



São Paulo, Brazil

Megacities!



Some people love cities, and other people hate them. But everybody wants to live in one. The first cities started about 5000 years ago. Since then, cities have always been the centers of everything important. The government, businesses, and the university were always in the city. Around the world more than 1 million people every week move from rural areas to a city. In the year 2030, 60 percent of the world's people will live in cities.

These cities will be bigger than ever. A megacity is a city with a population of over 10 million people. In 1995, the world had 14 megacities. In 2015, there will be 21 megacities. And the ranking will change. Today, the world's five largest cities are 1. Tokyo, 2. Mexico City, 3. São Paulo, 4. New York, and 5. Mumbai (Bombay). In 2015, they will probably be 1. Tokyo, 2. Dhaka, 3. Mumbai, 4. São Paulo, and 5. Delhi.

Megacities around the world face the same problems: traffic and housing. São Paulo, Brazil, is a good example. "There are 30 million daily trips in São Paulo," says Jorge Wilhelm, a city official. "One-third is public transport, one-third is private cars, and one-third is walking. Sixty to seventy percent should be on public transportation." The city is building a new freeway and adding to the subway system, but it's slow work. Every day, millions of people are sitting in traffic jams.

Housing is also a serious problem for the 18 million people in São Paulo. Most of the jobs are downtown, and houses and

apartments are very expensive there. So workers live in cheaper places far away from their jobs and commute for many hours. And many new **residents** can't find any housing for their families, so they live in **slums**. People find empty land and build small **huts**.

Ilson da Silva is one man who has done this. When he came to the city six years ago, he didn't have a job. He built a one-room hut next to a **garbage dump**. Now he works as a janitor, and his house has three rooms and a flower garden. The government has brought in **running water** and electricity, and the slum is becoming a real neighborhood. For Ilson, and for millions of other people, megacities mean hope for a better future.

