AN URBANIZING WORLD (1996)

An Urbanizing World is a comprehensive review of conditions and trends in human settlements around the world and of the urbanization process through which more than half of the world’s population will soon live in urban areas. It shows how the growth in urban population has slowed in most parts of the world, while the scale of urban poverty has been underestimated. The report describes both positive and negative sides of cities; including how cities have great potential to combine healthy and safe living conditions, cultural riches, and environmental advantages, as well as what is being done to address the problems of inadequate housing and environmental degradation. The main conclusion of the report is the importance of good urban governance.

GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (1986)

This first Global Report on Human Settlements analyses world-wide and regional developments, trends, and prospects in the field of human settlements. The report reviews the concept of human settlements as it has evolved from the first Habitat conference (convened in 1976 in Vancouver), and analyses human settlements trends and prospects at both the global and regional levels. It selects and illustrates key policy issues in the areas of national development, resource mobilization, institutions, settlement planning and management, building materials and construction technologies, infrastructure, land and shelter. It illustrates the need for a transition from normative and regulatory practices to enabling strategies, and it presents the role of human settlements as both an objective and an instrument of development.

THE GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS SERIES

The Global Report on Human Settlements series provides the most authoritative and up-to-date assessment of conditions and trends in the world’s cities and other human settlements. Written in clear non-technical language and supported by informative graphics, case studies and extensive statistical data, this series is an essential tool and reference for researchers, academics, planners, public authorities and civil society organizations around the world.

The Global Report on Human Settlements is one of UN-HABITAT’s two flagship report series and is prepared under a mandate from the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 34/114). The General Assembly also encouraged “Member States and Habitat Agenda partners to provide support for the preparation of the Global Report on Human Settlements … so as to raise awareness on human settlements issues and to provide information on urban conditions and trends around the world” (resolution 55/194).

In preparing issues of the Global Report, UN-HABITAT draws on inputs and advice from a wide range of experts, in particular the members of the Advisory Board of the Global Research Network on Human Settlements (HS-Net) [http://www.unhabitat.org/hs-net].

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CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE (2011)

Cities and Climate Change reviews the linkages between urbanization and climate change, two of the greatest challenges currently facing humanity in the 21st Century, and whose effects are converging in dangerous ways. It illustrates the significant contribution of urban areas to climate change while at the same time highlighting the potentially devastating effects of climate change on urban populations. It reviews policy responses, strategies and practices that are emerging in urban areas to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as their potential achievements and constraints. In conclusion, the report argues that urban areas have a pivotal role in both climate change mitigation and adaptation and identifies strategies and approaches for strengthening this role.

PLANNING SUSTAINABLE CITIES (2009)

Planning Sustainable Cities reviews recent urban planning practices and approaches, discusses existing constraints and conflicts, and identifies innovative approaches that are more responsive to current challenges of urbanization. It notes that traditional approaches to urban planning (particularly in developing countries) have largely failed to promote equitable, efficient and sustainable human settlements and to address twenty-first century challenges, including rapid urbanization, shrinking cities and ageing, climate change and related disasters, urban sprawl and unplanned peri-urbanization, as well as urbanization of poverty and informality. It concludes that new approaches to planning can only be meaningful, and have a greater chance of succeeding, if they effectively address all of these challenges, are participatory and inclusive, as well as linked to contextual socio-political processes.

ENHANCING URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY (2007)

Enhancing Urban Safety and Security addresses three major threats to the safety and security of cities: crime and violence; insecurity of tenure; and forced evictions; and natural and human-made disasters. It analyses worldwide trends with respect to each of these threats, paying particular attention to their underlying causes and impacts, as well as to the good policies and best practices that have been adopted at the city, national and international levels in order to address these threats. The report adopts a human security perspective, which is concerned with the safety and security of people rather than of states, and highlights issues that can be addressed through appropriate urban policy, planning, design and governance. This report was designated an “outstanding academic title” by Choice, a leading review journal in the USA.

FINANCING URBAN SHELTER (2005)

Financing Urban Shelter presents the first global assessment of housing finance systems, placing shelter and urban development challenges within the overall context of macroeconomic policies. The report describes and analyses housing finance conditions and trends in all regions of the world, including formal housing finance mechanisms, microfinance and community funding, highlighting their relevance to the upgrading of slums. Recent policy developments in the area of shelter finance are discussed at the international and national levels. The report also examines policy directions that could be taken to strengthen shelter finance systems, particularly with respect to realizing the Millennium Declaration target of improving the lives of slum dwellers.


The Challenge of Slums presents the first global assessment of slums, emphasizing their problems and prospects. It presents global estimates of the numbers of urban slum dwellers and examines the factors that underlie the formation of slums, as well as their social, spatial and economic characteristics and dynamics. It also evaluates the principal policy responses to the slum challenge of the last few decades. The report argues that the number of slum dwellers is growing and will continue to increase unless there is serious and concerted action by all relevant stakeholders. The report points the way forward and identifies the most promising approaches to achieving the Millennium Declaration target on improving the lives of slum dwellers.

CITIES IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD (2001)

Cities in a Globalizing World presents a comprehensive review of the world’s cities and analyses the positive and negative impacts on human settlements of global trends towards social and economic integration. The report highlights the impacts of globalization in removing barriers and increasing the influence of market forces on policies and city development, including the increased isolation and marginalization of many, especially poor and vulnerable social groups. It documents current housing and urban living conditions, and examines policies and initiatives for improved quality of life across all sectors of urban society. The report presents lessons for urban planning and management policies in support and promotion of inclusive cities and good urban governance.