



**Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN 2010)
United Nations Human Settlement Programme
(UN HABITAT)
Background Guide**

Honorable delegates,

It is with great pleasure we welcome you to the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN Habitat) in the Montessori Model United Nations 2010.

You will find a brief description of the history and functions of the UN-Habitat. These documents may help you understand the scope and breadth of what the UN Human Settlements Programme is mandated to promote and strive for. Included within this document is a brief introduction on the two agenda topics that you will soon be researching in depth for the upcoming MMUN conference in March.

Please remember, the primary purpose of all the information provided in this guide is to “strike your imagination.” You will spend most of your time researching and preparing your topics, from the perspective of your country. Finally, the application of the data will be the writing of position papers. You will couple this with familiarizing your delegation with proper committee protocols and drafting of speeches, in anticipation of participating in the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN Habitat) committee sessions in New York.

We look forward to meeting you in March.

Montessori Model United Nations 2010 Secretariat

The Birth of the United Nations

The first half of the 20th century is remembered as a period of change and turmoil. After the First World War many people believed that it was necessary to create a world organization capable of keeping peace and preventing the horrors of war. The League of Nations was founded immediately, consisting of 42 countries, 58 at its largest point. Its goal was to preserve peace by solving international conflicts peacefully and promoting cooperation between nations in economic and international affairs. However, the Second World War unfolded and proved that the League had not accomplished its goal.

In 1944 representatives of China, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Russian Federation (In that moment USSR) meeting at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC, prepared a blueprint for a new and stronger international organization. Towards the end of the war, representatives of 51 countries gathered in San Francisco in 1945 to prepare the final text that would lay the foundations of international cooperation. Most of the ideals and structure of this new organization were the same as the League's. The difference was that now, the organization had the support of the most powerful countries of the world. The UN came to exist officially when the Charter of the United Nations was supported by the five permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, and France) and a majority of all other signatories on October 24, 1945.



The purpose of the United Nations is to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development, based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well being of all people. It affords the opportunity for countries to balance global interdependence and national interests while addressing international problems. Currently, 192 countries are United Nations Member States. Representatives from these nations meet in the General Assembly, which is the closest event to a world parliament. Each country, large or small, rich or poor, has a single vote.

The United Nations Today

The United Nations is an international organization committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards, and human rights. Due to its unique international character, and the powers vested in its founding Charter, the Organization can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 192 Member States to express their views, through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees.



The work of the United Nations reaches every corner of the globe. Although best known for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, there are many other ways the United Nations and its System affect our lives and make

the world a better place. The Organization also works on: sustainable development, environment and refugees protection, disaster relief, counter terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, promoting democracy, human rights, governance, economic and social development and international health, clearing landmines, expanding food production, and more, in order to achieve its goals and coordinate efforts for a safer world for this and future generations.

UN Human Settlement Programme (UN HABITAT)

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all people. The main documents outlining the mandate of the organization are the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, Habitat Agenda, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and Resolution 56/206.

The Challenge

The United Nations Millennium Declaration recognizes the terrible living circumstances of the world's urban poor. It articulates the commitment of Member States to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020 – **Target 11 of Millennium Development Goal No.7, a task mandated to UN-HABITAT.**

As large as 100 million may seem, however, it is only 10 per cent of the present worldwide slum population, which, if left unchecked, will multiply threefold to 3 billion by the year 2050. The challenge is made more daunting by the fact that, according to UN-HABITAT's own research, the world's slum population has already grown by 75 million in barely three years since the Millennium Declaration.

As our towns and cities grow at unprecedented rates setting the social, political, cultural and environmental trends of the world, sustainable urbanization is one of the most pressing challenges facing the global community in the 21st century. In 1950, one-third of the world's people lived in cities. Just 50 years later, this proportion has risen to one-half and will continue to grow to two-thirds, or 6 billion people, by 2050. *Cities are now home to half of humankind.* They are the hub for much national production and consumption – economic and social processes that generate wealth and opportunity. But they also create disease, crime, pollution and poverty. In many cities, especially in developing countries, slum dwellers number more than 50 per cent of the population and have little or no access to shelter, water, and sanitation. This is where UN-HABITAT is mandated to make a difference for the better.



