

Alan Mwendwa - UN Urges Widespread Improvement Of World's Urban Slums



Source: human-wrongs-watch.net

urbangateway.org. October 2014. With a quarter of the world's population living in urban slums, a sustainable response to improving the living conditions of the urban poor is becoming increasingly necessary, the United Nations agency tasked with promoting environmentally and socially sustainable cities and towns said today.

In a press release made available ahead of World Habitat Day, UN Habitat warned that urban poverty was not just a present problem affecting today's metropolitan environments but "an ever-growing concern posing development and humanitarian threats to humankind."

The theme of this year's World Habitat Day, observed annually on the first Monday of October, is Voices from the Slums - an effort to highlight the hardships of slum living through the voices of the urban poor while also giving rise to their experiences and ideas about improving their living conditions.

The UN agency voiced hope that the upcoming observance would also contribute to a policy dialogue that focuses on the broad range of issues related to the integration of life in the slum into the city; identify policy formulation and capacity development issues in which the UN can offer significant contributions; and identify key stakeholders in slum upgrading and adequate housing and actively engaging them in further discussions.

Read more: <http://www.urbangateway.org/un-urges-widespread-improvement>

Sir Peter Hall - Reflections On A Lifetime Of Town Planning



Late planning guru and geographer Sir Peter Hall. Photograph: Graham Turner

theguardian.com. October 2014. At the beginning of the first world war, town planning was very much in its infancy. Indeed, one hundred years on, it is hard to appreciate how modest were the beginnings of planning as a profession, and as a subject for university education. Very few local authorities had the resources to secure the services of a professional, even had they desired to do so.

Later, during the government's post-war reconstruction, when priority was given to the preparation of local authority housing schemes to meet a national need for some 40,000 additional homes, planning was left behind again. It was only in the 1960s, when the relationship between the sciences and architecture was realised, that academic research became at all significant in the field of planning.

The late '60s saw a planning boom. There was a national plan, and a second wave of new towns including Milton Keynes, Northampton and Peterborough came into being. Every region had a Regional Economic Planning Council; the south-east strategy proposed to link London to these new towns, and to other major

developments at the edge of the region, by discontinuous growth corridors along main railway lines and the motorway network, then in mid-construction. In 1967, the peak year for housing completions in the UK, local planning departments were being reorganised to take on the challenges, staffed by multiskilled young planners who were emerging from fast-expanding planning schools - including new and unconventional ones - with radical new curriculums.

Go to: <http://www.theguardian.com/sir-peter-hall-reflections>

Nick Hedges - Below The Poverty Line: Slum Britain In The 1960s - In Pictures



Mrs T and her family of five lived in a decaying terraced house owned by a steelworks. She had no gas, no electricity, no hot water, no bathroom. Her cooking was done on the fire in the living room. Sheffield, May 1969.

Photo: Nick Hedges - Guardian

Photographer Nick Hedges travelled from Birmingham slums to Glasgow tenements in the 1960s and 70s to document poverty-stricken Britain. He found families who slept with the lights blazing to keep the rats away, children sleeping on wet floors and mothers cooking over an open fire.

Go to: <http://www.theguardian.com/slum-britain-in-the-1960s>

Michael Regnier - Life And Health In Delhi's Slums



Ills.: post.jagran.com

mosaicscience.com. September 2014. The smell of urine and human excrement betrays the entrance to the slum. There is a line of fresh turds alongside the main road. Most look healthy enough; a couple are what you might call loose.

Dilip Jha admits to feeling nervous. Ben Gilbert (Mosaic's photographer) and I have asked him to show us around Delhi, including its slums to see where some of India's poorest rural-to-urban migrants live, so Dilip, a senior research project manager at the South Asia Network for Chronic Disease, has brought us to Sector 7.

We turn left, down a side road, except that this street marks a social, political and moral boundary between two superposed cities. Ben and I walk about 50 metres before Dilip quietly but urgently suggests we go back to the main road.

At the junction, Ganchem sells freshly squeezed orange juice. Like everyone else in this slum, he is from Rajasthan and, like everyone else, he specialises in drumming at functions and weddings. It is only ever part-time work, so people have other jobs, often house-painting. They have done well to secure painting and drumming as their niche - other slums might specialise in rag-picking, bringing the city's rubbish home on handcarts and sorting through it for plastic or paper scraps they can sell for a pittance. Migrants often find the only opportunities to make a living are doing the jobs too dirty, degrading or dangerous for anyone else.

Read more: <http://mosaicscience.com/life-and-health-delhi-slums>

Al Jazeera - Risky Business



Fifty years from now, one in three people worldwide will live in slums like Tondo in the sprawling mega city of Manila - built without proper sanitation, lacking medical facilities, and packed to capacity.

But in the face of all life's hardships, finding work and making a living - no matter how - is the only way for most residents to ensure their survival.

Ricky Fuertes makes his living sorting through rubbish - tonnes of it, every day. He earns \$2.50 a day scavenging so he can feed his family of five. But he faces his biggest challenge when his slum is burnt to the ground.

Nearby, Chito Barquin dives for his money. He normally makes a living working salvage jobs, but times are tough so he now dives in polluted waters for old tyres he can sell. His meager catch must feed his wife and five children.

None of Chito's three grown-up children graduated from high school and the family has all its hopes pinned on their youngest, 15-year old Evelyn. But Chito is struggling to afford to keep her in school.

Meanwhile, tyre repair man Freddie Awayang runs his business on one of the busiest roads in the slum. He has been repairing rubber for 32 years but local competition is affecting his profits.

And now he has even bigger things to worry about: He has been served with an eviction notice, and his baby granddaughter is in need of a life-changing operation.

Go to: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/the-slum>

J. Brooks Spector - Johannesburg's New Towns: The Utopian Answer To The City's Needs Or Another Problem To Fix?



dailymaverick.co.za. September 2014. For as long as people have been living in towns and cities, somebody has planned the urban space - perhaps just the way Kublai Khan did it for Xanadu. Build it here; don't build there. Add a palace, a temple, walls, streets and bridges, homes for the rich, hovels for the

poor, water, and - more recently - electricity, IT connectivity and Mag-Lev trains.

Recently, this writer came across a beautifully drawn 16th-century plan of the city of Milan. The way the city was depicted, Milan had a magnificent, balanced symmetry. Its walls were precisely designed to be works of architectural beauty as well as to offer enfilade fire on any would-be attackers. And there was a sumptuous ducal palace located in the northern quadrant of the city, balanced between East and West.

Read

more: <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/johannesburgs-new-towns-the-utopian-answer>