



UN-HABITAT

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AIR POLLUTION/ATMOSPHERE

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I would like to make a statement on behalf of UN-Habitat concerning air pollution and atmosphere.

The year 2007 marks a historic crossroads in human history. For the first time, half of humanity will be living in towns and cities. Our research shows that by 2030, this figure will rise to two-thirds. We thus live at a time of unprecedented and irreversible urbanisation. The cities growing fastest are those of the developing world. And the fastest growing neighborhoods are slums. Indeed, 2007 will also be the year in which the global number of slum dwellers is forecast to reach the 1 billion mark.

In terms of urban transport patterns within developing country cities, the trajectory is sobering. We already have an urban health crisis on our hands through increasing levels of air pollution. The urban poor are especially vulnerable to this hazard and suffer the most from income losses through sickness and unproductive commuting times. The costs of urban air pollution are estimated to be upwards of 5% of GDP in developing countries. On a global level, private motor vehicles are among the biggest contributors to GHG emissions and other emissions worldwide. The growth in urban travel demand in both the developed and particularly

An often overlooked but crucial part of the urban transport fabric in developed as well as developing country cities is the use of non-motorized transport or in other words bicycling and walking. In many instances this mode of transport is already the overwhelming majority of all urban transport trips. And yet despite this fact, it is often

neglected in the design and modernization of either new or existing urban transport infrastructure investments. However, this completely environmentally benign transport technology is under threat from increasing rates of motorization, particularly in developing country cities.

Non-motorized transport must begin to be viewed as an integral component of the urban transport patterns in all cities. Steps must be taken to encourage the proper amount and design of NMT-friendly infrastructure to cater for this mode of transport.

Indeed, at some point, this huge and vast army of the underserved urban poor are going to begin to demand mobility and transport. If we rely exclusively on motorized transport to meet this future demand, there will be catastrophic environmental impacts on the global environment. We must ensure we maintain a rich diversity of transport modes to capture this demand, including continuing to make our cities as pedestrian and bicycle-friendly as possible.

Thank you for your time and attention.