

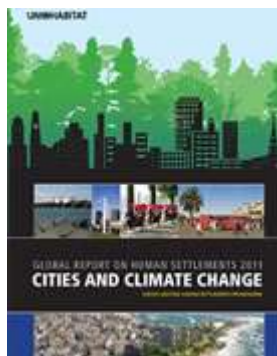
The Global Report on Human Settlements



Prepared under a mandate of the United Nations General Assembly, the Global Report on Human Settlements provides the most up to date assessment of urban conditions and trends globally. It is an essential reference tool for researchers, academics, planners, public authorities and civil society organizations around the world.

Cities and Climate Change: Global Report on Human Settlements 2011 ? Responses to the Impacts of Climate Change in Urban Areas

The lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people will be affected by what is done (or not done) in urban centres with regard to adapting to climate change over the next decade. Action is urgently needed, both to address current risks and begin building into urban fabrics and systems resilience to likely future risks. It is generally much easier to make provisions now for likely future climate-related risks – in infrastructure expansion, new buildings and new urban development – than to have to retrofit buildings, redo infrastructure and readjust settlement layouts in the future.



The main responsibility for implementing policies to address the impacts of climate change in cities rests with local governments. Yet, many city governments around the world have so far failed to accept and/or act on this responsibility, with the result that many households and communities have been forced to implement climate change adaptation measures on their own. Most of these responses are impact-reducing, *ad hoc*, individual short-term efforts to save lives or to protect property.

Recognizing the importance of *local adaptive capacity*, many communities are actively involving local residents and their community organizations in facilitating adaptation to climate change. Where there are representative community-based organizations, the possibilities of building resilience to climate change are much greater. In many countries, there are now national federations of slum and shack dwellers that have community-based savings groups as their foundation. Small-scale loans managed by these savings groups and repaid over short time periods, provide much needed capital for livelihood activities, or responses to shocks and stresses.

Much adaptation (and disaster risk reduction) needs the installation and maintenance (and funding) of infrastructure and services that are at a scale and cost that are beyond the capacity of individuals or communities. Yet, in many countries, especially where local governments are weak or significant populations live in informal settlements, households and community responses are often the only adaptation responses that are actually implemented.

Effective risk reduction is possible if household, community and government investments and actions work together in coordinated manner. Many governments in developing countries are initiating national studies of the likely impacts of climate change and developing 'National Adaptation Programmes of Action.'

PAST ISSUES



Planning Sustainable Cities - Global Report on Human Settlements 2009



Enhancing Urban Safety and Security - Global Report on Human Settlements 2007



Financing Urban Shelter - Global Report on Human Settlements 2005



Given the increasing importance of urban economies to national economic success, *Cities and Climate Change* suggests the need for national governments to focus on 'City Adaptation Programmes of Action' and local-focused 'Local Adaptation Programmes for Action.'

Globally, there is evidence of the beginnings of city-based adaptation strategies in certain cities. These are what might be called the early adapters as well as the early adopters. As yet, too few cities have developed coherent adaptation strategies and even fewer strategies that have begun to have a real influence on public investments or effect needed changes in building and infrastructure standards and land-use management.

Effective action on adaptation on the ground also depends on a willingness to act by local governments. The generic lessons that can be drawn from the experiences of cities that have already developed adaptation plans include:

- Building commitment among different stakeholders;
- Develop or expand the information base on current conditions;
- Initiate risk/vulnerability assessments for the city;
- Assess sector-specific vulnerability and responses;
- Develop strategic plans for the city as a whole and its surrounds; and
- Support local responses to climate change

Further, climate change adaptation action is needed in almost all sectors relating to local urban government such as water, infrastructure and settlements, human health, tourism, transport and energy. Accordingly, for many cities in developing countries, poverty alleviation and other pro-poor policies at the urban level are likely to be the single most important component of an overall adaptation strategy.

Many urban areas in developing countries already experience an 'adaptation deficit' whereby existing infrastructure is insufficient to cope with present climatic conditions – let alone those that will arise as a result of climate change. The adaptation needs for these urban areas are thus based on the need for development that takes a changing climate into account.

Many communities are also involved in activities that will build the resilience of individuals and households, including through savings schemes. While insurance policies contribute to resilience, they remain unaffordable for most of the population and most enterprises in developing country cities.

Drawing on the descriptions of household, community-based and local government actions for adaptation, *Cities and Climate Change* emphasizes the need to link structural and behavioral responses. Finally, successful adaptation also has to take into account the following major issues:

- Concerted action at the household, community, local government, national government and international level are required;
- Improved global and national projections about climate change impacts;
- The issue of social and environmental justice needs to get appropriate attention, both within cities and countries, but also internationally. As acknowledged by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the bulk of funding for climate change adaptation has to come from those countries that are responsible for global climate change;
- The emerging international funding for climate change adaptation has to be adequate to the task at hand, and should explicitly allocate a fair share of resources to urban settlements.

To download the full and abridged versions of *Global Report on Human Settlements 2011*, please go to:

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=555&cid=9272>

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Next Issue: Planning and Design for Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013

The report will review key trends, practices and policies on sustainable mobility and transportation patterns from cities around the world. It will also provide insights on how to improve the working and living conditions of urban populations by meeting their transport needs in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. The report will be organized as follows:

- Chapter 1: The urban mobility challenge
- Chapter 2: Trends and conditions of urban mobility
- Chapter 3: Mass transit: Metros and BRTs
- Chapter 4: Urban goods transport
- Chapter 5: Mobility and urban form
- Chapter 6: Access to urban mobility
- Chapter 7: Urban mobility and the environment
- Chapter 8: The economics of urban mobility
- Chapter 9: Institutions and governance for urban mobility
- Chapter 10: Towards sustainable urban mobility

The report is scheduled to be launched in October 2013

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