World Habitat day in Sri Lanka was celebrated with the Participation from the Ministry of Housing and Construction, Ministry of Urban Development and Water Supply, National Housing Development Authority, UN Habitat, Local Authorities, International and Local NGO’s, School prize winners and their teachers and parents.

The main function was held at BMICH with the participation of Minster of Housing and Construction Mrs Ferial Ashraff, Secretary Mrs Mallika Karunarathna, Chairman National Housing Development Authority, and Mr Conrad DeTissra UN Habitat Programme Manager.

Extracted from HPM’s Massage

Mr. Conrad Detissra HPM UN-HABITAT was invited to share the Key note in addition to the theme on Cities Magnets of Hope Mr. Conrad Detissra HPM explained the UN Habitat has pioneered innovative approaches for neighborhoods upgrading through community participation in the country. Projects adopting the above approach aim to improve small-scale infrastructure at neighborhood level through the involvement of communities in selection, planning and implementation of the infrastructure works. The consolidation of these settlements for longer term sustainability not only involves livelihood, but also community self-governance, sustainable environment management and building, partnerships with local authorities and external support agencies. By involving the communities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project activities and the process of joint decision-making will give the people ownership to the process and bring back the communities together again. It will restore trust and human dignity which are also integral parts of the peace building process.

Minister Mrs Ferial Ashraff from Ministry of Housing and Construction, in her address stressed the importance of citizen to be pro-active in finding solutions to the housing problems in the country with regard to finding land, condominium management and Migration to cities to keep the cities a loveable and a livable place to live.
Prizes were distributed to the winner of the Island wide Art and Easy competitions. Environmental friendly models for main cities by members of the environmental societies of the schools were also presented for the competition.

Press Conference

Thereafter in the afternoon a press conference was organized at the United Nations Conference Room with Mrs Mallika Karunarathna Secretary Ministry of Housing and Construction shared on Sri Lanka’s housing policy, Mr Laxshman Peara Additional Secretary Ministry of Urban Development and Water Supply shared on urban sector policy and on Slum Upgrading Project in Sri Lanka, Mr Conrad DeTissra UN Habitat Programme Manager shared on UN Habitat’s programme in Sri Lanka, Mr Disa Weerapan UN Habitat Regional Adviser shared on the Theme Cities Magnet of Hope and UN Habitat’s Global Programmes and Mr Tim MacNair UN Habitat Housing Adviser – on Donor relationships and our projects in Sri Lanka.

Further to the press conference UN Habitat’s executive director Mrs Anna Tibaijuka’s Massage was shared at the conference.
From 25th September – 2nd October 2006, was declared a Habitat Week to celebrate the World Habitat Day in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Construction, National Housing Development Authority and UN Habitat.

26.09.2006 Awareness programme for local correspondence of Habitat day / week Activities and, current district housing programme – by National Housing Development Authority

27.09.2006 School awareness Programme on Condominium Housing Schemes – by Ministry of Education

28.09.2006 Environment day and Habitat, preparation of environmental friendly models for main cities by members of the environmental societies of the schools - Condominium Management authority and other Local Authorities.


29.09.2006 Technical Officers, training Programme on guidelines for Housing development in Sri Lanka – by NHDA, UN –Habitat, GTZ

30.09.2006 Settlements Development day. Community action programme in Urban housing schemes – by Local authorities and CBO’S

02.10.2006 World Habitat Day celebrations and distribution of art & easy Competition awards at BMICH – by Ministry of Housing & UN- Habitat

02.10.2006 Press Conference with Ministry of Urban Development & Water Supply, Ministry of Housing & UN Habitat.

04.10.2006 Documentary Programme on UN Habitat Tsunami settlement in Sri Lanka with the participation from Ministry of Housing.

05.10.2006 Awareness programme on Slum Upgrading Facility and the work plan For the 2006/2007 in Moratuwa.- Moatuwa Municipal Council with UN Habitat.
Media Publicity on WHD

Electronic Media

02\textsuperscript{nd} October at 9.20am

- Live Interview on Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation on World Habitat day
  Mr Sumith Kannangara Director Housing Sector from Ministry of Housing and Mr
  Kapila Fernando Project Manager UN Habitat participated the interview.

