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## Urbanization: Planning For Growth

*The Next Two Billion People Will Live In Cities, So We Need To Plan Now.*

Almost all future population growth in the next 40 years will be absorbed by cities of the developing world, which are unprepared for such rapid expansion. Planning needs to begin now to take advantage of the many benefits cities can offer.

While cities concentrate poverty, they also provide the best means of escaping it. Cities have long been the engines of economic growth. Densely populated areas can be more environmentally sustainable than sprawling communities and allow for more efficient provision of services. The ideas, connections and activities in cities often generate the solutions to the problems they create.

Urbanization also accelerates the trend toward smaller families and offers more opportunities for women and young people.

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### The Situation

- In 1960, one in three people lived in a city. The urban population has more than quadrupled since then, and today about half of all people do:
- 3.4 billion people. By 2045, more than two out of three people will likely live in urban and peri-urban areas.<sup>i</sup>
- The 21 “mega-cities” with 10 million or more inhabitants (such as Tokyo, Sao Paulo, Mexico City and New York, the four largest) account for only 9 percent of the world’s urban population.
- Most urbanites (52 percent) live in cities of 500,000 or fewer.<sup>ii</sup>
- Most people who move to cities seek better jobs and higher incomes, as productive industries, services and technologies tend to cluster in cities: 80 percent of the world’s gross domestic product is thought to be generated in urban areas.<sup>iii</sup>
- Overall, some 60 percent of urban growth is due to natural increase, with rural-urban migration and reclassification of land accounting for the remainder.<sup>iv</sup>
- Governments often focus on ways to reduce migrant flows to large cities. Many refuse to give slum dwellers access to legal land tenure, and that lack is often a barrier to access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and waste collection. Meanwhile the threat of eviction gives residents little incentive to make home improvements.<sup>v</sup>

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## The Trends

- More than 200 million slum-dwellers have gained access to improved water, sanitation or more durable and less crowded housing in the last ten years, greatly enhancing their prospects of escaping poverty, disease and illiteracy.<sup>vi</sup> By mid-century, the world's urban population will likely be the same size as the world's total population was in 2004.<sup>vii</sup>
- Most cities in the developing world will double in size by 2025.<sup>viii</sup>
- By 2025, the world will have eight more mega-cities: Asia will gain another five, Latin America two and Africa one. Today, Tokyo is the largest, with 36.5 million people.<sup>ix</sup>
- Between 2009 and 2050, Asia's urban population will double, from 1.7 billion to 3.4 billion. Africa's will triple, from 399 million to 1.2 billion, and Latin America and the Caribbean will rise from 462 million to 648 million. Europe's city dwellers, meanwhile, will increase from 531 million to 582 million, and North America's from 285 million to 404 million.<sup>x</sup>
- Over the past 10 years, the share of the urban population living in slums in the developing world has declined significantly: from 39 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2010. However, in absolute terms, the number of slum dwellers in the developing world is actually growing, and will continue to rise in the near future.<sup>xi</sup>

Contact: Abubakar Dungus, +1 212-297-5031, [dungus@unfpa.org](mailto:dungus@unfpa.org)

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- ii United Nations Population Division, "Life Expectancy at Birth – Both Sexes," "Life Expectancy at Birth – Female," and "Life Expectancy at Birth – Male," World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision, New York: <http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/mortality.htm>, Accessed 5/4/11
- iii United Nations Population Division, DESA, "World Population Ageing 1950-2050 – VI. Conclusions" p. 33, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/worldageing19502050/pdf/92chaptervi.pdf>, Accessed 5/4/11
- iv United Nations Population Division, "Annual Population Both Sexes," World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision, New York: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm>
- v Population Reference Bureau, "World Population Highlights: Key Findings for PRB 2010 World Population Data Sheet," Population Bulletin 65-2. New York, 2010, p. 6
- vi United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2010, New York, 2010, p. 77: <http://www.weforum.org/issues/water>, Accessed 4/20/11
- vii Population Reference Bureau, "World Population Highlights," op. cit., p. 6
- viii Population Reference Bureau, "World Population Highlights," ibid., p 6
- ix Population Reference Bureau, World Population Data Sheet, op cit., p. 4
- x United Nations Population Division, "Annual Population Both Sexes," World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision, New York: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm>
- xi United Nations Population Division, "Media Age of Population", World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision, New York: <http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm>, Accessed 5/4/1