



Florida High Schools Model United Nations

FHSMUN 35

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

COMBATING URBAN POVERTY

Author: Brian D. Sutliff

Abstract: In a rapidly urbanizing world, it is essential that cities and towns be safe, sustaining, livable environments for the billions already living in them and the tens of millions that migrate to cities and towns every year. The proliferation of sprawling urban slums poses major challenges to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as to the national poverty reduction strategies that many governments have started implementing. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in consultation with related UN agencies and interested development partners, is tasked with implementing feasible strategies for reducing and/or eliminating urban poverty.

Introduction

The twenty-first century world is the most urbanized in history; approximately half of all people now live in cities and towns and millions continue to migrate from rural areas to all forms of urban centers and settlements. While cities have always been dynamic centers of economics and governance, they have far too frequently become repositories of poverty, human insecurity, crime, and despair. As the UN System and the international community confront the continuing financial and food price crises as well as the impending 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), all relevant stakeholders, including national governments, international organizations, businesses, urban residents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society representatives, must commit themselves to comprehensively addressing the myriad causes and consequences of urban poverty.

Urban poverty presents multiple, often overlapping, problems for the international community, particularly in the context of the exponential growth of urban slums. While slums are found in highly developed countries, they are usually clearly geographically bounded and according to widely accepted international statistics, only about 6% of all urban residents in the highly developed countries live in slums. Conversely, an appalling 78% of all urban residents in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) live in slums, with an estimate of approximately 924 million slum dwellers globally¹; in the case of Ethiopia, an astonishing 99.4% of all urban

¹ Pietro Garau, Elliott D. Sclar, & Gabriella Y. Carolini, "A home in the city" UN Millennium Project Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers 2005 p. 12. The entire report may be accessed at: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_slum.htm

residents are slum dwellers.² These shocking statistics would undoubtedly be even worse if great strides in overcoming poverty, especially in China and India, had not occurred during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The UN estimated in 2011 that some 227 million people had escaped slum life during the period 2000-2010, even as the overall slum populations in developing countries increased by some 50 million people during that same decade.³ In its landmark document *The Challenge of Slums: The Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*, the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT), noted that "in light of the increasing numbers of slum dwellers, governments have recently adopted a specific target on slums, i.e. Millennium Development Goal 7, Target 11, which aims to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. Given the enormous scale of predicted growth in the number of people living in slums (which might rise to about 2 billion in the next 30 years), the Millennium Development target on slums should be considered as the bare minimum that the international community should aim for."⁴ The pervasiveness of urban poverty unfortunately extends far beyond the slums, however; recent estimates indicate that more than half of all urban residents in the developing world qualify under their respective national definitions as being impoverished.

The tragedies of modern cities are immense: unemployment; insecurity of tenure in regards to human settlements; environmental degradation; inadequate or non-existent social services, including potable water, sanitation, and sewage treatment; public health threats, including highly infectious diseases; personal insecurity in regards to crime and even official security forces; and a fundamental sense of marginalization and lack of opportunity. A further impediment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 is the increasing feminization of poverty as tens of millions of women and girls find themselves increasingly left behind and excluded from the economic and human development opportunities that they have sought in the cities and urban areas where they now reside

Economists, including those at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, finance ministers, and businesspeople may assert that the tragedies of these cities, and especially their ever-expanding peripheries and slums, result largely from a lack of human capital development, inadequate savings and entrepreneurial expertise, and the restrictions imposed by previous statist economic policies but their prescribed methods of increased privatization, budget austerity, and rapid trade liberalization have thus far not produced the broad based and sustained economic and human development needed to resolve poverty in these cities, particularly when viewed in light of the recent global financial crisis. Indeed, as Mike Davis notes, "rapid urban growth in the context of structural adjustment, currency devaluation, and state retrenchment has been an inevitable recipe for the mass production of slums."⁵ Improving the efficiency and the equitable behavior of the state in national and global poverty reduction strategies will be a vital component of any comprehensive multistakeholder solution to the problems posed by widespread, and increasing, urban poverty.

² Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* Verso New York 2006 p. 23.

³ *BBC News*, "UN says 227m people escaped slums in past decade" March 17, 2010.

⁴ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), *Human Settlements Report 2003* Nairobi 2003 p. xxvi.

⁵ Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* 2006 p. 17.

