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Urban Development Studies

SLUMS of hope or SLUMS of despair?

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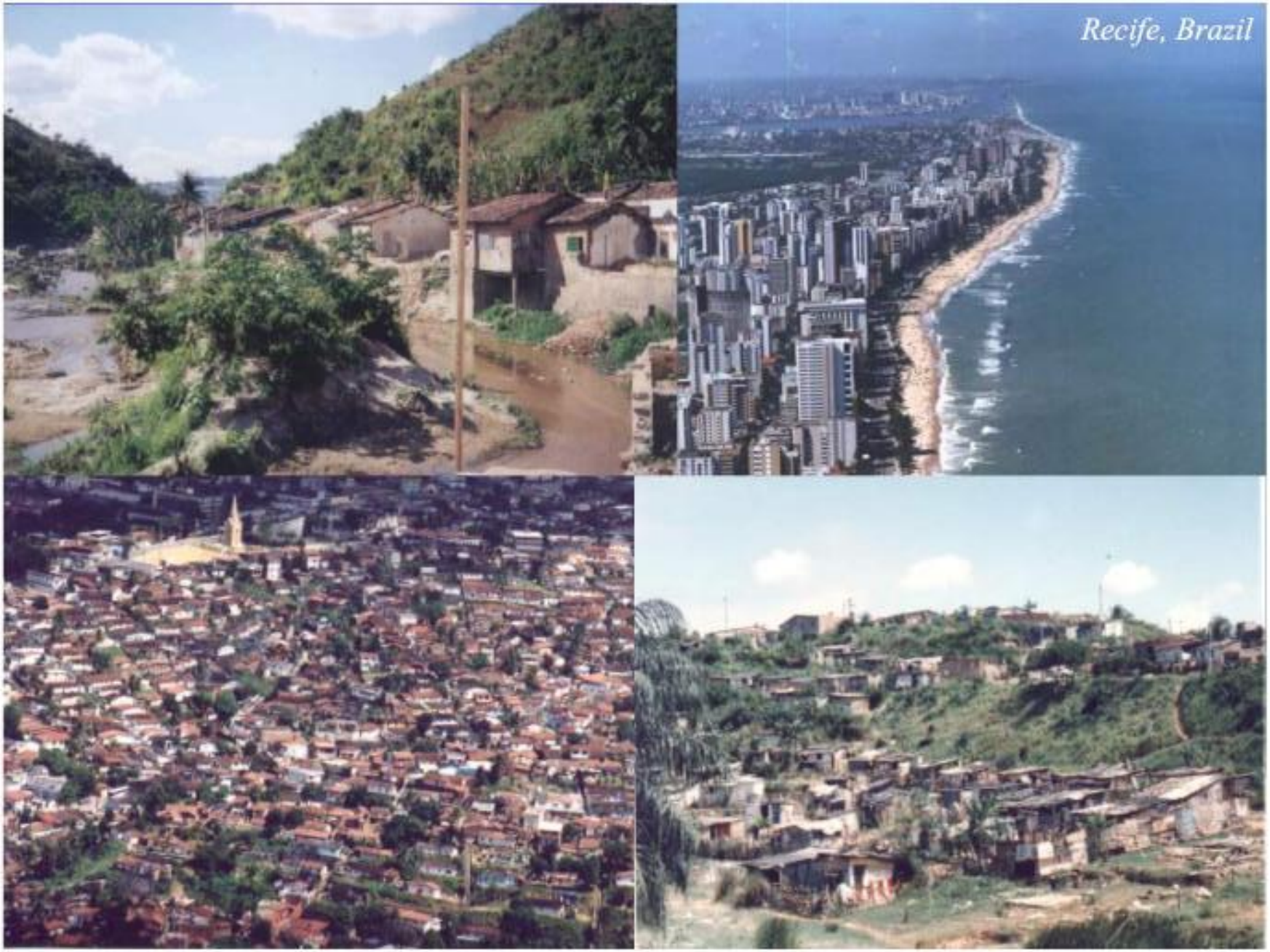
"The locus of global poverty is moving to cities, a process now recognised as the urbanisation of poverty".

Kofi Anan, Global Report of Human Settlements, 2003.

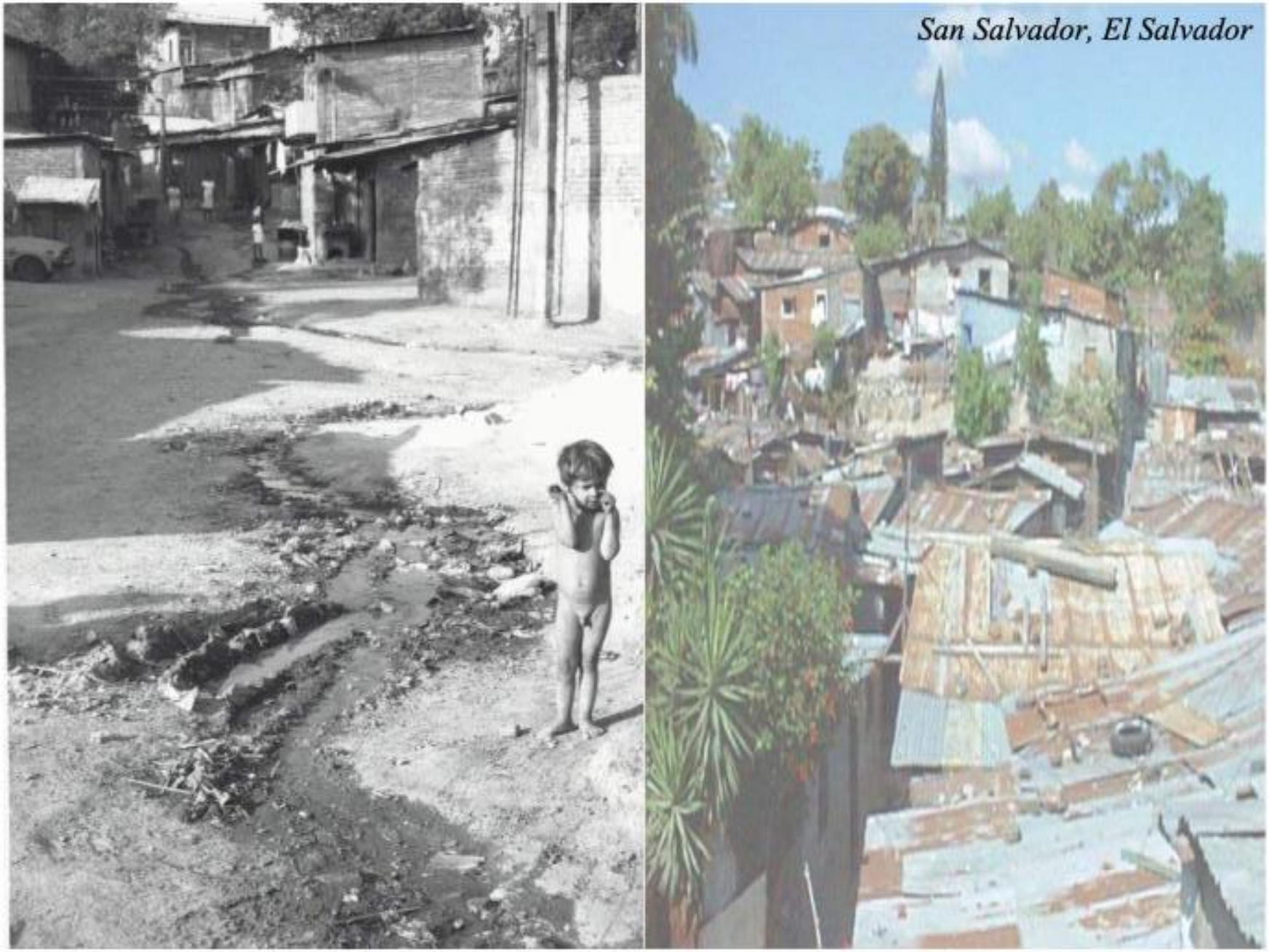
BCN

In the absence of the state and policies to respond to their basic needs, the poor is left with nothing but his creativity, invention and own labour as his only resource to find housing in the city.

A range of obstacles to access land and housing pushes large numbers of poor families to informal and often illegal housing and land development processes.


Recife, Brazil

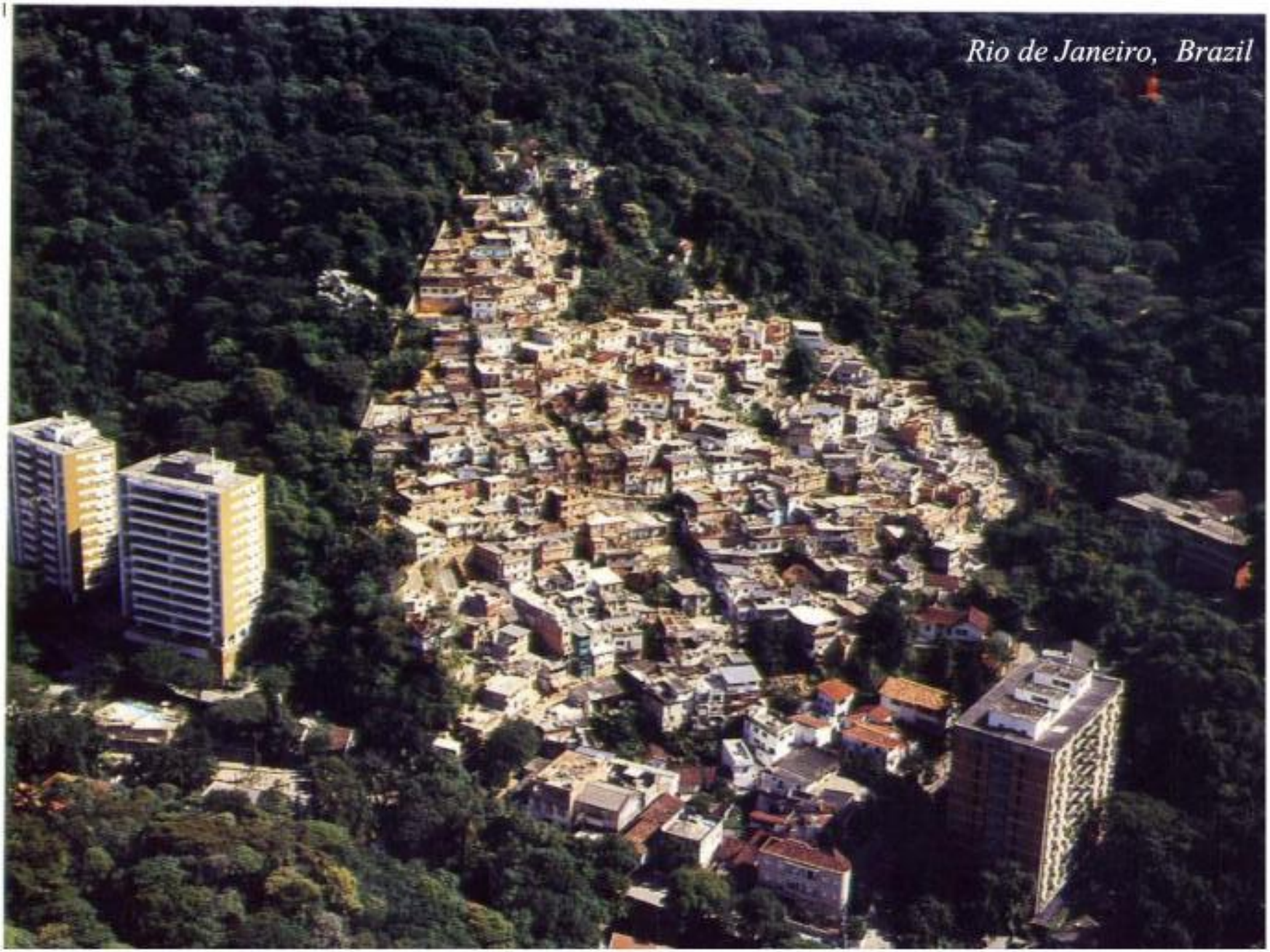
Cairo, Egypt


San Salvador, El Salvador

Informal settlements, squatters, slums or whatever name we give to human settlements deprived of basic conditions, are just one of the visible signs of poverty and social exclusion that affect the life of nearly 1 billion of people in today's world population.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

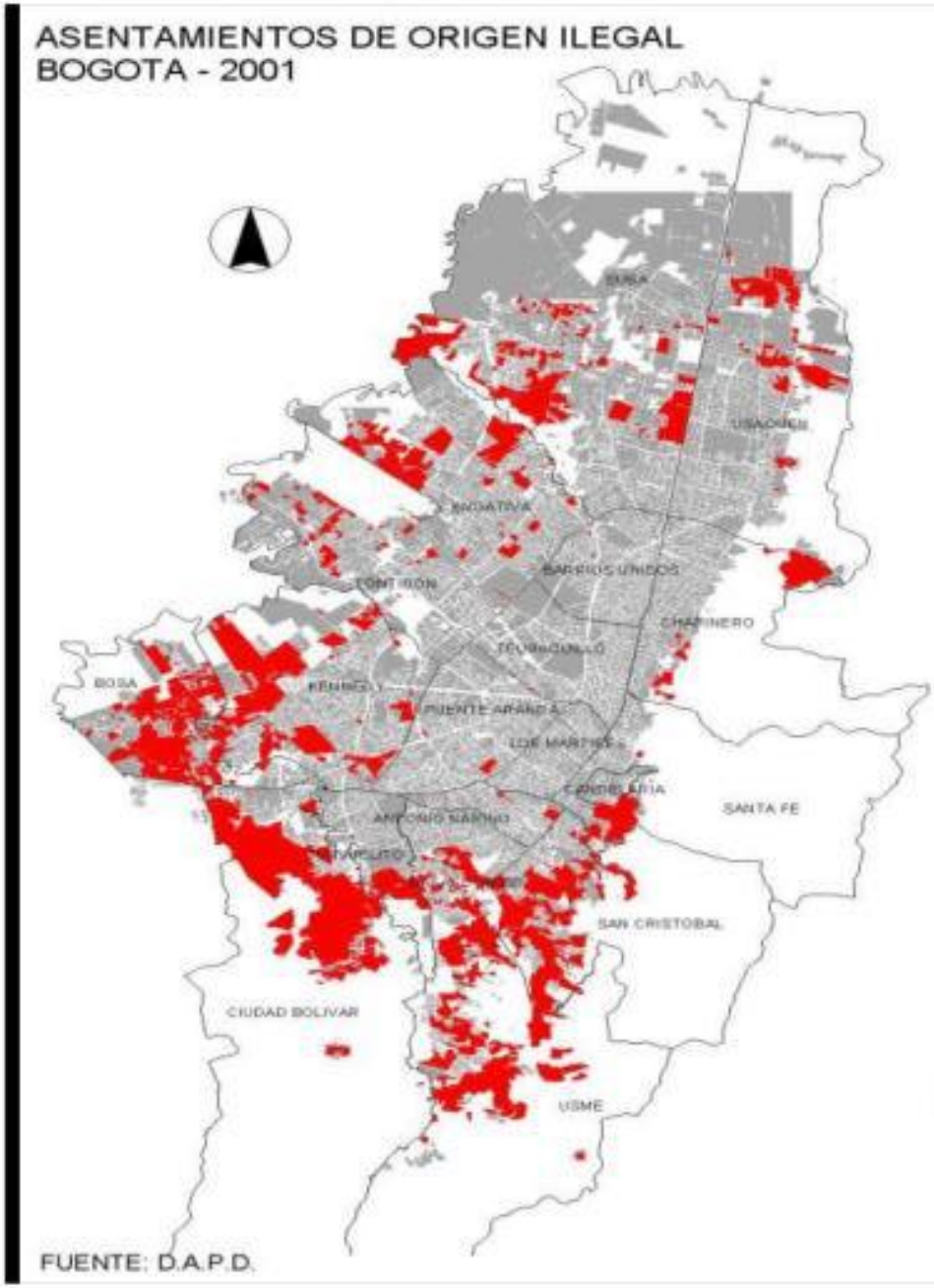
The impacts of this form of urbanisation can be seen in cities like Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Caracas, Sao Paulo, Delhi, Jakarta, Lusaka, Accra and Lagos just to mention a few of the major cities in the Developing world.


Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

“Pirate” land subdivisions and irregular settlements show the other side of the problem, revealing another way to resolve the access to land and housing for low income families.

However, it shows different types of problems. And causes irreversible environmental impacts. . .

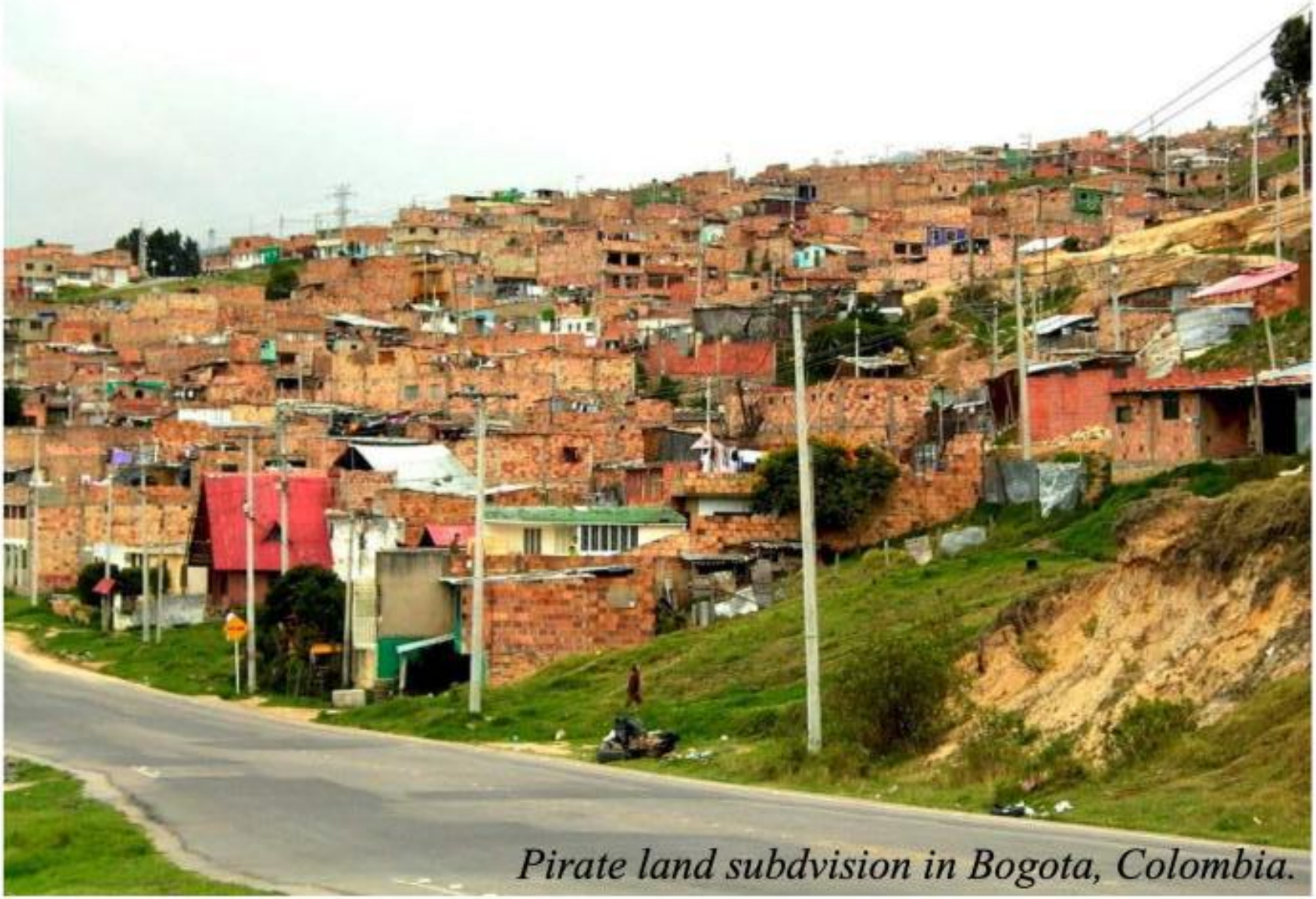
In São Paulo, nearly 3 million people live in more than 3000 irregular settlements, totally out of the regulatory frameworks governing urban planning.



In Bogota, Colombia, 18% of the total urban area is informal.

In 1990, 23% of the city was illegal.

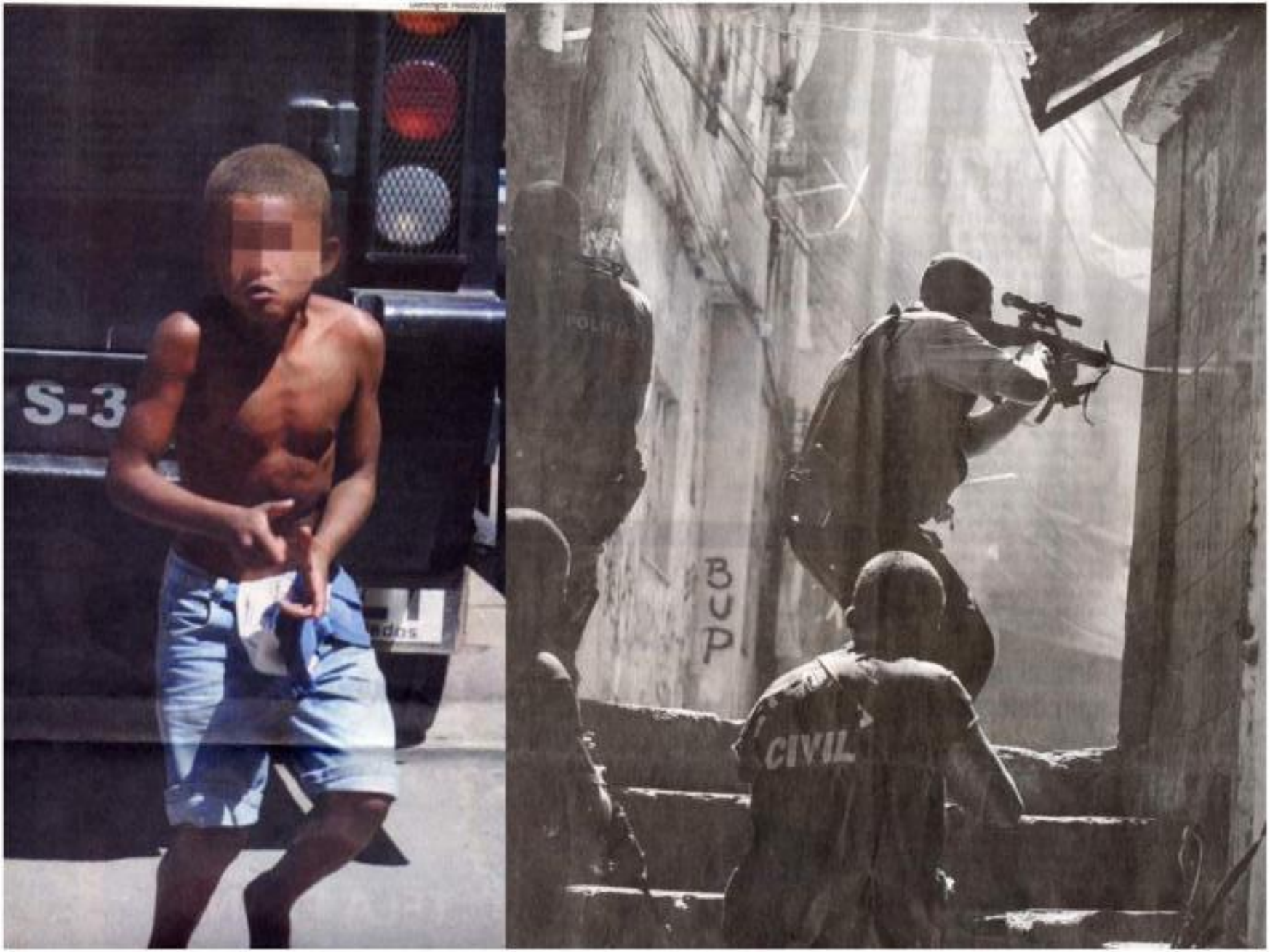
In 2000 this figure decreased to 18% .

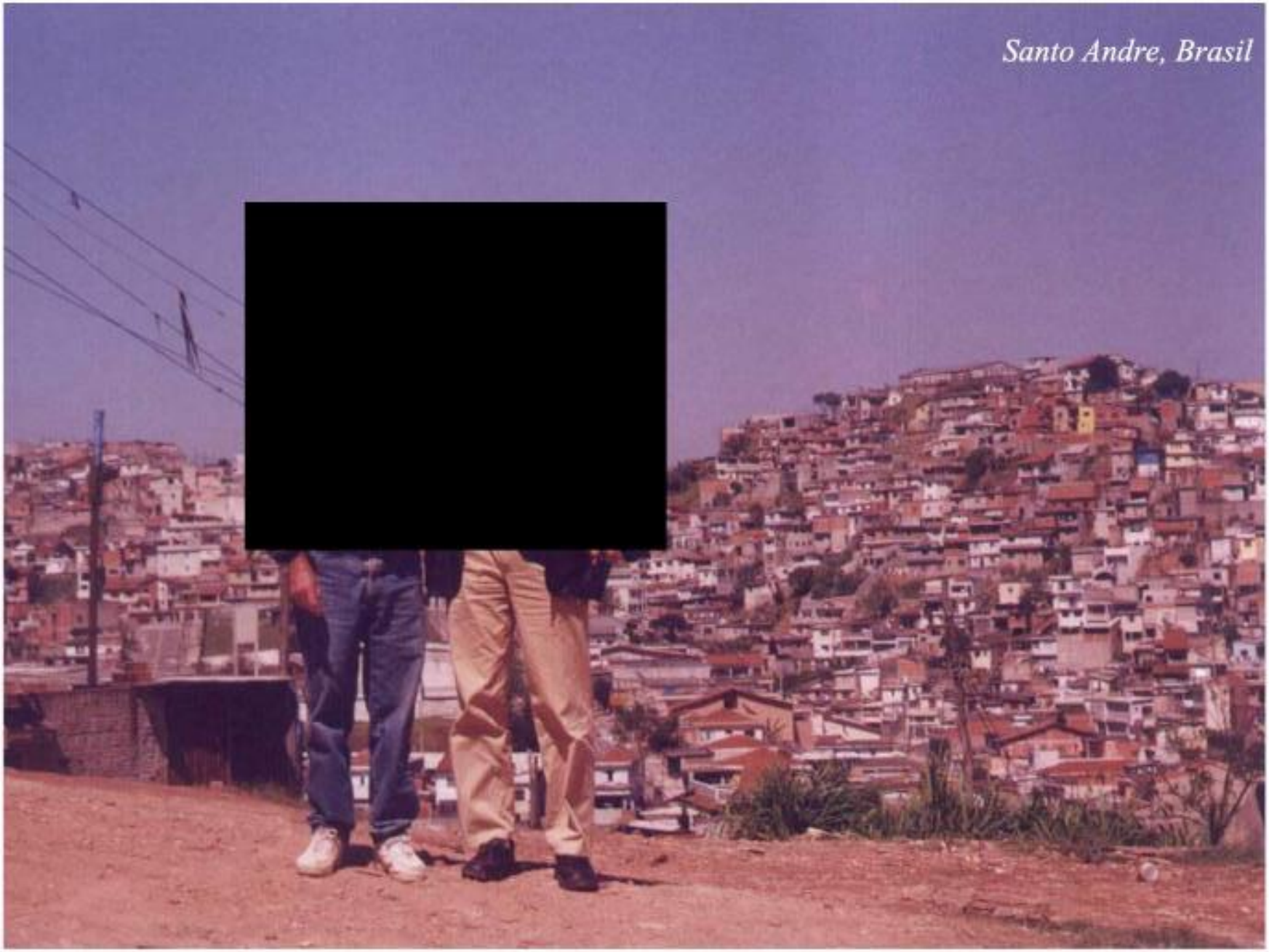


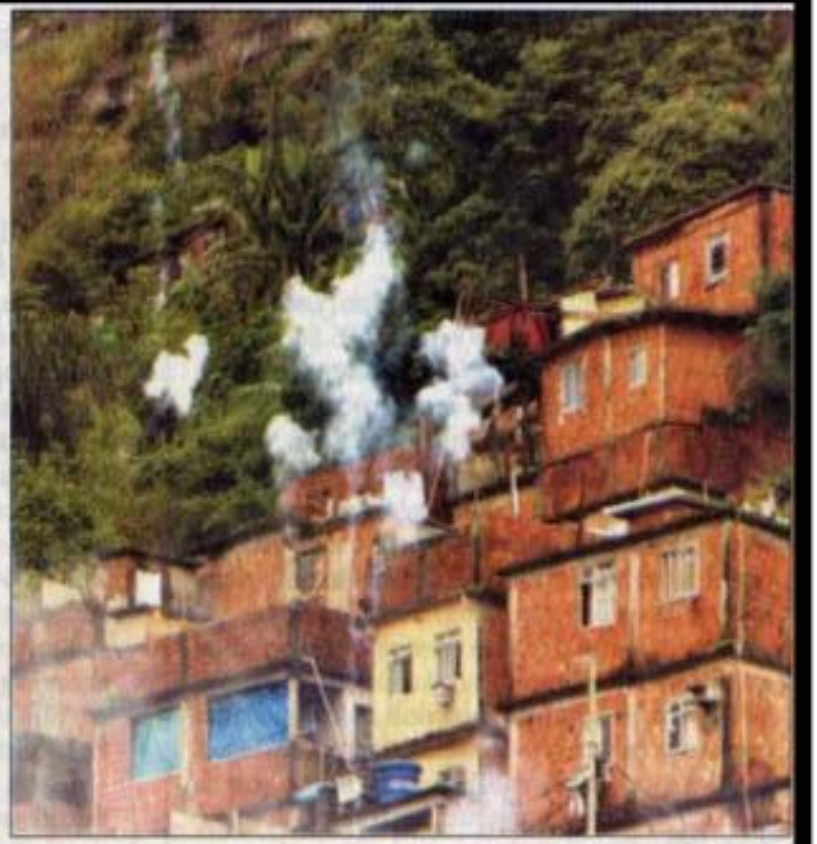
Pirate land subdvision in Bogota, Colombia.

