
STATISTICS AT THE SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL

Note prepared by UN-HABITAT

Background

1. **UN-HABITAT mandate** United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)¹ is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to monitor and report on the progress of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (HA). In the aftermath of the Millennium Declaration² in September 2000, the Agency has the added responsibility to report on the “*significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers*”, Target 11, of the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDG).
2. **The urbanization of the world’s population growth.** Of the 2.2 billion increase the world’s population is projected to register between now and the year 2030, 2.1 billion people will be in urban areas.³ If in spite of potential economic stagnation and/or decline, such growth projections become reality, urban centers will absorb more than 95 per cent of the world’s expected population growth by the year 2030. These prospects are far more dramatic than the usual perceptions of “a world of cities”, or of an “urbanizing world”. Whether or not the extent of population growth predicted is actualized, what the projections clearly indicate is a major trend toward urban life, which means that the future needs of the world’s population will have to be handled largely in urban contexts.
3. **The urbanization of poverty.** In the mid-1970s, there was a need for a re-orientation of development policies away from ‘big infrastructure’ to addressing the needs and priorities of poor rural dwellers. But this re-orientation failed to recognize growing levels of deprivation in urban areas. It still does so today, even though urban populations have grown much more than rural populations (for the least developed nations, urban populations have increased more than 400 percent since the mid 1970s while rural populations increased 75 percent). If present trends continue, the majority of future poor will be urban dwellers in the developing world⁴, and their proportions will be highest in the poorest countries.

¹ Hereinafter in this document referred to as the ‘Agency.’

² United Nations, 2000 *The Millennium Declaration*, New York, 8 September 2000

³ United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: the 2001 Revision*.

⁴ See Ravallion, M. (2001) “On the Urbanization of Poverty”, World Bank Working Paper, for more information (quoted by Task Force 8).

Need for comprehensive and reliable sub-national official statistics

4. **City and district information.** Censuses and household surveys such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Living Standard Measurements Surveys (LSMS) have gathered information on various population, social, and health issues. In these surveys, tremendous efforts have been made to disaggregate indicators by region, and type of residence (urban/rural). However, there is a need for comprehensive, comparable and reliable information at city and district levels. To localize and then implement the MDGs, governments are interested in having sub-national statistics at the city and district levels. The most urgent need for sub-national statistics is obviously at the level where the deficiencies are to be tackled –that is, data for each household in each urban area and districts.
5. **Intra-city differentials.** Along with the need of sub-national statistics, the need for disaggregated information at intra-city level is also recognized. Census and survey results generally indicate better demographic and health outcomes in urban area than in rural area. However, this hides wide disparities in health and livelihood status between the slum and non-slum areas. All urban households –rich and poor– are averaged out to provide a single estimate of poverty, overlooking existing pockets of poverty in the city, and consequently underestimating the urban poor and the conditions in which they live. Studies in the area of health and nutrition showed, for instance, that children living in urban areas might be up to ten times more at risk of being stunted if they are from poor households compared to children from households of higher socio-economic status. The fact that there are consistently such strong socio-economic gradients in urban areas of developing countries *implies that reliance on global average statistics to allocate resources between rural and urban areas could be dangerously misleading.*
6. **Need for country reporting on MDG Target 11.** A common expression of concern is that MDGs Target 11 has been largely ignored in country and agency reports on progress on the MDGs. This is due in part to the lack of intra-city data disaggregated across slum and non-slum dwellers. As noted above, the earlier practice of simply providing urban versus rural estimates has masked the crisis that slum dwellers are facing. To improve the lives of slum dwellers, local policy needs to be informed about the consequences of vastly different living conditions experienced by slum and non-slum dwellers. For that purpose, there is a need to assemble and disaggregate existing indicators to describe sub-city areas and design a database capable of maintaining and updating this information. To improve the lives of slum dwellers it is crucial to know *how many are they, where are they located, and what are their basic needs* in terms of shelter, water, sanitation, health, education, employment, etc.

