

OUR URBAN CHANGE

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

“Urbanization is a source of





A CHANGING AND GROWING MISSION FOR UN-HABITAT

UN-Habitat, the urban agency of the United Nations, was created when two-thirds of humanity was still rural.



Today, half of humanity lives in towns and cities. Our research shows that figure will reach the two-thirds in little over a generation.

This makes our quest as city changers for better planned, healthier, greener cities where the poor feel they belong, where women feel safer and where youth have better opportunities,

more urgent than ever. This means better urban planning and design.

Our work and years of experience with organizations at every level, including all spheres of government, communities and partners in business, academic and civil society sectors, tells us that the urban mission is arguably the most

important confronting humanity in the 21st century.

There is a need for a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements which provides for affordable housing and infrastructure and prioritizes slum upgrading and urban regeneration. And they further stressed their commitment towards improving the quality of human settlements, including the living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers in the context of poverty eradication so that all people have access to basic services, housing and mobility.

As we move ahead to the third 20-year Habitat III summit in 2016, UN-Habitat's priorities will focus on seven areas:

1. urban legislation, land and governance;
2. urban planning and design;
3. urban economy;
4. urban basic services;
5. housing and slum upgrading;
6. risk reduction and rehabilitation;
7. urban research and capacity development.

Cities after all are the greatest and perhaps most enduring legacy of human civilization. This is why governments want us to promote an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements. We are tasked with supporting local authorities, increasing public awareness and enhancing the involvement of local people, including the poor, in decision making.



"We stress the need to strengthen existing cooperation mechanisms or platforms, partnership arrangements and other implementation tools to advance the coordinated implementation of the United Nations Habitat Agenda with the active involvement of all relevant United Nations entities and with the overall aim of achieving sustainable urban development. We further recognise the continuing need for adequate and predictable financial contributions to the UN-Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation so as to ensure timely, effective and concrete global implementation of the Habitat Agenda." – from the pledge by world leaders in the Rio +20 outcome document, *The Future We Want*.



Joan Clos

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director of UN-Habitat

development, not just

an outcome of it. We should



URBAN LEGISLATION, LAND AND GOVERNANCE

Ninety-five percent of the world's urban population growth is a result of population increases in developing countries cities, most of which are unprepared for rapid urbanisation and struggle to adapt existing means to cope.



UN-Habitat believes that urban legislation should be a priority area for sustainable urban development. Cities and local authorities must have legislation to manage land, planning, financing, including taxation, housing, basic

services, infrastructure, transport, economic development and social exclusion.

Obsolete, inappropriate and poor regulatory frameworks are among the major obstacles for urban management and governance. This

be able to build a political

gives rise to an informal economy and parallel systems to circumvent the system. Good laws and institutions are the basis of effective urban governance, management and planning.

UN-Habitat can help cities identify and recommend reforms and strategic actions which can help urban expansion, while strengthening decentralisation and local democracy. The production of large scale serviced land can accommodate rapid urban growth, create more public space, and in some cases enable development cost sharing through land value capture.



Global Land Tool Network

When land matters are poorly managed, the problems can lead to disputes, degradation, lost economic and development opportunities, and conflict. Poorly managed land also leads to discrimination and rights violations, and slum growth.

UN-Habitat helps develop standards for urban land, innovative residential tenures, affordable land management systems, land-related regulatory and legal frameworks, with an emphasis on pro-poor and women's rights and empowerment.

One of our projects is the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN). The GLTN objective is to contribute to poverty alleviation and the Millennium Development Goals through land reform, improved land management and security of tenure. The Network has developed a global land partnership and its members include international civil society organizations, international finance institutions, international research and training institutions, donors and professional bodies. The GLTN is a demand driven network where many individuals and groups have come together to address this global problem. www.gltn.net.

commitment to accommodate



Safer cities

Crime and the fear of crime and violence is one of the most influential factors in our daily lives, dictating where we choose to live, how we behave, where to go and where we work. Safety enhances investments, promotes competitiveness, contributes to good governance and fosters social cohesion.

