme planning, outreach, community problem-solving and strategies for addressing drug trafficking and substance abuse. All “Take Back the Park” efforts remain in action today.

## Helping children in India

Kolkata (City of Joy a.k.a. Calcutta), with a population of 13.2 million, is one of the largest cities in the world. It’s the capital city of the Indian State of West Bengal. More than a 100,000 children living in streets, red light areas and slums were left unattended and stayed away from schools. These vulnerable children were involved in menial labour, exposed to sexual exploitation and never had access to formal education. The purpose of the educational initiative started in 1989 is to enroll all out-of-school children of (5-14

years) into local schools. Priorities include protecting children in vulnerable situations by providing them with shelter, protection, care and counselling with the involvement of railway authorities, police and the local public. The initiative has not only reached out to 15,000 deprived urban children but has been able to enrol 8,000 children into formal schools while reuniting them with their respective families.

Over the years, Children In Need Institute (CINIASHA), has created a model in the field of education by evolving its own Bridge Course method (accelerated method of teaching and learning) for children not in school and drop-outs. The children are reintegrated according to age and appropriate levels in one year's time. CINIASHA has designed a package of the Bridge Course curriculum and training module in collaboration with UNESCO for training approximately 400 community volunteers to date. CINIASHA, has also been a pioneer in designing modules and conducting training for NGO representatives in counselling street children in collaboration with National Institute of Social Defence. The innovative strategies have been replicated by NGOs and the Government at the national level.

### ...and helping children in Chile

The "Adopt a Brother or a Sister" programme of the *National Foundation for Overcoming Poverty*, is an innovative programme aiming to reduce the gap between the quality of the education for children living in poverty and children from higher socio-economic sectors, and at the same time give university students the opportunity to make a social contribution by volunteering as mentors of disadvantaged children. The programme was launched in 1999 and at present well over 700 university students from 30 universities are participating in the programme reaching out to approximately 1,000 children from 43 municipal schools in 19 municipalities.

Through meaningful and affective links between mentors and children, the programme empowers children and improves their interpersonal skills, thus further developing their cognitive abilities. Furthermore, tutors establish close relationships with the children's families, thereby improving family ties through a modeling process on how to influence the children in a positive manner.

## READERS' FORUM

### Exchanging ideas

Please accept our congratulations for the excellent coverage on "Innovative urban Financing" in *Habitat Debate* (Volume 9, Issue No. 1), which is a crucial issue.

Its wide coverage enables those concerned directly to move in to action on several critical fronts. The story on *Building a new local administration in war ravaged Somalia* has some points of relevance to the process of rebuilding parts of Sri Lanka too that have experienced the ravages of war.

The story from Kenya, *Helping house the poor in Kenya* by Jerry McCann, National Director of Habitat for Humanity, Kenya, is an experiment that can be tried in other developing countries including our own.

Indicating e-mail addresses of the writers after their name in the relevant articles would encourage direct communication.

— *Hewage Jayasena, Director, Buddhist Socio Economic Development Institute, Sri Lanka.*

**Editor's note:** *Many of our writers are prominent people for whom privacy is paramount. We are therefore not at liberty to provide their contact details. For the time being, we suggest that readers wishing to get in touch with our authors should contact us so that we can help them communicate.*

### Talking about slums and women

The life of Reeva Sood (*Habitat Debate* Vol. 9, No. 1, April 2003) is one of the many examples of women residing in the marginalized sections in developing countries. She highlights the most conspicuous question of life of slum dwellers and provides the solutions. An important thing highlighted in the article is the influence of the power of women.

On the one hand, what we see in most developing countries is that women are worst affected by poverty. Not only are they subjected to

exploitation of various kinds, but lack of proper sanitation facilities cause many a disease in women, who are the creators of new generation.

On the other hand, what emerges from the article is a new facet of women. Her determination can change societies and, of course, the surroundings in which they live. It is imperative for women to get the awareness or the so-called "Chetna" to rise up to their own self and unite to bring in a better future for the whole community.

— *Geeta Kochhar, Research Scholar Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.*

### The right to adequate housing

Far from progressing towards the goal of improving the lives of slum dwellers, it seems that the number of people who are born, live and die in outrageous conditions increases minute by minute.

According to data recently published by UN-HABITAT, 924 million people around the world live in slums. Out of these 924 million, more than 80 per cent live in the South, and 31.6 per cent live in urban areas.

