



URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MIGRATION:

A REVIEW OF POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PRACTICES

United Nations Housing Rights Programme, Report No. 8

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

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FOREWORD

“The global urbanisation process increasingly includes indigenous peoples. Although, globally, the majority of indigenous peoples still live in rural areas the limited available data shows that more and more of them are... migrating to urban areas. This migration can be temporary or permanent. Thus, urbanisation is affecting indigenous peoples in many countries, both developed and developing, with diverse impacts.” – (UN-HABITAT and OHCHR).

This new report, *Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration: A Review of Policies, Programmes and Practices* is the outcome of joint efforts by UN-HABITAT and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as part of the United Nations Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP).

The material originates from an international Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration held in Santiago, Chile, March 27-29, 2007. It seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of migration by indigenous peoples into urban areas from a human rights and a gender perspective.

In this work, particular attention is paid to the varying nature of rural-urban migration around the world, and its impact on quality of life and rights of urban indigenous peoples, particularly youth and women.

Indigenous peoples living in urban areas often constitute more than half of the indigenous population in many countries. This rate is on the increase due to a variety of factors that has led to forced or involuntary movement from rural to urban areas.

The situation of indigenous peoples in urban areas varies greatly. While some are able to adapt and improve their living conditions without loss of cultural identity, many are subject to discrimination, exclusion and violence. A growing number of indigenous peoples, who are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized urban communities, are living in slums.

Greater attention by the relevant authorities is required to address rights of urban indigenous peoples. Public authorities need to appreciate the multiple identities of indigenous peoples within urban areas and their continuing relationship to their traditional lands and natural resources.

This report highlights some of the innovative and effective strategies, policies and practices currently in force to improve the living conditions of indigenous peoples in cities and to contribute to a better understanding of urban indigenous peoples.

I thank all of those who contributed to this report. I view this work as an important component of our quest for better urban living conditions around the world, and as an important component of UN-HABITAT's new World Urban Campaign for better, more equitable, and thus more sustainable cities.



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Christophe Lalande coordinated the overall project. Together with Rasmus Precht (of UN-HABITAT) and David Martin (of OHCHR) he developed the research design. Claudio Acioly and Mohamed El Sioufi (of UN-HABITAT), and Antti Korkeakivi, Julian Burger and Samia Slimane (of OHCHR) provided valuable inputs. Maria de la Guardia (of UN-HABITAT) did the layout and artwork for this publication.

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