Many Latin American cities experience the rise of another phenomenon that is currently associated with informal settlements ... challenging society and the rule of law:

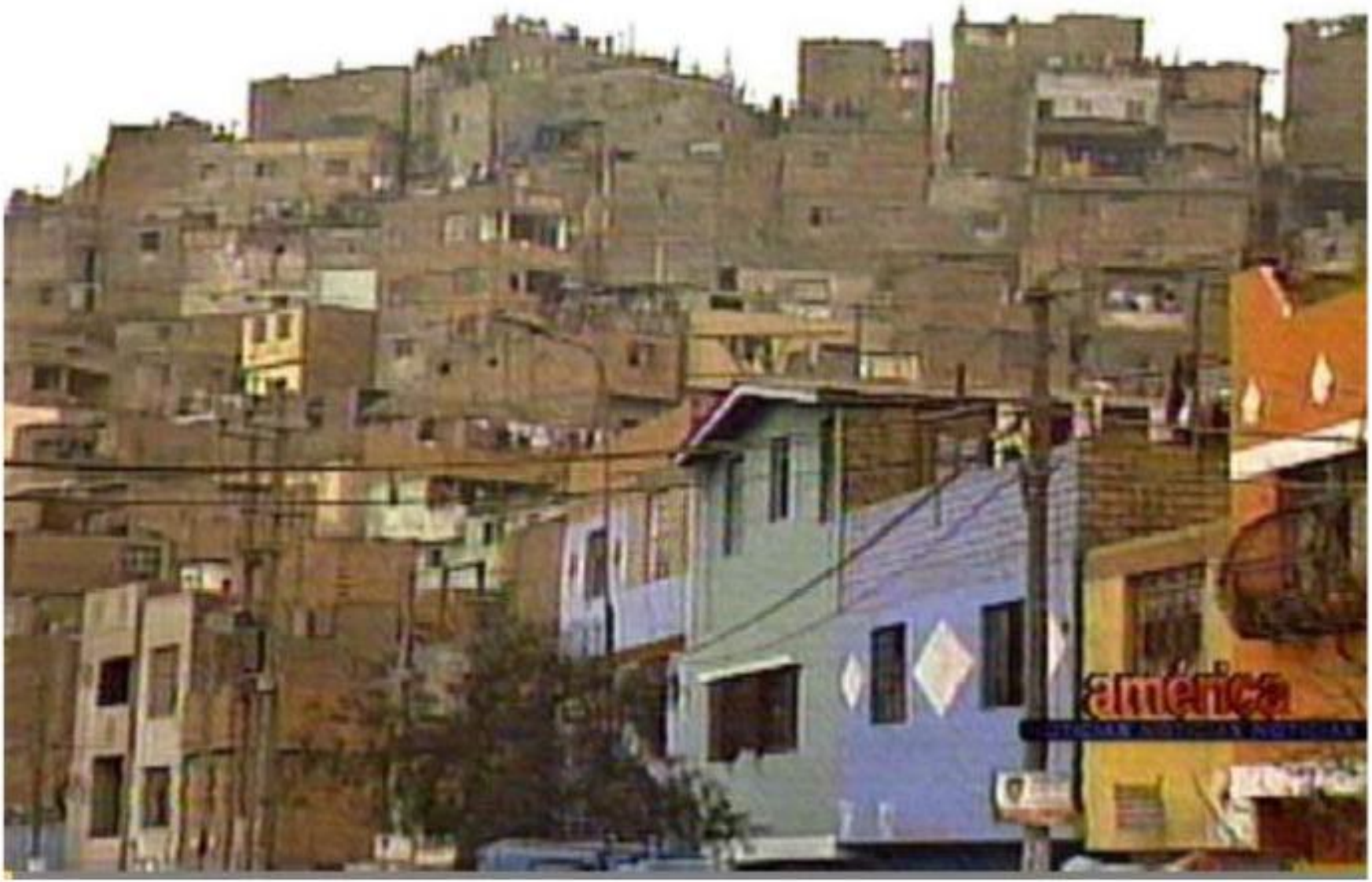
The narco-traffic and urban violence.


S-3
BUP
CIVIL

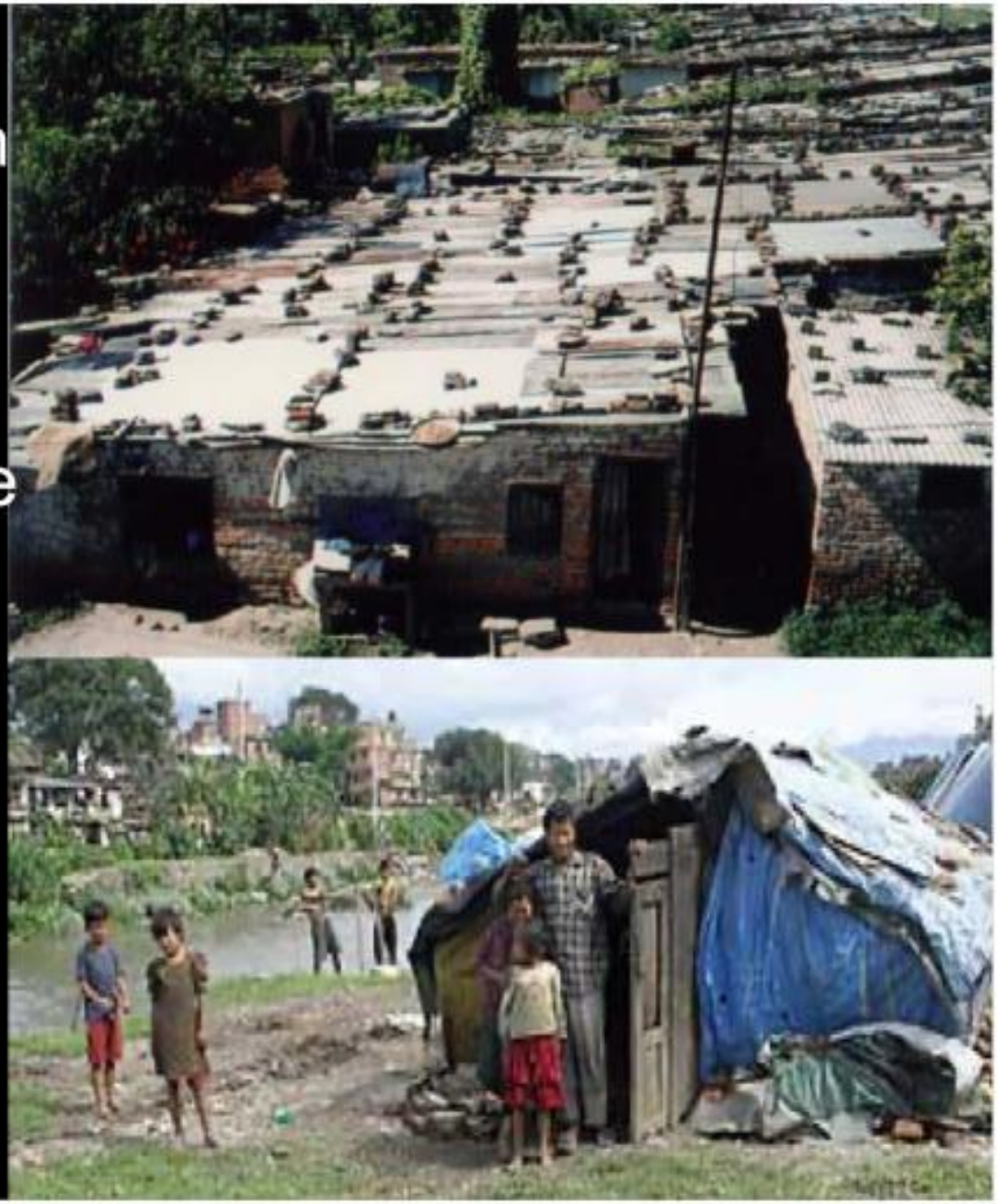

Santo Andre, Brasil



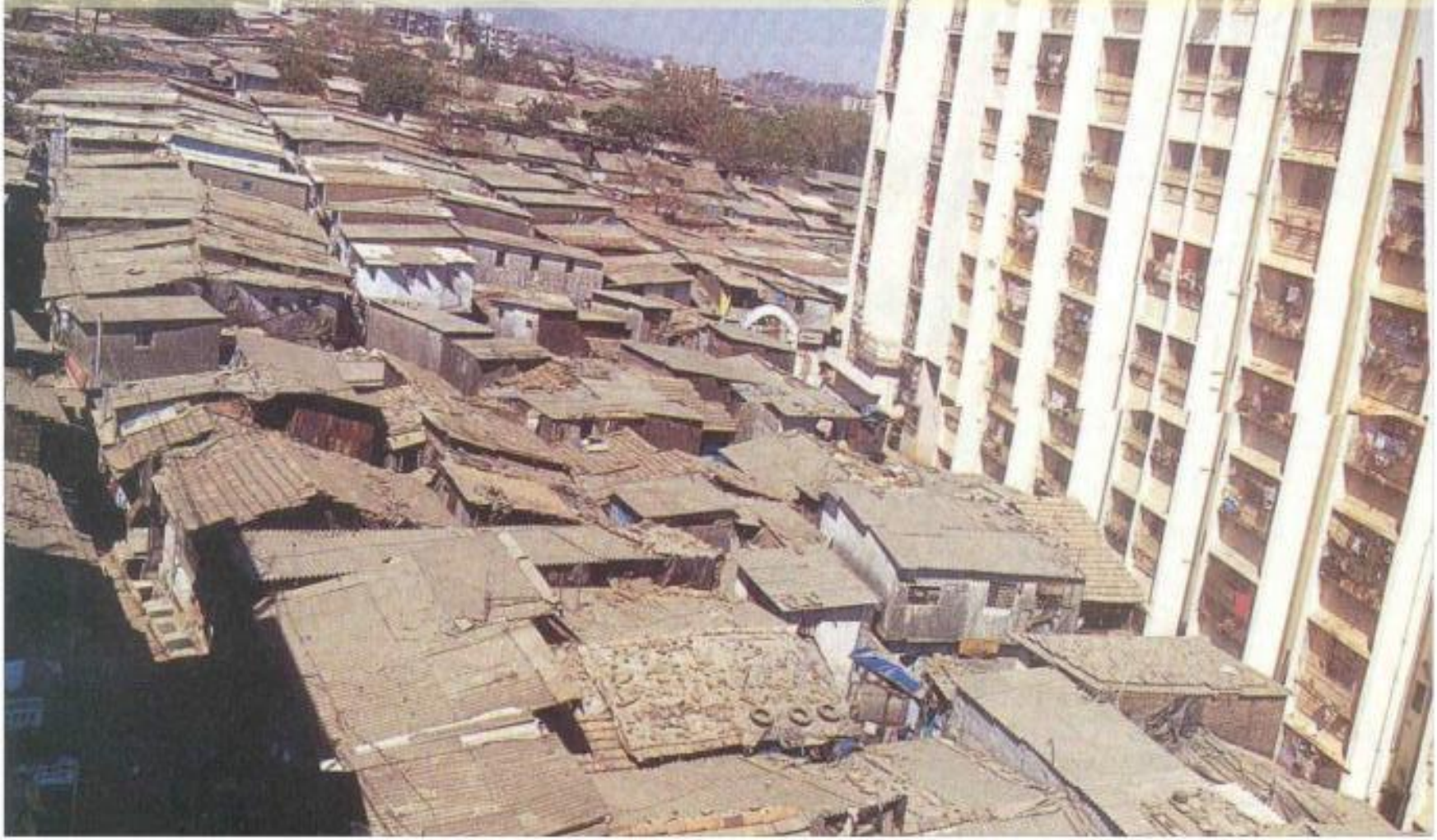
Lima, Peru

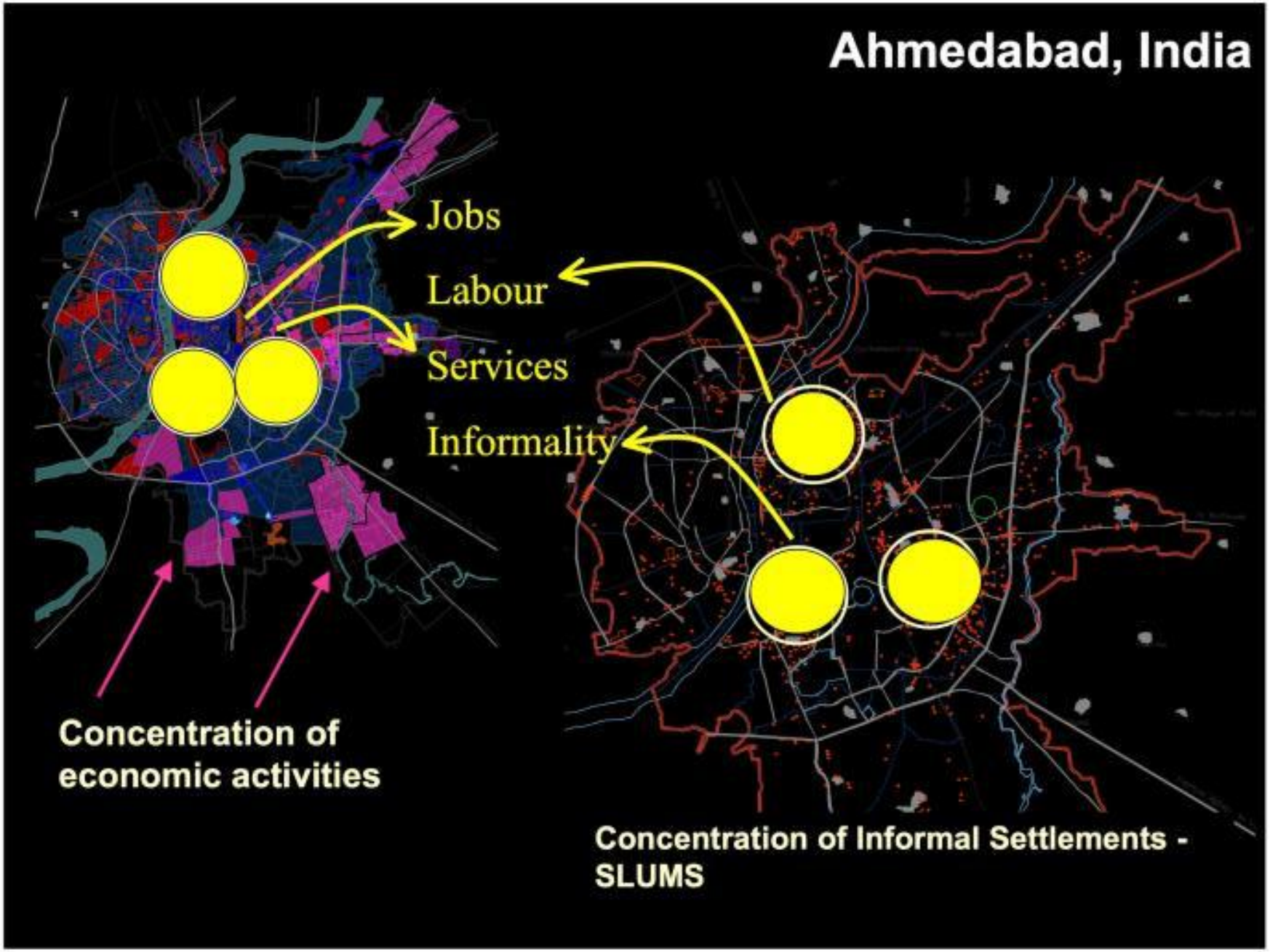


In Nepal, 42% of the total population lives under the poverty line and a significant part of the households live in informal and illegal settlements.



