Urbanization, urban poverty and rural-urban migration
IOM WMR 2015 Seminar

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Urban agglomerations with 750,000 inhabitants in 1800 & 1900

Urban agglomerations with over 750,000 inhabitants

1800
- ≤ 1 million
- 1.1 - 2.5 million

1900
- ≤ 1 million
- 1.1 - 2.5 million
- 2.6 - 5 million
- 5.1 - 10 million
Figure 8.1: Urban agglomerations with over 750,000 inhabitants in 1950

Urban agglomerations with over 750,000 inhabitants

- <= 1 million
- 1.1 - 2.5 million
- 2.6 - 5 million
- 5.1 - 10 million
- > 10 million
Figure 8.2: Urban agglomerations with over 750,000 inhabitants in 2025

Urban agglomerations with over 750,000 inhabitants
- ≤ 1 million
- 1.1 - 2.5 million
- 2.6 - 5 million
- 5.1 - 10 million
- > 10.1 million
Key points on urbanization

- Scale of global & local urban transformations
- Underpinned by economic transformation & migration
- Political (& often economic) difficulties in governing cities
- But strong potential advantages of cities; where these are well used, strong association with development gains for all urban dwellers
Urban centres

- 54% of world’s population
  - *Home to most middle & upper-income groups & most of the world’s healthiest people*
- Most of the world’s economy (most industry, investment, innovation...)
- All wealthy nations predominantly urban
- Strong association between scale of economic growth and increase in level of urbanisation

But limited data:
- many nations with no recent census and/or only 1-3 censuses in last 60 years
- Over-reliance on national sample surveys
  - *Lots of aggregate stats for urban*
  - *Little focus on migration*
Low- and middle-income nations; changes in the proportion of the workforce and the economy in industry and services and level of urbanization, 1960-2005

- % GDP from industry and services
- % labour force in industry and services
- Level of urbanization
Many myths to be avoided

- Africa not the fastest urbanising continent
- Rate of urbanisation in low-income countries neither unprecedented nor accelerating
- Megacities not becoming predominant urban form (10% of urban population; most not growing fast)
- Urbanisation not primary driver of urban land expansion (declining urban densities & natural population growth)

We are not facing an urban explosion that needs to be restrained, but the latter part of an urban transition that needs good local governance
Growth (& projected growth) in the world's urban population

2.3 billion increase in urban population 2015-2050

Low- & middle-income nations

High income nations
"The post-2015 agenda must be relevant for urban dwellers. Cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost."

Draft SDGs going to UN General Assembly for approval: Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
One in seven of the world’s population living in informal settlements such as these.

A billion urban dwellers that are invisible in official records and maps.
Scale of urban deprivation

- Water
- Sanitation
- Drainage
- Solid waste collection
- Housing
- Health care & emergency services
- Schools
- Rule of law
- Participation

OUR FOCUS: those facing these deprivations (easily identified by house/settlement that is also basis for self organization)

Particular risks & vulnerabilities of sub-sets of this – eg migrants or women or class/caste or young or elderly....
% of the urban population with ‘improved water’ and with water piped to their premises; 2010
Nations with a decline in the % of their urban population with water piped to premises 1990-2012

- Sudan
- DR Congo
- Vanuatu
- Nigeria
- Dominican Republic
- Zimbabwe
- Yemen
- Haiti
- Iraq
- Zambia
- Madagascar
- Rwanda
- Namibia
- Mongolia
- Ghana
- Papua New Guinea
- United Republic of Tanzania
- Kenya
- Algeria
- Afghanistan
- Yemen
- Sudan
% urban population with 'improved' sanitation

And these figures greatly understate the problem by setting the bar for ‘improved sanitation’ so low
Using cities’ comparative advantages

- **Compact city & agglomeration economies** for businesses (& resource use/waste management)
- **Compact city**
  - *Lower unit costs for incremental upgrading, infrastructure and basic services*
  - *See progress in much of Latin America*
Using cities’ comparative advantages

- Risk reduction
  - everyday hazards
  - Cities with resilience to disasters and climate change
- Climate Change Mitigation
  - high quality of life with low carbon emissions
Cities’ comparative advantages

- Potential influence of civil society
  - Especially with representative organizations of slum/shack dwellers
- Transformational changes in relationships between civil society & local government
- Possibilities of co-production
Poverty reduction & universal provision of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

Climate change mitigation

The urban agendas
Economic success

How to make this work for the billion in informal settlements
Poverty reduction & universal provision of services

Disaster risk reduction

The urban agendas
Poverty reduction & universal provision of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

The urban agendas

Large overlaps
All addressing risk & vulnerability
Importance of local citizen/civil society pressure
The urban agendas

Poverty reduction & universal provision of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

Climate change mitigation
Climate change mitigation

Poverty reduction & universal provision of services

Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction

The urban agendas
Critical roles for city government & civil society in meeting needs/reducing poverty/implementing the SDGs

WHERE THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS
• Mayors & city governments that are elected
• Cities with significant investment capacity
• Cities with representative organizations & federations of ‘slum/shack’ dwellers

• But international system fails to recognize & support local level
• Most SDG responsibilities with local governments that are not engaged in SDG discussions