UN-HABITAT runs a series of strategic programmes designed to help make cities safer, to bring relief in countries suffering the aftermath of war or natural disasters, and promote sustainable cities and good governance. Under the Urban Management Programme, an initiative of United Nations Development Programme, UN-HABITAT, the World Bank and various bilateral donors, the agency fosters urban management in the fields of participatory urban governance, urban poverty alleviation, environmental management, and the dissemination of this information at the local, national and regional levels. UN-HABITAT also develops indicators of good urban governance with **two principle aims**. The first aim is to help cities identify urban governance priorities and assess their progress towards the quality of city-life and the second aim is to develop a global Good Urban Governance Index. The agency has a Training and Capacity Building Branch which works at national and local levels in various countries to strengthen capacity building through high-level policy dialogues seminars, consultations and expert workshops.

Our Work

UN Habitat is involved in:

- Urban Development and Management
- Land and Housing
- Environment and Climate Change
- Water Sanitation and Infrastructure
- Urban Economy and Financing Shelter
- Risk and Disaster Management
- Social Inclusion
- Information Monitoring

<http://www.un-habitat.org/categories.asp?catid=9>



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In Mumbai, India, exists the Dharavi slum region; it is Asia's largest slum in one of its wealthiest cities. 54% of the city habitants live in this and other slums, that is 1.2 million people living in unhygienic conditions, according to the Human Development Report. These Mumbai inhabitants, the countries capital, are making less than 25 cents a day. The injustice lies in part in the fact that this impoverished population live on just 6% of the cities land in "horrific levels of congestion".

Ironically, these two extremes, rich and poor, depend on each other. The slum dwellers provide services and cheap products for the cities wealthy. The slum dwellers mix and mingle in most parts of the city, freely; but, the wealthier Mumbai residents rarely, if ever, venture into the slum dwellers streets. This dichotomy needs to change; that is the work of the UN Habitat and its cooperating agencies.



<http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/TPWL-pressrelease>

Upcoming UN Habitat Forums and Awareness Events:

World Habitat Day: Planning Our Urban Future ...was October 5, 2009

World Urban Forum 5: Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, 22-26 March 2010

Shanghai World Expo 2010

UN Habitat works with many local and global government, educational and financial institutions, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to achieve its mandate from the General Assembly through UN Environmental Program (UNEP), to which it reports. Some of these multi-lateral groups include UNEP, the Cities Alliance, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, and Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN Habitat) - Topics for the MMUN 2010

Topic 1: Young People in the Development of Human Settlements

Topic 2: Elimination of Slums worldwide, especially in Asia

Topic 1: Young People in the Development of Human Settlements

Millennium Development Goal #7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Target 11: By 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Target 10: Calls for the reduction by half of the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

UN-HABITAT has launched a program to train youth on how to “map” their cities. Using participatory planning techniques combined with the latest in spatial technologies, youth from the One Stop Youth Resource Centre sites in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, and Kampala will over the next three months map youth services and other important sites in their communities.

“Asset mapping is an important participatory tool for youth in decision making at the city level” stated Mutinta Munyati, Human Settlements Programme Officer at the opening of the training workshop. The project is being implemented by the International Centre for Sustainable Cities, working under the UN HABITAT Youth Empowerment Program, with support from the Government Norway.

The youth from each One Stop site will map their communities using GPS as well as video, photography and audio recordings. This information will then be transferred both to Google Earth, for global distribution, and to print, in the form of a Youth Friendly Cities guide for each city. UN HABITAT and the University of Colorado have undertaken an initial pilot test in Dar es Salaam. The outputs can be viewed at <http://daressalaam.youthcore.ca/>

“Urban planning is no longer only the purview of professionals” states Doug Ragan, coordinator for the project and University of Colorado PhD student, “With easy access to GPS, which can even now be done on mobile phones, and web based programs such as Google Earth, planning can now truly be participatory, engaging even those most marginalized such as youth in the slums. It is the meaningful engagement of those most marginalized through tools such as this which creates safer and more productive cities.”

UN HABITAT is planning a community mapping training at the upcoming World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro. As well, they will be publishing and launching the guides and a train the trainer manual.

According to UN-HABITAT’s State of the World’s Cities Report 2006/7, the year 2007 will mark a turning point in human history - the urban population will for the first time equal the world’s rural population and the number of slum dwellers in the world cross the one billion mark. One in every three city residents will live in inadequate housing with no or few basic services.

The global urban population has quadrupled since 1950, and cities of the developing world now account for over 90 per cent of the world's urban growth. Current trends predict the number of urban dwellers will keep rising, reaching almost 5 billion by 2030. Cities hold tremendous potential, they are the engines of economic and social development as well as the main source of countries' jobs. **However, cities today can also generate and intensify social exclusion, denying the benefits of urban life to poor youth.** Africa's urban population is forecast to double from 295 million in 2000 to 590 million in 2020 – a growth rate consistent with the most rapid urban growth rates in the world.