Scale of the Problem

Accurately assessing the extent and severity of poverty remains a daunting task the world over. National governments measure poverty differently and all governments have obvious motivations to underreport poverty. Frequently, too, poverty is concentrated within specific geographic, ethnic, and religious communities; in a number of cases, actions and policies of national governments have directly contributed to this unequal distribution of societal resources and consequent concentration of poverty. As governments prepare to undertake upcoming censuses, and not all governments conduct regular censuses, it is vital that these censuses not only provide accurate assessments of the overall population of each country but further that they gauge the actual living conditions of the various segments of these national populations. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society representatives, including labor unions and community associations, may play vital roles in ensuring that these censuses account for all people, especially the urban poor. The UN System and its Specialized Agencies, as well as many governments, other intergovernmental organizations, academics, and journalists generally employ a definition of extreme poverty as living on \$1.25 USD per day. With the recent emergence, and continued growth, of the world's megacities, cities whose metropolitan statistical area (MSA) populations are greater than 10 million people, it is imperative that future urban development be well-designed.

Causes and Consequences of Urban Poverty

Widespread poverty typically results from a horrifying confluence of negative circumstances, flawed and/or discriminatory policies, and the unwillingness of the more privileged sectors of society to engage in more distributive politics. While millions of people are born into poverty each year, many millions find themselves thrust into poverty as a result of unemployment and economic displacement, illness or injury, the death of a spouse or relative, war and insecurity, environmental degradation, and natural and man-made disasters. When national governments reduce their spending on essential social services, including education, health, and public sector employment, the corresponding economic and social effects of those social services reductions often alter the life circumstances of the poorest and most vulnerable in the community. "Local governments ... lack the institutional capacity as well as the tax base to deal with the physical and social disintegration of cities that had once enjoyed some degree of opportunity and egalitarianism."⁶ These cuts in social spending are magnified during recessions so it is essential that all relevant stakeholders find solutions that will not exacerbate the misery already being experienced by tens of millions of people around the world.

Governments and employers can further increase the difficulties faced by ostensibly middle class as well as working class and poor people through their both deliberate and unintentional policy changes. Governmental and corporate decisions to relocate and/or close facilities will obviously create pockets of poverty but even those decisions intended to foster economic and human development may entail serious negative economic consequences. Malaysian fishermen found themselves displaced by the government's quest for economic development for other industries and segments of the population. "After the fishermen's homes

⁶ Allison Garlan, Mejgan Massoumi, Blair A. Ruble, and Joseph S. Tulchin, "Poverty and the Periphery: Cities in Latin America and the Former Soviet Union" *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2007 p. 6.

were cut off from the sea by a new highway, their fishing grounds were polluted by urban waste, and neighboring hillsides deforested to build apartment blocks, they had little choice but to send their daughters into nearby Japanese-owned sweatshop factories."⁷ Decisions by businesses about where to locate their plants and facilities are crucial to local employment patterns and they frequently affect the local tax base. While increased economic activity generally raises tax revenues, national and even local government policies can limit or even reverse the potential of these tax revenues to finance needed services. When local and national officials provide tax breaks and other incentives to businesses, including elimination of minimum wage laws and environmental and occupational safety regulation, the urban poor and their surrounding communities may find themselves even worse off than before the businesses chose to locate their facilities in the affected area. Furthermore, the physical location of the actual facility may do very little for the urban poor if no jobs are actually created, the tax revenues flow directly to disconnected national authorities, and the profits are not invested in the local area.

Millions of the urban poor strive to earn a sustaining income through informal and microenterprise economic activities. A truly ubiquitous scene in developing world cities is that of street vendors hawking their sundry wares on sidewalks, at traffic intersections, and even on the subways and mass transit systems of cities such as Buenos Aires and Cairo; in Nigerian cities, over 70% of all jobs are actually in the informal sector.⁸ While these activities are undoubtedly entrepreneurial, these street vendors frequently incur the ire of more established merchants as well as the local authorities. Governments naturally seek tax revenues from business activities but imposing strong regulations and significant tax burdens on the poorest urban residents will likely be counterproductive as these economic activities will suffer and the state may be forced to assume a greater role in terms of direct assistance to these former micro entrepreneurs. In its analysis of addressing the potentially endemic problems of urban poverty, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) asserts that "urban poverty initiatives have a responsibility to promote innovation and productivity in both segments of the informal sector, while also making the transition to formal-sector employment (and regular tax payment) easier to negotiate."⁹

