

## **UN official calls for policies to address rapid urbanization in developing countries**



Urban sprawl - a view of old Lijian city in China. Photo: UN-HABITAT

3 September 2012 – A United Nations official today called for the development of national urban policies to ensure developing countries are not overwhelmed by urbanization, which he compared to a tsunami for its staggering growth which can surpass cities' capacities to manage it.

“What we are seeing now is a huge process of urbanization in the south which goes hand in hand with development. You cannot have one without the other. The problem is that the institutional architecture cannot keep pace with urbanization,” said the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Joan Clos at the opening of the 6th World Urban Forum in Naples, Italy.

“If there is no proper anticipation urbanization becomes a mess and if you try to correct the problem afterwards it costs a lot to fix. Countries are overwhelmed by urbanization. It's like a tsunami. Urbanization goes faster than the capacity to manage it,” Mr. Clos said. “We need to re-design our cities to face these challenges.”

Mr. Clos stressed the importance of urban planning at national, state, and local levels to avoid informal settlements and slums, as well as high concentrations of people in mega capitals.

He stated that planning policies would help countries provide their citizens with jobs and prosperity while still tackling environmental challenges.

The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing problems facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies.

Organized jointly by UN-Habitat, the Government of Italy, the Campania Region and the city of Naples, the theme for this year's meeting, which will be attended by more than 3,000 participants, is The Urban Future.

#### **News Tracker: past stories on this issue**

[Rio+20: Development banks to invest \\$175 billion in sustainable transport](#)