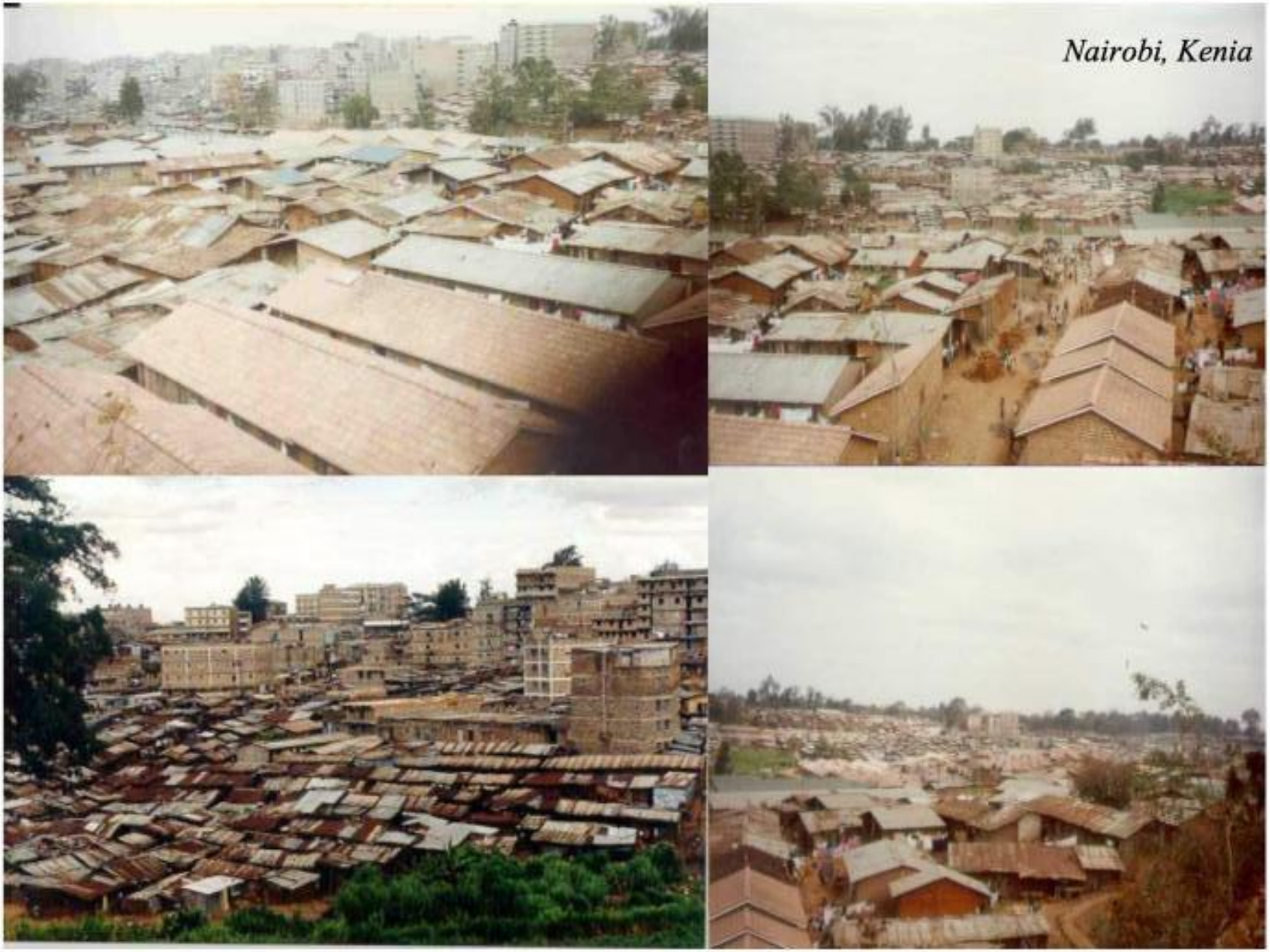
Urban research in Ahmedabad, India, reveals that informal settlements are directly associated with economic opportunities.



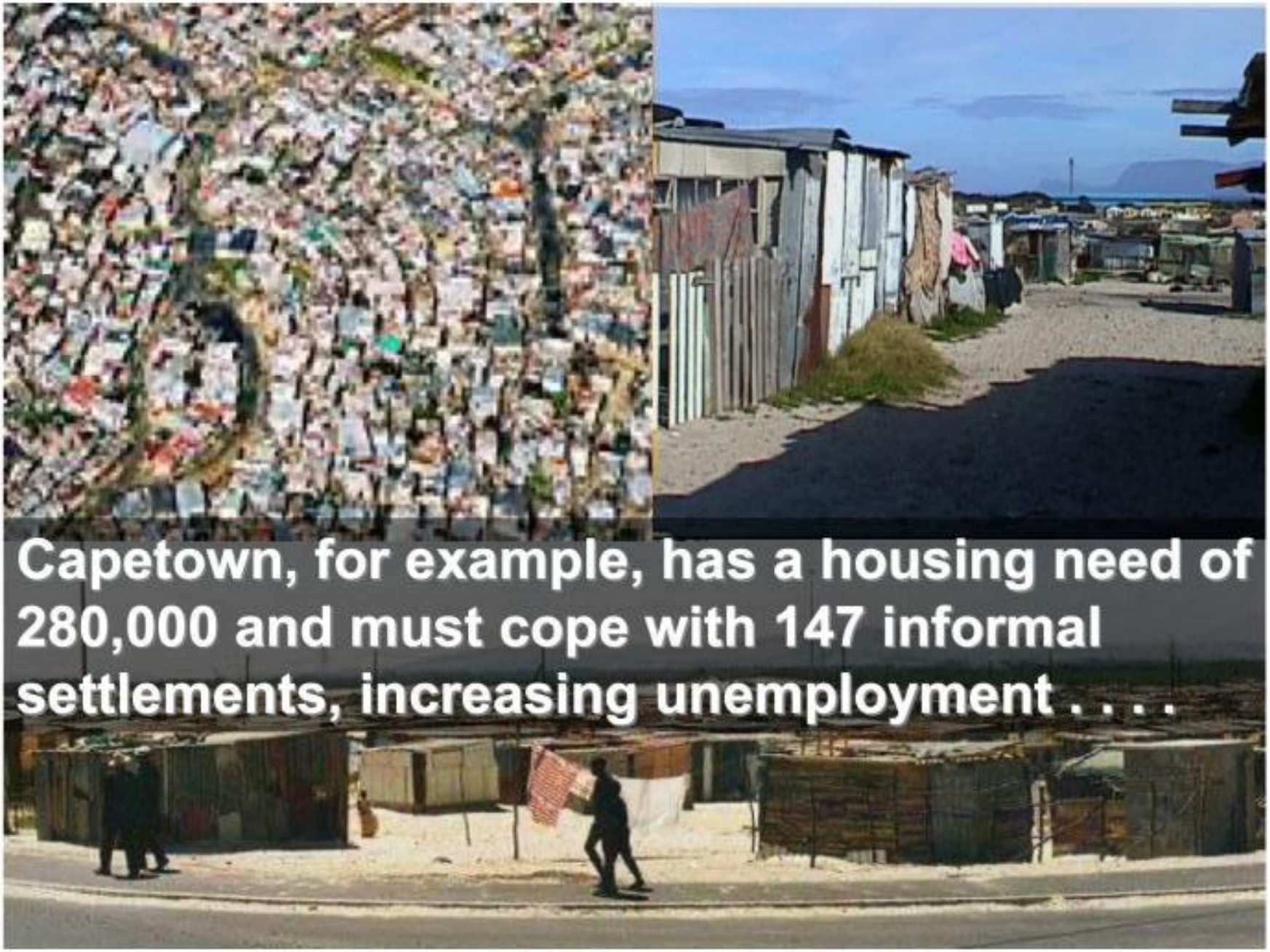

Ahmedabad, India
Jobs
Labour
Services
Informality
Concentration of economic activities
Concentration of Informal Settlements - SLUMS

Rigorous research around the globe reveals the micro-cosmos of the poor and its strategy to survive.

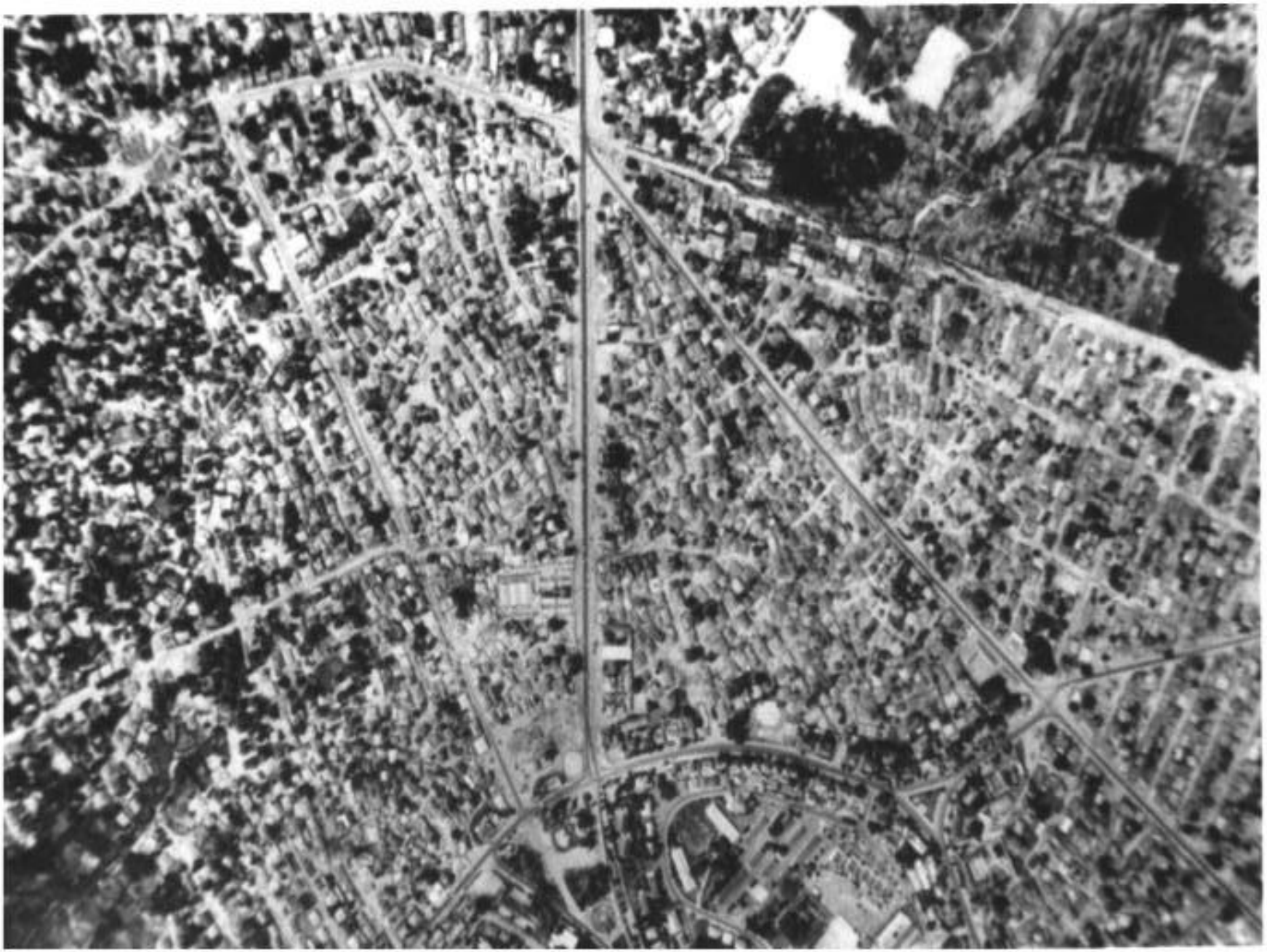
In Nairobi, one finds settlements where the majority of the shacks are rented occupied, with absent owners being a common fact.


Nairobi, Kenia

In South Africa, more than 5 million people live in 1.8 million shacks situated in informal and poorly served urban townships.