Illness and death have always been associated with the reversal of individual and familial economic fortunes and impoverishment but in recent years analysts have compiled more authoritative data on the devastating impacts that these twin disasters frequently bring. Anirudh Krishna writes that "health and healthcare expenses are the leading cause for people's reversal of fortune."¹⁰ Cities and urban municipalities that previously provided affordable or at least partially subsidized health services for the urban poor often find these same services completely inadequate today, particularly in light of the increased fiscal constraints imposed by structural adjustment plans and neoliberal economic orthodoxy. These fiscal constraints present serious challenges for the urban poor because overcrowding, lack of sanitation facilities and access to clean water, and general environmental degradation, including air and water pollution, create deadly environments. Even within cities and towns, the poorest communities suffer the worst

⁷ Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* 2006 p. 9.

⁸ USAID, "Making Cities Work: Urban Poverty".

Found at: http://www.makingcitieswork.org/urbanThemes/economic_growth/Urban_Poverty#Jobs

⁹ USAID, "Making Cities Work: Urban Poverty".

¹⁰ Anirudh Krishna, "Reversal of Fortune" *Foreign Policy* May/June 2006 p. 62.

health outcomes and typically have the lowest average life expectancies from birth. "Diseases virtually absent in the official city are epidemic in squatter settlements. A study of São Paulo found that infant mortality rates are four times greater in poor areas of the city than in the most privileged zone."¹¹ Addressing these serious and sustained threats to the health of the urban poor will require that all relevant stakeholders, and especially national and local governments, consider these highly infectious diseases and other threats to human health as public health exigencies and not merely the predictable and lamentable consequences of urban poverty.

The growth of cities around the world has also been fueled by large-scale influxes of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and others fleeing instances of human and environmental insecurity. When people flee situations of armed conflict, they frequently find themselves confronted by unknown circumstances and potentially hostile urban environments. In cities throughout Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, and Pakistan, hundreds of thousands of people fleeing armed conflicts have crowded into cities and towns, especially the respective national capitals of Kabul, Bogotá, Kinshasa, Baghdad, and Islamabad. Bogotá's population has grown by nearly a half million people in recent years as tens of thousands of IDPs move into new informal settlements; their existence there is precarious. According to Mike Davis, "without urban skills and frequently without access to schools, these young peasants and their children are ideal recruits for street gangs and paramilitaries."¹² The returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) that have swelled Kabul's population rarely find access to the educational, health, housing, and social services and employment that they so desperately require to achieve any level of sustainable human development.¹³

Many global cities are now comprised of ever expanding rings of slums and informal communities; the lack of tenure or property rights that most poor urban residents face only compounds the precariousness of their situations. Governments frequently demolish slums and informal communities in order to convert the area to more profitable uses and/or to remove the tangible and unsightly reminders of urban poverty. In 2006, Mumbai's police forcibly evicted slum dwellers from Dharavi, the city's largest slum of nearly 2 million people, and protected the bulldozers that were plowing through the area to "turn this slum into a jogging boulevard."¹⁴ This process has been repeated throughout many of the developing world's most well-known and populous cities, including Istanbul, Harare, Abidjan, and Mexico City. As many of the urban residents are illegally squatting on land that the government and private sector developers frequently prize, the squatters often find themselves in a "prolonged test of will and endurance against the repressive apparatus of the state."¹⁵ Even when the government and its private sector allies grudgingly permit the creation and/or continued existence of informal settlements, the local residents are frequently victimized by corrupt civil servants and police officers as well as organized criminal gangs and syndicates. In September 2012, at the World Urban Forum in Naples, Italy, the UNDP announced the debut of a new program aimed at strengthening urban governance, particularly related to bringing the developing world's 800+ million slum dwellers

¹¹ Allison Garlan, Mejgan Massoumi, Blair A. Ruble, and Joseph S. Tulchin, "Poverty and the Periphery: Cities in Latin America and the Former Soviet Union" *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2007 p. 7.

¹² Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* 2006 p. 49.

¹³ Andrew North, "Refugees make do in Kabul's ruins" *BBC News* February 16, 2005.

¹⁴ Karishma Vaswani, "Selling India's slums" *BBC News* July 3, 2006.