UN-Habitat runs programmes designed to help make our cities safer throughout the Global Network for Safer Cities, and provide a design service to support cities in the development of urban safety programmes. The design service offers technical expertise and a set of tried-and-tested analytical and operational tools, with a sharp focus on improving safety for the most vulnerable.



Inclusive cities and governance

The divide between the wealthier and poorer segments of society in our cities stands out as one of the major paradoxes of this early 21st century. Good governance gives us inclusive cities where equal access to urban services and opportunities are less restricted by all kinds of invisible and very visible barriers. UN-Habitat uses various systems to improve and consolidate good governance. They include the Urban Governance Index (UGI), Participatory Budgeting, Transparency in Local Governance and Land Administration, land governance, participatory dialogues, and the Urban Governance Analytical Framework.



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URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

We live in an age where the world's population has grown to 7 billion, and the coming two decades will be unprecedented moment in human history:



This global population will grow from 50 per cent urban today, to 70 per cent.

This transition to a predominantly urban world is irreversible and brings with it equally irreversible changes in the way we use land, water, energy and other resources. How we manage this rapid

urbanisation will be the key to our very survival and prosperity.

One of our new top programme priorities is promoting a new way of urban planning.

The new approach that emphasises: (1) preventive planning; (2) planning at the scale of

the problems; and (3) planning in phases, beginning with ensuring adequate physical access and basic urban services, especially water and sanitation, linking planning with financial capacities.

Combined with modern technology, better urban planning can solve most of the problems that we are facing, and lead cities to prosperity. Cities are engines of wealth and employment, innovation and creativity, and provide the best opportunities to improve livelihoods. Cities give great economies of scale and opportunities for efficiency to infrastructure development.



Future urban planning must address five major factors shaping 21st century cities:

1. Environmental challenges of climate change and the excessive dependence of cities on cars using fossil fuel;
2. the demographic challenges of rapid urbanisation, shrinking cities, large youth populations in some parts of the world and ageing in others, and increasingly multicultural cities;
3. economic challenges of uncertain future growth and fundamental doubts about market-led approaches now endangered by the current global financial crisis, as well as increasing informality in urban activities;
4. increasing socio-spatial challenges, especially social and spatial inequalities, urban sprawl, unplanned peri-urbanisation and the increasing spatial scale of cities;
5. the institutional challenges related to governance and the changing roles of local government.



Los Angeles, USA. © iofoto/Shutterstock

rapid increase of urban

population, to prevent the



URBAN ECONOMY

UN-Habitat promotes urban economic and financial development so that cities can reduce poverty, be more productive, provide better housing and municipal finance, regional economic development, and community-based initiatives.



Many cities and towns lack the resources to meet the ever-growing demand for more housing, more basic services, new public transport, and new infrastructure and maintenance.

Municipal authorities – with the backing of central government – need guaranteed funding

for much of this. They also need the support of the business sector, and they need to find new ways of generating resources. They need to be able to raise revenue with the help of advisory, technical and capacity building support which UN-Habitat can provide.

These mechanisms include land value capture, borrowing and access to capital markets, identifying bankable projects attractive to the private sector, privatisation of municipal and revenue collection. Others are generating income from issuing of permits to business operators, forming public-private partnerships, privatisation of the provision of municipal services or obtaining grants from multilateral financial institutions development partners.

Cities face constant pressure to be competitive and attractive to investors and talent. Unemployment is a major problem. In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, more than 70 per cent of the labour force is vulnerable. Youth unemployment is a particular concern with young people more than three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.

UN-Habitat helps local governments, especially in secondary towns and cities, understand and exploit their local assets and urban development opportunities for growth, jobs and increased tax revenue.

UN-Habitat brings expertise and networks in local economic development demonstrated through initiatives implemented with partners in a number of countries, including Canada, Egypt, Liberia, Philippines, Romania, Senegal and Vietnam.