The right to adequate housing should be addressed within a comprehensive approach of economic, social and cultural rights, where adequate housing includes the consideration of the habitat component, access to health services, labour and the cultural adaptation of housing solutions.

At present, together with international bodies, the governments carry out different programmes designed to alleviate the serious housing problems of its citizens. As an example, I would like to introduce the cases of two Latin American countries, Peru and Uruguay. Although quite different in their demographic and geographic environment, both countries have implemented programmes aimed at normalizing the housing issue. They share an equal lack of global approach to the five key dimensions recommended for housing by the COFORPRI project

funded by Peru and the World Bank, and PIAI funded by Uruguay and UNDP.

On the one hand, title deeds are granted under risky and precarious conditions and a total lack of access to basic services. But areas with difficult living conditions are normalized, thus increasing the price of the final solutions and ignoring the integral cost that represents the expansion of services nets and infrastructure in the country's economy.

This brief description is simply an example of how governments act in order to achieve the goal of reducing slum dwellers in terms of statistics. In the majority of cases, the issue is not addressed through the kind of integral approach that a complex problem deserves.

Today, more than ever, in the context of the severe economic crises that Latin American countries are suffering, there is a need to identify and encourage groups already working on these issues in order to share solutions and take active part in policy making.

— Graciela Dede, Architect, Social Watch/Control, Ciudadano, Montevideo, Uruguay.

## Problems in the UN System

I would like to raise some problems we have with the UN system. When we approach them with an idea or a project, they tell us that their relationships are with the states, not directly with movements or associations. Cooperation with youth movements directly are difficult if not impossible. I wish UN-HABITAT will take this into consideration in its starting relationship with youth movements, most of them needing capacity building in various domains.

For African Youth Network (AYN) made of regional, sub-regional and some national youth councils in Africa, the major problem is the lack of material, financial, and technical means to solve its various problems. The relationship with UN-HABITAT can consist of being the link between our platform and the UN system organizations in charge of issues like: HIV/AIDS, biodiversity, child labour and child soldiers, human rights, disarmament, drug abuse, education for all, girl child, globalization, governance, international law, peacekeeping and preventing conflicts, poverty and refugees.

Let UN-HABITAT, one of the only UN agencies based in Africa, be the spokesperson and have its specialists assist African youth associations, movements or organizations set up an exchange network on the various issues mentioned above.

Many troubles all over the world would have been averted if we had better opportunities, unemployment being the biggest problem.

The ghettos or slums found in almost every city, especially in Africa, are the birth places of crime, rape, drug abuse, prostitution, even terrorism, the last terrorist killing in Morocco and other countries being some examples. A project which will consist of training young people in replacing the existing slums step by step by having the youth of these areas build homes for themselves and their families will help alleviate such problems.

About one hundred shelters built in Lomé, the capital city of Togo (where the African Youth Network is based), can be the experimental city of this project. It can be spread to many cities in the east, west, central and southern part of the continent, and other continents.

— Koffi TOUSSAH, Vice Chairman and Acting Secretary General, African Youth Network, Lomé, Togo.

### Join the debate - your views are important

We welcome readers' letters to stimulate the debate. These will be published under this Readers' Forum, at the discretion of the Editor, who may shorten or edit material to meet space and style requirements. The remaining issues this year will cover *Water and Sanitation for Cities* and *Urban Land Policy and Management*. Write to [habitat.debate@unhabitat.org](mailto:habitat.debate@unhabitat.org), or to the Information Services Section (Habitat Debate), P.O. Box 30030, 00100 GPO, Nairobi, KENYA, or fax number 254-20-623477.

We would also like to know what you think of the new design and contents of Habitat Debate. Please take a few minutes to complete the form below and send it to the above address. The form is also available on [www.unhabitat.org/hd/form.asp](http://www.unhabitat.org/hd/form.asp).

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- Trust/Foundation
- United Nations System

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#### Topics of Interest

- Environment
- Housing Rights/Security of Tenure
- Risk & Disaster Management
- Rural Linkages
- Safer Cities
- Slum Upgrading
- Statistics
- Training/Capacity Building
- Urban Poverty
- Urban Development
- Urban Finance
- Urban Governance
- Water and Sanitation

Other – please specify

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

**Operational Activities Report 2002**

HS/684/03E, ISBN: 92-1-131679-0

92-1-131673-1 (Series)

Year: 2003

Language: English

The *Operational Activities Report 2002* focuses on the support the UN-HABITAT and its partners provided to governments in the formulation of policies and strategies to create and strengthen a self-reliant management capacity at both national and local levels for the year under review.