¹⁵ Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* 2006 p. 38.

into greater and sustained engagement with their local and national governments in order to protect their citizenship and prospective property rights.¹⁶

Assessing and combating urban poverty has become more difficult for all interested stakeholders in the wake of the recent, and in some cases continuing, global economic and financial crisis. Throughout the world, many of the most affected peoples were already amongst the most vulnerable sectors of their respective societies and the increased unemployment as well as severe cuts to social services experienced during the crisis only made existence and survival that much more precarious. Sustained human development in the context of increasing urbanization must address the prospects that current and future economic crises and downturns are likely to exacerbate the problems confronting, and confronted by, the urban poor.

Megacities

While a considerable amount of the growth in cities is actually occurring in smaller and medium-sized cities, the growth of the world's 30+ megacities must be of significant concern to the international community, especially given all of the demographic projections indicating that the world will add over a dozen more megacities in the next twenty years. The world's megacities are critical engines of economic growth and cultural production but their rapid, unplanned growth presents the international community, and particularly their poorest residents, with daunting challenges. Discussing the growth of Lagos, Nigeria, Oka Obono points out that the lack of resources and infrastructure in Lagos severely restrict the human development possibilities for Nigeria and neighboring communities in West Africa. "The 2006 state budget was \$650 million for its estimated 15 million inhabitants, compared to New Delhi's \$2.6 billion for its 13.8 million people. This underfunding leads to an overburdened metropolitan infrastructure and unmanageable human sprawls, inadequate housing and health care, traffic congestion, urban violence, a high crime rate, and social and economic exclusion that persist despite public-private partnerships that form the key points of government policy."¹⁷ The local governments of the world's megacities must ensure that they are able to provide the necessary social services for their residents or these cities may become increasingly dangerous and fractured communities that are ideal breeding grounds for violent extremism, organized crime, and highly infectious diseases.

The International Community and Combating Urban Poverty

International organizations and the UN System must play critical roles in collaborating with all relevant stakeholders to reduce urban poverty and achieve the MDGs by 2015. Within the UN System, a host of agencies and programs are directly involved in reducing urban poverty, including the: UNDP; UN-HABITAT; World Health Organization (WHO); International Labour Organization (ILO); and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The major

¹⁶ UNDP, "Protecting the Rights of Informal Slum Dwellers Through Improved and More Inclusive Urban Governance" September 4, 2012. Found at:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2012/09/04/protecting-the-rights-of-informal-slum-dwellers-through-improved-and-more-inclusive-urban-governance.html>

¹⁷ Oka Obono, "A Lagos Thing: Rules and Realities in the Nigerian Megacity" *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2007 p. 32.

international financial institutions (IFIs), including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, and the regional development banks, must also ensure that their policies are designed for real and sustained poverty reduction. The UNDP's priority areas for reducing urban poverty include national and international macroeconomic policies, employment patterns, public resource management, information and communication technology for development (ICTD), the inclusion of civil society representatives in the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), improving urban infrastructure that actually services the urban poor, and implementing effective poverty reduction strategies. To achieve these goals, UNDP continues to work extensively in many developing countries such as Mongolia and the Philippines.

UN-HABITAT's crucial work with private sector partners and local governments "could soon shove ... [UN] HABITAT towards the front of the UN system and make it an increasingly important player in green politics."¹⁸ Improving the environmental sustainability of cities is intimately connected to reducing poverty in cities for several reasons: 1) sustainable and safe housing; 2) mitigation and/or prevention of infectious diseases, public health hazards, and even natural disasters; and 3) increased employment for the urban poor in "green" industries. UN-HABITAT's critical work in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda include the Lake Victoria Local Economic Development (LV-LED) Initiative¹⁹ as well as the Millennium Cities Initiative (MCI) and are fundamental representations of the multistakeholder collaborative networking and community-oriented development activities that characterize the ethos of the contemporary UN System. UN-HABITAT's Slums Upgrading Facility is another keystone program that is essential for improving the lives of millions of slum dwellers while simultaneously improving the relations between UN-HABITAT, national governments, and local civil society partners. While these programs are frequently cited as well-intended and accorded considerable initial praise, the actual results are often limited because of a lack of political will and commitment on the part of governments, international organizations, and private sector partners. Kenyan writer Rasna Warah notes that "the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme, initiated in 2000 in an agreement between the government of Kenya and UN-HABITAT, has remained largely unimplemented, mainly because no one can agree on the best way forward."²⁰