- T.V News Item on WHD and UN Press conference on Sri Lanka Rupavahini
  Corporation

- T.V News Item on WHD and UN Press conference on Independent Television
  Network

- Radio News Item on WHD and UN Press conference on Sri Lanka
  Broadcasting Corporation

09\textsuperscript{th} October 2006

- T.V. Documentary on UN Habitat’s Tsunami Settlements in Sri Lanka on Sri
  Lanka Rupavahini Corporation.

Print Media

- Press report on Daily Mirror on 03\textsuperscript{rd} October 06

- Press report on Daily News on 03\textsuperscript{rd} October 06

- Press article on cities Magnets of hope, Daily News 02\textsuperscript{nd} October 06

- Press release by the President of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and
  the Minister of Housing for World Habitat day - Daily News 02\textsuperscript{nd} October
  2006.

(Articles as per attachment)
Govt, UN to uplift tsunami affected

Mohammed Naalir

COLOMBO: The Government has drawn several projects to help tsunami victims and raise the living standards of the people below the poverty line.

Addressing the media Housing Ministry Secretary Malacca Karunaratne pointed out that the projects will function as short-term, and long-term plans.

Under the short-term plan, measures would be taken to improve the condition of houses and also construct new houses. Loans would be given at low interest through Sanasa, rural banks and the Samurdhi Authority. The long-term development projects would be launched at provincial council level, she said.

At the press conference at the UN Conference Room on Monday she said assistance of Local Authorities was vital in launching development projects especially in tsunami-affected areas.

"The Government has launched resettlement programmes with the assistance of donor countries. They are progressing," she added.

According to statistics tabled at the press conference, out of the Moneragala district population is about 296,351 more than 30.75 per cent live below the poverty line. The percentage of poverty in the Colombo district is six per cent. In 30 years most people will be living in the urban areas and urbanisation is the way for development. More than 60 per cent in the rural areas live below the poverty line. Cities are the places where the poverty percentage is less, UN-Habitat Regional Advisor Dina Weerapana said.

The Regional Advisor pointed out that if the world was witnessing great immigration into towns and cities, 'One third of the world will live in cities and it will be doubled in the future'.

The Master Plan for Colombo (1978-1983), assisting the million houses Programme (1984-1988), Million and a half Houses Programme (1989-1993) and the Sustainable Cities Programme (1990) are still in operation. The Community Infrastructure and Shelter Rebuilding in tsunami-affected areas are among them, it was revealed.

UN Habitat Programme Manager for Sri Lanka, Conrad De Sisera and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Lakshman Perera were also present.
My Greetings to the World Human Settlements Day

I

In the year 1980, only 23

percent of the world popu-

lation lived in slums. Today, the

figure is more than 50 per-

cent. This phenomenon is a

major threat to human

development. It is a matter of

concern that the human

population of the world is

growing at a much faster

rate than the provision of

adequate housing.

Special attention has been

directed to the develop-

ment of urban areas con-

cerning to a schematic

design. It is the task of

the human being to ensure

that all people living in

the urban areas have a

better life.

In addition to this, the

government has focused on

ensuring that all people have

adequate housing. The

Ministry of Housing and

Construction has been

working on this issue for

many years. The Ministry is

continuing to work on this

issue and has made

significant progress.

My congratulations to

everyone involved in the

development of urban areas.

Prime Minister

Palasvati Wijewardene

Prime Minister

Message from the President

World Habitat Day

This year’s theme for World Habitat Day is "Cities, Magnets of Hope". The theme "Cities, Magnets of Hope" is chosen because the urban setting offers hope for a better future. The theme reflects the importance of promoting sustainable urban development, ensuring access to quality housing, and addressing the needs of the urban poor.

It is an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities presented by urbanization. The urban poor face various challenges, including inadequate housing, lack of access to basic services, and displacement. It is crucial to address these issues to ensure a sustainable and inclusive urban future.

