

URBAN TRENDS: 227 MILLION ESCAPE SLUMS

A total 227 million people in the world have moved out of slum conditions since 2000, meaning governments have collectively surpassed the Millennium Development target by 2.2 times, says the new UN-HABITAT report on the ***State of the World Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide***.

The agency says in its biennial report for 2010 that the 22 million people in developing countries that moved out of slums each year between 2000 and 2010 was the result of slum upgrading.

While welcome, the overall reduction in the world's urban divide still requires greater effort since the "absolute number" of slum dwellers has actually increased from 776.7 million in 2000 to some 827.6 million in 2010. This means that 55 million new slum dwellers have been added to the global urban population since 2000.

"The progress made on the slum target has not been enough to counter the growth of informal settlements in the developing world," UN-HABITAT says.

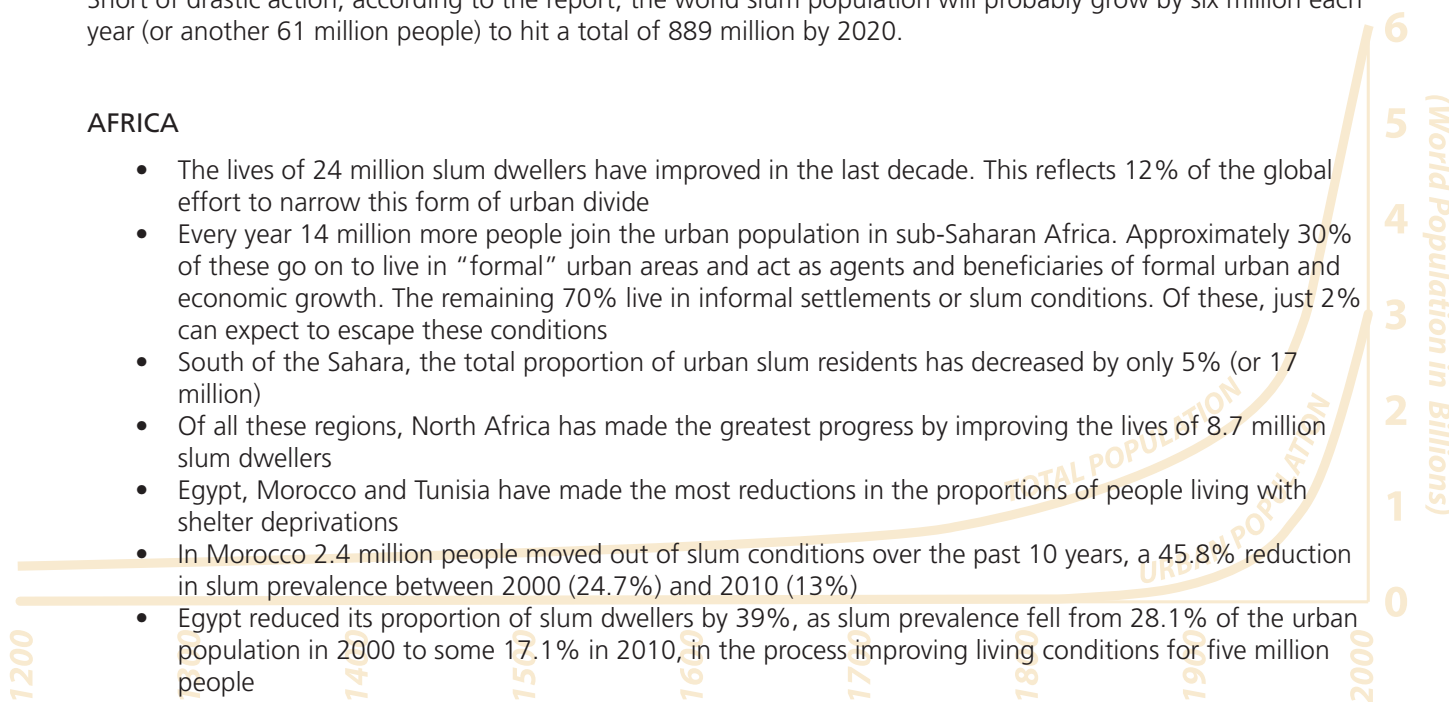
In this sense, the report says, efforts to reduce the number of slum dwellers, and the urban divide at its most unacceptable, are neither satisfactory nor adequate, especially when considering that 50.6% of the world's population (or 3.49 billion) now live in urban areas.

