

# Tackling tenure security in slums through participatory enumerations



## Millennium Development Goals

**Goal 7** Ensure environmental sustainability

**Target 11** By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

*In participatory enumerations, the people being surveyed help organize and conduct the survey. That leads to better data and crucially, more trust between the authorities and residents.*

*Photo: Jack Makau, Pamoja Trust, Kenya*

**M**ILLIONS OF PEOPLE live in slums and informal settlements, often in insanitary and unsafe conditions. One option open to governments is to regularize and upgrade such settlements by improving residents' security of tenure.

Participatory enumerations are a way of gathering information about informal settlements by involving residents in the data-gathering process. They are an efficient way of generating accurate, up-to-date information about informal settlements that governments need to plan upgrading and resettlement initiatives.

Because such enumerations are participatory, they can improve trust between local residents and the authorities, stimulate the involvement of local people in finding effective solutions to urban problems, and achieve buy-in for proposed solutions.

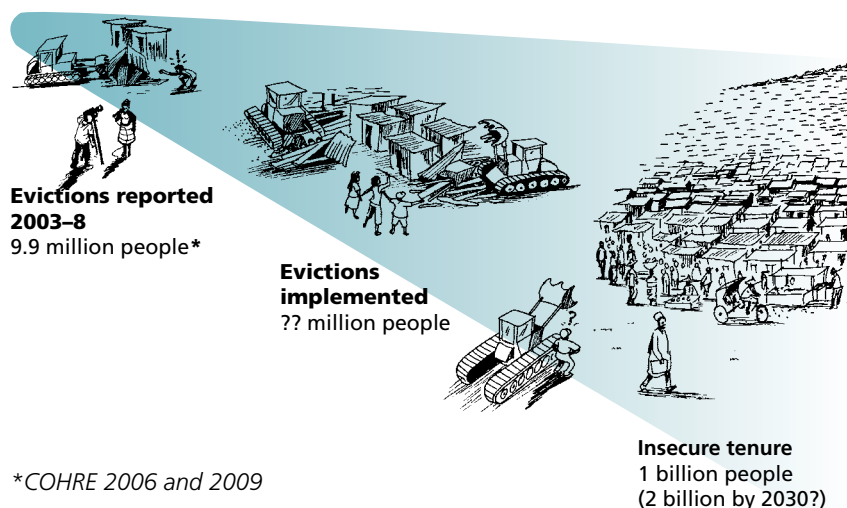
## Tackling urban poverty

Urban poverty is one of the major challenges of our times. The United Nations Millennium Declaration commits member States to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. But how to achieve this target? And though it is a large number, 100 million is only 10% of the world's current slum population of 1 billion people. If left unchecked, there will be 3 billion people living in slums by 2050.

In many cities, slums are not merely marginalized neighbourhoods that house a few people. On the contrary, they are home to a large proportion of the urban population, and are growing as fast as cities themselves. In the developing world, one out of every three people living in cities lives in a slum. The increasing prevalence – and even dominance – of poor-quality, underserved neighbourhoods calls for new ways of looking at cities and the slums within them (UN-HABITAT 2008).

Many cities and countries are using innovative approaches to land development and

the use of space so they can respond more effectively to informal settlements. One is to find alternatives to forced eviction of slum dwellers – for example by regularizing and upgrading settlements rather than neglecting and demolishing them. Other approaches include the strategic use of planning tools such as building trunk infrastructure, guided land development and land readjustment. Many of these efforts depend on community participation for their success.



\*COHRE 2006 and 2009

*Nearly 10 million forced evictions were reported in 2003-8 – but that is just the tip of the iceberg*

## Participatory enumerations

An increasingly popular way to promote tenure security is through participatory enumerations.

Rather than creating specialist teams of external enumerators, it is often more effective to have people from the community be the main enumerators. Urban poor communities around the world already collect information about themselves, especially so they can press for improved security of tenure. They conduct household and livelihood surveys, housing profiling and structure surveys; they draw maps, keep records and conduct local censuses for different purposes – some even at a city-wide scale.

In most cases, they do so in partnership with other communities, or with non-governmental organizations and other civil society groups. Participatory enumerations not only gather data for local planning; they also build consensus and ensure that the views of all residents are included in negotiation. They have proven an effective way to organize communities and involve them in large-scale slum upgrading.

## Tapping opportunities

Participatory enumerations provide a wealth of data as well as entry points for engagement at the community level. A key challenge often remains to ensure that the resulting information is used appropriately: for strengthening residents' tenure security through state recognition, and in formal physical planning procedures. Over 70% of land ownership in many cities in developing countries is unregistered, so tapping the



*By involving residents of informal settlements in the surveying activities, participatory enumerations can ensure that the data accurately reflect reality on the ground.*

*Photo: Jack Makau, Pamoja Trust, Kenya*

### Participatory enumerations

Participatory enumeration is a data-gathering process which is to a significant extent jointly designed and conducted by the people who are being surveyed.

information provided by participatory enumerations is an important start.

Together, authorities and local communities can ensure that participatory enumeration data are sufficiently accurate for a wider set of uses. Such collaboration needs to benefit local communities: by becoming visible officially and statistically, urban slum dwellers have prospects of legitimacy, inclusion, recognition of their rights and access to services. The collaboration should be supported by technical capacities on both sides.

Participatory enumeration activities jointly undertaken with authorities, or supported by them, can lead to:

- Strengthened acceptability and legitimacy of the process by local communities through tapping local knowledge
- Trust and confidence by all parties
- Effective utilization of existing competencies and resources
- Quality of information gathered
- Fewer disputes among local residents and between communities and authorities
- Effective responses to local conditions and priorities
- Opportunities for further engagement between the community and authorities.

## Ongoing global efforts

Progressive governments are already supporting participatory enumeration efforts through policy instruments such as:

**Land information programmes, Namibia** The Community Land Information Programme involves authorities, community organizations, NGOs and research institutes in documenting and gathering household-level data on informal settlement dwellers. As of March 2009, 235 settlements in all regions had been profiled.

**Land ownership verification** In the Land Administration and Management Program in Payatas, Philippines, residents and land administration personnel jointly developed a prototype records management system. This included verification and reconstituting records that had been destroyed in a fire, creating a cadastral map, eliminating fake and duplicate titles, and computerizing the records, so creating an up-to-date picture of all the land parcels in the area.

### Count me in: Surveying for tenure security and urban land management

Published by UN-HABITAT 2010



This book describes how participatory enumerations have been used to strengthen tenure security and improve urban land management throughout the world.

Copies available from the Global Land Tool Network Secretariat, UN-HABITAT

**City-wide upgrading** In the Baan Mankong national slum upgrading programme in Thailand, implemented by the public organization Community Organizations Development Institute, poor communities collaborate closely with local government professionals, universities and NGOs to survey all communities in their city and plan for the upgrading process. The initiative is under way in 300 cities across the country.

### Published by

GLTN Secretariat, facilitated by UN-HABITAT: Land, Tenure & Property Administration Section, PO Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya. Tel. +254 (0)20 7625199, fax +254 (0) 20 7624265, email [gltn@unhabitat.org](mailto:gltn@unhabitat.org), [www.gltn.net](http://www.gltn.net)

### Sponsors

Funded by the Global Land Tool Network with funds provided by the Norwegian Government, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Cities Alliance.

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