TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO NATIONAL URBAN PROFILE

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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FOREWORD

According to research published in UN-Habitat's[1] 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.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

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1   *UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme*

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 over 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 Trinidad encompasses a national profile, as well as profiles for San Fernando, Scarborough and Port of Spain. This is the Trinidad and Tobago national report and it constitutes a general background, a synthesis of the six themes (Governance; Slums, Shelter, Land and Tenure; Basic Urban Services; Inclusive and Safer Cities; Local Economic Development; and Disaster Management, Climate Change and Environment), and priority project proposals.

BACKGROUND

Trinidad and Tobago is a stable country which has been independent since 1962. The economy is based on the energy sector, with the tourism industry being a main earner, particularly for Tobago.

GOVERNANCE

The system of governance in Trinidad and Tobago is highly centralised. The impact of this is widely felt, with consequences for areas such as the autonomy of the local government, particularly in regard to finances, planning and prioritising. The system of governance is additionally one in which there is limited involvement of the civil society in planning, budgeting and decision making. Related issues include an inefficient and bureaucratic public service which needs comprehensive reform.

SLUMS, SHELTER, LAND, AND TENURE

Statistics show that poverty in Trinidad and Tobago is on the rise, as is the gap between the rich and the poor. This is set against a backdrop of spiralling violent crime, deficiencies in the education system and rising unemployment. In this context, the poor are unable to access land in the inflated real estate market, and turn to squatting on vacant land. It is estimated that there are some 300,000 people squatting, and living in dwellings which display slum characteristics.

BASIC URBAN SERVICES

Variations exist in basic urban service provision across the study area. Efficiency of provision is often hampered by old distribution networks, many of which are in pressing need of upgrade and maintenance. Utility providers are mostly State bodies and suffer from issues such as shortage of qualified staff, bureaucracy, and allegations of corruption. Lack of coordination between the entities involved in basic urban service provision is another concern.

INCLUSIVE AND SAFER CITIES

Crime is a major issue for the country and one which continues to do harm to its international image, which has a negative impact on the country's tourism sector. The root causes of crime include poverty, unemployment and drug use.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economy is largely dependent on the energy sector. Such over-reliance on finite resources enhances economic vulnerability, which is further compounded by the undermining of traditional growth models by the global economic crisis. The local economy exhibits signs of stagnation as well as a lack of responsiveness to changing circumstances. A critical issue relates to the key resource of human capital and the way in which it is harnessed in the interests of economic growth and sustainability.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Trinidad and Tobago is vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and the consequences of climate change. This is closely related to the way in which interaction with the environment is managed and regulated. This sector suffers from a lack of coordinated effort, political will, legislation, and financial prioritisation.

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Urban Profiling

The Urban Profiling consists of an evaluation of urban conditions based on needs identified by gaps and existing institutional responses gained at both the local and national levels through a public forum and consultation and critical secondary stakeholder consultation. The purpose of the study is to develop poverty reduction policies at all levels - local, national and regional, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contributor to a wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as defined by the UN – Millennium Development Goal 7, Target C (reducing by half the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water) and Target D (achieving significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million people living in informal settlements by 2020). The study is based on analysis of existing data through consultation with relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, primary and secondary stakeholders, civil society, the private sector, development agencies, and statutory bodies. The Urban Profiling has been successfully implemented in several African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in partnership with the UN. In Trinidad and Tobago and in the other Caribbean countries, Urban Profiling is being implemented in partnership with the University of the West Indies (UWI). This offers a unique opportunity for comparative regional analysis with particular customisation to the Caribbean context and history which holds particular relevance in the formulation of the themes.

METHODOLOGY

The Urban Profiling methodology consists of three phases:

Phase one consists of a profiling of urban conditions at national and local levels. The capital city, a medium size city and a small city are selected and studied to provide a representative sample in each country. The analysis focuses on the following themes: Governance; Slums, Shelter, Land, and Tenure; Basic Urban Services; Inclusive and Safer Cities; Local Economic Development; and Disaster Management, Climate Change and the Environment.

Information is collected through desk studies, structured interviews and discussions with key stakeholders to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the national and local urban set up. The findings are presented and refined during city consultation workshops and consensus is reached regarding priority interventions. National and City reports synthesise 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 previous phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening and replication.

This report presents the outcomes of Phase One of the urban profiling at the National Level in Trinidad and Tobago.

URBAN PROFILING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The urban profiling in Trinidad and Tobago encompasses the cities of Port of Spain, the capital city of Trinidad and Tobago, San Fernando, a medium sized city in south Trinidad and Scarborough, the main settlement in Tobago. Each urban profile is published as a separate report.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report consists of:

1. A general background of the urban sector of Trinidad and Tobago based on the findings of the Port of Spain, San Fernando and Scarborough analysis, and a desk study. The background includes data on the urban context, administration, population, poverty, water and sanitation, health, and the socio-economic challenges of sustainable development;

2. A synthesis of the following themes: governance; slums, shelter land and tenure; basic urban services; inclusive and safer cities; local economic development; and disaster management, climate change and the environment, in terms of the institutional set-up, regulatory framework, resource mobilisation and performance, agreed priorities, and a list of identified projects;

3. The last section includes a SWOT analysis and outlines priority project proposals for each theme. The proposals include beneficiaries, partners, estimated costs, objectives, activities, and outputs.