The 184-page report highlights the following areas in which UN-HABITAT contributed to the various governments: promoting shelter for all, improving urban governance, reducing urban poverty, improving the living environment, and managing disaster mitigation and post-conflict rehabilitation. The report gives a breakdown of the various amounts spent in each county and the specific projects undertaken.

**Food Security and Sustainable Development: Report of a Workshop for Journalists from English-Speaking African Countries**

Authors: UN-HABITAT and COASAD

Year: 2003

Language: English

This is the report of the workshop jointly organized by UN-HABITAT and the Coalition of African Organizations for Food Security and Sustainable Development (COASAD). The aim of the workshop was the sensitize journalists on their role, as opinion leaders and agenda setters, to participate more actively in the crusade for Africa be able to feed itself.

This 96-page publication attempts to cover the essence of the workshop which was held in Nairobi from 20-22 November 2002. It contains various papers on food security issues presented at the workshop and recommendations to end Africa's endemic food security problems. The workshop was held against the background that a city without food will be a very dangerous place to live.

**Partnership for Local Capacity Development – Building on the Experiences of City-to-City Cooperation**

ISBN No: 92-1-131680-4

HS Number: HS/687/03E

Year: 2003

Language: English

Category: Urban Management/ Governance

This publication was prepared as background documentation for the Dialogue on the Strengthening of Local Authorities during the 19th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT. It is a joint report of UN-HABITAT and the local government community on the benefits of city-to-city learning and mutual support which highlights the broad range and diversity of decentralized cooperation practices.

It showcases the variety of complementary options for supporting cities in their cooperation, and draws forward-looking conclusions regarding opportunities to improve the scope of both decentralized cooperation and international support.

**Guidelines on how to undertake a National Campaign for Secure Tenure**

ISBN No: 92-1-131681-2

HS Number: HS/689/03E

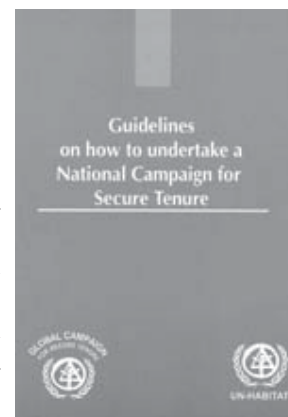
Year: 2003

Languages: English and French

Category: Land Policies

As the title implies, this 52-page publication sets out in a systematic way the appropriate procedures to follow in the national campaigns for secure tenure. It sets out the roles and activities of each stakeholder in order to ensure a successful campaign.

With the publication of this book, countries and institutions wishing to embark on a campaign for secure tenure need not re-invent the wheel, because the guidelines on how to accomplish this task have been comprehensively spelt out in this uniquely easy-to-understand publication.

**Handbook on Best Practices, Security of Tenure and Access to Land**

HS/588/99E, ISBN 92-1-131446-1; Year: 2003; Pages: 115

Language: English; Category: Land and Secure Tenure

UN-HABITAT is soon to publish a handbook on Security of Tenure and Access to Land. It identifies some of the innovations at the global level in the field of land management and identifies land tenure trends. It shows how governments, including local government and other stakeholders, are coming to grips with implementing the land related principles enshrined in the Habitat Agenda at a practical level in the cities and towns.

It is useful as a benchmark to assess at a global level the tools, methods and approaches that exist for the implementation of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, and to identify the gaps, blockages and problems that still need to be addressed.

*For further information on these and other publications please see: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)*

*Reviews by Joseph Igbiniedion*

## Recent Events

### UN-HABITAT's Governing Council a Success

The 19th Session of UN-HABITAT's Governing Council held in Nairobi in May 2003 approved a US\$44.4 million budget for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the 2004-2005 biennium. The Council also passed a record number of resolutions most of which were committed to strengthening the agency.

The new budget represents an increase of 40 per cent on the last budget allocated by the 18th Session and almost double the budget approved by the 17th Session. The Executive Director was also authorised to commit up to US\$50.5 million subject to availability of resources.

The Governing Council also approved a Work Programme for 2004-2005 which includes the creation of a fourth division that will work on human settlements financing.

"The fact that over 800 delegates managed to reach consensus so quickly is a sure indication that governments from both developing and developed countries are now fully committed to doing something about urbanization," said Bo Göransson, the newly elected President of the 19th Session of the Governing Council.