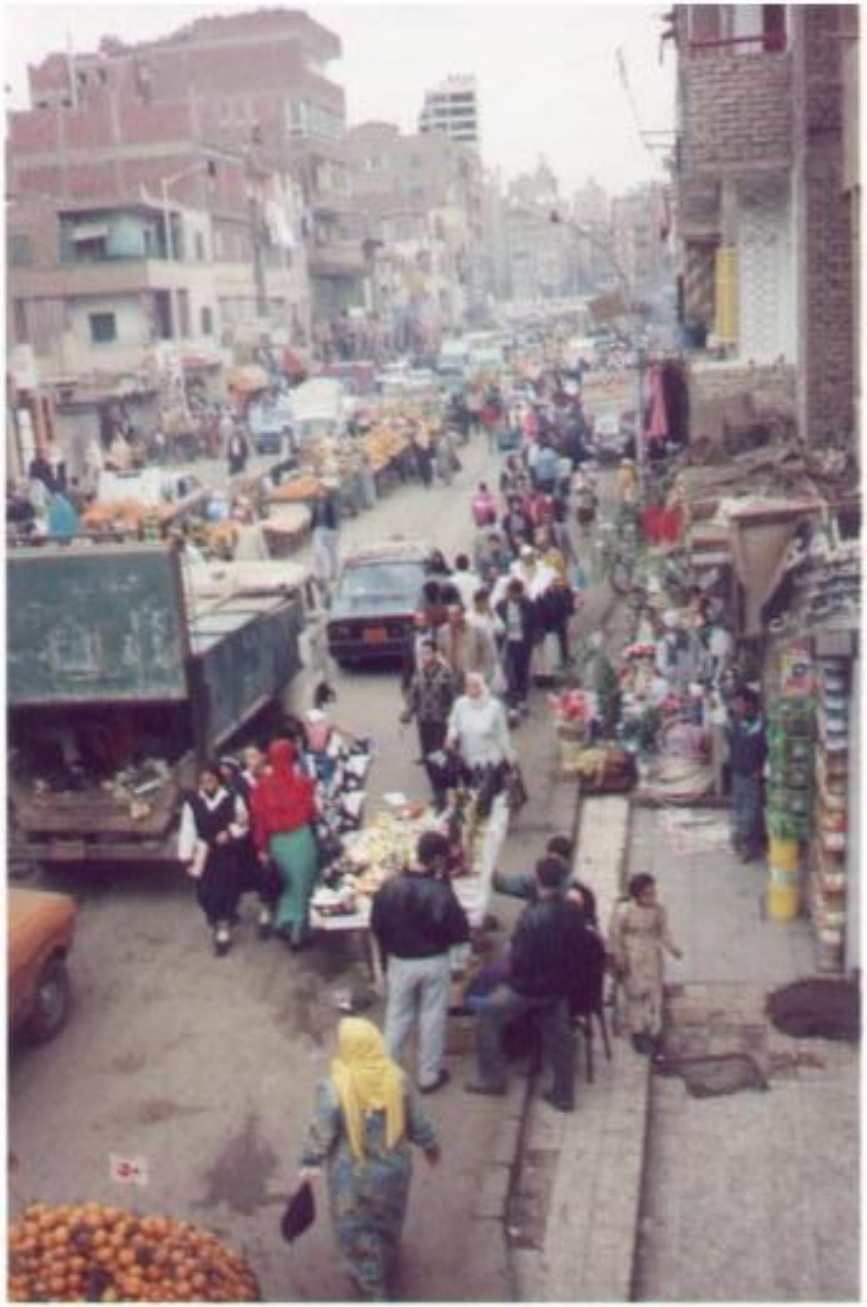

Capetown, for example, has a housing need of 280,000 and must cope with 147 informal settlements, increasing unemployment . . . .

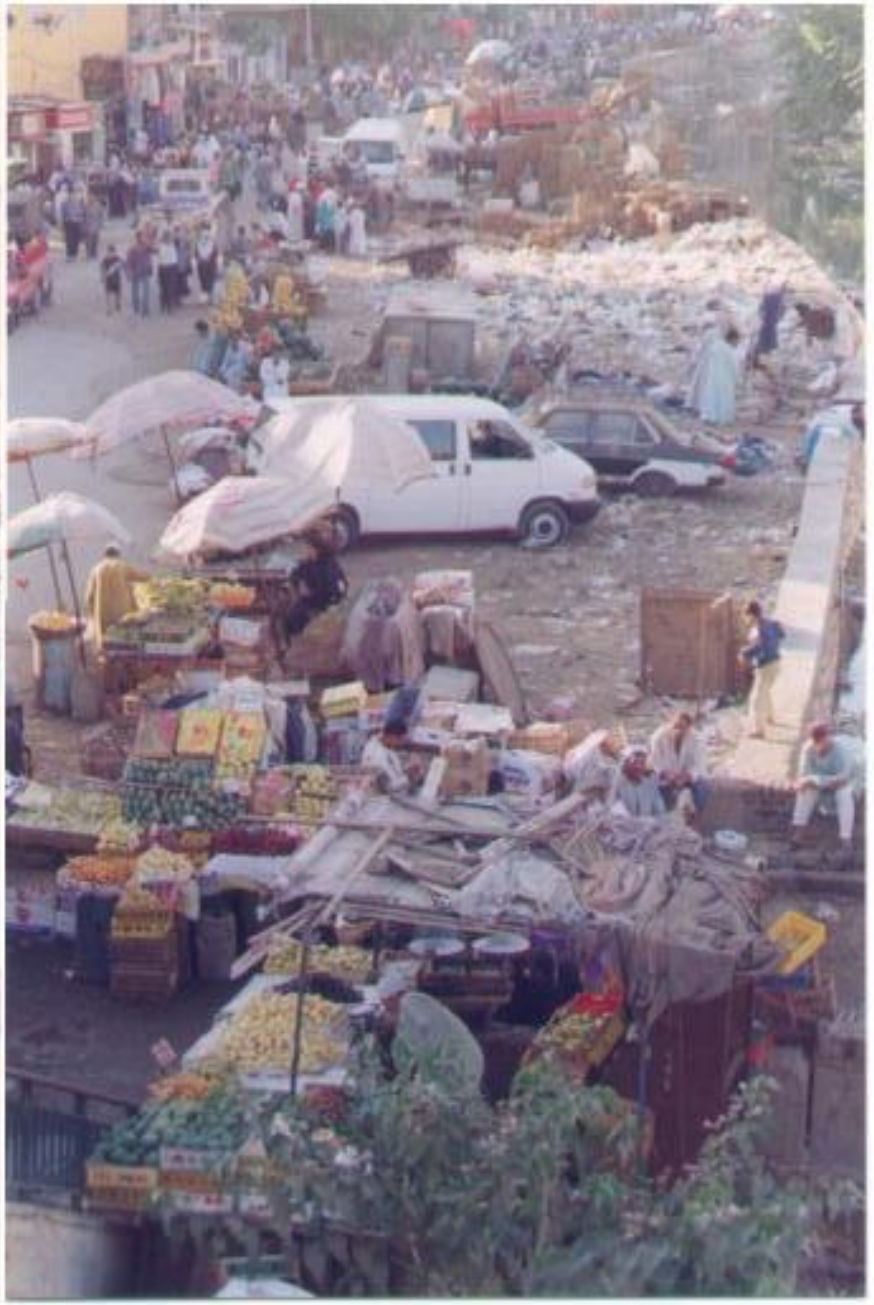
In cities of SubSaharan African, urban growth is remarkable and mainly caused by informal urbanisation. One sees a mix of customary practices in land occupation and land subdivision with high population densities.



Similarly, in Asian Cities, like Mumbay and Bangkok, poor settlements & slums are getting densely occupied

In Cairo, settlements developed informally and illegally on privately owned arable land is producing extremely high density where overcrowding, congestion and poor environmental conditions are the norm of the day.





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What kind of settlement are we talking about ? Are we giving the right names for the right phenomena?

Spontaneous, Unplanned; Favelas, Loteamentos Clandestinos (Brasil); JJ settlements (India), katchi abadis (Pakistan), Unauthorised colonies (India); tugurios, barreadas (Peru), gecekondus (Turkey), vecindades, villas miseria, informal settlements, slums, squatters...

Jhuggi-Jhomprio

In Belgrade, Yugoslavia, these settlements are called areas of wild construction.

In Tirana, Albania, informal land development processes are shaping the city in the post-communist period, but not without serious conflicts of interests, with an intricate set of legislation recognising rights and claims on land property.

The lack of security of land tenure and the lack of clarity of the government on rights over land parcels generate conflicts and social mobilization

DUELI

Fitoi Bathorja

Bathores duke treguar plumba

Foto: Studio B

DUAM SHKOLLE

Nga protestat e djeshme në Bathore

Ballkan

PROTESTA E BATHORES

everia premton legalizim të banesave

akimit me përfaqësues të qeverisë protestuesit e Bathores largohen dhe lirojnë rrugën nacionale

Grup ekspertësh e hetim fondesh për Bathoren

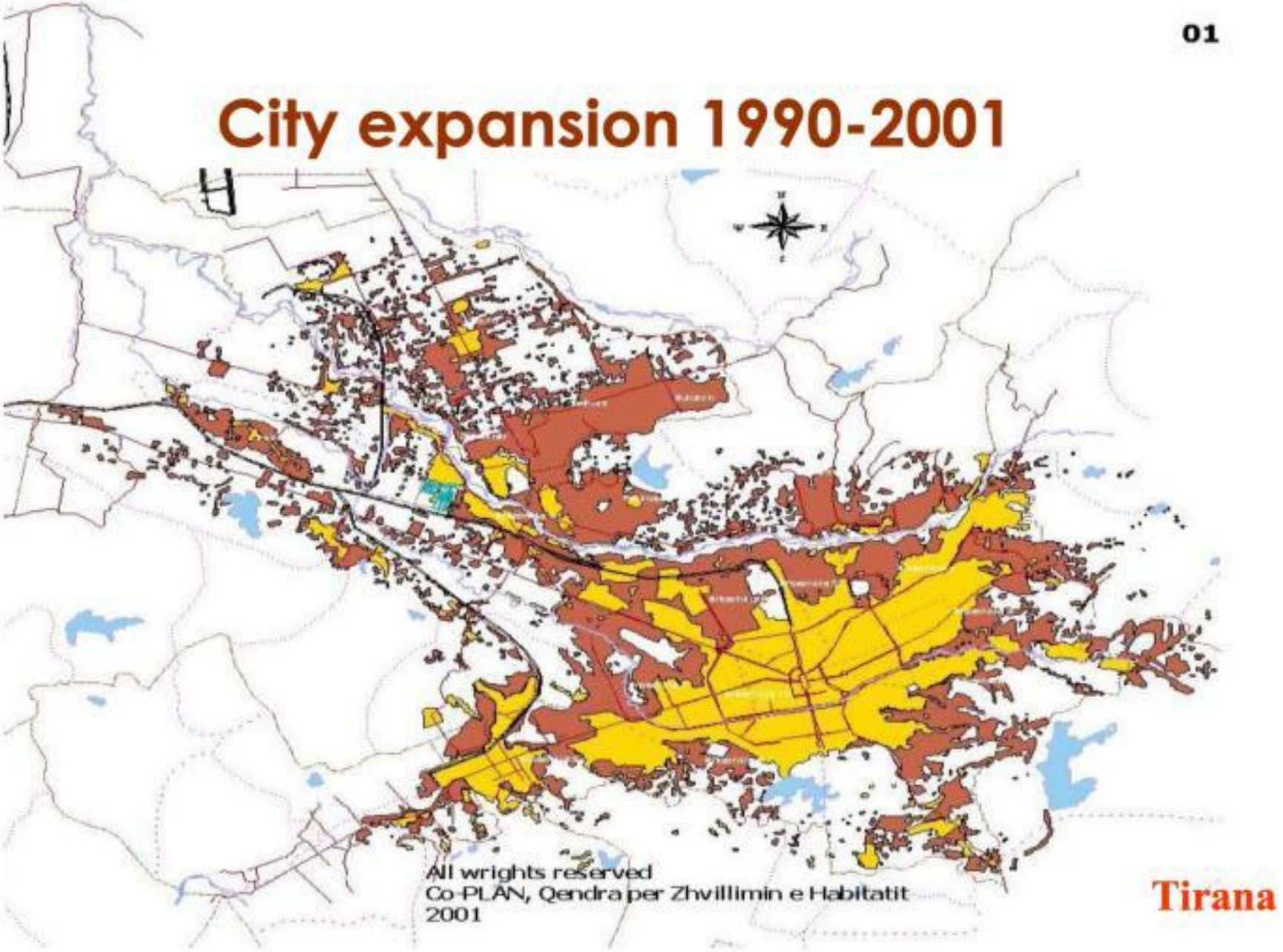
Legalizimi i Bathores, projektligj në Kuvend

Ja masat e qeverisë për zonën e Bathores

Kërcënimi i Bathores: Sot armët

Qeveria në mbrëmje: Kush dhunon, do arrestohet

City expansion 1990-2001

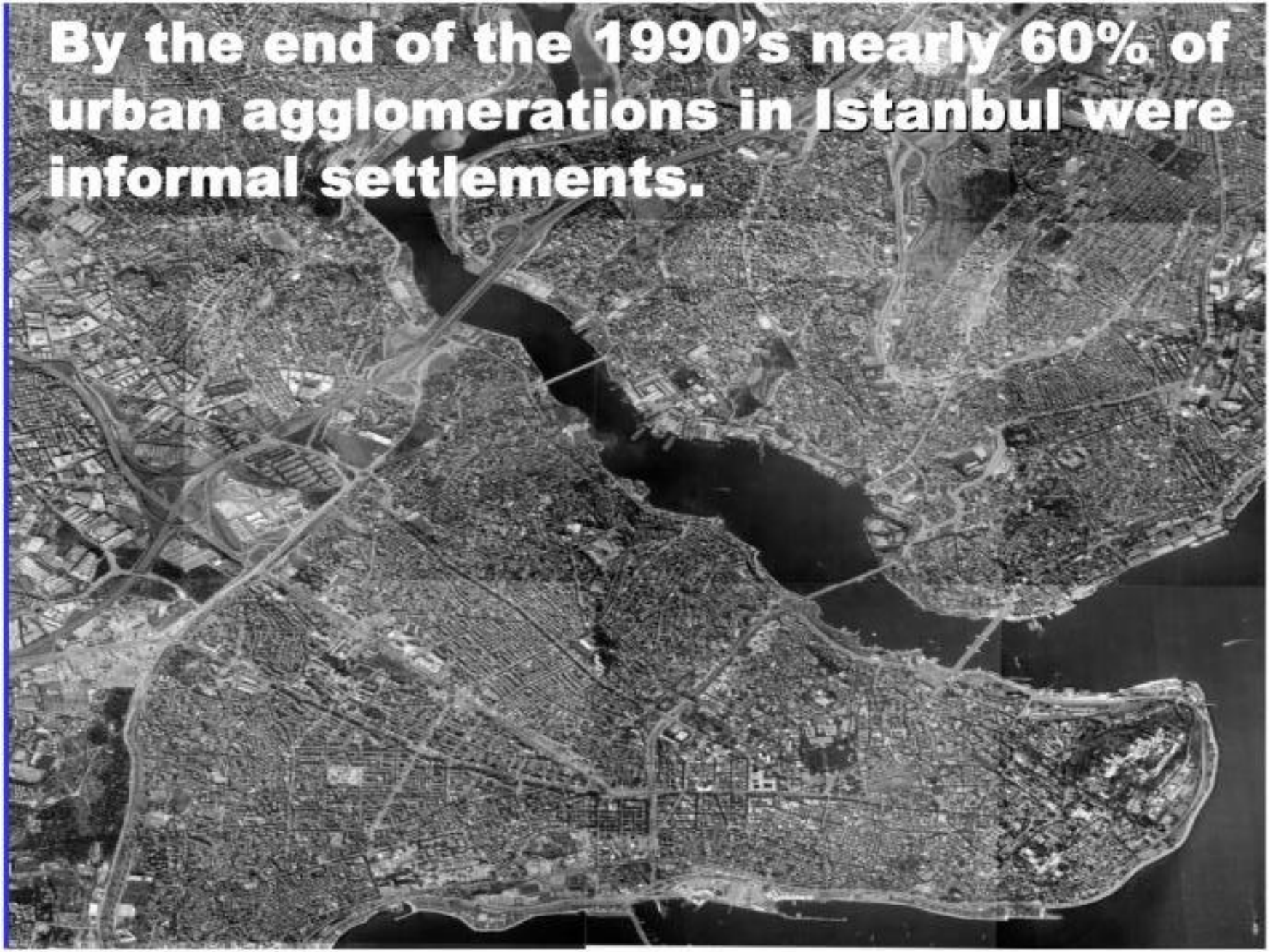


Tirana

Conditions may be better and the development context is certainly different but the processes and mechanisms may be the same. The fact remains, cities are growing not on the basis of plans and policies but on the basis of markets and people's demands.