International financial institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, and regional development banks comprise an essential conduit of development financing and poverty reduction mechanisms. During the emergence of the "Washington Consensus" of the 1990s, the IMF negotiated a number of strict and austere structural adjustment plans (SAPs) that required extensive cuts in social services. These cuts in social services remain highly controversial in many developing world cities, and even within the international development finance community, the current emphasis is on sustainable poverty reduction strategies. The World Bank's contemporary urban poverty reduction strategies incorporate smaller loans to small and microenterprises (SME)²¹ as well as inclusive,

¹⁸ *The Economist*, "Sub-subprime" November 24, 2008.

¹⁹ Please see: <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=4619&catid=513&typeid=13&subMenuId=0>

²⁰ Rasna Warah, "Life in Kibera" from Linda Starke, ed., *State of the World 2007: Our Urban Future* W.W. Norton & Co. New York 2007 p. 149.

²¹ The World Bank, "Urban Markets: Labor Markets and Employment"

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTURBANDEVELOPMENT/EXTURBANP>

participatory poverty reduction mechanisms. Given the disproportionate prevalence of poverty faced by women and girls, and especially in female-headed households, it is imperative that many of these loans and forms of assistance be targeted and/or designated for women and girls.

In June 2006, Vancouver hosted the Third World Urban Forum, with a theme of “Cities: Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action,” where representatives from governments, civil society, NGOs, and the UN System met to discuss the most appropriate methods to redress these troubling situations of urban poverty. In November 2008, Nanjing hosted the Fourth Urban World Forum, with a theme of "Harmonious Urbanization" and Rio de Janeiro hosted the Fifth Urban World Forum, “The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Digital Divide,” in March 2010. Naples, Italy hosted the Sixth Urban World Forum with a focus on “The Urban Future” in September 2012²² and Medellín, Colombia will host the Seventh Urban World Forum in 2014. The Third World Urban Forum (WUF III) is considered a cornerstone conference on sustainable urban development because of the focus on social inclusion and the need to immediately address the pervasiveness of urban poverty. During a key session of the Third World Urban Forum in Vancouver, the Urban Manager of the World Bank, Eleoterio Codato "noted that the World Bank and UN-HABITAT have estimated the cost of Achieving Goal 7, Target 11 of the Millennium Declaration to be approximately \$367 billion. ... He noted that lending for slum upgrading is not the answer and that allocation of fair, equitable, and targeted subsidies by national governments may be necessary."²³ While private sector and philanthropic involvement will be essential to comprehensively addressing urban poverty, public sector leadership, including funding, is both fundamental and necessary.

International assistance from highly developed countries is crucial for developing world countries to reduce and/or eliminate urban poverty. In February 2003, the Netherlands donated \$7.3 million USD to UN-HABITAT to improve UN-HABITAT's financial capacity to directly combat urban poverty.²⁴ Increasing the volume of these governmental contributions will be absolutely critical to the success of UN-HABITAT and related UN agencies and stakeholders in reducing urban poverty; governments and inter-governmental donors provide a clear majority of UN-HABITAT's funding. Voluntary contributions for technical cooperation have increased dramatically in recent years, rising from under \$10 million USD in 2001 to approximately \$128 million USD in 2010.²⁵ Foreign assistance is also critical for providing the necessary funds for the urban poor to avoid the devastating situation known as the poverty trap where all income must be consumed to meet basic needs, leaving no resources available for saving or investment. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, argues that "the end of extreme poverty would ... require less than 1 percent of the annual income of the rich world to finance crucial investments needed in the poorest countries to extricate them from

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²² Delegates may ask the report from the Sixth Urban World Forum at:

<http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/ProgrammeWUF6.pdf>

²³ World Urban Forum III, "Report of the Third Session of the World Urban Forum" Vancouver June 19-23, 2006 p. 32. The full report is available at: http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/3406_98924_WUF3-Report.pdf

²⁴ UN Wire, "Netherlands Donates \$7.3 Million to Combat Urban Poverty" February 20, 2003.