The theme "Cities, Magnets of Hope" highlights the role of cities in shaping the future of our societies. It is a reminder that cities can be engines of growth and innovation, providing opportunities for all. The goal is to ensure that cities are inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

It is important to remember that the urban poor are not just numbers on a chart. They are human beings with dreams, aspirations, and hopes for a better future. It is our responsibility to ensure that these dreams are not dashed but rather fulfilled.

Let us work together to create sustainable, inclusive cities that provide hope and opportunities for all. Together, we can build a better future for our cities and our societies.

President of the Republic

Message from the Minister

World Habitat Day

The theme for World Habitat Day 2023 is "Cities, Magnets of Hope". The theme reflects the importance of promoting sustainable urban development, ensuring access to quality housing, and addressing the needs of the urban poor.

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Minister of Housing & Construction

Rajitha Seneviratne

Minister of Housing & Construction
I firmly believe that every citizen in Sri Lanka should have a home of their own. In order to achieve this objective, 65,000 new houses will be constructed in the coming years for the people in need. The government is planning to construct 2,300 houses within the city of Colombo.

Mahinda Rajapaksa
President of Sri Lanka

We are moving towards the theme of the World Habitat Day: "Cities, progress of hope". With the establishment of urban settlements and providing the necessary infrastructure, we are improving the living standards of the urban population. The President, electron, our country's future, will always be a priority.

The development is carried out in the Ministry of Urban Development & Water Supply in close coordination.

Dinesh Gunawardena
Minister of Urban Development & Water Supply

I extend my greetings to the housing project for slum dwellers under the auspices of the Ministry of Urban Development & Water Supply.

Prasanna Abdulla
Director of Housing & Construction

A Biennial of the Housing Project, the Mayor of the Municipal Council, Hon. Mr. Thilakaratne W. Wijeratne, has unveiled the foundation stone of the new housing project at the site of the new housing project in the Town of Colombo on the 23rd of October 2006.

A new fund raiser for the Housing Project "Palin Mandira"

By a Gazette notification, the Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Urban Development & Water Supply has announced and obtained Cabinet approval for a levy of 5% of all new construction projects over 500 sq. ft. the proceeds of which will be utilised for the proposed fund of the housing project for slum dwellers: "Palin Mandira"

Are we ready to make our cities the centrepiece of hope?

The past is always beautiful. This is simply because there is an unlimited fund of memories. We believe that memories are like the photographs we take in life. However, we do not necessarily keep them for the future. Where do these memories go? Where do we keep them?

This is the world of the memory. It is the place where we keep the memories of our lives. We keep these memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums. We keep these memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums. We keep these memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums. We keep these memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums.

The city of Colombo is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories. It is a place where we keep our memories.

In Colombo, we keep our memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums. We keep these memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums. We keep these memories in the same way that we keep the photographs in our photo albums.

Among the challenges facing the residents of Colombo is the need to make the city a more attractive place for living and working. Among the challenges facing the residents of Colombo is the need to make the city a more attractive place for living and working. Among the challenges facing the residents of Colombo is the need to make the city a more attractive place for living and working. Among the challenges facing the residents of Colombo is the need to make the city a more attractive place for living and working.

To achieve this objective, the Ministry of Urban Development & Water Supply has launched a "Palin Mandira" housing project.

Dinesh Gunawardena
Minister of Urban Development & Water Supply

Printed and Published by the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., at No. 24, D.G.(W) Vileparle, Colombo 10, on Monday October 2, 2006.
CITIES MAGNETS OF HOPE

2006 WORLD HABITAT DAY
National Conference
and
Awards Ceremony of
School-Art and Essay Competition
organized by the
National Housing Development Authority
will be inaugurated by
Hon. Ferial Ismail Ashraff, MP
Leader of National Unity Alliance
and
Minister of Housing & Construction
in Committee Room A,
Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall,
Colombo 07
on Monday, 02nd October 2006 at 9.30 a.m.
with the participation of
Hon. H.M. Gunaratne Weerakoon, MP
Minister of Regional Development and
Deputy Minister of Housing & Construction.

National Housing Development Authority
Ministry of Housing & Construction
URBANIZATION: The World Habitat Day is celebrated worldwide on the first Monday in the month of October each year.