Mr Göransson, who is also the Swedish ambassador in Kenya, said: "The resolutions and recommendations that have been passed today will require the commitment of all Habitat Agenda partners, governments, local authorities, the private sector, Non-governmental Organizations and ordinary citizens. We all need to find new ways to prioritise the funding and financing of shelter strategies for the urban poor."

Encouraging the financing of pro-poor investments in human settlements was a priority for the delegates at the Governing Council and the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation was called upon to seek seed capital to encourage the mobilisation of domestic resources for investment in shelter, particularly in developing countries. The Foundation has also been asked to work with the World Bank Group and other international financial institutions to develop a mechanism for increasing the supply of affordable credit for slum upgrading and other pro-poor human settlements development.

Recognizing UN-HABITAT's leading role in the field of providing clean water and decent sanitation to the urban poor, the Governing Council commended UN-HABITAT for forging partnerships with the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Governments were also urged to increase their support to the water and sanitation activities of UN-HABITAT including contributions to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund.

"With nearly one billion poor people living in urban slums in developing countries and with the figure expected to double by 2030, the Governing Council sent a clear signal that the international community is determined to make a difference," said UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka.

"The increase in budget is a vote of confidence in UN-HABITAT. It will enable us to help governments design and implement territorially balanced urban development strategies," Mrs. Tibaijuka said. "At the same time, within cities, we can prioritise improving the living conditions of the urban poor. Together we can make sure that one day our children will live in cities without slums, where every family will have adequate shelter with clean water and decent sanitation."

The resolutions tabled at the Governing Council were designed to improve the capacity of UN-HABITAT to meet the challenges of urbanization. In particular, the recommendations were aimed at strengthening UN-HABITAT's ability to help governments implement the Habitat Agenda and to meet the Millennium Development Goals, especially those concerned with improving the conditions of slum dwellers and the urban poor in developing countries. Special emphasis was placed on helping governments of least developing countries, and on handling the specific problems of countries with economies in transition, mainly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics.

The Governing Council commended UN-HABITAT's contribution to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals through the Global Campaigns of Urban Governance and Secure Tenure and its programme for

regional and technical cooperation and called for increased support to these activities. The agency was also asked to explore all avenues for further funding for slum upgrading. At the same time, UN-HABITAT was asked to establish an advisory group to monitor, identify and, when requested, promote alternatives to unlawful evictions.

The Governing Council stressed the need for detailed knowledge of the extent of poverty and endorsed UN-HABITAT's role in monitoring the implementation of those goals aimed at improving the lives of slum dwellers and providing sustainable access to safe drinking water and decent sanitation.

In a major step forward, a resolution was passed requesting that gender perspectives should be integrated into all UN-HABITAT's activities. The agency urged governments to promote the effective participation of women in human settlements planning and development with an emphasis on poor women's right to housing, land and need for secure tenure. This includes access to credit and protection from forced evictions, particularly for women with HIV/AIDS.

Encouraging the full participation of civil society partners was also a major theme of many of the resolutions and recommendations. The rules of procedure for all future governing councils encouraged the active participation of local authorities, non-governmental organizations and youth. The Executive Director has also been charged with establishing a multi-disciplinary, regionally balanced, ad hoc advisory body on decentralization.

### Cities talk AIDS

The first city consultations on tackling the scourge of HIV/AIDS have been launched by UN-HABITAT's Urban Management Programme in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Seeking to bridge the communication gap that exists between municipal, civil society and community groups that exists in so many countries around the world, the idea is to develop a new shared vision and joint action strategy against the disease.

The first two City Consultations held in May 2003 in Blantyre, Malawi, and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, were viewed as so successful that further such

meetings are planned for Mumbai, India; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Burj el Barajneh, Lebanon; Louga, Senegal; Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; and Santo Andre, Brazil.

The strategy is aimed at institutional capacity building, good governance, information, awareness raising, reducing stigma and re-orienting municipal services to respond more effectively to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS.

In Blantyre, Malawi's economic capital, life expectancy is just 37 years – an alarming figure representative of lower life expectancy trends in southern Africa where the regional average has dropped from 62 years to 47 years corresponding to the rise in HIV prevalence. The National Aids Commission of Malawi estimated the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Blantyre in 2000 to be 98,435, almost 20 per cent of the city's population.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Municipality of Port of Spain, with the assistance of the UN-HABITAT/UNDP Urban Management Programme, has formed a partnership with national government, civil society partners and the private sector. The partnership aims to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS and its impact across the city and to engage communities and citizens in envisioning a new HIV/AIDS free future and developing an innovative and sustained local response.

While the current situation in Trinidad is not as serious as in Blantyre, the epidemic is currently at a critical phase where it is spreading from the high-risk population to the general population. Figures are not available for Port of Spain, but in Trinidad and Tobago, HIV/AIDS is presently among the leading causes of death among young people with increasing numbers of young women at risk. According to the University of the West Indies, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS may be as high as 39,000.

## Land in Kenya

A group of leading experts on land issues met in Nairobi to find ways of improving the security of land tenure in Kenya. During a workshop held from 12-13 June 2003, under the auspices of the Institute of Surveyors of Kenya (ISK), the Commonwealth Association of Surveyors and Land Economists (CASLE), and UN-HABITAT, met Amos Kimunya, Minister for Lands and Settlements.

Mr. Kimunya promised that his ministry would provide land for slum upgrading. They also agreed on a set of eight resolutions:

- ISK/CASLE resolves to participate and contribute in the development of national land policies in the East African region, especially in regard to innovative tenures, affordable land management and land information systems capable of being implemented at scale.

- ISK/CASLE supports UN-HABITAT's endeavours to create an international task force to prevent unlawful evictions.

- ISK resolves to contribute to the improvement of good governance in land management systems and to strengthen the observance of professional ethics.

- The workshop resolves to undertake a study to assess equity issues including those relating to women's rights and other vulnerable groups in land titling and land management systems starting with the East African region.

- The workshop resolves to encourage governments and professionals in the region to extend the lessons learnt from Kenya's rural land administration programme to the urban areas for the purpose of informal settlement development.

- The workshop resolves to set up a study group in support of the development of land information systems for poverty alleviation, good governance, decentralization and affordable land management including security of tenure for the poor and the delivery of social and economic services.

- CASLE resolves to encourage appropriate education and training for surveyors and land economists including continuing professional development relating to land information systems and land management. It also resolves to play its part in building capacity in the other stakeholders.

The delegates also agreed to hold regular meetings at two or three-year intervals.

## Future Events

### World Habitat Day 2003

6 October 2003

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**Theme:** Water and Sanitation for Cities

Governments, community organizations and individuals around the world will celebrate *World Habitat Day* this year on Monday, 6 October in a wide range of events at

national and community levels focusing on this year's theme of *Water and Sanitation for Cities*. The theme was chosen because the world's urban water and sanitation crisis is far worse than official statistics suggest. The global observance will be held in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro.

According to a new report by UN-HABITAT, *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities*, in Africa alone, for example, there are as many as 150 million urban residents – up to 50 per cent of the continent's urban population – who lack adequate water supplies. Even more people, an estimated 180 million, lack adequate sanitation.

The idea behind the annual World Habitat Day is to remind governments, municipalities and the public at large about the urgency of striving to improve human settlements and especially those of the urban poor who live without clean water, proper sanitation and basic services.

Among the highlights of the global observances of World Habitat Day in Rio de Janeiro will be the *Habitat Scroll of Honor*, an international award for outstanding contributions towards urban governance by individuals, organizations and projects. The Building and Social Housing Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in the United Kingdom, will also present the *World Habitat Awards* in recognition of innovative, sustainable and replicable human settlements projects throughout the world.

### Sustainable Cities Programme, Local Agenda 21

#### Global Meeting 2003

29 September – 2 October 2003

Alexandria, Egypt.

**Theme:** Environmentally sustainable urbanization through planning and management capacities aimed at poverty reduction in Alexandria.

### International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP), 47<sup>th</sup> World Congress

5-8 October 2003

Vienna, Austria.

**Theme:** Cities and Markets, Shifts in Urban Development

### Second World Urban Forum

13-17 September 2004

Barcelona, Spain.

# UN-HABITAT OFFICES

## HEADQUARTERS

UN-HABITAT  
P.O. Box 30030, GPO,  
**Nairobi, 00100, Kenya**  
Tel: (254-020) 621234  
Fax: (254-020) 624266/624267/  
624264/623477/624060  
E-mail: [infohabitat@unhabitat.org](mailto:infohabitat@unhabitat.org)  
Web-site:  
<http://www.unhabitat.org/>

## REGIONAL OFFICES

### Africa and the Arab States

UN-HABITAT Regional Office for  
Africa and the Arab States  
P.O. Box 30030, GPO,  
**Nairobi, 00100, Kenya**  
Tel: (254-020) 621234/623221  
Facsimile: (254-020) 623904/623328  
(Regional Office)  
624266/7 (Central Office)  
E-mail: [roaas@unhabitat.org](mailto:roaas@unhabitat.org)  
Web-site:  
<http://www.unhabitat.org/roaas/>