Regionally, today, **sub-Saharan Africa** has the largest slum population where 199.5 million (or 61.7%) of its urban population live in such areas. It is followed by **Southern Asia** with 190.7 million (35%), **Eastern Asia** with 189.6 million (28.2%), **Latin America and the Caribbean** with 110.7 million (23.5%), **South-Eastern Asia** with 88.9 million (31%), **Western Asia** with 35 million (24.6%), **North Africa** with 11.8 million (13.3%) and **Oceania** with six million. (24.1%).

Short of drastic action, according to the report, the world slum population will probably grow by six million each year (or another 61 million people) to hit a total of 889 million by 2020.

AFRICA

- The lives of 24 million slum dwellers have improved in the last decade. This reflects 12% of the global effort to narrow this form of urban divide
- Every year 14 million more people join the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 30% of these go on to live in "formal" urban areas and act as agents and beneficiaries of formal urban and economic growth. The remaining 70% live in informal settlements or slum conditions. Of these, just 2% can expect to escape these conditions
- South of the Sahara, the total proportion of urban slum residents has decreased by only 5% (or 17 million)
- Of all these regions, North Africa has made the greatest progress by improving the lives of 8.7 million slum dwellers
- Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have made the most reductions in the proportions of people living with shelter deprivations
- In Morocco 2.4 million people moved out of slum conditions over the past 10 years, a 45.8% reduction in slum prevalence between 2000 (24.7%) and 2010 (13%)
- Egypt reduced its proportion of slum dwellers by 39%, as slum prevalence fell from 28.1% of the urban population in 2000 to some 17.1% in 2010, in the process improving living conditions for five million people
- Such significant narrowing of the urban divide in Morocco and Egypt account for two-thirds of Northern Africa's progress



ASIA

- Governments in the region succeeded in improving the lives of 172 million slum dwellers. This represents 74% of the total number of urban residents in the world who no longer suffer from inadequate housing
- The greatest advances in the region were in South and Eastern Asia where 145 million moved out of the “slum dweller” category (73 million and 72 million respectively); this represented a 24% decrease in the total population living in slums in both subregions
- Countries in Southeast Asia also improved the living conditions of 33 million slum residents – a decrease of 22%
- In absolute numbers, China and India have improved the lives of more slum dwellers than any other country. Together, they have lifted at least 125 million out of slum conditions between 1990 and 2010
- China has made most progress, with improvements to the day-to-day conditions of 65.3 million urban residents who were living with one or more factors of shelter deprivation. In proportional terms, China’s urban slum population fell from 37.3% in 2000 to some 28.2% in 2010, a 25% relative decrease
- India has helped 59.7 million urban residents out of slum conditions since 2000. Slum prevalence fell from 41.5% in 1990 to some 28.1% in 2010, a relative decrease of 32%
- Only Western Asia failed to make progress: the number of slum dwellers increased by 12 million. This was largely due to conflict-related deterioration of living conditions in Iraq where the proportion of urban residents living in slum conditions rose from 17% (2.9 million) in 2000 to some 53% (10.7 million) in 2010

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Some 13% of the progress in meeting the global slum reduction target has occurred in this region
- 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since 2000. Proportionally this is a 19.5% reduction. This puts the region behind North Africa but ahead of sub-Saharan Africa
- Argentina, Colombia and the Dominican Republic – the most successful countries in the region – were able to reduce their proportions of slum dwellers in the last decade by over one-third
- Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru achieved reductions ranging from 21% to 27%
- Brazil reduced its slum population by 16%
- Latin America’s four most populated countries – Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Brazil – account for 79% of the region’s improvements in the lives of slum dwellers. Among these, Argentina and Colombia have been the most successful, reducing their slum population by two-fifths because of improved housing and better access to water and sanitation

The Millennium Development Goals are eight major developmental objectives nations are encouraged to achieve by 2015. The goals are drawn from targets contained in the **Millennium Declaration** that was endorsed by heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The slum target of the goals is to improve, significantly, the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers around the world by 2020.