

The Environment in Urban Planning and Management

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Abstract : Increasing urbanization will be one of the defining features of the 21st century. This produces particular environmental challenges, but also creates opportunities for urban development that can contribute to broader goals of improving the quality of life for urban residents while achieving greater levels of global sustainability. Half of the world's population already lives in urban areas, with a growing number of these people living in towns and cities in low and middle-income countries. As well as being a demographic phenomenon, urbanisation is intricately linked with economic, social and environmental transitions. The increasing proportion of the world's population living in urban areas has been driven by the growing concentration of new investment and employment opportunities. In general, nations with the most rapid and sustained economic growth have urbanized most.2 Urban centres provide opportunities for a range of social and cultural activities, as well as being critical for innovations in science, technology and education. Indeed, urban areas are of critical importance for social and economic development: as the Cities Alliance recognizes, 'only sustained urban growth has the capacity to lift both rural and urban populations out of poverty'.

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