The main objective of the deliberations is to highlight a particular aspect impacting the state of human settlements and to focus on the need to recognise adequate shelter as a fundamental right for all.

The theme chosen by United Nations for deliberations in the current year is 'Cities, magnets of hope'. It is observed that the United Nations has chosen the theme as a reminder that the world is witnessing the greatest trends, ever, in migration of people to towns and cities.

Urbanisation and its impact currently is therefore of critical significance to both developed and developing countries.

It would be pertinent to examine some thoughts on the phenomenon of urbanisation in retrospect, perhaps to get an insight in terms of historical facts and lessons of experience.

The process of urbanisation which commenced with the industrial revolution in Britain led to the creation of urban settlements throughout the developed world. These urban settlements or cities were described by Max Weber (1958) as 'tightly' knit, well individualised urban communities.

The growth of cities of urban agglomerations proceeded so rapidly needing a new vocabulary to describe and deal with it. Patrick Geddes coined the term conurbations to describe urban agglomerations in Britain.

The term 'metropolitan area' stemming from the Greek 'metropolis' (meaning the mother city that spawns other cities) came into general international usage subsequently.
Some scholars in the 1950s, however, felt that the concept of the city as described by Weber has become a phenomenon of the past.

Martindale in fact questioned whether the city was not dissolved in a new system, much wider geographically, where the new community framework would embrace the nation as a whole in the future.

These views, however, remained less significant until about the 1970s where the central problem concerning cities in the developed world was of trying to find out how best to manage urbanisation.

The world trend towards urbanisation i.e. the concentration of people in urbanised regions, seems to have been fully accepted. Since then, however, it has often been questioned whether cities were a permanent or a passing phenomenon.

The mid 1970s witnessed a counter-urbanisation debate based on some statistical indices which were considered to be complex and debatable. These indices purported to indicate a settlement scattered and dissolved in the country side.

This model attempted to depict a trend basically described as the dissolution of the city and its apparent replacement by what was assumed to be a dispersed habitat. These views were nevertheless short lived.

In the 1980s there emerged a new concept of urban renaissance which connotes a rebirth of the city. This clearly contradicted the prospect of a decline of the city but did not necessarily mean that the suburban dispersal has come to an end.

It was argued that urban renaissance could mean an exercise in planning, repair and maintenance. It could perhaps be an effort to conserve the cityscape. Such propositions however, were in contrast to what generally has been witnessed in the past decades in most cities.

The reality is that there has been indiscriminate large scale demolition of all buildings block by block in what has been described as a 'massive surgical renewal' to build in new style for new uses.
More significantly some basic changes in the functions of cities over the years are discernible. The industrial revolution filled cities and towns with manufacturing plants and workers.

These manufacturing plants and the workers presently are being moved out from compact and congested cities and out of old buildings unsuitable to modern equipment and activities.

Many of the blue collar occupations, it is observed are gradually becoming redundant due to automation. Additionally the pressure of population growth, in migration and rising economic standards inevitably lead to a general spatial extension and the flow into the country side of urban land uses.

This spatial extension has been facilitated by the improvement of road and rail transportation networks. The result has been a growing separation between the places where people work and transact business, which is still linked to the central cities, and the places where people live i.e. sleep and relax which sprawl around the country side.

It would seem therefore, that the basic changes in the functions of cities inter-alia have been accompanied by significant increases in their functional magnitude. The rise of skylines is a manifestation of cities as distinct entities effecting changes in the urban way of life.

The next phase in this evolutionary process is the emergence of the 'transactional city' (Corey-1983) based on what is described as transactional forces where employment is shifting from labour force dominated by workers who produce and handle tangible goods to a labour force with a majority of its members engaged in the generation, processing and management of such intangibles as information, knowledge and decisions.

It would be observed that there is a transformation of economies and societies revolving around hardware to one concerned increasingly with software.

Similar trends observed in the developed world comprise the increased competition among cities in an international division of labour described as globalisation and a shift towards an information mode of production where information becomes the basic input resulting in a new division of labour not by product but by process (Peter Hall - 1991) To a considerable extent economic
activity over the last couple of decades has shifted from production places to
centres of finance and highly specialised services.