Well planned and designed cities can generate better financing, higher levels of wellbeing, and better employment opportunities. UN-Habitat priorities are:

1. to help cities improve municipal finance;
2. to turn local assets into economic drivers;
3. to promote community empowerment;
4. to focus strongly on youth.



Working with young people

The 1.2 billion young people aged 15-24 is the largest youth population the world has ever known. These youth live, by and large, in cities and towns. It is estimated that as many as 60 per cent of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030. UN-Habitat meaningfully engages youth so as to fully realise the all the opportunities cities offer and thus create prosperity.

UN-Habitat recognises young people as active participants in the future of human settlements, the UN parlance for towns and cities.

UN-Habitat, through its Urban Youth Fund, and new **Youth-21** initiative is actively involved with city youth projects around the world.



emergence of slums, to face the

climate change adaptation and





URBAN BASIC SERVICES

Millions of people around the world still are without access to clean urban water supplies, proper sanitation, and the results on attaining the water and sanitation target of the Millennium Development Goals remains a major priority of UN-Habitat.



As the world becomes more and more urbanised, the transition places cities at the heart of the climate agenda. At a time in history today when just over half of humanity lives in cities, urban areas now consume 80 per cent of global energy

output. They generate more than 70 per cent of the world's waste, greenhouse gases and other pollution. And because of the growing numbers of people living in them, cities themselves are the primary victims of climate change.

UN-Habitat helps cities exchange views on ways of offsetting these problems, and primarily cutting our reliance on fossil fuels and energy consumption in general. It promotes more efficient, cleaner public transport; energy efficient buildings; and thus less reliance on the automobile.

It also promotes better waste management, and a range of other strategies whereby smarter cities can deliver better services to their citizens, while at the same time reducing energy consumption.

By improving basic services, reducing the urban impact of climate change problems, improving transport systems and using energy more efficiently UN-Habitat promotes sustainability that is human-centred – cities which improve the relative quality of life of their people; cities geared towards the happiness, rights and fulfilment of their citizens.



Drinking water - good progress

The number of people using improved drinking water sources reached 6.1 billion in 2010, up by over 2 billion since 1990. China and India alone, recorded almost half of global progress, with increases of 457 million and 522 million, respectively. Yet the work is not yet done. Eleven per cent of the global population—783 million people—remains without access to an improved source of drinking water and, at the current pace, 605 million people will still lack coverage in 2015. In four of nine developing regions, 90 per cent or more of the population now uses an improved drinking water source. In contrast, coverage remains very low in Oceania and sub-Saharan Africa, neither of which is on track to meet the drinking water target by 2015. Over 40 per cent of all people without improved drinking water live in sub-Saharan Africa.



Urban mobility

What we call 'sustainable urban mobility' – the ability to move about town easily – is the key to a properly functioning city. The success of doing business and conducting productive relationships in cities depends on sustainable, efficient mass transport systems. UN-Habitat pursues three objectives: First, mobility plans integrated within the overall urban plans for the city; second, how urban investments can decrease the demand for private vehicles and discourage urban sprawl, and third, the need to ensure a political and financial commitment for trunk infrastructure, including high capacity systems, which are environmentally friendly.



Sanitation – a “global scandal”

Sanitation coverage increased from 36 per cent in 1990 to 56 per cent in 2010 in the developing regions as a whole. Despite progress, almost half of the population in those regions—2.5 billion—still lack access to improved sanitation facilities. The greatest progress was achieved in Eastern and Southern Asia, where sanitation coverage in 2010 was, respectively, 2.4 and 1.7 times higher than in 1990. At the current pace, and barring additional interventions, by 2015 the world will have reached only 67 per cent coverage, well short of the 75 per cent needed to achieve the Millennium target. An analysis of data from 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (representing 84 per cent of the region's population) shows that over 90 per cent of the households in the richest urban quintile benefit from improved sanitation, while access in rural areas falls below 50 per cent even among the wealthiest households. In the poorest rural quintile, over 60 per cent of households practice open defecation.