Globally, **young people aged 15-24 years represent 18 per cent of the world's population.** Africa houses the largest segment of young people. Available estimates show that in most African countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia the youth and children aged 25 years and below constitute about or over 70 per cent of the population. It is imperative that youth be recognized and supported as leaders within their own communities.

By 2020, one half of Africa's population will be living in cities. In many cities around the continent, more than 50 per cent of inhabitants are under the age of 19.2. The lives of young people, in Sub-Saharan Africa are blighted by a combination of intense human injustice and disasters. In addition, youth have over the past 20 years been particularly affected by growing urban poverty, child trafficking, exploitation, high unemployment, and the growing phenomenon of street children. Crime and violence, the breakdown of family life, environmental degradation, worsening health conditions and the transmission of infectious diseases, and the worsening HIV/AIDS pandemic also add to the list.

The Third Session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada in June 2006, highlighted the leadership that youth are currently demonstrating on key urban issues such as Information Communication Technologies, HIV/AIDS and employment. There is urgent need for young people to be encouraged and supported to take leadership roles and be empowered to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Young people are also adversely affected by the impact of globalization on values and culture, which in some cases is rapidly destroying local cultural ties and affiliations as well as traditional inter-generational ties.

UN-HABITAT views young people as effective advocates of change, both decision makers and to the general public, and them as catalysts in making a difference in implementing change on the ground for all.

Young people in the development of human settlements

Questions to consider when researching:

1. What are the needs of youth and housing / neighborhoods?
2. How are the ideas of youth considered?
3. How does your country incorporate the ideas of youth? Is the youth valued in your country in its actions and laws?
4. What organizations, NGO's, or educational institutions have partnered with youth?
5. How has technology changed the involvement of youth?
6. How does education enhance youth involvement in human settlements?

7. What declarations already exist incorporating youth in human settlement development?
8. How are population centers changing? Consider Urban vs. Rural concentration

What are slums?

The word “slum” is often used to describe informal settlements within cities that have inadequate housing and squalid, miserable living conditions. They are often overcrowded, with many people crammed into very small living spaces. These settlements lack basic municipal services such as water, sanitation, waste collection, storm drainage, street lighting, paved sidewalks and roads for emergency access. Most also don't have easy access to schools, hospitals or public places for the community to gather. Like all informal settlements, housing in slums is built on land that the occupant does not have a legal claim to and without any urban planning or adherence to zoning regulations. In addition, slums are often areas where many social indicators are on a downward slide; for example, crime and unemployment are on the rise.

All slums are not the same, and some provide better living conditions than others. Likewise, slum dwellers are not a homogeneous population, but a diverse group of people with different interests, means and backgrounds. Slums are also a significant economic force. In many cities, as much as 60 percent of employment is in the informal sector of the urban population. Today, more than one billion people in the world live in slums. In the developing world, one out of every three people living in cities lives in a slum.

Questions about Slums

1. What are slums?
2. Why do slums develop?
3. What can be done to prevent the development of new slums?
4. What do we mean by land rights or secure tenure?
5. What do we mean by citizenship rights?
6. What is slum upgrading? Is slum upgrading different from urban upgrading?
7. Why is slum upgrading important?
8. Why not tear down the slums and start over?
9. What factors are needed for slum upgrading to be successful?
10. What are some of the challenges in slum upgrading?
11. How long does it take for a slum to be upgraded?
12. What is the role of gender in slum upgrading?
13. What are some examples of successful slum upgrading projects?
14. What is the role of the Cities Alliance in slum upgrading?

Population growth

Countries around the world are urbanizing rapidly as more people migrate from rural areas to the cities and natural population growth continues to occur. Today, more than half the world's population resides in urban areas. More than 90 percent of this urban growth is taking place in the developing world.

Urban migration happens for a number of reasons:

The pushing and pulling forces of migration. Some people migrate because they are pushed out of their place of origin by factors such as natural disasters or sustained ecological changes. Others are pulled to a new destination by better job prospects, education, health facilities, or freedom from restrictive social or cultural realities.

Low incomes from agriculture. Most people in rural areas work in the agricultural sector, which is highly dependent on weather. Also, rural land is limited, its fertility sometimes low or declining, land holdings are small, farm debts are high, and many households have become landless. As a result, overall rural incomes are low.

