

A WORLD OF CITIES

AN URBANIZED WORLD

The new human habitat

Rapid growth of population and its concentration in cities around the world are affecting the long-term outlook for humanity. Despite four millennia as centres of civilization and economic activity, cities never attracted more than a few percent of the global population until the last century. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, systems of cities have become a dominant factor in the world's social, economic, cultural and political matrix. Burdened with all the problems of growth, cities are increasingly subject to dramatic crises, especially in developing countries. Unemployment, environmental degradation, lack of urban services, deterioration of existing infrastructure and lack of access to land, finance and adequate shelter are among the main areas of concern.

population in both highly industrialized countries (HIC) and those countries with a high Human Development Index (HDI¹), is above 70 percent. Urbanization falls to less than 30 percent in countries that are classified as Least Developed Countries (LDC) or have a low HDI. All HICs score high in their provision of urban services and infrastructure to all citizens and low in incidence of absolute poverty. Development and urbanization, thus, proceed hand-in-glove. Without substantial investment in the infrastructure and services that support both, neither can occur.

Moving toward urban-rural equilibrium

The current worldwide rate of urbanization (that is, the percentage rate, per year, that the urban share of total population is expanding) is about 0.8 percent, varying between about 1.6 percent for all African countries to about 0.3 percent for all HICs. Worldwide, nearly all cities continue to grow in absolute terms. The rates at which they are capturing a portion of a country's total population, however, vary. In Asia and North America, cities are still taking in national population at an *increasing* rate, although the rate in North America is very low at 0.26 percent. In Africa, Europe and Latin America, urbanization rates are slowing. In Latin America, urbanization rates - now at about 0.5 percent - have been slowing since 1950 when the average for all countries in the region was 1.8 percent per year. With the exception of the small island states of Oceania, that actually had negative urbanization rates since 1975 and are now moving into positive territory, rates of urbanization are projected to drop in all regions after 2015. Slowing urbanization rates mean that the *combined rate* of (1) domestic rural-to-urban migration, (2) immigration of foreigners directly to cities and (3) the natural rate of population growth in cities is dropping off.

	Urban Population as a % of total population			Urban Population annual growth rate (%)	
	1970	1995	2015	1970-1995	1995-2015
Least Developed	12.7	22.9	34.9	5.1	4.6
All Developing	24.7	37.4	49.3	3.8	2.9
Industrialized	67.1	73.7	78.7	1.1	0.6
Low HDI	18.2	27.4	38.6	4.1	3.7
Medium HDI	23.0	37.7	52.7	3.9	2.8
High HDI	52.8	70.9	78.5	3.3	1.7

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report 2000

For better or for worse, the development of contemporary societies will depend largely on understanding and managing the growth of cities. The city will increasingly become the test bed for the adequacy of political institutions, for the performance of government agencies, and for the effectiveness of programmes to combat social exclusion, to protect and repair the environment and to promote human development.

Urbanization and human development

There is a strong, positive link between national urbanization and national levels of human development. Urban population, as a share of total national

1000

1100

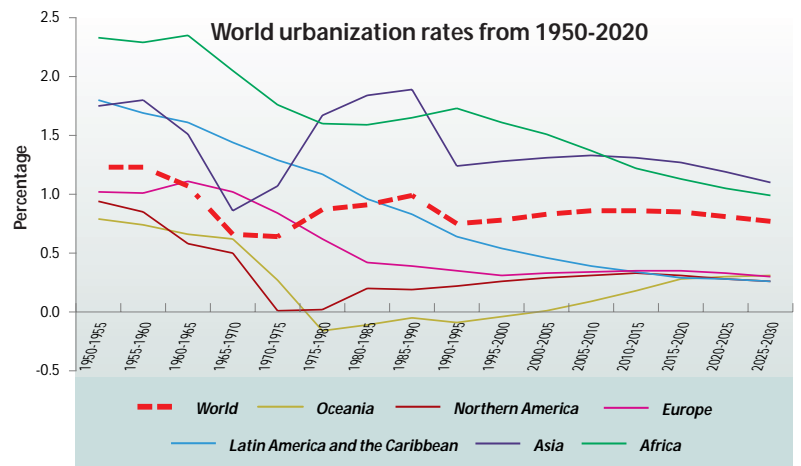
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Mega-cities in the developing world

The rise of the mega-city (cities of at least 10 million people) in developing countries over the past twenty years is of concern because of incapacity to increase the provision of housing and basic services at the same pace. There is currently an extremely rapid displacement of developed country cities² on the list of the world's 30 largest cities by those in developing countries. Between 1980 and 2000 Lagos, Nigeria, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Cairo, Egypt, Tianjin, China, Hyderabad and Lahore, India, along with several others in developing countries, were added to the list. By 2010 Lagos is projected to become the third largest city in the world.