Tirana's informally developed settlements

Source: Co-PLAN, www.co-plan.org


By the end of the 1990's nearly 60% of urban agglomerations in Istanbul were informal settlements.

A typical agricultural zone in Egypt's Nile valley...

Once land has been subdivided and a plot purchased, the first step is to make it unused for agricultural purpose. Then place a petition requesting change from rural to urban use. Since it is not allowed, building starts during weekends and nights.

The change from rural to urban is dramatic. Infrastructure is not available at first but the process of encroachments on agricultural land continues as long as the tolerance of the government allows.

The results of this process is obvious.

The causes may not be so obvious!

The explosive growth of cities in the developing world presents the greatest challenges for planners and governments....!!!!

Do we know how to tackle it?

"Without concerted action on the part of the municipal authorities, national governments, civil society actors and the international community, the number of slum dwellers is likely to increase in most developing countries. And if no serious action is taken, the number of slum dwellers worldwide is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion."

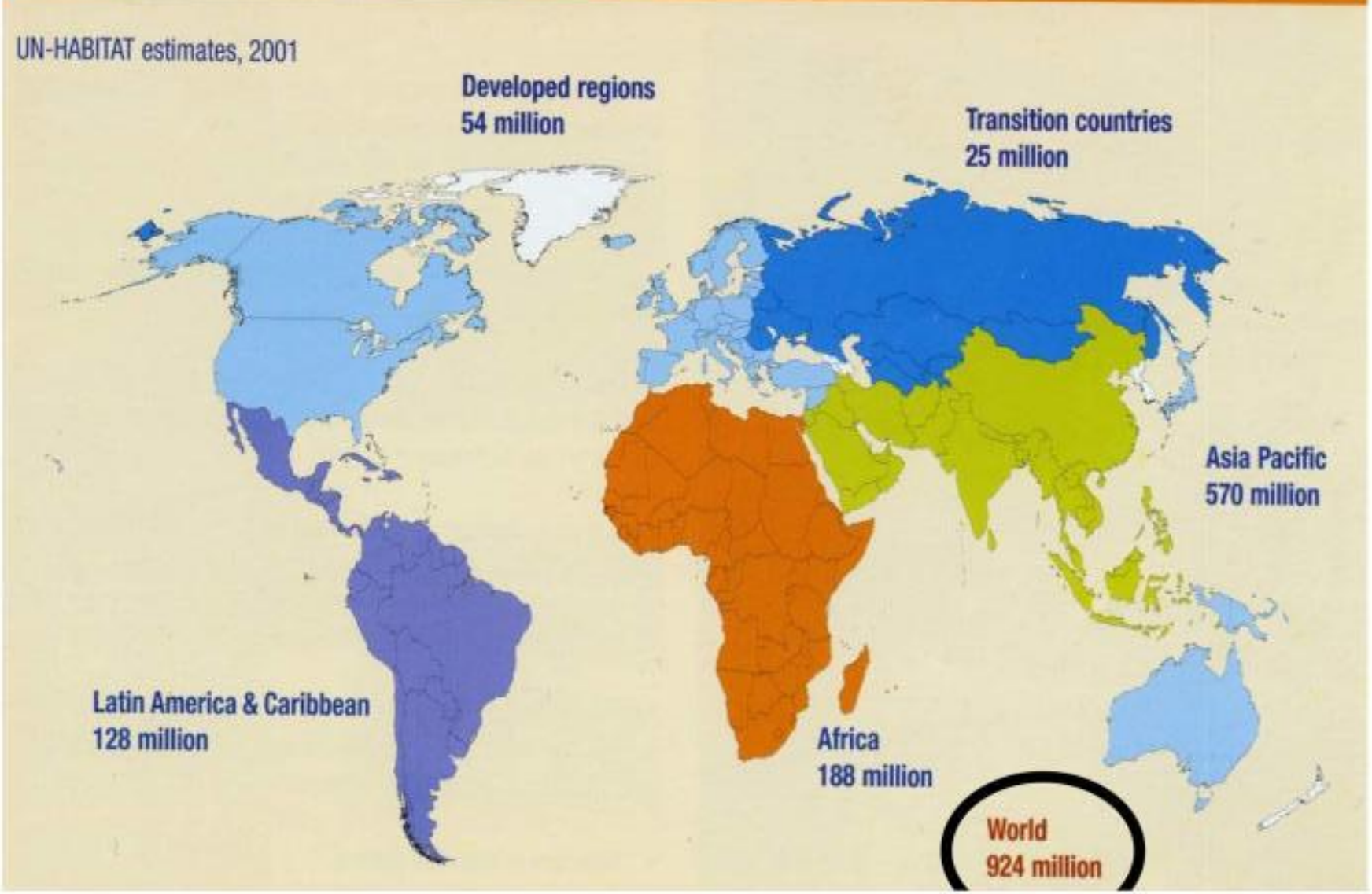
Kofi Anan, Global Report of Human Settlements, 2003.

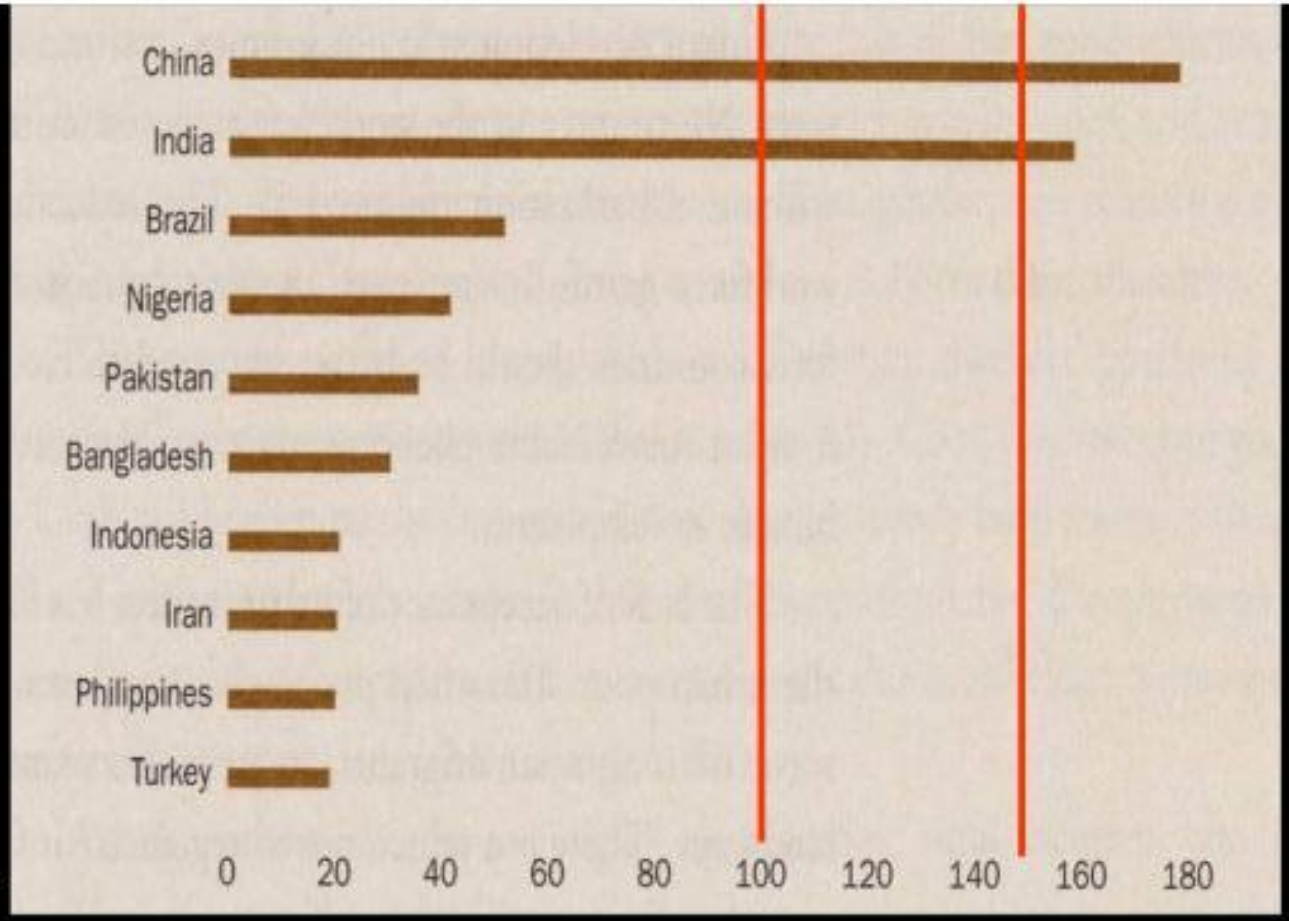
Nearly 1 billion people already live in slums in the world today.

Slum dwellers account for 43 % of the total urban population in the developing world.

Global Report of Human Settlements, 2003.

People living in Informal Settlements

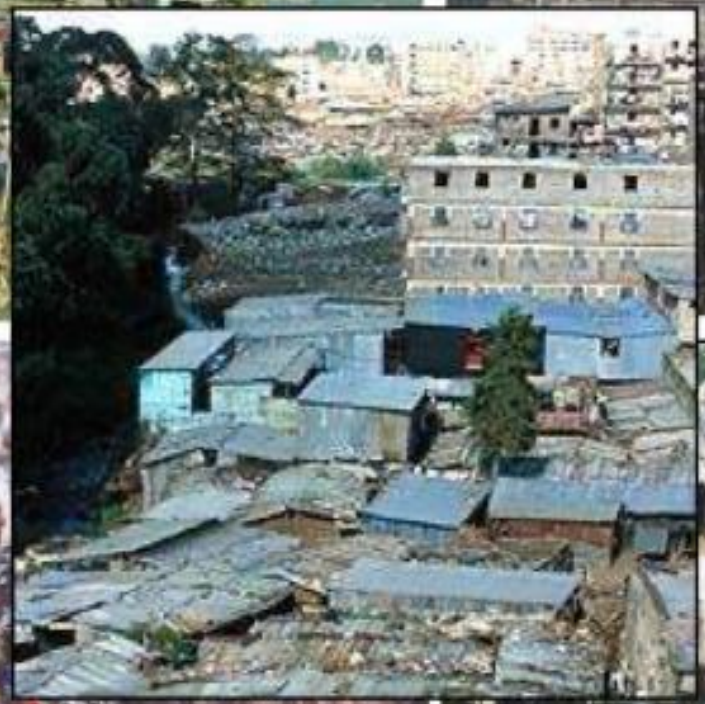




Source: UN Habitat, 2005.

The Total Number of Slum Dwellers in the Top 10 Countries, in Millions.

China, India and Brazil have the greatest.



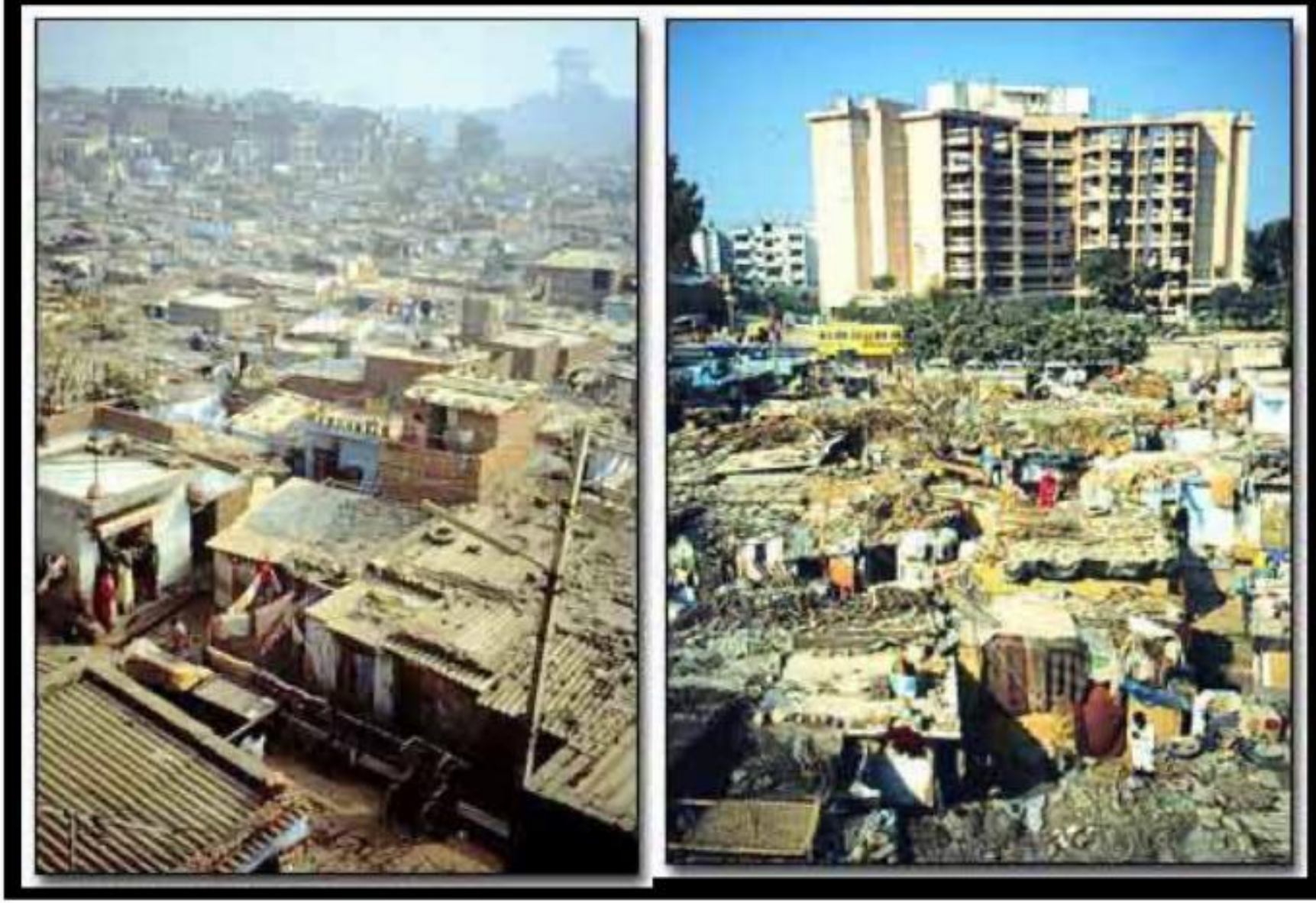
Informal urbanisation:

what do we know about it?

