



THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE HOUSING MARKET

The Experiences from Asia



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

The Human Settlements Finance and Policies Series

The Role of Government in the Housing Market: The Experiences from Asia

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FOREWORD



As we move into the new millennium, one trend overwhelms our concerns: the rapid urbanization with deepening poverty, environmental degradation and increasing slums, which poses tremendous challenges for achieving adequate shelter for all. The challenges we face in human settlements cannot be met by governments, private sector or civil society alone. It requires the actions of all aspects of the society.

Human settlements are places of organised human activities. The way in which human settlements are organised is influenced by the pace and breadth of socio-economic development. Such development cannot take place without linkages and continuous interactions between physical, institutional, economic and social structures. Human settlements are the product of deliberate planning or of spontaneous and uncontrolled economic and social activities. The problems and issues of human settlements cut across the conventional socio-economic sectors and are of multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary nature.

The national resource allocation and finance strategies are evolving towards the identification of national development priorities and challenges. Therefore, a full understanding of human settlements needs to be looked upon in the national policy context, and links finance to policy debate. This approach is increasingly appreciated by policy-makers and planners when addressing human settlements problems and policy options. *The Human Settlements Finance and Policies* series aims to explore the intricacy of finance and policy interrelations and to promote better human settlements finance policy and strategies.

This series addresses the most important issues in improving human settlements. It draws the intellectual leaders and practitioners from the governments, local authorities, private sectors and civil society to confront human settlements and finance problems and to exchange views and experiences in tackling human settlements problems and issues, and to explore and promote innovations in policies and strategies and methods to address challenges in human settlements. Publications in this series provide opportunities to move towards a deeper understanding of the broad range of human settlements and finance issues.

Our habitat is shaped by human actions and policies. Policies have profoundly shaped our cities, towns and villages in the past and they will continue to define the 21st century. Decision-makers face

challenges of designing policies that allow their countries and cities to meet the increasing human settlements challenges. I hope that this series will contribute to the policy debate and will enhance the capacity of member states to design new policies and strategies to address human settlements challenges. In human settlements policy debate, choices made today will impact our common future of habitat tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Tibaijuka', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dr. Anna Tibaijuka
Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director
UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	i
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
The Role of Government in the Housing Market: Restructuring of the Home Ownership System in Japan	9
1. The Home Ownership System in the Post-War Period	10
2. The Bubble Economy and Home Ownership Policy	13
3. Deteriorating Economic Conditions for Home Ownership	16
4. Decline in the Housing Ladder System	21
5. Marketisation of Home Ownership	24
CHAPTER 2	
The Role of Government in the Housing Market in South Korea	29
1. Evolution of Housing Policy in South Korea	30
2. Housing Policy Instruments	33
3. Evaluation of Government Intervention	35
4. Lessons and Policy Implications	38
CHAPTER 3	
The Impact of the Intangible Factors on the Housing Market in Vietnam	43
1. Housing as a Special Good in the Market	43
2. Role of the Intangible Factors	44
3. A new theoretical Model of Urban Residential Location and City Structure	46
4. Social Trade-off	49
5. Implications of Residential Location Model	52

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码

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