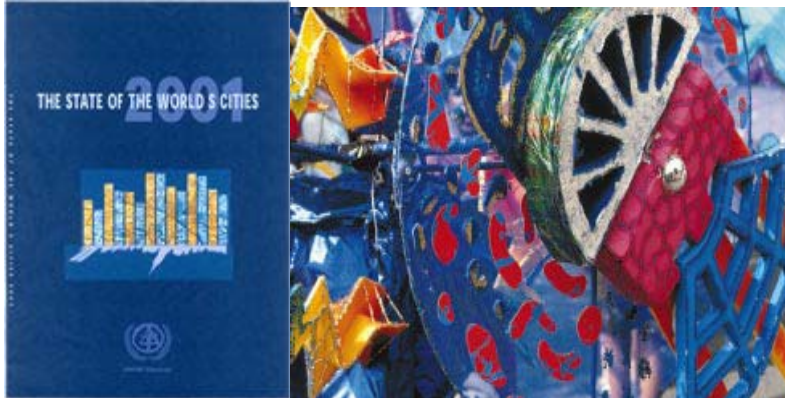


BOOK REVIEW THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CITIES REPORT 2001



Published by
the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Nairobi, 2001 ISBN 92-1-131476-3
HS/619/01E

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Most United Nations reports focus on country-level analyses of human development. Now, for the first time, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has released a report focusing exclusively on city-level analyses of a wide range of urban issues. *The State of the World's Cities Report 2001* is a first in-depth attempt to monitor, analyze and report on the realities faced by urban populations around the world. The report was produced by UNCHS (Habitat) to coincide with the Istanbul + 5 Special Session of the UN General Assembly, which took place in New York in June 2001.

In his foreword, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, refers to *the State of the World's Cities Report* as, "a milestone in the efforts of the United Nations to build and disseminate knowledge for policy-makers and the general public," adding that the Report is a valuable contribution to collective efforts to implement the Habitat Agenda.

According to Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), the report presents the UN with an additional tool to monitor urban conditions and trends: "The Report is significant in that it uses the city, rather than the country, as the basic unit of analysis. This means that we can now authoritatively differentiate between national development and urban development and make policy recommendations based on city data. This is a significant step forward in the UN's efforts to provide up-to-date information on the state of the world and how well or how badly it is performing in various areas of development."

The State of the World's Cities Report explores a range of urban issues and policy responses in five major areas: shelter, society, environment, economy and governance. It then takes a look, region by region, at urbanization trends and issues. Some interesting facts have emerged:

- In 2020, Asia and the Pacific region will host the largest number of urban dwellers in the world -- 1.97 billion people, or 46 per cent of the region's projected total population of 4.298 billion.
- Only a quarter of Europe's urban population lives in cities with more than 250,000 people; half the urban population lives in small towns of 10-50,000 people, while a quarter lives in medium-sized towns of 50-250,000 people.
- Latin America and the Caribbean is the most urbanized region in the developing world, with 75 per cent of its population living in cities.
- Lagos will be the third largest city in the world in 2010, after Tokyo and Mumbai.
- One billion people live in inadequate housing, mostly in slums and squatter settlements in developing countries.
- The right to adequate housing is recognized by 70 per cent of the world's countries.
- The Arab States region provides the greatest protection against forced evictions.
- Informal sector employment makes up 37 per cent of the total employment in developing countries as a whole and is as high as 45 per cent in Africa.
- Municipalities in highly industrialized countries obtain an average of US\$ 2906 per capita in revenue per year. This figure is almost 200 times the average revenue obtained by African municipalities, which receive, on average, only US\$ 14 per capita per year.

The State of the World's Cities Report notes that cities are the main players in the global economy. Large cities typically produce a significant share of the Gross Domestic Product of countries, yet manage to capture only a small percentage of national revenue per year. This, suggests the Report, has significant ramifications for urban development. The Report touches on urban poverty and how liberalized trade and finance, without proper safeguards, make urban populations everywhere more vulnerable to external shocks.

Employing, among other resources, UNCHS (Habitat)'s Urban Indicators and Best Practices databases, the Report makes regional comparisons of city-level analyses and data, and introduces, for the first time, the **City Development Index**, a tool developed by UNCHS (Habitat) to track regional, national and city level progress.

The central message of *the State of the World's Cities Report* is that people's processes and initiatives and enabling governing structures must unite to form broad-based partnerships that will promote justice, equity and sustainability in cities. The Report concludes that a country's global success rests on local shoulders: for the good of all citizens, city and state must become political partners rather than competitors. Most importantly, if accommodation requires new political arrangements, institutional structures or constitutional amendments, it is never too late -- or too early -- to begin making changes.

Easy to read and beautifully illustrated with photos, graphs and tables, *the State of the World's Cities Report 2001* will make a valuable addition to any reference library and will appeal to all those interested in making our cities work. It is undoubtedly one of the most significant publications to come out of the UN in recent years.

To order *State of the World's Cities Report 2001*,
 contact UNCHS regional or information/liason offices,
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