This rather sketchy account of the evolutionary process of cities in the developed
world may not be totally relevant to developing countries.

For instance the concept of spread effects of economic investments where
investments in a region generated economic growth not only in that region but
also in neighbouring regions, which was true of developed countries failed to
materialise in the developing countries.

However, given the complexities of the world economy some of the past
economic remedies may not succeed even in the developed world.

Despite such reservations what appears to matter is that rapid urbanisation is
taking place in most developing countries although for quite different reasons.
Initially people were attracted to cities because of the availability of industrial
jobs consequent to the industrial revolution in Britain.

The current exodus however, from rural areas to cities in the developing world is
not because there are adequate jobs on offer but because the prospect of getting
employment in the rural areas is almost zero.

While there is absolutely no hope in getting employment in the rural areas in
most developing countries the driving force of migrants to cities is the hope of
getting some employment some day in the city. Cities in the developing world
have therefore, been appropriately described as 'magnets of hope'.

In terms of the present trends the world will become predominantly urban within
the next decade. The developing countries may follow suit probably in a couple
of decades.

United Nations statistics suggest that two thirds of the population in the world
will live in cities by the year 2050. It is inevitable that urbanization in the
developing world will also be accompanied by urban sprawl, with the attendant
evils of poor and in sanitary housing, unemployment, disease and environmental
degradation.

Urbanisation in developing countries is also likely to create 'dual cities', wherein
a formal city with all the modern features and characteristics will lie along side
what may be described as an 'informal city' with poor infrastructure, housing and other facilities beset with severe environmental problems.

There will, however be innumerable economic linkages between the formal and informal city which will constantly influence each other and bind them economically and socially and will enhance the dependant relationship among them.

The city of Nairobi in Kenya provides an example of a dual city fitting to the above description. While the formal city gives a visitor the impression that he sees things no different to what he would probably see in Oxford Street in London, the informal city depicts all the evils of poverty and underdevelopment.

Nevertheless there is intense economic activity of an informal character taking place in the latter providing employment and shelter for quite a substantial population, perhaps to a much larger labour force than what the formal city could provide for.

The demonstration effect depicted in the concept of consumer behaviour in economics seems to be catching up in cities in the developing world in their modernisation efforts. This is characterised in the sphere of property development and urban land uses.

A case in point is the emergence of luxury apartments replacing old office and factory buildings in Central London reversing the prevailing preferences of the rich for suburban living.

Curiously though, a similar development process is taking place in Colombo where luxury apartments are coming up in prime locations of the city replacing other urban land uses. While there are innumerable dissimilarities in the state of cities in the developed and the developing world there could also be instances of striking similarities as shown above.

Given the impact of globalisation, informationalization and internationalisation it is unrealistic to assume that cities in the developed and developing worlds will tread along different paths in watertight compartments. It is most likely that the latter will catch up with the former in at least some respects.

However, it has to be recognised that each country has a specific development process with a specific socio-economic, political and juridical system which will
be reflected in the state of its cities. There are no universal standard remedies for city problems.

The once successful Keynesian economic remedies have proved to be utterly ineffective in tackling modern day economic problems even in the developed world let alone the developing countries. The failure of macro-economic growth strategies is reflected more severely at the city level.

This is primarily because macro-economic growth strategies are not spatially related. The traditional sectoral approach used by economists considers space as a constant in their growth equation.

As the world becomes increasingly urban it is essential that policy makers take adequate note of the spatial dimension and use the city as a catalyst for economic growth and national development.

It is easier and more economical to provide amenities, facilities, utilities and services to a concentrated population rather than a scattered population country wide. Cities ideally should be able to provide inclusive living conditions for their citizens. The poor is an essential component of the city.

They have an important role to play in the upkeep of the city. Besides every one irrespective of whatever differences has a right to the city and a conducive living environment.

The provision of such an environment entailing safety and security, safe drinking water, sewerage systems, electricity, transport, solid waste disposal, houses, schools, playgrounds and a strong economic base that could provide adequate employment inter-alia would be the greatest challenges to be met.

(The writer is the former Head/ Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Moratuwa, Director of Post Graduate Studies and Senior Professor of Town Planning)