



MAURITIUS: PORT LOUIS URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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FOREWORDS



According to research published in UN-Habitat's¹ 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, appearing 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

¹ UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme



The aim of the first phase of UN - Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is to review the urban situation and analyse the development needs to enhance the urban sector.

It is a matter of great interest for the City of Port Louis to have been chosen, along with the town of

Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and the Black River District, for this ambitious project. Such a project will definitely help to identify - through research and consultations with various authorities, institutions, pressure groups, non-governmental organisations, and the local population - the right policies, strategies and means to implement these policies for better living conditions and a healthier environment.

We all know that slums dwellers do not have access to basic services such as water, sewerage and electricity. Their living environment is very precarious and a threat to human life. Sanitary conditions in the slums are also a health risk not only for the slum inhabitants but also for those living outside the slums.

The policies and strategies of action will have to account for the specific conditions of each region while adapting to the population's requirements as well as sustainability. Another vital element to be considered is the issue of climate change. Efforts of competent authorities should focus on replacing slums with decent living spaces. Better living conditions, in present times, means secure conditions to face extreme consequences of climate change such as scarcity of water and food.

The feedback obtained from these three localities will ultimately serve the same purpose of slum upgrading for other regions and will give way to a new development concept for the whole island.

Dr Mahmud Aniff KODABACCUS

The Lord – Mayor of Port Louis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) is an accelerated and action-oriented urban assessment of needs and capacity-building gaps at the city level. The programme is supported by funds from the European Commission's European Development Fund and it is currently being implemented in more than 30 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. PSUP uses a structured approach where priority interventions are agreed upon through consultative processes. The PSUP methodology consists of three phases: (1) a rapid participatory urban profiling at national and local levels, focusing on Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Gender, Environment, Slums and Shelter, Basic Urban Services, and Waste Management, and proposed interventions; (2) detailed priority proposals; and (3) project implementation. PSUP in Mauritius encompasses a national profile, as well as profiles for Port Louis, Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and Black River, each published as a separate report. This is the Port Louis City report and it constitutes a general background, a synthesis of the nine themes; land tenure and management; governance and urban planning; infrastructure and basic urban services; municipal revenue collection; local economic development; housing and deprived and vulnerable areas; gender; security; and environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction, and priority project proposals.

LAND TENURE AND MANAGEMENT

Land is at the heart of urban planning. Unfortunately, municipalities have no say in land management. The Ministry of Housing and Lands makes all the decisions regarding State land management. However, due to population increase, Port Louis is now suffering from land shortage. Squatters can be seen in the town's suburbs such as Cité la Cure, Karo Kaliptis, Bangladesh, Roche Bois, and Vallee Pitot.

The Municipal council needs to ensure that the poor have access to serviced land in order to reduce squatting.

GOVERNANCE AND URBAN PLANNING

Mauritius has a participatory and democratic system of governance. Councillors are elected by city residents while the mayor is elected from among the councillors.

Mandated by the provisions of the Local Government Act of 2011, the local authorities depends mostly on the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands which has political and financial powers.

BASIC URBAN SERVICES

The city suffers from uncontrolled urbanization and the demands placed on the existing service infrastructure such as water, electricity and refuse collection. The current basic urban services supply is inadequate to meet the demands of the increasing urban population.

MUNICIPAL REVENUE COLLECTION

The main municipal revenues collected are land rates, business licenses and fees, building permits, and user fees. Tourism also generates a lot of revenue for the municipal council.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Port Louis is the commercial and communication hub for Mauritius and it offers various economic opportunities. The presence of the port, the head offices of all major businesses, the central market of the city, and various manufacturing activities contribute to making Port Louis the economic hub of the country.

HOUSING AND DEPRIVED AND VULNERABLE AREAS

Port Louis has experienced high population growth resulting in the proliferation of uncontrolled squatter settlements. Certain areas of the city are characterized by poor infrastructure and a shortage of basic urban services such as water, refuse collection and electricity. Residents of squatter settlements are vulnerable to natural disasters due to their poor state of housing. However, the municipality has not devoted a special budget for the rehabilitation of these illegal settlements. The Ministry of Housing and Lands in collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation is responsible for constructing low cost housing which is affordable to the poor.

GENDER

Despite governments' efforts to address gender equality, gender disparities continue to exist in Mauritius. The government supports gender equality and affirmative action for women. However, women still face a lot of challenges and are not represented in the decision making process.

SECURITY

Urban Security is the responsibility of the Mauritius Police Force. Port Louis has 11 police stations situated in various parts of the town. The rate of crime in the town has been on the decline since 2005. However, the concentration in Port Louis of public and private sector structures, particularly small enterprises, calls for more substantial resources to effectively maintain safety and security in the city.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Environment and climate change are developmental issues which have a huge impact on any community. Remedial measures to reverse the harmful effects of climate change cannot be confined only to the national level but must also be translated into rules and regulations at municipal level. In this context, the Environment Protection Act of 2007 (as Amended) is the reference framework for environment protection and management.

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