²⁵ UN-HABITAT, "Donors". Found at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=381>

the poverty trap (and even that modest transfer to the poor would be temporary, perhaps lasting only until 2025)."²⁶

All stakeholders have critical roles to play in successfully eliminating urban poverty and the Cities Alliance represents a very effective example of global municipal networking. The Cities Alliance is a growing international network of global cities and development partners that have committed nearly \$100 million over the past 10 years towards critical infrastructure and development programs aimed at reducing and/or eliminating urban poverty. These programs include: the Municipal Finance Task Force (MFTF); the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF); and the Community-Led Infrastructure Financing Facility (CLIFF). While the majority of the governments that are currently partners in the Cities Alliance are wealthier developed country governments, the governments of Chile, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Philippines, and South Africa are partners and the Cities Alliance is actively seeking more developing world partners.²⁷ The Eighth Forum of the World Cities Alliance (WACAP8) was hosted by Dublin, Ireland in February 2013, bringing together “more than 500 delegates from cities around the world met for two days to debate, discuss and deliberate on solutions to urban poverty challenges.”²⁸ WACAP8 also focused on “crowdsourcing” and soliciting ideas and input from nearly 3 million people worldwide through increased use of digital media.

Conclusion: Scaling Up to Reduce Urban Poverty

Throughout the international community it is increasingly apparent that it is generally far simpler and more effective to scale up existing programs than to have to create equivalent programs out of whole cloth. When addressing the complex set of factors that create and exacerbate urban poverty, national governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, including the UN System and relevant international financial institutions (IFIs), and civil society partners will be able to have a much greater positive impact on reducing urban poverty when they can use existing poverty reduction and related programs rather than have to establish brand new programs, particularly in the context of the current global financial crisis. The essential mission of the UNDP and related stakeholders then must be to assess, design, and implement the most effective urban poverty reduction strategies that can be quickly scaled up to permit the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets by lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. "Urban poverty must be solved by crafting policies that promote inclusion in urban communities and avoid or reverse processes that do the opposite – making access to urban services more difficult for vulnerable elements of the population."²⁹

²⁶ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* Penguin Press New York 2008 p. 12.

²⁷ Cities Alliance, “About Cities Alliance”. Found at: <http://www.citiesalliance.org/about-ca/about-ca.html>

²⁸ UNDP, “Poverty summit in Dublin ends with focus on practical solutions to urban poverty” February 21, 2013. Found at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2013/02/21/cities-against-poverty-summit-in-dublin-ends-with-focus-on-practical-solutions-to-urban-poverty.html>

²⁹ Allison Garland, Mejgan Massoumi, Blair A. Ruble, and Joseph S. Tulchin, “Poverty and the Periphery: Cities in Latin America and the Former Soviet Union” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2007 p. 5.

The international community's inclusive participatory multistakeholder dialogue on reducing urban poverty must be superseded by effective poverty reduction strategies and actions. Focusing on the creation of truly livable cities for all residents will require governments to commit significant resources to stimulate economic and human development initiatives, including the extension and improvement of critical infrastructure that serves poor communities. One of the most critical elements of livable cities is the fundamental issue of safe, affordable, and sustainable housing stock; upgrading existing slums and flexible planning for future urban growth will alleviate many of the worst instances of poverty and tragedy that currently plague so many of the world's cities. Furthermore, national governments must develop and implement national poverty reduction strategies that acknowledge the prevalence of urban poverty and that involve all relevant stakeholders. Successfully incorporating the best practices of the world's most livable cities, as well as effective urban poverty reduction strategies, will make the continued expected urban growth of the next few decades manageable and humane.

Guiding Questions:

What is the current situation in your country in terms of urbanization and urban poverty? If cities in your country are growing rapidly, what planning is your government doing to manage this growth? Are the planning processes inclusive and participatory, particularly for the urban poor?

What is the current fiscal situation in your country? Is your government likely to cut social spending in the next few months or years? If so, what strategies is your government pursuing to ensure that these spending cuts do not exacerbate urban poverty? How involved is the private sector in local and national poverty reduction strategies? How involved are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in poverty reduction strategies?

How closely does your country work with international organizations, including UNDP and UN-HABITAT, in regards to poverty reduction strategies? Does your country seek financing from the IMF, the World Bank, and/or regional development banks? Does your country receive financial assistance from other governments for urban poverty reduction initiatives?

If your country is a wealthier developed country, what forms of financial and technical assistance has your government provided to developing countries and/or to UNDP, UNHABITAT, or the Cities Alliance? How might your government increase this critical financial and technical assistance during the current global financial crisis?