Dhaka, Bangladesh © UN Photo/Kibae Park



to fight against urban poverty

and inequality. Urbanization is a



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HOUSING AND SLUM UPGRADING

In many cities, especially in developing countries, slum dwellers number more than 60 per cent of the population and have little or no access to shelter, water, and sanitation, education or health services.



Never before in history has the world witnessed such a rapid growth in urbanisation. However, this rapid urbanisation has also seen the absolute number of slum dwellers increase from 776.7 million in 2000 to some 827.6 million in 2010.

How we manage this situation is arguably one of the biggest problems confronting humanity in the 21st century. As more and more governments recognise this, the United Nations needs to galvanise its strength like never before in the quest for sustainable urbanisation.



In essence, it is a problem of adequate and affordable shelter for all, and ways of providing it – a cornerstone of UN-Habitat's relationship with governments, municipalities, its civil society partners, and the financial world, both public and private, as well as with those most in need of shelter, water, sanitation, electricity and other services that make for an acceptable standard of living.

With so many millions living in slums, and countless thousands joining them every day, we are indeed sitting on a social time bomb that is ticking away quietly in many overcrowded, poverty-stricken corners of a geopolitical chessboard already fraught with problems.

It is a shocking fact, for example, that 61.7 per cent of people living in towns and cities in sub-Saharan Africa today live in slums, and that slum dwellers constitute 35 per cent of urban residents in South Asia.



© JOSHCO



Achieving the target

Improvements in the lives of 200 million slum dwellers bring achievement of the Millennium target even as rapid urbanisation swells the ranks of the urban poor, according to the latest UN-Habitat research carried in the 2012 Millennium Development Goals Report of the United Nations. The share of urban slum residents in the developing world declined from 39 per cent in 2000 to 33 per cent in 2012. More than 200 million of these people gained access to improved water sources, improved sanitation facilities, or durable or less crowded housing, thereby exceeding the target. This achievement comes well ahead of the 2020 deadline. But despite a reduction in the percentage of urban population living in slums, the absolute number of slum dwellers continues to grow. Fed by an accelerating pace of urbanisation, 863 million people are now estimated to be living in slums compared to 650 million in 1990 and 760 million in 2000. The achievement of the Millennium target does not lessen the need to improve the lives of the urban poor and to curb the increase in numbers of slum dwellers.



source of development, not just

an outcome of it. We should



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RISK REDUCTION AND REHABILITATION

In recent years, the world has witnessed an increasing series of disasters which have resulted in the dramatic loss of human life, the destruction of homes, property, infrastructure, services and indeed the displacement of entire communities.



With an estimated 130 international staff working with more than 2,300 national staff in crisis situations around the world, UN-Habitat's experience shows that in most post-

crisis situations, the sudden disruption of service provision and the destruction of critical infrastructure represent a major threat to recovery for urban survivors.

A key area of work for the agency is ensuring prevention, protection and early recovery of basic service provision and critical infrastructure for transport, water, sanitation, waste management and hygiene systems. This also includes immediate support for health provision, education, and governance systems.

To achieve this, UN-Habitat practices the philosophy of sustainable reconstruction. It is able to show that the best ways to help survivors get back on their feet again is by involving them in planning, managing and rebuilding their homes and neighbourhoods, within a longer term development strategy. Prevention can be greatly enhanced through the adoption and enforcement of better land use planning and building codes, and facilitating compliance through training and capacity building.

The rapid restoration of homes and livelihoods, on the other hand, is more complex and difficult to achieve. It requires that humanitarian relief operations be conceived from the very start as a bridge to development.

The number and plight of internally displaced persons and refugees living for months, sometimes years in situations of

prolonged dependency argue in favour of more sustainable solutions that combine short-term emergency efforts with the longer-term development. During reconstruction after a disaster or conflict, we advocate special attention being paid to the environment, women's secure tenure, rights to land and adequate housing among other matters. UN-Habitat always presses home the message that the survivors should be treated as assets and partners in the rebuilding.



