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## **UN report calls on African nations to prepare for massive urban population growth**



UN-HABITAT Executive Director Joan Clos

23 November 2010 – A new United Nations report warns that Africa’s urban population is set to triple in the next 40 years, putting massive pressure on governments and infrastructure across the continent.

“The State of African Cities 2010: Governance, Inequalities and Urban Land Markets,” which was released today by the UN Human Settlements Programme ([UN-HABITAT](#)), urges careful urban planning from governments to meet the needs of the poor.

“Urbanization is here to stay and within a few decades, Africa will be predominantly urban. Already huge urban corridors across Africa are engines of economic growth,” said Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.

“The issue now is for regional and national governments, local authorities and all other stakeholders to pull together to ensure the efficient management of urban agglomerations. Smart urban policies could help spread the benefits and lift the continent out of poverty.”

The report notes some positive developments, such as a general reduction in the number of slum dwellers across Africa and the potential of urban corridors across the continent to drive growth, especially of land-locked countries.

At the same time, it says that Africa will suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change and that accurate counting of slum dwellers is very difficult, in part because many poor people move between urban and rural locations for work.

“It is interesting to note that today, in many parts of the world, poor people take advantage of urban-rural mobility to live in multiple locations. This is especially true of slum dwellers who retain links with their rural homesteads,” said Mr. Clos.

The report was launched in Bamako, Mali, during the 3rd African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, at which ministers from all over the continent have the opportunity to share best practice in the areas of land management and sustainable urbanization.

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