What do we understand about the underlying causes of that?

How do we know what we don't know about the dynamics of such settlements?

1997, Indore, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Calcutta



Surveys in India's urban slums indicate that mean income of slum dwellers is slightly above the poverty line.

Nearly 60% of them are living just at the edge of the poverty line, below or slightly above.

The remaining of slum dwellers live well above the poverty line.

Alison Barrett and Richard M. Beardmore (2000). "Poverty Reduction in India : Towards Building Successful Slum-Upgrading Strategies", World Bank.

Thus, only 40-60 % of the urban poor actually live in slums or squatter settlements. The balance live on pavements (close to sources of income), overcrowded tenements, or commute daily to and from peri-urban areas.

Homelessness!

Joblessness!

Seem to be part of the same problem or not?

Alison Barrett and Richard M. Beardmore (2000). "Poverty Reduction in India : Towards Building Successful Slum-Upgrading Strategies", World Bank.

The problem seems to be much more complex than it appears on site. The first question is “can we prevent slums and squatters to appear in our cities? Why do we have slums?

Malfunctioning of land markets and inadequate land delivery systems may hinder the access to a land parcel and consequently drive poor families to peripheral areas or completely inadequate sites ending up in informal and often "illegal" practices???

Are the norms and regulations enabling or hindering the creativity and capacity of poor families to build their own houses???

Are financial resources sufficiently mobilised to enable poor families to access fundamental inputs to housing?

Are there any policy in place?

Are planners responsive to the real needs of the population resulting in plans of actions and not plans that regulate actions?

Do we have the right policies to address the problem?

Do informal settlements indicate the need for different types of skills and methods to address the problem?

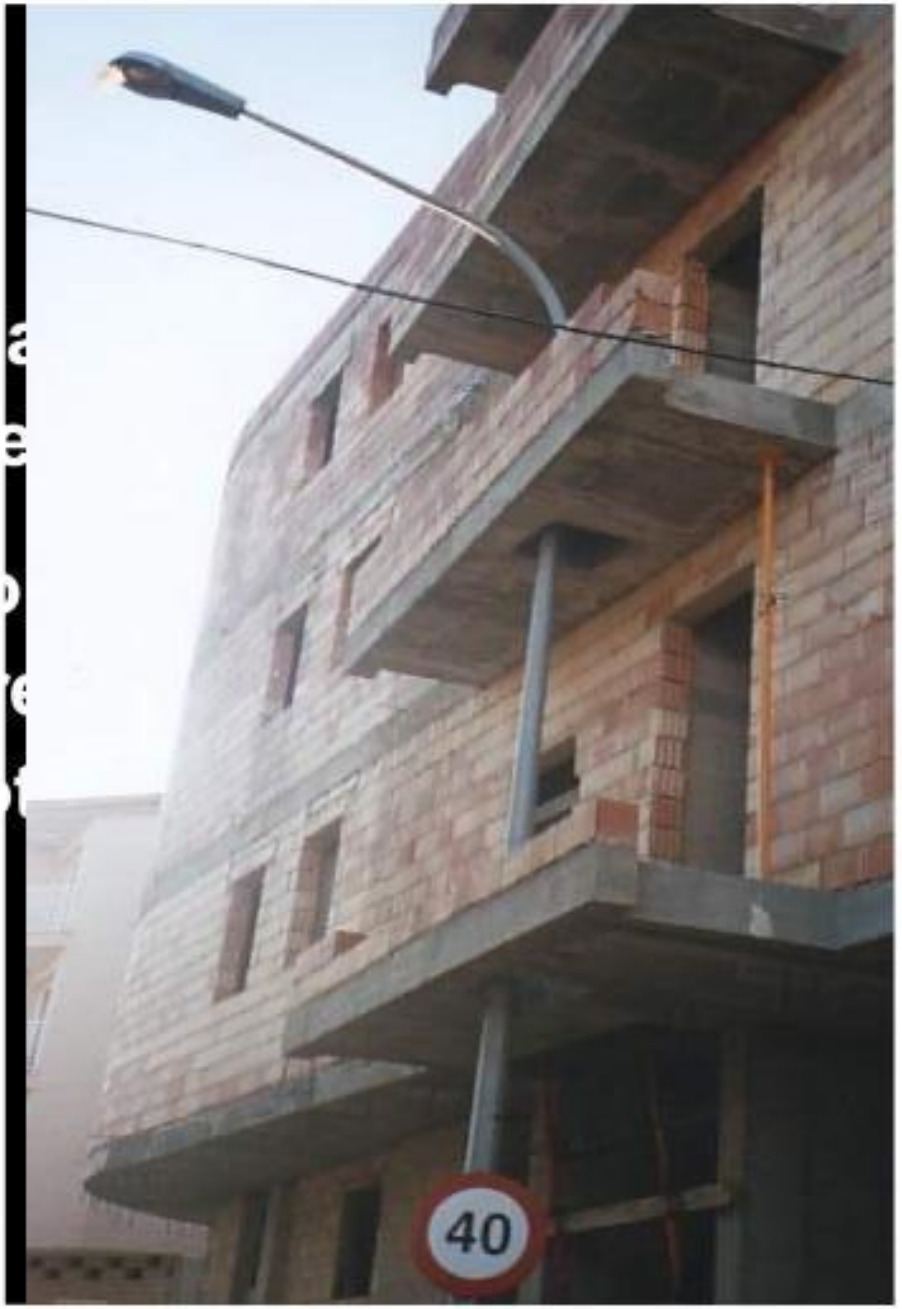
The development model in place is INFORMAL! But we are trained to plan and build while our cities grow under a totally different Logic!

1. PLANNING
2. IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
3. CONSTRUCTION
4. OCCUPATION

FORMAL URBANIZATION

1. OCCUPATION
2. CONSTRUCTION / consolidation
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICES AND BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE
4. PLANNING

INFORMAL URBANIZATION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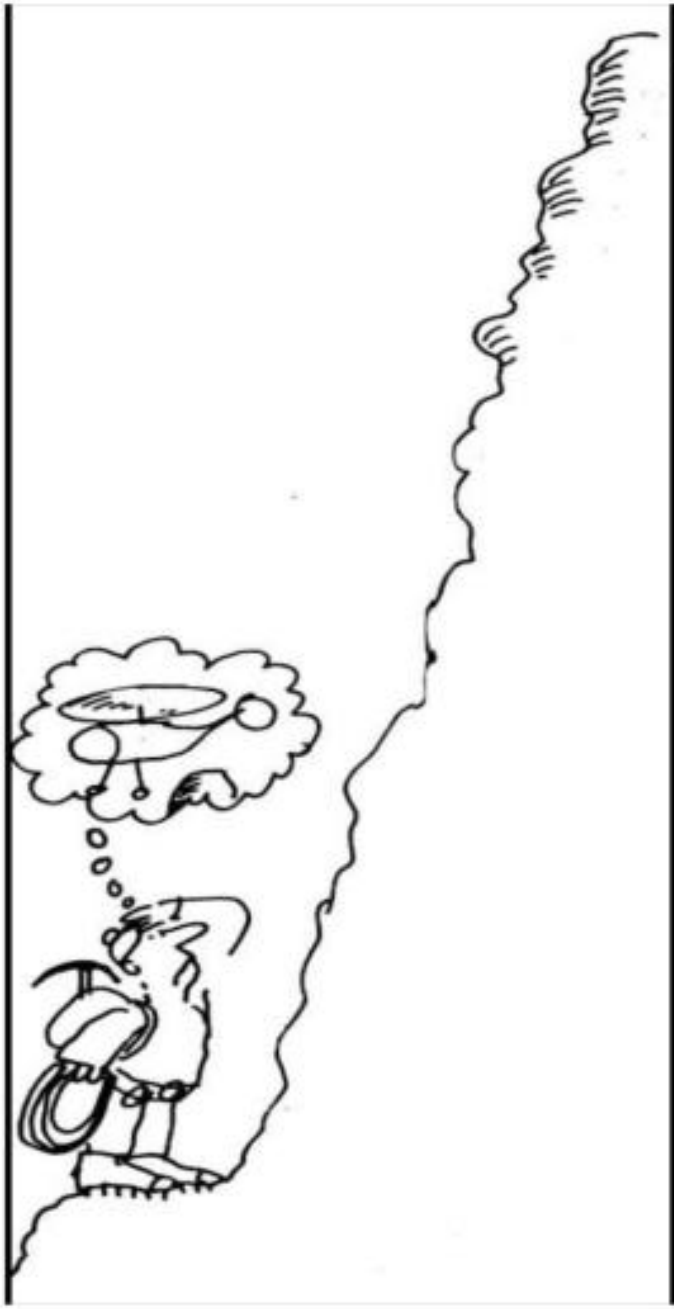
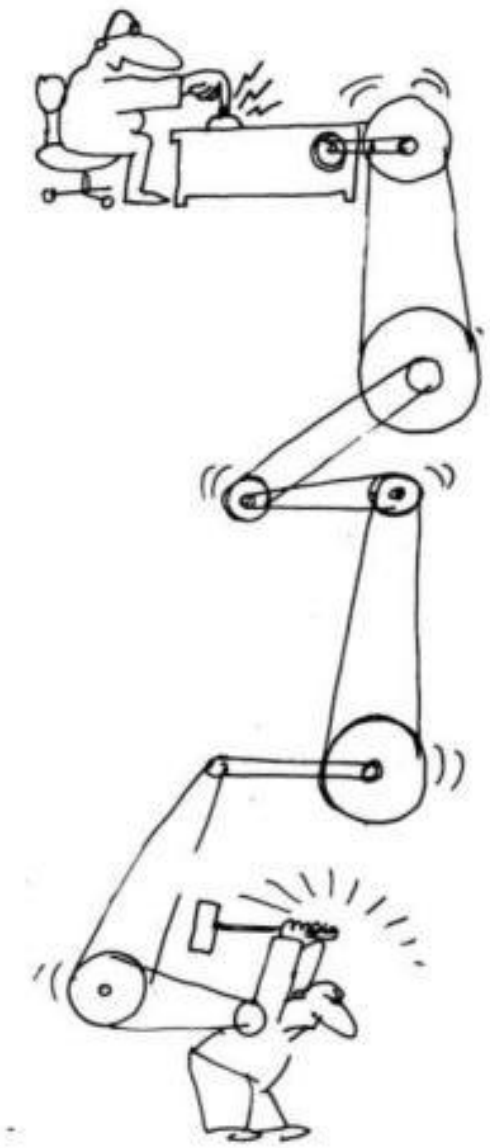


We must make choices.

Do we have the right means and instruments to pursue policies towards informal settlements?

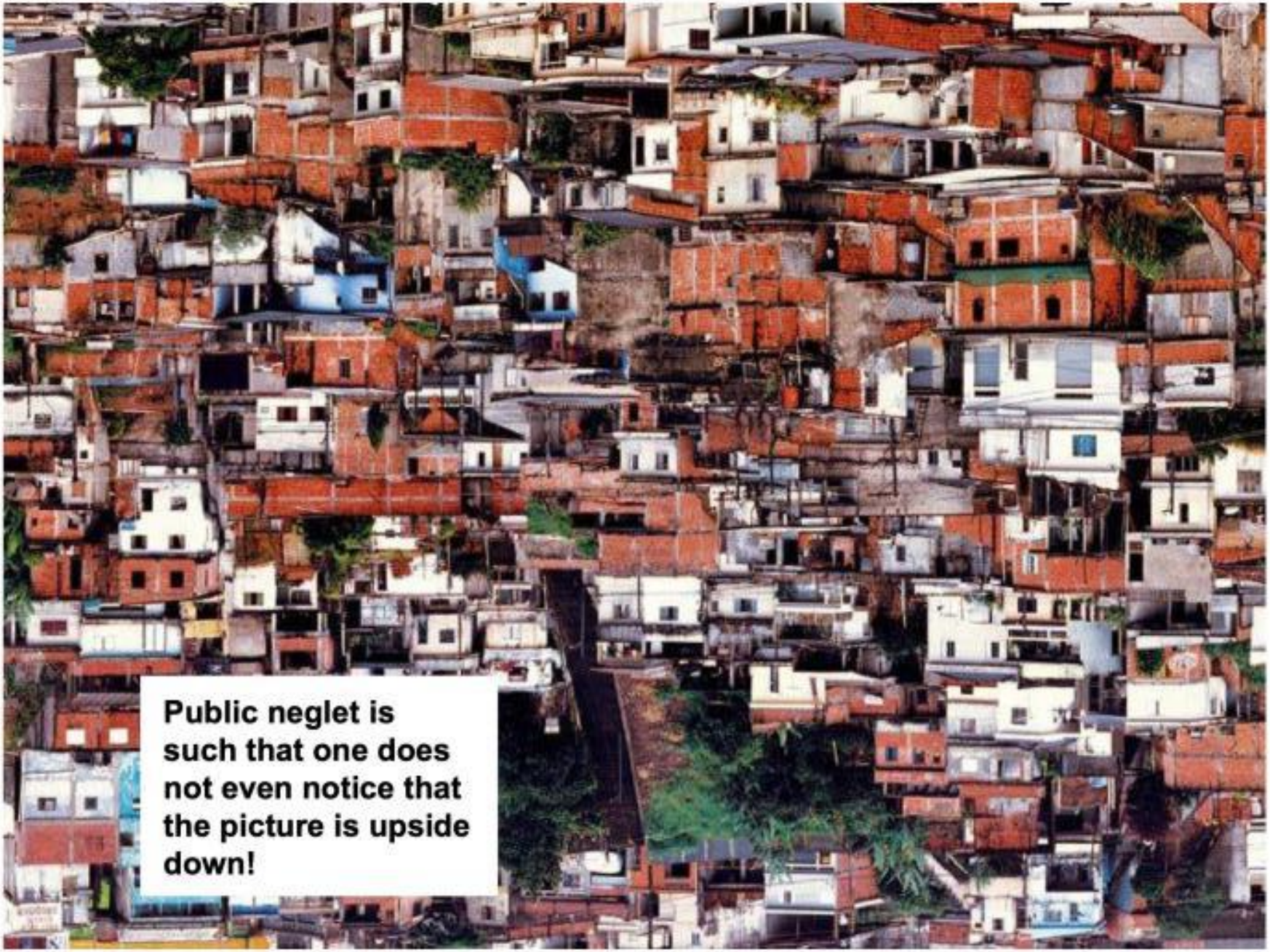
Something must be wrong with our planners, plans, governments, with our understanding:

what do we do and how do we do it?