In concert with other UN humanitarian bodies, UN-Habitat's Strategic Policy on Human Settlements and Crisis enables it to provide expert support as part of a carefully coordinated humanitarian response. Our added value is the agency-wide unique capacity to deploy urban specialists in the immediate aftermath of emergency events.

UN-Habitat believes that governments and municipalities must have early warning systems for cities, towns and villages. Our experience tells us that the smartest, most sustainable solutions combine the short-term emergency efforts with longer-term development.



be able to build a political

commitment to accommodate



URBAN RESEARCH AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

UN-Habitat helps cities learn, know and understand their own needs.



From finding out how many people in a given street may have water and sanitation, to what local non-governmental and civil society organizations might think about a city, or how women's views should be taken into account, and helping exchange information and best practice

ideas world-wide, the agency provides the facts, figures and studies that can help decision makers at every level and even local residents make optimum choices.

The agency publishes two biennial flagship reports, *The State of the World's Cities*, and the

Global Report on Human Settlements. Both are today considered among the most authoritative reports on urban affairs anywhere to be found. Also in this league are another set of regional biennial reports – *The State of African Cities*, *The State of Arab Cities*, *The State of Asian Cities*, *The State of Chinese Cities*, *The State of European Cities in Transition*, and *The State of Latin American Cities*.

Good urban policy and planning requires accurate information. UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatory helps also cities get a bird's eye view of their situation and their needs.

Here one of the agency's slogans is: *Building capacity to build capacity*. Based on this premise, the agency will continue to offer technical support to institutions for innovative training programmes which target local governments and non-governmental and community-based organizations.



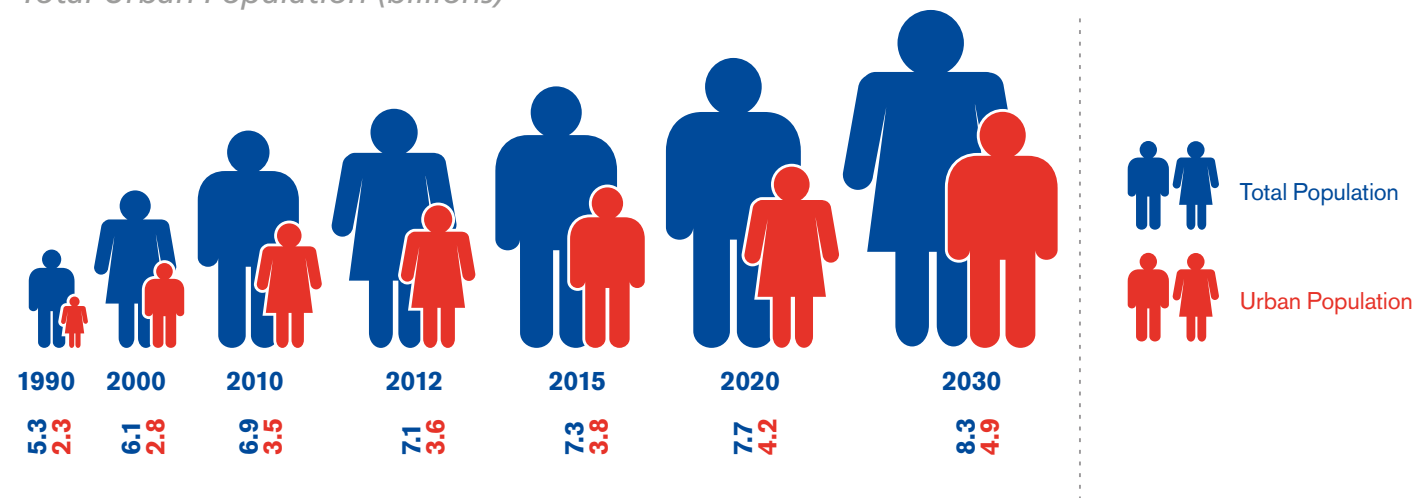
Gender Mainstreaming

Women face discrimination of one kind or another in every major city of the world. The agency strives to broaden gender equality and women's rights into all its activities by supporting and strengthening gender awareness. It seeks to ensure more accountable, participatory and empowering urban development practices through a gender sensitive approach.