### Asia and the Pacific

UN-HABITAT Regional Office for  
Asia and the Pacific  
ACROS Fukuoka Building, 8th Floor  
1-1-1 Tenjin, Chuo-ku  
**Fukuoka 810-0001, Japan**  
Tel: (81-92) 724-7121  
Fax: (81-92) 724-7124  
E-mail:  
[habitat.fukuoka@unhabitat.org](mailto:habitat.fukuoka@unhabitat.org)  
Web-site:  
<http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org>

### Latin America and the Caribbean

UN-HABITAT Regional Office for  
Latin America and the Caribbean  
(ROLAC)/Oficina Regional para  
America Latina y el Caribe (ROLAC)  
Av. Presidente Vargas, 3131/1304  
20210-030 - **Rio de Janeiro RJ,  
Brazil**  
Tel: (55-21) 2515-1700  
Fax: (55-21) 2515-1701  
E-mail: [rolac@habitat-lac.org](mailto:rolac@habitat-lac.org)  
Web-site: <http://www.habitat-lac.org>

## LIAISON OFFICES

### New York Office

UN-HABITAT New York Office  
Two United Nations Plaza  
Room DC2-0943  
**New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.**  
Tel: (1-212) 963-8725/  
963-4200  
Fax: (1-212) 963-8721  
E-mail: [habitatny@un.org](mailto:habitatny@un.org)

### Geneva Office

UN-HABITAT Geneva Office  
ONU-HABITAT Bureau de Genève  
International Environment House  
Maison Internationale de  
l'Environnement (C-511)  
11-13 chemin des Anémones  
CH-1219 Châteline  
Postal address: Palais des Nations  
Av. de la Paix 8-14  
CH 1211 **Genève 10, Switzerland**  
Tel: (41-0) 22 917-86 46/7/8  
Fax: (41-0) 22 917-8046  
E-mail: [habitatgva@unog.ch](mailto:habitatgva@unog.ch)  
Website: <http://www.unhabitat.org>

### European Union Office

UN-HABITAT Liaison Office  
with the European Union and  
Belgium  
14 rue Montoyer  
B-1000 **Brussels, Belgium**  
Tel: (32-2) 503-35-72  
(32-2) 503-1004  
Fax: (32-2) 503-46-24  
E-mail: [unhabitat@skynet.be](mailto:unhabitat@skynet.be) or  
[unhabitat.admin@skynet.be](mailto:unhabitat.admin@skynet.be)  
Web-site: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)



UN-HABITAT

## INFORMATION OFFICES

### Central Europe

UN-HABITAT Information Centre  
for Central Europe  
H-1124 **Budapest**  
Németvölgyi út 41. 2. ep. 1.1.,  
**Hungary**  
Tel/Fax: (36-1) 202-2490  
E-mail:  
[horcher@unhabitat.datanet.hu](mailto:horcher@unhabitat.datanet.hu)

### India

United Nations Human Settlements  
Programme - UN-HABITAT  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor (East Wing)  
Thalamuthu Natarajan Building  
(CMDA Building)  
Egmore, **Chennai 600 008, India**  
Tel: (91-44) 2853-0802/91-44-2855-  
5834  
Fax: (91-44) 2857-2673  
E-mail: [unchssp@md2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:unchssp@md2.vsnl.net.in)

### China

UN-HABITAT Beijing Information  
Office  
No. 9 Sanlihe Road  
**Beijing 100835**  
People's Republic of **China**  
Tel: (86-10) 6839-4750, 68350647  
Fax: (86-10) 6839-4749  
E-mail:  
[unchspek@public.bta.net.cn](mailto:unchspek@public.bta.net.cn)  
Web-site:  
<http://www.cin.gov.cn/habitat>

### Russian Federation

UN-HABITAT Executive Bureau in  
Moscow  
8, Stroiteley Street, Building 2,  
Office 809  
Moscow, 119991  
**Russian Federation**  
Tel: (7-095) 930-6264  
Fax: (7-095) 930-0379  
E-mail: [unhabitat@gosstroy.gov.ru](mailto:unhabitat@gosstroy.gov.ru)  
URL: [www.unhabitatmoscow.ru](http://www.unhabitatmoscow.ru)