



UN HABITAT



# ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: ST. JOHN'S URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORDS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
BACKGROUND	7
GOVERNANCE	12
SLUMS AND SHELTER	14
GENDER AND HIV/AIDS, SAFETY AND SECURITY	17
DISASTER MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT	21
CULTURAL HERITAGE	25
BASIC URBAN SERVICES	28
LAND	30
PROJECT PROPOSALS	
ST. JOHN'S CITY	33
DISASTER MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT	34
BASIC URBAN SERVICES	28
LAND	30





## FOREWORDS



According to research published in UN-HABITAT's<sup>1</sup> flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011*, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's

population already living in urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the developing countries moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-HABITAT estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-HABITAT is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-HABITAT, the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-HABITAT headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-HABITAT to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Joan Clos'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Dr. Joan Clos**  
Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

<sup>1</sup> UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW

“Slums in many cities are no longer just marginalized neighbourhoods housing a relatively small proportion of the urban population; in many cities, they are the dominant type of human settlement, carving their way into the fabric of modern-day cities, and making their mark as a distinct category of human settlement that now characterizes so many cities in the developing world.” - UN-HABITAT

With over half the world population living in cities, it is estimated that one in every three urban dwellers now lives in a slum. The total slum population today exceeds one billion.

The daunting daily challenges poverty-stricken slum dwellers face range from a lack of basic services and infrastructure such as water and sanitation, to a lack of security of tenure and job opportunities.

A large number of them live in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific regions, which is why the European Community, through its agency EuropeAid and the Intra-ACP Fund, provided 4 million Euros for UN-HABITAT's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

One of the most important impacts of the programme is that it brings together a wide range of stakeholders and urban actors. Local and national government, private and informal sector, civil society, non-governmental organization, academia, and research institute representatives join bilateral and multilateral partners to discuss the major challenges and how best to address them.

Such collaboration is advantageous, especially the involvement of target groups, who often know best how to improve living conditions. Innovative planning, programme formulation, and resource mobilization will reinforce partners as they meet the future demands of our growing cities.

## ST. JOHN'S AND ITS CRITICAL ISSUES

### OVERVIEW OF ST. JOHN'S CITY

St. John's, situated in Antigua, is the capital of the three-island nation of Antigua, Barbuda and Redonda. St. John's City has a population of about 25,000 - 32% of the country's total population. The next largest urban area in the country, All Saints Village, has a population of about 4,000; St. John's is therefore a primate city. A primate city is defined as being “at least twice as large as the next largest city and more than twice as significant” [

Mark Jefferson in 1939]. A primate city is number one in its country in most aspects, like politics, economy, media, culture, and education.

St. John's, at the head of a deeply indented harbour, is not only the residential capital of the country, but the commercial, entertainment and administrative centre as well. Tourism is important, and the harbour has been dredged to accommodate deep-draft (35 feet) cargo and cruise vessels. Because of the city's British colonial past, it is blessed with a number of historic buildings and heritage sites which are important for heritage tourism, especially in light of the fact that most tourist cruise ships that visit the country dock in St. John's Harbour and the tourists disembark directly into downtown St. John's.

Though St. John's may be one of the most developed and cosmopolitan municipalities in the Lesser Antilles, it has its share of problems and issues.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S CITY

In the year 1666, only a small group of houses existed along the Cove, the area which would later be called St. John's Harbour. The harbour was large, and though shallow, it was ideal for loading the English colony's exports into small boats, which were sailed out to merchant ships anchored offshore. The main produce then was sugar, tobacco, indigo, and ginger. In 1667, the town of St. John's was less important than Falmouth Town, as the latter possessed Antigua's first church and courthouse and was in close proximity to the important Nelson's Dockyard Naval facilities. However, by 1689, St. John's had grown to be the same size as Falmouth, and by 1701 it became the island's premier trading town seconded by Parham Town. This may have come about as sugar was developed to become the colony's dominant export and St. John's was more accessible than other settlements to the central sugar growing plains. Also, the largely calm St. John's Harbour, being situated on the leeward side of the island, was more feasible for anchoring ships; Falmouth and Parham Harbours were further windward.

In 1702, St. John's was laid out with cross (grid) streets, the public market was established and many wharfs were constructed. The town became a city in 1842 and covered an area of about 150 acres (less than a quarter square mile). The first St. John's Anglican Church was built in 1681. The present St. John's Anglican Cathedral was completed in 1845 near the earlier site, and today is a salient landmark and national icon as it dominates the city's skyline with its immense size and height and serves as a major tourist attraction.

Today, the city of St. John's sprawls across the coast of St. John's Harbour. It has grown considerably since the early 18th century, but particularly during the past 40 years. It now covers an area of well over four square miles and embraces villages and communities that were once considered rural. The city houses roughly a third of the total population of the country. Its central business district (CBD), however, is more or less confined to limits of the original 18th century town (North Street up to Independence Avenue which was formerly East Street, across to South Street, and bordered on the west by the St. John's Harbour shoreline). While a great deal of rebuilding and new construction has taken place over the years, much of the old town still remains, with plenty of wooden and stone buildings having colonial architecture and streets with their original layout.

St. John's has been the administrative centre of Antigua and Barbuda since the islands were first colonized in 1632, and it became the seat of government when the nation achieved independence in 1981.

## BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

#### Urban Profiling

The St. John's Urban Profiling consists of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study is to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national, and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The study is based on analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, academics, and others. The consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their development into proposed capacity-building and other projects that are all aimed at urban poverty reduction. The urban profiling is being implemented in 30 ACP<sup>1</sup> countries, offering an opportunity for comparative regional analysis. Once completed, this series of studies will provide a framework for central and local authorities and urban actors, as well as donors and external support agencies.

### METHODOLOGY

**The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme** consists of three phases:

**Phase one** consists of the rapid profiling of urban conditions at national and local levels. The capital city, a medium-sized city, and a small town are selected and studied to provide a representative sample in each country. The analysis focuses on seven themes; governance; slums and shelter; safety and security, gender and HIV/AIDS; disaster management, climate change and the environment; cultural heritage; basic urban services; and land. Information is collected through standard interviews and discussions with

**Phase three** implements the projects developed during the two earlier phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening, and replication.

This report presents the outcomes of **Phase One** at the local level in St. John's.

### URBAN PROFILING IN ST. JOHN'S

The urban profiling in St. John's is one of two similar exercises conducted in Antigua and Barbuda; the other urban profiling centres are All Saints.

Representatives from St. John's who included local and national government, private and informal sector representatives as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations, academia, research institutes, and bilateral and multilateral partners elaborated together where major challenges are and how best to address them. The aim was to develop options for formal inter-agency collaboration in order to create a coordination body integrating a wide range of urban stakeholders in a single response mechanism.

### REPORT STRUCTURE

This report consists of:

1. a general background of the urban sector in St. John's, based on the findings of the St. John's City Assessment Report, a desk study, interviews, and a city consultation. The background includes data on administration, urban planning, the economy, the informal and private sector, urban poverty, infrastructure, water, sanitation, public transport, street lighting, energy, health, and education;
2. a synthetic assessment of the following seven main thematic areas: governance; slums and shelter; safety and security, gender and HIV/AIDS; disaster management, climate change and the environment;

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