The implementation of women's rights to land, property and housing remains a formidable challenge facing the world today. The problem persists despite a host of international human rights instruments such as *Millennium Development Goal 3* (Promote gender equality and empower women), and the 2005 *World Summit Outcome*, where women's land, property and inheritance rights are seen as an important indicator of women's empowerment and human development.

In an effort to strengthen gender mainstreaming in its activities, UN-Habitat produces resource materials on gender and post-crisis governance, reconstruction and land administration, gender in local governance, and best practices in gender mainstreaming in human settlements development.

Total Urban Population (billions)



Source: United Nations (2010).

rapid increase of urban

population, to prevent the

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ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

UN-Habitat has to find ways of reaching out to all globally and creatively.



The quest for sustainable cities of the future is something that can be achieved only if we all understand the important of the role we can play as individual city changers.

UN-Habitat is now preparing for the Habitat III summit in 2016, the global conference on cities held every 20 years, following the Vancouver (1976) and Istanbul (1996) summit meetings at which the Habitat Agenda was forged.

The guidance comes also from our partners, meetings such as the World Urban Forum held every two years. We also celebrate every year the World Habitat Day, in which the agency conveys its research and findings through the publication of flagship reports, its public website and in various other publications or international conferences taking place throughout the year.

emergence of slums, to face the



ALL AROUND THE WORLD

With a portfolio currently valued at USD 741 million, UN-Habitat teams work in more than 70 countries around the world.



As the graphics show, the size of the agency's portfolio in any given area underscores our efforts to reach those cities most in need.

The many climate-related disasters, humanitarian emergencies such as the tsunami in Japan, devastating floods in Pakistan, the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, housing problems in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the continuing reconstruction programme in Haiti, constantly test our resolve and our mission.

UN-Habitat manages this work through its

central Project Office at headquarters in Nairobi, and its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Rio de Janeiro, its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Fukuoka, the Regional Office for the Arab States in Cairo, and the African States in Nairobi.

At the country level, UN-Habitat helps governments improve the quality of urban planning to so that cities are more resilient against disaster, the impacts of rapid urbanisation and climate change.