Better job prospects. In comparison with rural areas, urban areas offer dramatically increased job opportunities. In addition, because urban cultures are often less constrained than those in villages, cities can also offer greater prospects of upward social mobility.

People know what cities can offer them. Most migrants make a deliberate choice to stay or leave in rural areas. Improved transport, communications and links with earlier migrants have all made rural populations much more aware of the advantages and disadvantages of urban life, especially regarding job opportunities and housing.

Urban migration is often a survival strategy for rural households. Sometimes, rural households split into several groups located in different places—rural areas, small towns, and big cities—in order to diversify their sources of income and be less vulnerable to economic downturns.

Governance

Another reason slums develop is bad governance. Governments often fail to recognize the rights of the urban poor and incorporate them into urban planning, thereby contributing to the growth of slums. In addition, many countries simply cannot respond to rapid urbanization quickly enough. People are coming to cities far faster than the planning process can incorporate them. Often, they find their own land and build a shack before the government has a chance to learn of their existence.

The attitude of a government towards urbanization is also an important component. Some governments take a hostile approach to urbanization. They believe that if they provide urban services to the poor, it will attract urbanization and cause the slums to grow. The problem with this view is that very few people come to the city for water or services—they come looking for work. In other cases, governments take more of a passive approach to urbanization. They either do not have the planning tools to deal with the rapid urbanization that is happening, or the tools in place are not sufficiently responsive to the reality on the ground.

What can be done to prevent the development of new slums?

There are basic things a government can do to prevent new slums from developing. One is to recognize that urbanization is going to happen. Sometimes governments believe that adopting alternative policies, such as focusing on rural development, will stop urbanization. This approach is rarely effective. Once governments accept the reality of urban growth, the next step is to plan for it and determine where the new residents will live. Authorities should identify land and plan for its settlement even if money is not available for urban services. Once people settle on that land and feel that they have a right to live there, they will begin investing in it. Over time, the area will upgrade incrementally.

What do we mean by land rights or secure tenure?

Land tenure is the right of an individual or group to occupy or use a piece of land. It can be via ownership or lease. Land rights is about confidence in the future. People who are safe from eviction with a sense of long-term stability (whether they own the land or not) are much more likely to invest in their housing or community. Over time, these incremental improvements by residents can upgrade the entire community. There must also be a clear legal framework behind land rights. Often, slum dwellers face significant obstacles to owning or obtaining the rights to land. Land markets are frequently dysfunctional, and inappropriate standards or regulations make it nearly impossible for local authorities to find enough well-located, serviceable and affordable land for the residents of overcrowded slum settlements. In addition, control of land is often connected to political patronage and corruption, making it difficult to get clear information about land ownership, use and availability.

What do we mean by citizenship rights?

Slum dwellers are part of the urban populace, with the same democratic rights to environmental health and basic living conditions as all residents. These rights are often limited by a government's ability to realize them. The process of realizing the rights of slum dwellers hinges on their capacity to engage actively with the government. It is a question of creating a space where slum dwellers and the government can engage in a dialogue about slums and upgrading their communities. Through dialogue, the parties can begin to lay out their rights and responsibilities and design programmes that communities are able to respond to. This is an important part of the process; if communities don't understand their responsibilities or a slum upgrading programme is beyond the reach of the slum dwellers, the programme has a much lower chance of success.

Questions:

1. Does your country have a slum problem?
2. If so, how is it addressed?
3. Is there a population vs. migration / immigration issue affecting the growth of slums?
4. What practices have been used to address the challenge of slums?
5. What other MDG's or needs may affect the development and therefore the reduction of slums?
6. Does the paradigm regarding the improvement of slums need to be changed as well as urban practices?
7. Do Displaced Persons or Refugees affect the increase or decrease in slums?
8. How do groups like City Alliance help countries address the slum dilemma?
9. What roles do education, employment, and a countries economy have, within a country, in alleviating or reducing the development of slums?

Important Links

<http://www.unhabitat.org/>

<http://www.poline.org/docs/1575/180005.html>

http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/annual_report

http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/what_we_do

<http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/About-slum-upgrading>

** <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/mdg-factsheets/slumdweller-factsheet.pdf>

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=4843&catid=5&typeid=6&subMenuId=0>

http://www.unhabitat.org/cdrom/networking/implementing_mdg_target%20html.htm

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=4419&catid=531&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>