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**World urbanization process:  
global challenges and the Eu response**

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2

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## Abstract

*For many years, development cooperation has been concentrated in rural areas, but now we live in an increasingly urban world: Today, most of the world's population is urban and, due to global world population growth, this ratio is increasing. More than 2 billion new urban dwellers are likely to concentrate in Africa and Asia within the next 35 years.*

*There is an urgent need to change the traditional way of thinking policy to address this major global population and urban swift. These unprecedented global challenges ask for new global coordinated action to transform them into opportunities for sustainable development. Accordingly, new Eu response strategies need to include new financial instruments to deliver the necessary assistance.*

*The 3rd UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) will adopt a "New Urban Agenda" in Quito (October 2016). The Eu advocates it encompass four strands of priority actions promoting cities which are i) inclusive and safe, ii) green and resilient, iii) prosperous and innovative, iv) benefiting of improved good governance.*

*The Commission is working on the elaboration of a set of documents including an urban development cooperation position paper and a Staff Working Document to raise awareness in this respect and advocate for an upscale of Urban Development as a sector of the Eu Cooperation policy. This cannot be done without strong partnerships with professional managers, political leaders and academic stakeholders.*

## Parole chiave/ Keywords

*World urbanization, Sustainable developmnet, Habitat III, New Urban Agenda, Prtnership.*

For many years, development cooperation has been concentrated in rural areas, but now we live in an increasingly urban world: In 2014, 54% of the world's population of 7.2 billion people lived in urban areas. Due to global world population growth, this percentage is projected to reach at least 66% by 2050 (of a global total population of around 9.5 billion) representing an increase of 2.5 billion urban dwellers within the next 35 years. Although all of the world's regions are expected to urbanize further in the coming decades, 90% of additional urban dwellers are likely to concentrate in Africa and Asia, whose urban populations were 48% and 40% respectively in 2014.

Megacities and large cities are also growing in number and in proportion to the global urban population predicted for 2030. Furthermore, half of the urban population in 2050 will be living in deltas or coastal cities. The majority of increasing migratory flows across the borders tends to have as a point of final destination urban areas.

There is an urgent need to change radically the traditional way of thinking policy to address this major global population and urban swift. These unprecedented global challenges ask for new global coordinated action to transform them into opportunities for sustainable development. Accordingly, new Eu response strategies need to include new financial instruments to deliver the necessary assistance helping create better living conditions in the urban areas of developing countries for those who might otherwise have been ready to risk their lives on the dangerous journey to Europe.

The growing number and concentration of people in urban areas raises increasingly complex issues. How can we ensure that all residents have access to drinking water, food, shelter, sanitation, medical assistance and education, in line with their basic human rights, whilst preserving the planet's dwindling natural resources? Any city's natural, financial and human resources are limited, but providing the required basic infrastructure and services is crucial in order to avoid rising poverty levels and the implications they have on society as a whole.

Eu external assistance is called upon to help address the challenges brought by the new urban realities and dynamics, and to assist in harnessing the opportunities brought by urbanisation, in order to ensure the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of its external assistance. In a more and more urbanised world,

addressing urban development challenges will be an increasingly relevant issue for our External Relations, Cooperation and Development in the coming years.

4