



UN HABITAT

URBANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT: EMERGING FUTURES

WORLD CITIES REPORT 2016

FOREWORD



Since the 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, the world has faced many serious challenges, including rising inequality, increasing insecurity in many places and the widening impacts of climate change everywhere. But we have also made major advances in medicine, life expectancy, information and communications technology, governance and human knowledge. On both the positive and negative sides of this ledger, cities have been a primary arena where change takes place.

As the world has transformed, so have urban areas. Today, cities are home to 54 per cent of the world's population, and by the middle of this century that figure will rise to 66 per cent. While cities face major problems, from poverty to pollution, they are also powerhouses of economic growth and catalysts for inclusion and innovation. With vision, planning and financing, cities can help provide solutions for the world.

This year's United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development — known as Habitat III — in Quito, Ecuador, is a timely and important opportunity. It takes place as the world embarks on efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which gives a prominent role to cities. Habitat III is expected to discuss and agree on a New Urban Agenda aimed at enhancing the contribution of cities to sustainable development, and at ensuring that cities are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

This new World Cities Report presents a number of issues that this New Urban Agenda should address. I commend its analysis and documentation to a wide global audience, and encourage all stakeholders to make Habitat III a success in pointing the way forward in designing and managing cities so that all their inhabitants can enjoy lives of dignity.

Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations

