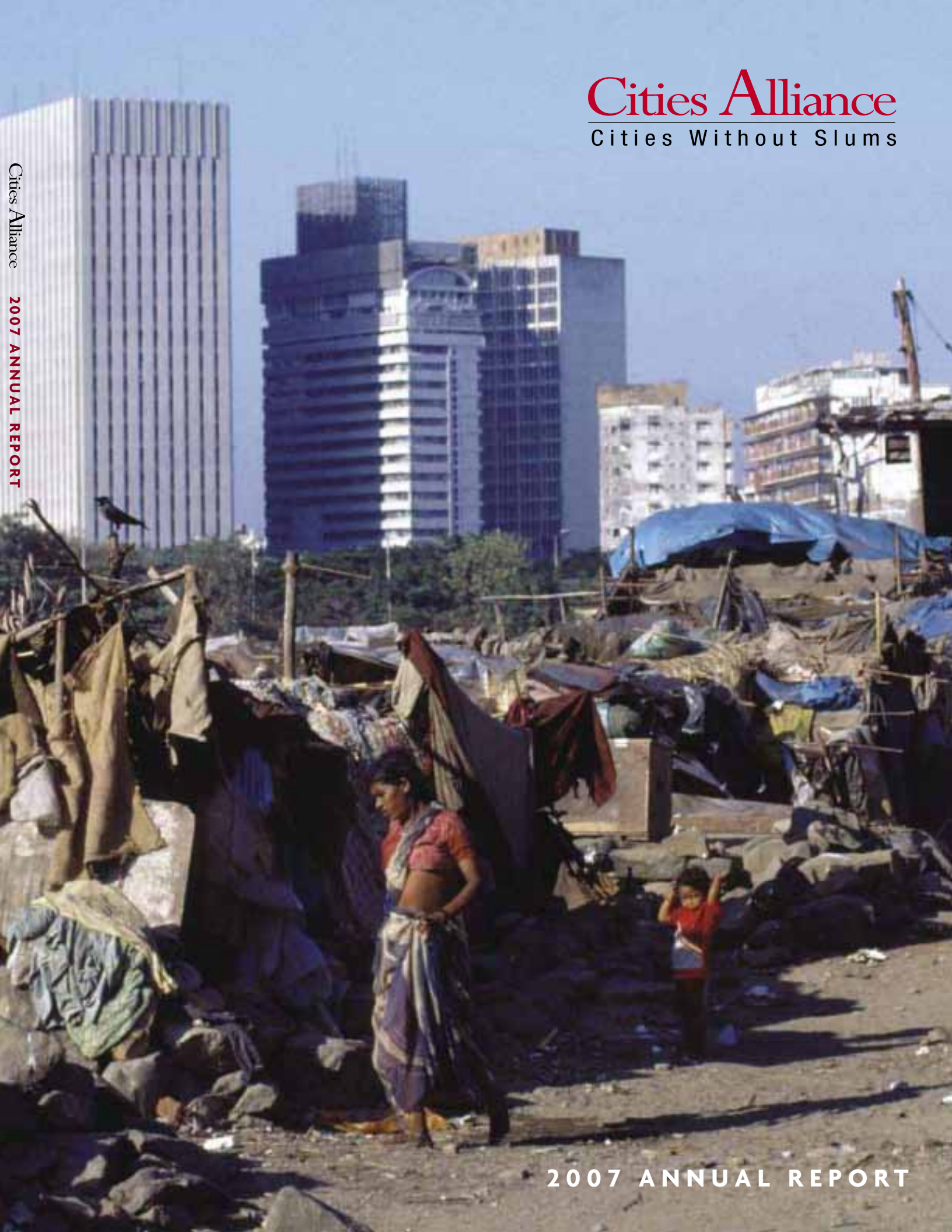


# Cities Alliance

Cities Without Slums

Cities Alliance  
2007 ANNUAL REPORT



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## CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Cities Alliance in Action	1
<i>Lessons from Slum Upgrading Activities</i>	
<i>Lessons from City Development Strategies</i>	
<i>Sustainable Financing of Investments</i>	
Cities Alliance Members' Reports	29
Communications and Knowledge Sharing	63
<i>Knowledge Sharing Activities</i>	
<i>Publications Review</i>	
Cities Alliance Organisation	74
<i>The Consultative Group</i>	
<i>The Policy Advisory Board</i>	
<i>The Secretariat</i>	
Financials	79
Abbreviations and Acronyms	90



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## FOREWORD

Wherever it comes from, the growth of urban areas includes huge numbers of poor people. Ignoring this basic reality will make it impossible either to plan for inevitable and massive city growth or to use urban dynamics to help relieve poverty.

UNFPA State of World Population 2007

**D**espite the widespread perception that urban issues do not attract the attention they deserve, it is possible to discern a number of recent, significant trends that, combined, indicate a renewed interest in urban issues and, more importantly, on cities.

We can expect increased attention on the role of cities in the context of climate change, which has become a new global developmental priority. Marginal doubts about the negative global impacts of human activity have largely disappeared in the face of a broad international consensus, greatly assisted by coverage given to the Stern Report and, more emphatically, by the authoritative reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. As public awareness of climate change increases, so will the focus increasingly shift to cities, where many of the consequences of climate change will be most sharply felt, and need to be managed.

Cities Alliance members should be well placed to provide assistance, particularly to smaller cities, as they strive to identify ways to adapt to the consequences of climate change. The United Nations Environment Programme's efforts in strengthening the Cities Alliance focus on environmental issues in its work programme is thus particularly timely. Climate change will also be one of the main focus areas at United Cities and Local Governments' second World Congress, to be held in Jeju, Korea in October 2007.

Additional reasons for the growing international recognition of the scale and impact of urbanisation arises from the very effective role that has been played by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) in hosting the World Urban Forum (WUF). From its very modest beginnings in Nairobi in 2002, the Barcelona (2004) and, emphatically, Vancouver

(2006) conferences have firmly established WUF as the most significant platform for discussing and debating urban and city issues. Combined with Habitat's *State of the World Cities* reports, the convening, normative power of the United Nations has significantly boosted international attention on urban development issues and on cities, alike. WUF 4 in Nanjing in October 2008 is likely to consolidate and strengthen this process.

Elsewhere, after years of declining interest and budgets, a number of bilateral partners have begun to renew their interest in urban development. Supported by the publication of the very direct and readable *More Urban Less Poor*, the Swedish International Development Agency launched its new urban policy in 2006. The Norwegian Government is due to release its own urban development policy before this *Annual Report* is published. The summer of 2007 also saw the French Government produce a succinct analysis called *Emerging Cities*, designed as a guide for their Embassy staff, although it will doubtless attract a far wider readership. Spanish cooperation has prioritised decentralisation and the strengthening of local administrations in its comprehensive Master Plan to 2008. Looking ahead, the World Bank's 2009 World Development Report will focus on the spatial dimensions of development.

Outside of the membership of the Cities Alliance, a significant amount of media attention has been generated by the publication of two, high-quality reports. The first was the Worldwatch Institute's report *State of the World 2007: Our Urban Future*. This was followed by the United Nations Population Fund's flagship publication *UNFPA State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*. Written in a very accessible style, the report was a welcome addition to the debate highlighting the positive potential of urbanisation and noting that: '**Cities concentrate poverty, but they also represent the best hope of escaping it**'.

For its part, the Cities Alliance is well situated to continue to provide support to partner cities and countries, especially through an increased focus on

learning and knowledge, and by helping cities to learn from each other, directly and indirectly. From its beginning, a central objective of the Cities Alliance has been to help improve the quality of development assistance, and be a party to effecting real, sustainable and long-term change. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, to which most Cities Alliance members are signatories, has reinforced the importance of finding mechanisms to achieve this coherence of effort.

Following the second independent evaluation of the Cities Alliance in 2006, the core focus and mandate of the coalition—supporting citywide and national upgrading programmes, and promoting city development strategies—was reaffirmed. In order to maximise its impact, the Alliance is in the process of reviewing and amending some of its project and programme approaches. These are likely to translate into a far greater emphasis on utilising the knowledge generated by the activities of the Cities Alliance and its members, and improving the Alliance's reach through a combination of knowledge sharing, improved communication and advocacy.

The Cities Alliance *2007 Annual Report* reflects some of these changes. Previous annual reports had been successful in combining a significant substantive message with a review of the highlights of the previous year's work programme and related activities. In anticipation of a steady increase in the number, and quality, of substantive outputs, this *Annual Report* focuses on reporting on the main activities of the year under review.

This *Annual Report* also marks my first complete year as Manager of the Cities Alliance. I want to thank the Consultative Group for its constant support and leadership, the members of the Policy Advisory Board for combining lively meetings with high quality advice. And, finally, I wish to thank my colleagues in the Secretariat for what I hope will be the first of a number of extremely challenging and productive years.

William Cobbett  
*Manager*