

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT: *Cities are the biggest challenge for judging the validity and applicability of concepts of and policies for sustainable development. The importance of cities is based not solely on demographic grounds, but on economic, political and social grounds as well.*

Cities around the world are growing at a never experienced rate. Over the past thirty years, the number of people living in cities in the developing countries has grown with more than 200%. Explosive urban migration, high birth rates, high unemployment rates, increasing crime, limited or ineffective health and education services, crumbling or missing infrastructure, and unfavourable business climates have created inhospitable cities. The cities suffer from widespread air and water pollution and soil contamination. Health conditions in many cities are often far below decent standards. Even in more flourishing countries, many health disorders are related to the negative effects of the urban environment.

Nevertheless, cities will largely influence the social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability of our societies and the earth in the future. If cities are not only to survive but also to prosper in the 21st century, they must undergo a major transformation, which in developing countries cannot be carried out without global plans and commitments. In my paper I will (i) summarize the current situation of and future challenges for cities in developing countries, (ii) assess the impact of them on global welfare and sustainable development, (iii) review the role of developed countries (with focus on the EU) in promoting development; and (iv) delineate some possible directions for the future.

KEYWORDS: *sustainable development, city, demographic grounds, urban migration,*

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