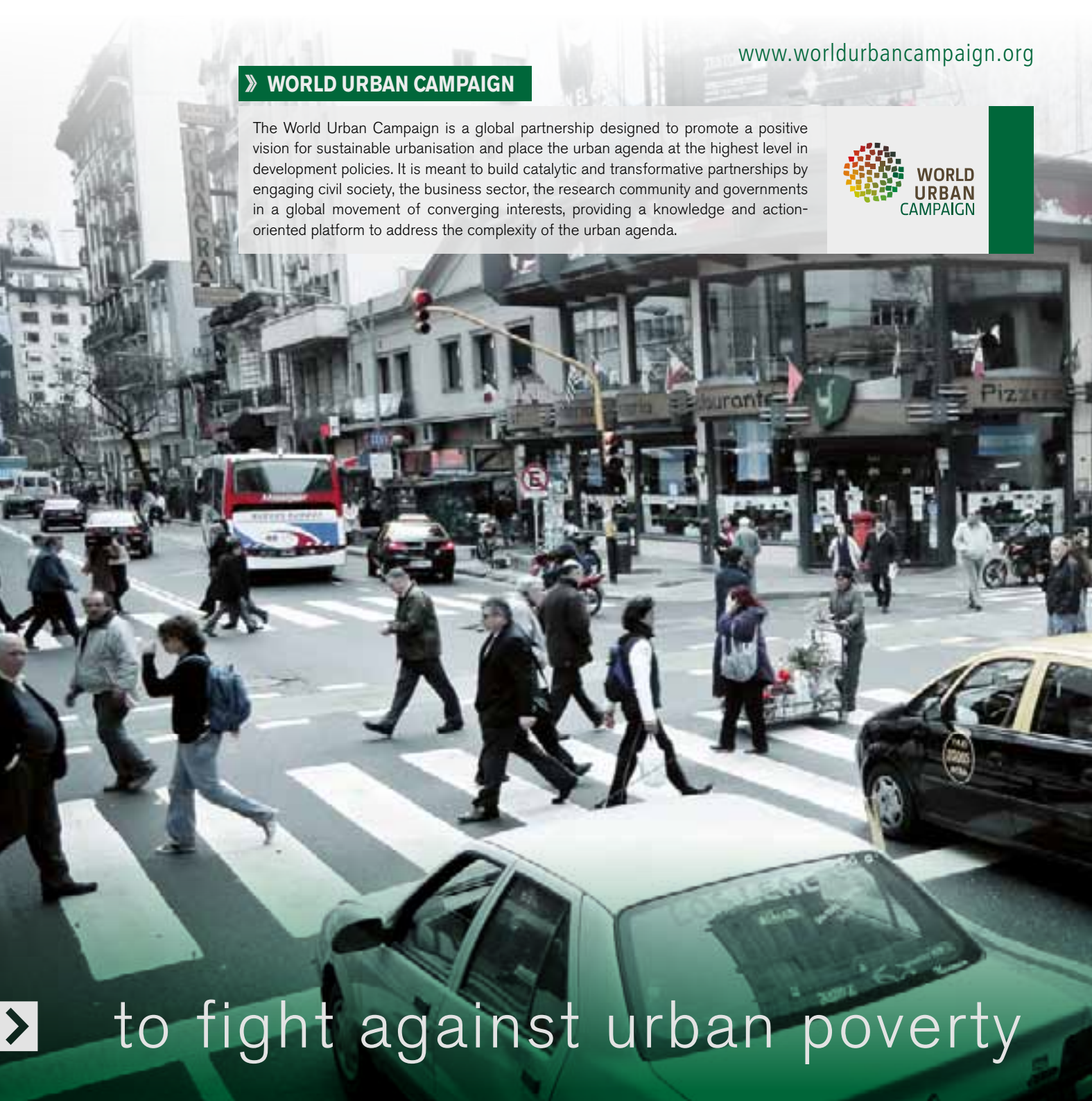
climate change adaptation and

» WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

The World Urban Campaign is a global partnership designed to promote a positive vision for sustainable urbanisation and place the urban agenda at the highest level in development policies. It is meant to build catalytic and transformative partnerships by engaging civil society, the business sector, the research community and governments in a global movement of converging interests, providing a knowledge and action-oriented platform to address the complexity of the urban agenda.



WORLD
URBAN
CAMPAIGN



» to fight against urban poverty

» WORLD URBAN FORUM

A unique feature of the World Urban Forum is that it is one of the most open gatherings on the international stage. It brings together government leaders, ministers, mayors, members of national, regional and international associations of local governments, private sector, media, non-governmental and community organizations in open dialogue and exchange.



WORLD
URBAN
FORUM



and inequality".





www.unhabitat.org/whd

» WORLD HABITAT DAY

This is another occasion where the agency brings urban matters to the international agenda each year. The United Nations has designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day. The idea is to reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right of all, to adequate shelter. It is also intended to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.



www.imacitychanger.org

» I'M A CITY CHANGER

I'm a City Changer is a worldwide campaign of UN-Habitat with the aim of sensitizing and creating awareness to achieve better cities. The campaign is an open platform to share positive actions that have demonstrated impacts on people's lives in urban areas and improve the livability of cities



**I'M A CITY CHANGER, FOR IMPROVING
WORLDWIDE CITIES**

Join it and share your stories!



“Join us changing cities”

UN-Habitat needs your support to continue improving the quality of life of millions of citizens around the world.

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