UN-HABITAT current approach to produce sub-national statistics

7. **Monitoring Habitat Agenda (HA) and MDGs.** The strategy of the UN-HABITAT's monitoring systems, is to both address the immediate demands of monitoring, while developing systems and capacity for medium and long term needs. The immediate response to the need for monitoring the Target 11 on slum dwellers was addressed by undertaking slum estimations based on meta data sources including the DHS and the MICS surveys. These estimations were published in the Global Report on Human Settlements 2003, and widely covered by the working paper "Slums of the World" 2003 and by major media agencies of the world. In the medium term, UN-HABITAT addresses the sub-national information needs through two programmes on monitoring the Habitat Agenda and the MDGs, the Urban Indicators Programme (UIP), and the Monitoring Urban Inequities Programme (MUIP). These are programmes of global scale, UIP covering 350 cities of the 10 reporting regions of the UN, MUIP covering 35 cities to represent the globe. In the long term the aim of UN-HABITAT is to mainstream the limited number of urban indicators, especially concerning that of the secure tenure and basic services, within the Population Censuses and household surveys. This is both due to the limited resources of the agency as well as the higher prospects for the sustainability
8. **Approach to produce sub-national statistics.** UN-HABITAT is developing, under its medium term response to the need of monitoring HA and MDGs, a comprehensive approach to the production of sub-national statistics that articulates organically four programmes: 1) providing training and capacity building to national governments to collect and analyse sub-national data in a more permanent manner as part of the Agency global monitoring activities; 2) creating a new programme of household surveys entitled "Urban Inequities Survey"; 3) Supporting the establishment of local system of production of statistics tailored to the needs expressed by local authorities 4) Supporting the use of the Small area Estimates techniques that integrate census and survey data to produce sub-national statistics at the sub-city or district level.

Programme 1: Training and capacity building to governments in producing sub-national data

9. **Urban Indicators Programme Phase 3 (UIP-3).** The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) of the Monitoring Systems Branch (MSB) is launching the third round of the Urban Indicators Programme (2004-2006). This programme is conceived as a monitoring structure to be repeated every 5 years up to 2020. UIP-3 is a revised version of the Urban Indicators Programmes 1 and 2, referencing to years of 1993 and 1998, respectively. The first two sets of data served as the bases for the Habitat Conference, in Istanbul 1996, and for the *State of the World Cities Report, 2001*, the major information document for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Human Settlements, in June 2001.
10. The UIP has been revisited, after a thorough evaluation in 2001. In keeping with the recommendations of the evaluation, the GUO changed its strategy to collect information, so as to 1) strengthen the capacity building component 2) have direct control over the data collection process, and 3) base indicators on a Global

Sample of 350 Cities (GSC), so as to ensure global generalisations needed to report on the MDGs and the HA.

11. **Capacity Building Workshops.** Within the framework of the Urban Indicators Programme – Phase 3, UN-HABITAT supports the realisation of two regional technical workshops in Africa (one in December 2004 and the other in February 2005) and in Asia Region (one in November 2004 and the other in March 2005). These workshops aim to strengthen the capacity of experts from the National Statistics Office (NSOs) and urban planners both from the state and city level on the collection, analysis and interpretation of urban indicators. The workshops would be organised jointly with UNSD, UNFPA, ESCAP and other UN agencies.
12. **The workshops as a mechanism for development of partnership.** The workshops also aim to strengthen partnership between the NSOs and urban planners. They will permit to identify and develop mechanisms to exchange information on the constraints and the successes experienced in gathering data at city level and will also foster a common approach to the production of official sub-national statistics. The workshops would examine the statistical requirements for the production of city statistics in the African and Asian countries, with particular emphasis on comparability of indicators, methods and classifications across the region to foster their dissemination in support of national and local policy making and monitoring of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Programme 2 : Urban Inequities Survey (UIS)

13. **Monitoring Urban Inequities Programme.** has initiated a new programme to monitor urban inequities (MUIP). The long-term objective of the MUIP is to enhance evidence-based formulation of urban development policies that incorporate the MDG and the Urban Indicators. Since the Habitat Conference, Istanbul 1996, UN-HABITAT's mandate is not only limited to the housing sector, but towards a more holistic development agenda. The aim is to assist cities to become more liveable places, where citizens enjoy better health, better education, better livelihoods, better transportation, better access to infrastructure and basic services, better environment, in short, a higher standing on a majority of MDG indicators, in a more equitable city setting. The MUIP's aim is also to develop capacity among multiple national stakeholders on holding policy analysis and on implementing multi-stakeholder programme frameworks in favor of the urban poor. For that purpose, MUIP will monitor the situation of slum dwellers, in order to understand the relation between slums and urban poverty, emphasizing the gaps between slum dwellers and other urban city groups.
14. **MUIP approach to gather sub-national statistics.** MUIP covers 35 cities around the three continents of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Due to constraints of funding, the MUIP follows a two-pronged strategy in developing capacities on data gathering, analysis, mapping and the interpretation of urban inequities. Strategy One, is to piggyback on other survey initiatives such DHS and MICS. Although cost-effective, two problems persist, with Strategy One. First, the UISs have to be abridged, and not all aspects of urban inequities are covered. Second, the capacity building aspect is also limited to sampling issues, security of tenure and basic services, because UN-HABITAT

does not have full control over the process. The second strategy is to conduct a stand alone Urban Inequities Survey (UIS) covering comprehensively aspects related to shelter, water, sanitation, security of tenure, social capital, crime and violence, income and expenditures. Strategy Two, implementing the full fledged version of the UIS, and holding the whole package of training in, at least half of the cities of the MUIP sample suits the purpose of the MUIP better. The Urban Inequities Surveys (UIS) is also complemented by Community Profiling, Participatory Rapid Assessment and Expert Opinion Surveys.

