

NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REPORT



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

NATIONAL URBAN POLICY: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REPORT

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FOREWORD



I am very pleased to present the State of National Urban Policies Report in Latin America and the Caribbean, an insightful assessment of urban policies in one of the most urbanized regions of the world. The report constitutes a valuable source of information, based on case studies conducted by UN-Habitat on the state of national urban policies in Latin America and the Caribbean regions.

The New Urban Agenda, the outcome document of Habitat III, along with Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, recognizes the transformative power of urbanization as a positive force potentially underpinning profound social, political and economic transformations.

The New Urban Agenda emphasizes the leading role of national governments in the definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies. National Urban Policies are also highlighted as an instrument for governments to integrate sectoral policies, engage a wide array of stakeholders, and define a shared and inclusive urban vision, to facilitate and enable sustainable urban development at all levels.

The purpose of this report is to gain an enhanced understanding of how governments in the region have addressed the transformation and expansion of their cities, and more specifically, assess how national urban policies have been developed, highlighting their challenges, successes and innovations. The Latin America and Caribbean region is particularly interesting for this study, as its recent rapid and privately managed urban transition has now generated acute challenges, such as limited mobility, a growing housing deficit, and urban/rural and intracity inequalities.

The region has now embarked on a second urban transition, attempting to actively reverse unsustainable urban development patterns. While this shift is recent and urban challenges remain considerable, it is remarkable in its political commitment and creativity. This new approach to urban policy introduces a number of exciting conceptual and methodological innovations including the reflection on the definition of good urban living, the constitutional guarantee of the rights of urban dwellers, extensive citizen participation adding democratic legitimacy to a solid legal framework, and a variety of policy and financial instruments to ensure implementation of urban principles.

The report is part of a series of five regional reports assessing the state of national urban policies that complement the Global State of National Urban Policies Report, conducted in collaboration between UN-Habitat and the OECD. These studies are timely, as they follow up on Habitat III and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and accompany the Second International Conference on National Urban Policy, held in Paris, France in May 2017.

I believe that this series of regional reports contributes to building empirical knowledge on the National Urban Policy process and will provide useful insight for academia, policy makers and practitioners to embark on an urban paradigm shift towards sustainable development.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

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