



THE STORY OF SHENZHEN

Its Economic, Social and Environmental Transformation

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First published in Nairobi in 2019 by UN-Habitat
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Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)
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HS Number: HS/030/19E

ISBN Number: (Volume) 978-92-1-132840-0

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Cover Photo: Shenzhen City @SZAICE

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Foreword

Southeast China, its coastal ports and history of trade, is particularly close and related to Southeast Asia, my home region. For centuries, the Chinese have ventured into the Nanyang, which is modern day Southeast Asia or the Southern Ocean, developed close trading partnerships and even established settlements. This pioneering spirit has created a wealth of opportunities for the people of both regions. It is not surprising that Shenzhen, the modern day leading city of Southeast China, once again proves to be an inspiring place.

This book shares economic, planning and environmental policies and strategies implemented by Shenzhen, which in a just four decades has emerged as the Silicon Valley of China. This remarkable economic and social development has been built on high-tech, manufacturing and service industries. Today, it is knowledge-based industries that drive Shenzhen's development. Its economic output is ranked third highest among 659 Chinese cities and according to the 2017 Global Financial Centres Index, Shenzhen is the twenty-second most competitive financial center in the world. In 2016, Shenzhen's contribution to China's GDP was USD303 billion, surpassed only by Shanghai and Beijing.

Yet, cities are not merely places where people reside or sites where the production of goods and services takes place. Through their own internal dynamics, cities are key drivers for growth and development. They generate wealth and prosperity, serve as hubs of innovation and transformation, create multipliers, facilitate redistribution of assets and opportunities, increase productivity and contribute to balanced territorial development.

For this four decade-old miracle to continue, the old Chinese practice of long-term thinking needs to be practiced. Sustainable development must be pursued in order to address current global challenges of rising poverty, social inequity, environmental degradation and climate change. In our rapidly urbanizing world, with more than half of the population now living in cities, the question of sustainable urban development comes to the fore. We must ask ourselves how we can improve the quality of life of urban citizens, while ensuring that urban areas remain economically productive, socially inclusive and environmentally sound for both present and future generations.

Shenzhen is truly a remarkable success story. Many growing cities, special economic zones and new cities can learn a lot from its experience. I am pleased to present to you this book, which draws upon the expertise of specialists representing various fields and institutions. It will help us understand many stories that make up the Shenzhen experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maimunah'.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Preface

It is with great pleasure that I write this brief message for this book *The Story of Shenzhen: Its Economic, Social and Environmental Transformation*.

Shenzhen has achieved tremendous economic and social development within the last four decades since the establishment of Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in 1980. This book documents Shenzhen's progress over the years from economic, social and environmental perspectives. Last year, China celebrated the four-teeth anniversary of its reform and opening-up. This year we are celebrating the four-teeth anniversary of the establishment of the city of Shenzhen, and next year we will welcome the four-teeth anniversary of the inauguration of Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. I am pleased that UN-Habitat is publishing this book at this important time for Shenzhen.

UN-Habitat is committed to promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. Many cities, towns and special economic zones in other countries can be inspired by Shenzhen's experience in its urban development. I would hope that this book will contribute to the body of knowledge on urban development, and benefit city leaders, urban planners, academics and economists.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Li Xiaogan'.

Xiaogan LI

President of Shenzhen Association for International Cultural Exchanges

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