Source: UN, World Urbanization Prospects, 1999

	1980	1990	2000	2010
1	21.9 Tokyo	25.1 Tokyo	26.4 Tokyo	26.4 Tokyo
2	15.6 New York	16.1 New York	18.1 Mexico City	23.6 Bombay
3	13.9 Mexico City	15.1 Mexico City	18.1 Bombay	20.2 Lagos
4	12.5 São Paulo	15.1 São Paulo	17.8 São Paulo	19.7 São Paulo
5	11.7 Shanghai	13.3 Shanghai	16.6 New York	18.7 Mexico City
6	10.0 Osaka	12.2 Bombay	13.4 Lagos	18.4 Dhaka
7	9.9 Buenos Aires	11.5 Los Angeles	13.1 Los Angeles	17.2 New York
8	9.5 Los Angeles	11.2 Buenos Aires	12.9 Calcutta	16.6 Karachi
9	9.0 Calcutta	11.0 Osaka	12.9 Shanghai	15.6 Calcutta
10	9.0 Beijing	10.9 Calcutta	12.6 Buenos Aires	15.3 Jakarta
11	8.9 Paris	10.8 Beijing	12.3 Dhaka	15.1 Delhi
12	8.7 Rio de Janeiro	10.5 Seoul	11.8 Karachi	13.9 Los Angeles
13	8.3 Seoul	9.7 Rio de Janeiro	11.7 Delhi	13.9 Metro Manila
14	8.1 Moscow	9.3 Paris	11.0 Jakarta	13.7 Buenos Aires
15	8.1 Bombay	9.0 Moscow	11.0 Osaka	13.7 Shanghai
16	7.7 London	8.8 Tianjin	10.9 Metro Manila	12.7 Cairo
17	7.3 Tianjin	8.6 Cairo	10.8 Beijing	11.8 Istanbul
18	6.9 Cairo	8.2 Delhi	10.6 Rio de Janeiro	11.5 Beijing
19	6.8 Chicago	8.0 Metro Manila	10.6 Cairo	11.5 Rio de Janeiro
20	6.3 Essen	7.9 Karachi	9.9 Seoul	11.0 Osaka
21	6.0 Jakarta	7.7 Lagos	9.6 Paris	10.0 Tianjin
22	6.0 Metro Manila	7.7 London	9.5 Istanbul	9.9 Seoul
23	5.6 Delhi	7.7 Jakarta	9.3 Moscow	9.7 Paris
24	5.3 Milan	6.8 Chicago	9.2 Tianjin	9.4 Hyderabad
25	5.1 Teheran	6.6 Dhaka	7.6 London	9.4 Moscow
26	5.0 Karachi	6.5 Istanbul	7.4 Lima	9.0 Bangkok
27	4.7 Bangkok	6.4 Teheran	7.3 Bangkok	8.8 Lima
28	4.6 Saint Petersburg	6.4 Essen	7.2 Teheran	8.6 Lahore
29	4.6 Hong Kong	5.9 Bangkok	7.0 Chicago	8.2 Madras
30	4.4 Lima	5.8 Lima	6.9 Hong Kong	8.1 Teheran

Source: UN, World Urbanization Prospects, 1999

At the same time Milan, Italy, Essen, Germany, and London, United Kingdom have all disappeared from among the top 30 cities, and New York, USA, Osaka, Japan and Paris, France will have slipped farther down the list by 2010. Among developed countries, only Tokyo will have held its place - as the largest urban agglomeration in the world - for 30 years. It should be noted that none of these great cities, with the possible exception of London, will have lost population over the 30 year span. Mega-cities are still growing, but in the developed world they are part of the general slowdown of urban growth rates to a global rate of about one-third of one percent per year. The overall urbanization rate in Asia, in contrast, is four times that and is reflected in the growth of its mega-cities.

