



# JAMAICA: MAY PEN URBAN PROFILE



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This report was prepared and managed by the University of West Indies in partnership with the University of Technology in Jamaica and the Steering Committee headed by the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing.

HS Number: HS/082/12E

ISBN Number (Series): 978-92-1-132023-7

ISBN Number (Volume): 978-92-1-132496-9

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Design and Layout: Florence Kuria



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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## FOREWORD



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, reading "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

## INTRODUCTION

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is an accelerated and action-oriented urban assessment of needs and capacity-building gaps at the city level. The programme is supported by the European Commission's European Development Fund and it is being implemented in 23 African countries, 59 African cities, 4 Pacific countries, 3 Caribbean countries, and 21 Pacific and Caribbean cities. The programme uses a structured approach where priority interventions are agreed upon through consultative processes. The programme 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.

Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Jamaica encompasses a national profile, as well as profiles for May Pen, Montego Bay and Old Harbour, each published as a separate report. This is the May Pen city report and it constitutes a general background; a synthesis of the four themes - governance, environment, slums and shelter, gender and HIV/AIDS; and priority project proposals.

## BACKGROUND

Clarendon was named in honour of the celebrated Lord Chancellor, Sir Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon in the late 1660s. The parish was formed from a combination of three parishes: St. Dorothy's, Vere and the old parish of Clarendon. Before the merger, the capital was Chapelton. The current capital, May Pen, was established as a plantation settlement by the British between 1660 and 1683 on a crossing point of the Rio Minho River. Based on the 2001 census, May Pen was identified as one of the fastest growing rural towns. It is situated, from an administrative point of view, in the middle of a largely agricultural area, and is the midpoint on the major thoroughfare leading from Kingston to Manchester.

As part of the new thrust to manage and administer urban areas effectively, the Ministry of Local Government, in 2002, divided the parishes into development areas. The May Pen Development Area comprises of 27 communities. These communities are of urban, peri-urban and rural descent. Within these communities there are formally developed areas as well as squatter settlements.

# BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION

### Urban Profiling

The May Pen 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.

Urban profiling is being implemented in 30 Africa, Caribbean and Pacific 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** is 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 governance, slums and shelter, environment, and gender and HIV/AIDS.

Information is collected through standard interviews and discussions with institutions and key informants, in order to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the national and local urban set-ups.

The findings are presented and refined during city and national consultation workshops and consensus is reached regarding priority interventions. National and city reports synthesize the information collected and outline ways forward to reduce urban poverty through holistic approaches.

**Phase two** builds on the priorities identified through pre-feasibility studies and develops detailed capacity-building and capital investment projects.

**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 May Pen.

## URBAN PROFILING IN MAY PEN

The urban profiling in May Pen is one of four similar exercises conducted in Jamaica; the other urban profiling centres are Montego Bay, Old Harbour and nationally.

## REPORT STRUCTURE

This report consists of:

1. a general background of the urban sector in May Pen, based on the findings of the May Pen Assessment Report, a desk study and interviews.
2. A synthetic assessment of the following four main thematic areas; governance, environment, slums and shelter, and gender and HIV/AIDS in terms of the institutional set-up, regulatory framework, resource mobilization, and performance; this second section also highlights agreed priorities and includes a list of identified projects.
3. A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis; and an outline of priority project proposals for each theme. The proposals include beneficiaries, partners, estimated costs, objectives, activities and outputs.

## GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHY

The estimated total population of the May Pen Development Area is 86,586. This population represents just over one third of the total population of the parish of Clarendon which as at the 2001 census stood at 243,600. Clarendon is one of the most populous parishes on the island. The population of the May Pen Development Area is spatially and demographically expansive, with the majority of its citizens falling in the lower age group. An examination of the statistics shows that approximately 53 per cent of the population falls within the 0-24 age group, which reflects a very youthful population. Accordingly, the recognized youth population aged between 0 and 35 is representative of two-thirds of the population at 67 per cent or 58,226 persons. This expansive population of the May Pen

Development Area has the largest age group being between ages 5-9, which accounts for 11.58 per cent of the total Development Area's population.

## GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Limestone is a significant feature within the Development Area. Alluvium is also found within the area but is less significant than limestone. Numerous sinkholes often accompany the limestone formations. Within the Development Area, the Newport formation is an important extensive limestone aquifer which can be found in communities such as Effortville, Treadlight, Curatoo Hill, Palmers Cross, and the district of Sheckles.

The soils within the Development Area are also suitable for the growth of agricultural crops.

## ADMINISTRATION

The Clarendon Parish Council is mandated to govern and manage land use and the overall development of the parish including its capital, May Pen. In fact, this is the mandate for all 13 parish councils in Jamaica. However, each parish council may vary in the approach taken to achieve some of its individual mandates. Since 2002, the Clarendon Parish Council has adopted many of the proposed reforms to the local government structures and functions. Below are some of the changes made, so far, at Clarendon Parish Council:

- Councillors and senior managers have already been exposed to a special training programme, developed in association with the University of the West Indies. This programme is being further developed and expanded,
- The principle of parity between comparable central and local government staff has been accepted and is being implemented,

## MUNICIPAL FINANCE

The proposed local government reform argues for greater autonomy by the local authorities over the fees and licenses that they collect. Unfortunately the Clarendon Parish Council, and by extension the city of May Pen, has not benefited directly from this proposed change as the central Government still controls the parish council's budget. However, the parish council has concentrated on increasing its revenue collection through improved collection of licences and fees.

## HOUSING

Based on the 2001 census, there are 15,756 habitable dwellings in the city of May Pen with over 10,000 houses in the sub-districts of Effortville and Bucks Common. The average household size is four persons per household. The housing stock and conditions in the May Pen Development Area vary tremendously from one community to another. The housing stock in the newer communities like Longville Park are generally in good to excellent condition, because of the age of the structures, where earth movements have not caused cracks in the walls, or weathering has not yet acted on the paint work. On the other hand, in older communities such as Palmers Cross, there are sections of the community that have houses and structures that range from fair to poor.

In addition, in some inner city or squatter settlements in the study area, the quality of housing is extremely poor. In more formal, well-established communities in and around May Pen, the housing stock was fair to good. The condition of the housing stock can be directly linked to the land tenure of the residents occupying these houses.

Regarding materials used in the construction of houses, generally homes are built to withstand hurricanes and some of the harsh weather elements. While this is the general representation, there are a large number of

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