TASMUN

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Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The following report submitted to the Economic and Social Council covers the topic of "Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration," which is an extension of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11. The report is created to inform the committee on the topic through trends of urbanization, human mobility, and internal and international migration. This report analyzes the following data by examining the causes and effects of urbanization. Furthermore, this report states challenges and future priorities regarding this theme and concludes with recommendations for further reading and research.

I.   Introduction

1. Cities are where most social, economic, and political activities take place in, and therefore attract internal and international migrants. Urbanization develops the country in ways such as reducing the poverty rate and providing citizens higher access to sanitary facilities. In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) recognized that urbanization and internal migration are related to the development of a country as it provides a higher quality of life to the citizens, but can also cause negative repercussions such as overpopulated cities and uncontrolled urban growth.

2. Cities generate about 80 percent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Most urban expansion is predicted to happen in developing countries, which is possibly hazardous as rapid urbanization might lead to an infrastructure gap in the country. Infrastructure represents the quality of people's lives. To urbanize and further develop the country, higher expectations for its infrastructure follows. It is essential to achieve a balance between higher quality of infrastructure and sustainable development in order to enjoy the benefits of urbanization without severe repercussions.

3. According to the trend graph from *World Urbanization Prospects* by the United Nations, 55 percent of the world population was living in urban settlements in 2018. Through consistent urbanization, it is predicted that 60 percent of the world population will be living in urban settlements in 2030. The most urbanized region of the world in 2018 was Northern America where 82 percent of its population lives in urban settlements. This is followed by Latin Americans with 81 percent and Europe with 74 percent. Asia and Africa have 50 percent and 42 percent of the population in urban settlements respectively. However, Asia and Africa's trend lines have a steeper slope, which means that the pace of urbanization in those two regions is the fastest.

Targets and Indicators

4. In 2015, the United Nations created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals serve as a guideline towards building a more sustainable future. The focus of this committee is on Goal 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Goal 11 has seven targets that further elaborate on ways the goal can be achieved. These targets include ensuring access to safe and affordable housing and upgrading slums, providing access to sustainable transport systems and other safe public spaces, limiting the environmental impact of cities, as well as protecting cultural and natural heritage. These targets also have individual [indicators](#) that were agreed upon in a General Assembly resolution adopted regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2017.

5. Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

6. Target 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

7. Target 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

8. Target 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

9. Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross

domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

10. <u>Target 11.6:</u> By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

11. <u>Target 11.7:</u> By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

12. <u>Target 11.a:</u> Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

13. <u>Target 11.b:</u> By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

14. <u>Target 11.c:</u> Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

II. Challenges

15. It is important to include migration when discussing sustainable urban living. Shifts in demographics within a country often lead to major shifts of population from rural to urban areas. Integration policies for foreign residents should take in consideration the high numbers of migrants that settle in metropolitan areas. Ineffective migration policies or unsustainable methods of migration could result in the disregard of foreign residents' human rights, health conditions, and cause a worsening in international relations between countries.

16. As cities continue to expand, they create significant issues in terms of sustainable living and impact on the environment. Figures from the United Nations Development Program show that at least one-half of humanity lives in urban areas. This number is expected to rise to two-thirds in 30 years. In fact, 6.5 billion people will live in cities by 2050. Currently, cities cover only 3 percent of the land on Earth but are responsible for 60 to 80 percent of energy consumption. Urban areas also produce more than 70% of carbon emissions.

17. Rapidly expanding cities also create slums, which are densely populated urban areas with low standards of living. Currently, 828 million people are estimated to live in slums. These areas often have significant problems with diseases. Slum-dwellers are more vulnerable to illnesses because of the overcrowded nature of their housing. This causes major illnesses such as malaria, diarrhea, and trachoma

18. Furthermore, in order to make effective and well-informed decisions, migration patterns and population trends need to be more specifically cataloged. New data sources such as satellite imagery can help improve understanding of changes in the impact of urban living. Governments should make sure that there are policies and safeguards for the accessibility and use of these resources while keeping privacy and confidentiality in mind. Cooperation between countries and within countries is another necessary factor when addressing data gaps in migration.

III.   Future Priorities

19. Effective urban planning is crucial for successful urbanization. Considerations regarding environmental damage, robustness, accessibility, convenience, and inclusivity should be taken into consideration when either constructing a city or when managing migrational trends.

20. The distribution and availability of services such as plumbing, waste collection, housing, and medical care to both urban and rural areas should be regarded. Effectiveness of

current channels should be evaluated, minding the possibility of improvements while referencing past issues on the topic.

21. Ensuring the needs of women are met in terms of infrastructure, including education, health care, work opportunities, services, property rights, political participation, family planning, and keeping in mind the conditions and health of migrant women while guaranteeing them the same status as all women.

22. Reforming flawed migration policies and further enforcing migration policies while ensuring the protection of their human rights, confirming the legality and availability of immigration process, and aiding migrants and their families in adapting to the local society.

23. Emphasizing the importance of cooperation, both within the local authorities and among the international community. Potential negative effects of migration and the abuse of human rights should be minimized and eradicated, whether through collaborating with local personnel and infrastructures or negotiating with affected countries regarding border regulations.

IV. Further Reading

https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1472043?ln=en
Report of UN Secretary-General regarding SDG 11 as of April 2018, and has a very comprehensive report on information, facts, trends, theories, and future indications on the SDG.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11
The official description, explanation, and background of said SDG.

https://indicators.report/targets/

More information on specific SDG targets and indicators.

https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html

Some crash course facts useful for context, plus a nice summary on the topic.

https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html

Addresses some of the popular questions and concerns on the topic of sustainable cities.

V.   Bibliography

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