TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: SAN FERNANDO URBAN PROFILE

DISCLAIMER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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FOREWORD

According to research published in UN-Habitat's[1] flagship report, The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's population already living in urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the developing countries moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-Habitat estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-Habitat is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-Habitat, the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-Habitat headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-Habitat to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

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1   UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The urban profiling is a rapid and action-oriented urban assessment of needs and capacity-building gaps at national and local levels. It is currently being implemented in over 20 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific states. Urban profiling uses a structured approach in which priority interventions are agreed upon through a consultative process. It consists of three phases: (1) a rapid participatory urban profiling at national and local levels, focusing on governance, informal settlements, urban services, urban safety, local economic development, disaster management, environment, and proposed interventions; (2) detailed priority proposals; and (3) project implementation.

Urban profiling in Trinidad and Tobago encompasses a national profile, as well as profiles for Port of Spain, Scarborough, and San Fernando, each published as a separate report. This is the San Fernando report, and it constitutes a general background, a synthesis of specific themes – Governance; Slums, Shelter, Land, and Tenure; Basic Urban Services; Inclusive and Safer Cities; Local Economic Development; and Disaster Management, Climate Change, and Environment – and priority project proposals.

BACKGROUND

San Fernando is the second-largest city in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and has been dubbed the country's industrial capital. As a result of the presence of oil and natural gas, a significant amount of income has been generated within the area. The sustained economic power of the area and its contribution to the gross domestic product resulted in the elevation of the former borough to a city on 18 November 1988. The city functions as the main transportation hub for the south of the island of Trinidad and is identified as a regional urban centre in the National Physical Development Plan of 1984. This indicates the significance of San Fernando as the key urban centre after the national capital, and denotes a concentration of urban amenities and employment opportunities and a high level of social services. The main landscape feature is the San Fernando Hill. The rugged topography of this central landmark has influenced the city's road and settlement patterns. Like Port of Spain and Scarborough, San Fernando is a coastal city. There are many lower-level government and administrative offices, in addition to a thriving central business district. However, as commercial land uses continue to encroach upon the existing residential areas, the character of the city continues to change, and residents are affected by the increasing lack of community services.

GOVERNANCE

The main governing body for the city is the San Fernando City Corporation. This is a local government body and its major focus is infrastructural maintenance and service provision under the Municipal Corporations Act 21 (1990). The corporation has two major arms, the San Fernando City Council and the administrative arm. The city council is responsible for physical infrastructure, public health, financial planning, and allocation of resources and personnel. The administrative arm comprises public servants who implement policies and deliver services based on the Municipal Corporations Act 21 (1990). Governance at this level is important to ensure that communities are not neglected.

SLUMS, SHELTER, LAND, AND TENURE

The urban poor are concentrated in pockets throughout the city, mainly in marginal areas and in some areas adjacent to government housing schemes such as Pleasantville and Embacadere. In these pockets, the housing stock does not reflect well on the city in terms of aesthetics, as it is often structurally unsafe, derelict and compromised as a result of the poor building materials and construction. There are areas in San Fernando that display slum characteristics such as inadequate access to potable water and sanitation, and deficiencies in physical infrastructure. There are four main squatter sites: Blitz Village, Embacadere, Bayshore, and Tarouba. In these areas, the houses are of poor structural quality, and the residents have insecure tenure.

BASIC URBAN SERVICES

In many areas of San Fernando, the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation and shelter is considered to be of a good standard and level. For example, in 2000 there was a relatively higher supply of piped water in San Fernando (86 percent) compared with Port of Spain (81 percent). The same year, approximately 8.7 percent of households in San Fernando used pit latrines, while 40 percent used septic tanks/soakaways. These present an environmental risk if the waste is not properly managed.

INCLUSIVE AND SAFER CITIES

Inclusiveness is an issue, as San Fernando is not conducive to the movement of persons. Many areas are not pedestrian-friendly, particularly for women, children or the handicapped. The layout of communities also limits access, with no centres to cater to the different needs of the public. Safety is an issue,

particularly during carnival and major holidays, when petty crime usually increases. There are many criminal activities in the Bayshore and Embacadere areas, as drug traffickers use the coast for access.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Almost half of the working population is employed in the private sector, while government and state-owned agencies account for 24.8 percent of the workforce. This is reflected in the dominance of private businesses in the city centre and along the major roadways. Cipero Street, Coffee Street, Royal Road, and Mucurapo Street all contain a high proportion of private commercial land uses. In contrast, government offices are limited to certain areas. The proximity of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate to the north of the city encourages the outward migration of workers, with San Fernando and its environs providing the catchment for entities such as the state-owned Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Petrotrin).

DISASTER MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

There are many disaster management and climate change issues for the city, particularly given its coastal location. Sea level rise is a concern, as land to the south of San Fernando, at the Godineau Bridge, is being reclaimed by the sea. Meanwhile, the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery to the north of the city pumps aerosol and carbon into the atmosphere. As a result, the carbon footprint of the island is very high, and the surrounding areas are severely affected. Improper waste disposal and the presence of a dump close to Embacadere also contribute to the contamination of the water table.

BACKGROUND

URBAN PROFILING

The Trinidad and Tobago urban profiling consists of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study is to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The study is based on analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, and others. The consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their development into proposed capacity-building and other projects, all aimed at urban poverty reduction. Urban profiling is being implemented in many African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries.

In Trinidad and Tobago and the other Caribbean countries, the urban profiling is being done in partnership with the University of the West Indies. This offers an opportunity for comparative regional analysis, with particular customization to the Caribbean context and history, which holds particular relevance in the formulation of the themes.

METHODOLOGY

Urban profiling consists of three phases:

Phase one consists of rapid profiling of urban conditions at national and local levels. The capital city, a medium-sized city, and a small city are selected and studied to provide a representative sample in each country. The analysis focuses on the following themes: governance; slums, shelter, land, and tenure; basic urban services; inclusive and safer cities; local economic development; and disaster management, climate change, and environment. Information is collected through standard

Phase two builds on the priorities identified through pre-feasibility studies and develops detailed capacity-building and capital investment projects.

Phase three implements the projects developed during the two earlier phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening and replication. This report presents the outcomes of Phase One of the urban profiling in San Fernando.

URBAN PROFILING IN SAN FERNANDO

Urban profiling in San Fernando is one of three such exercises conducted in Trinidad and Tobago. Similar exercises are being undertaken in Port of Spain, the capital city, and Scarborough, a small city in Tobago. Each urban profile is published as a separate report.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report consists of:

1. a general background of the urban sector in San Fernando, based on the findings of the desk study undertaken, interviews, and a consultation that was held in San Fernando on 9 September 2011. The background includes data on administration, urban planning, economy, the informal sector, the private sector, urban poverty, infrastructure, water, sanitation, public transport, street lighting, energy, health, and education.

2. an assessment of the areas of governance; slums, shelter, land, and tenure; basic urban services; inclusive and safer cities; local economic development; and disaster management, climate change, and environment, in terms of the institutional set-up, regulatory framework, resource mobilization, and performance. It is to be noted that gender was not identified as a specific issue