15. **Urban Inequities Survey Manual.** A reference tool called the **Urban Inequities Survey (UIS) Manual** has been developed following the UNICEF's End-Decade Multiple Indicator Survey Manual (MICS-2 Manual). The tool provides the LUO and local authorities with guidelines on how to conduct a household survey and will include the following topics: preparing for a survey, designing the questionnaire, the model questionnaire, designing and selecting the sample, preparing for data collection, conducting the fieldwork, processing the data, analyzing the data and producing survey reports and the model report.
16. GUO was able to piggyback on the DHSs of Accra, Cairo, Manila, Dhaka in 2003, and Sao Paolo, Dakar and Istanbul in 2004. The knowledge production component for the activities in Kolkata and Mumbai of India was also carried out in partnership with the Centre for Development Studies in Kerala, India. As an entry point MSB will run a secondary analysis on the National Family Health Surveys that have a separate slum strata, for Kolkata and Mumbai. A full Urban inequities Survey has been also conducted in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in 2003. It indicates significant intra-city differentials in terms of access to water, sanitation, shelter, security of tenure. Two UIS are planned in 2004-2005 for Lagos (Nigeria) and Beirut (Lebanon).

Programme 3. Support to the establishment of local system of production of statistics

17. UN-HABITAT has been assisting a certain number of cities and countries in developing urban indicators systems at local level through the Global Urban Observatory (GUO). The GUO is a world-wide monitoring and learning network that aims to assist governments, local authorities and organisations of civil society to strengthen their ability to collect, manage, maintain and use information on urban development; enhance the use of knowledge and urban indicators for policy formulation, planning and urban management through participatory process. The GUO provides support to around 120 Local Urban Observatories across the world.
18. **Local Urban Observatories (LUO).** The LUO in each city or town is the focal point for urban policy development and planning where collaboration among policy makers, technical experts and representatives of partners groups is fostered. It is a test bed for data gathering and management tools and for development of appropriate methods for the application and analysis of indicators. UN-HABITAT is assisting LUO to function as:

learning structures that identify conditions, trends and priority issues and produce sub-national statistics very often at city level;

service providers to develop appropriate urban indicators and evaluation frameworks for the city and its communities;

training agents that assist communities and cities to use appropriate tools and methods for the generation, management and analysis of urban information on a regular and consistent basis in the process of formulating urban policy; and

networking nodes that participate with other LUOs in the sharing of resources, the exchange of substantive and methodological knowledge and the dissemination of analyses of indicators to the national, regional and global levels.

Programme 4. Small area estimates

18. **Small area estimates.** The GUO's Small Area Estimates project aims at producing indicators at the local level. Existing post-census estimates of urban poverty and slum conditions at the local level are considered inadequate for various reasons. The Census is rapidly outdated and covers very limited socio-economic and health information. Although surveys such as DHS and MICS provide a wealth of information on shelter, social development, and other household and individual characteristics (Education, Health, gender, youth, etc.) are not sufficiently reliable, especially for those areas which are not sampled by surveys. The goal of The Small Area estimates project is to form these estimates for all urban areas (sub-cities) combining census and survey information. Although the methodology of Small Area Estimates (SAE) seems straightforward, it is not easy to satisfy its requirements. In principle, variables not observed in the census is provided and modeled in the survey in relationship with other variables collected both by the survey and census. However, it is convenient that the census and the survey are almost contemporaneous, and has used similar methods and instruments of collection of common variables. This is not always the case, for instance variables such as water and sanitation are often collected and coded differently across surveys and censuses (UNICEF/WHO, 2002; Gora Mboup, 2003).

Points for consideration by the Commission

19. UN-HABITAT recognizes that the CCSA support is crucial for the Agency to implement the activities summarized above. UN-HABITAT will be grateful to the CCSA if the following recommendations are considered:

- a) to assist through the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) to encourage governments and institutions producing data to consider the need to produce sub-national data in a consistent, permanent manner through their mainstream collection mechanism;
- b) to advise UNSC and other bodies to consider the need to integrate one or two very relevant questions about slum dwellers, and to update *Principles and Recommendations of census* in incorporating slum strata;
- c) to establish dialog between partners for the harmonization of household data collection at the international and national levels;
- d) to consider the small area statistics techniques as a complementary approach for the production of sub-national statistics; and
- e) to evaluate in the next CCSA meeting the progress made by governments and the international communities in the production of sub-national statistics.