



ANNUAL REPORT

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**UN  HABITAT**

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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Climate change and demographic expansion inseparably combine to pose cities an unprecedented challenge. Admittedly, leaders of the major regions of the world need more time to allocate respective responsibilities and duties as far as global climate change is concerned. In the meantime, though, local authorities and the international system continue pushing the agenda of sustainable urbanization, with UN-HABITAT standing at the forefront of these efforts.

In this respect, this agency received a major boost from member states when in early 2009 its Governing Council reaffirmed and strengthened its mandate, signalling enhanced confidence in the organization and its capacity to act as a catalyst of various partners' efforts and resources. UN-HABITAT as a whole responded with a flourish of activities that reflected its determination to achieve the objectives set out in its medium-term strategy, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals.

This is why the year 2009 may remain as a landmark in the 30-year history of UN-HABITAT. Our new flagship reports in 2009 provide policy-makers the figures, facts and policy guidance they need if they are to make the cities of this world more socially sustainable. Two of these new reports highlight the specific challenges women and young people continue to face in urban environments.

Our forthcoming World Urban Campaign, which involves partners from local government, business and organized civil society, will generate and maintain awareness and momentum around the themes of our biennial flagship and companion reports.

From a more operational point of view, and at the request of member governments, the year 2009 also saw the launch of our Cities and Climate Change Initiative. As a result, UN-HABITAT is streamlining climate change mitigation into its whole agenda – land and housing, urban governance, the environment, infrastructure and basic services, housing finance and disaster-related schemes. The initiative includes

institutionalised support to local governments, city networks and associations, among others, to address climate change and its implications at local, regional and global levels. Improved management must prevent uncontrolled urban sprawl, pollution and unsustainable consumption of land, water and other natural resources. The lessons from four early pilot-programmes have already been learned.

Over the course of 2009 UN-HABITAT also strengthened and widened partnerships with a wide range of groups and organizations. This includes the UN system, where the agency's voice is now better heard. These strategic links amplify the catalytic role of UN-HABITAT and, where needed, help deploy projects at scale.

This new initiative shows that attitudes to urban expansion and even the climate issue are now changing, and for the better. Indeed we should take urbanization for the opportunity it is – for the millions who have moved into cities in search of more fulfilling lives. And difficult as it may seem from a global perspective, we should take climate change as the opportunity it is at the local level – paving the way for healthier, more inclusive cities for all. Local authorities around the world have woken up to these positive perspectives and this agency stands ready to support them in this new, complex endeavour.

Indeed, UN-HABITAT staff are responding to the daunting double challenge of sustainable, inclusive cities with a renewed sense of confidence; as I am about to complete my last mandate at the head of this agency, I would like to express my appreciation for their achievements over the past ten years, as well as my heart-felt gratitude for their commitment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna K. Tibaijuka'.

Anna K. Tibaijuka,  
Undersecretary-General of the United Nations  
Executive Director, UN-HABITAT



## EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY, PARTNERSHIPS AND MONITORING

*“Enable all key stakeholders in the public, private and community sectors to play an effective role – at the national, state/provincial, metropolitan and local levels – in human settlements and shelter development.”*

-- The Habitat Agenda

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