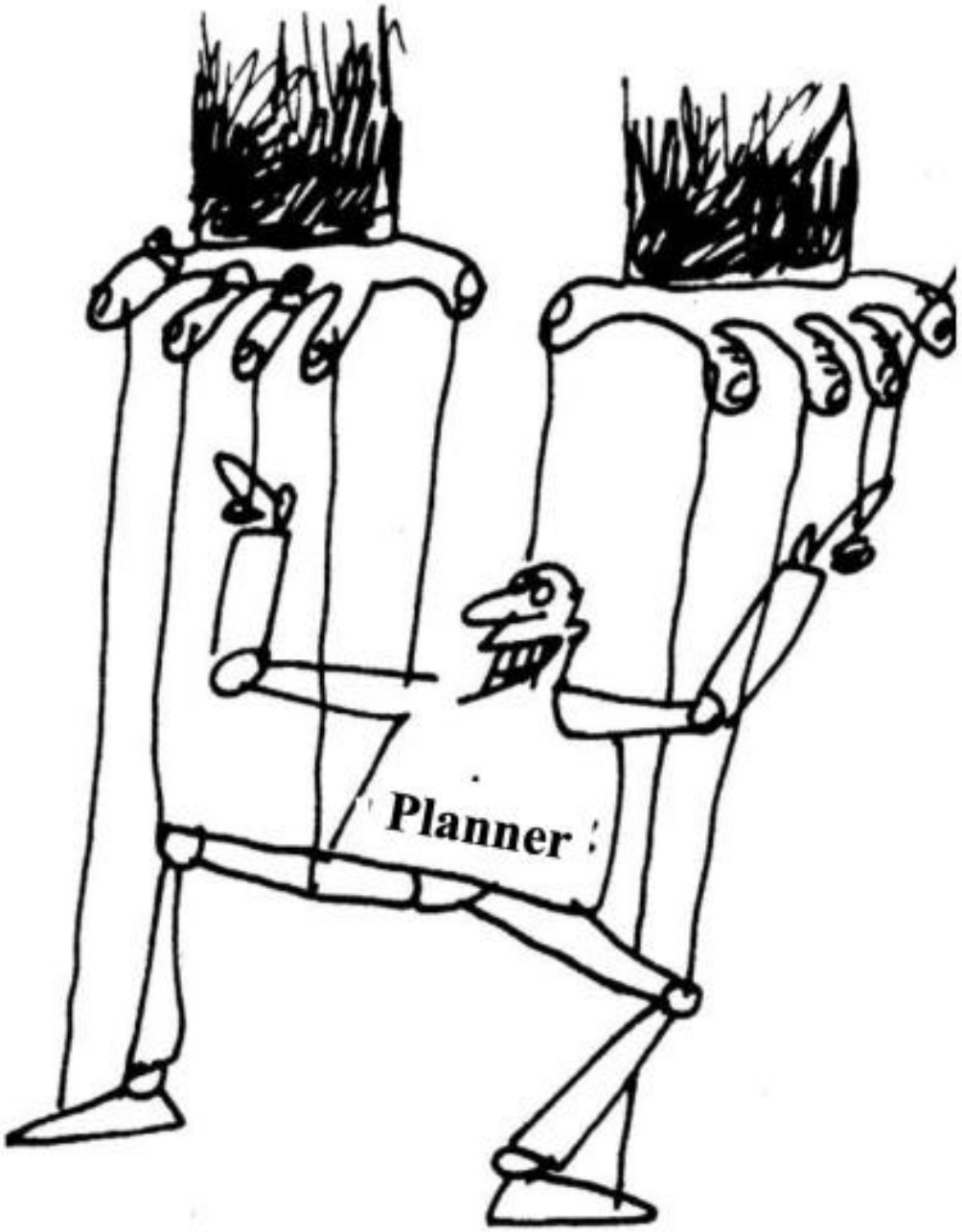


Besides the change in paradigm, planners are confronted with another challenge: **the attitude change!**

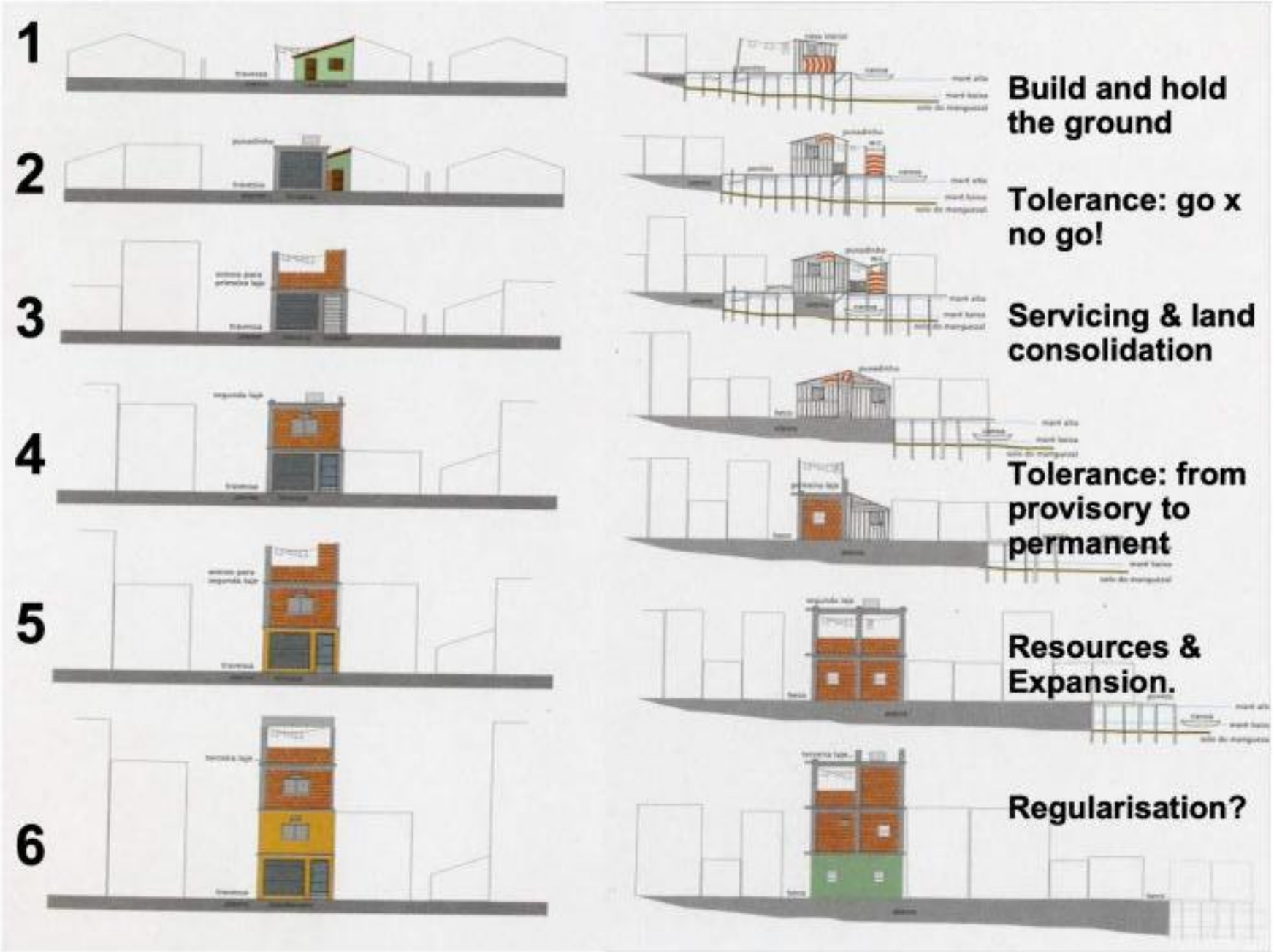
Different policies and approaches, other ways to look at the housing problem and changes in the way to work are some of the urgent themes to be dealt with.


Public neglet is such that one does not even notice that the picture is upside down!

Do we really know what is our role and the limitations of our tasks and functions in the city?


Planner :

Do we really understand the mechanisms through which individuals and group of residents consolidate their settlements??


1
2
3
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6
Build and hold the ground
Tolerance: go x no go!
Servicing & land consolidation
Tolerance: from provisory to permanent
Resources & Expansion.
Regularisation?

But how do we launch an improvement programme ?

Slum Upgrading seems to be only one of the solutions possible.

What should we tackle? Poverty? Lack of infrastructure? Insecurity of Tenure? Poor housing conditions?

In India, the "**Slum Improvement Projects-SIP's**" aimed at environmental improvements, community development and community health initiatives as linked interventions in different slum areas.

The Indore Habitat Improvement Project, often referred to as "**Slum Networking Approach**", was modelled on the same basic package of assistance covering:

Infrastructure improvement

Health

Education

Community development

In India, the objectives of the projects were not poverty reduction per se:

"improve the quality of life of the slum residents" (Hyderabad, 1989-96)

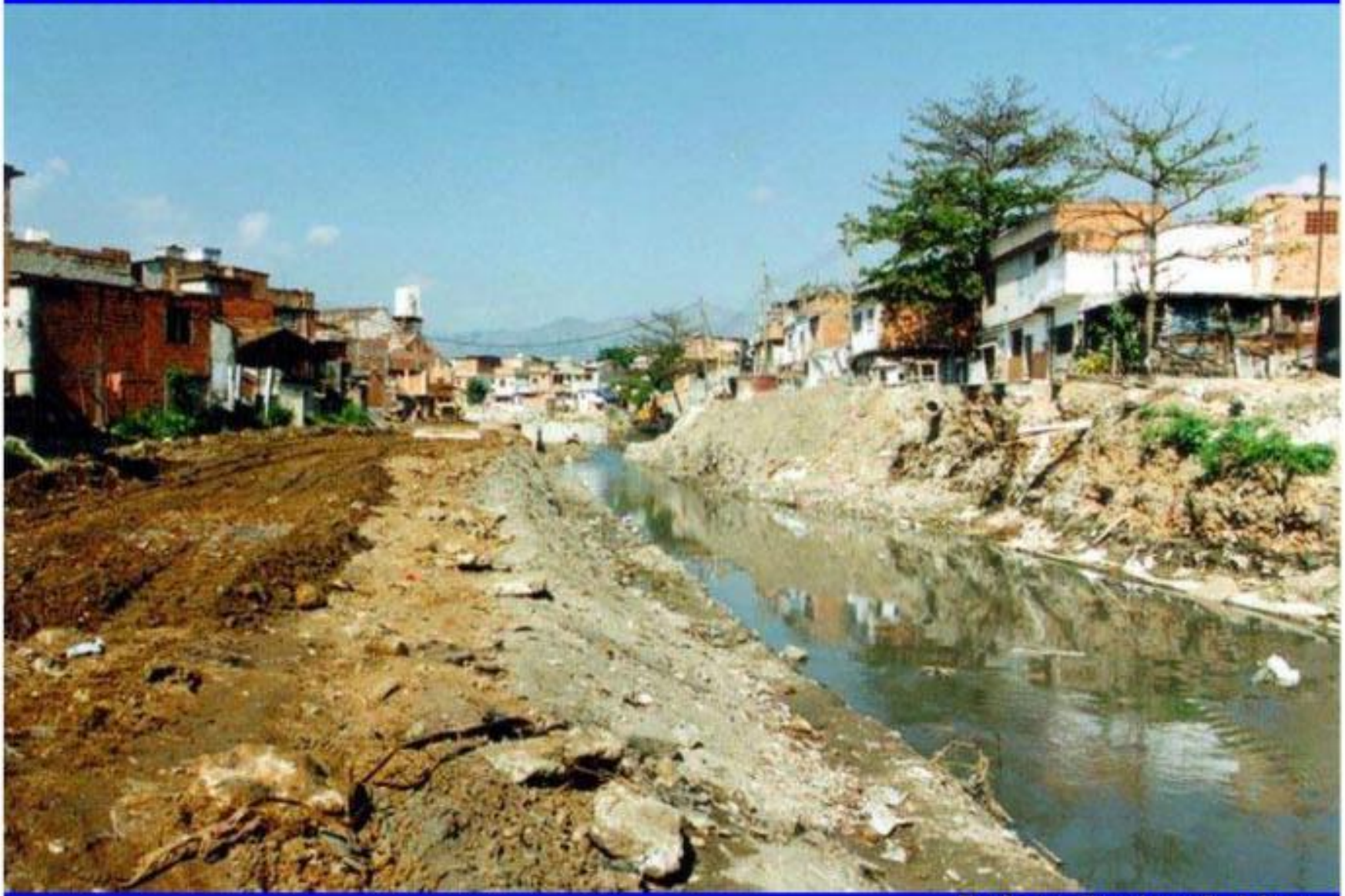
"increase the standards of health, education and community life in the slums, via an improved physical infrastructure and an enhanced level of services " (Visakhapatnam, 1988-96)

"sustainable improvements in the standards of health, education, shelter, environment and community life, and increased income-earning potential of people living in the slums" (Vijayawada, 1989-98)

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the objectives of upgrading is:

To bring the informal city as close as possible to the legal city, through regularisation and settlement upgrading and to transform "favelas" into real neighbourhoods through upgrading, land titling and provision of community and public services;

Fernão Cardim



Before, During & After

Fernão Cardim

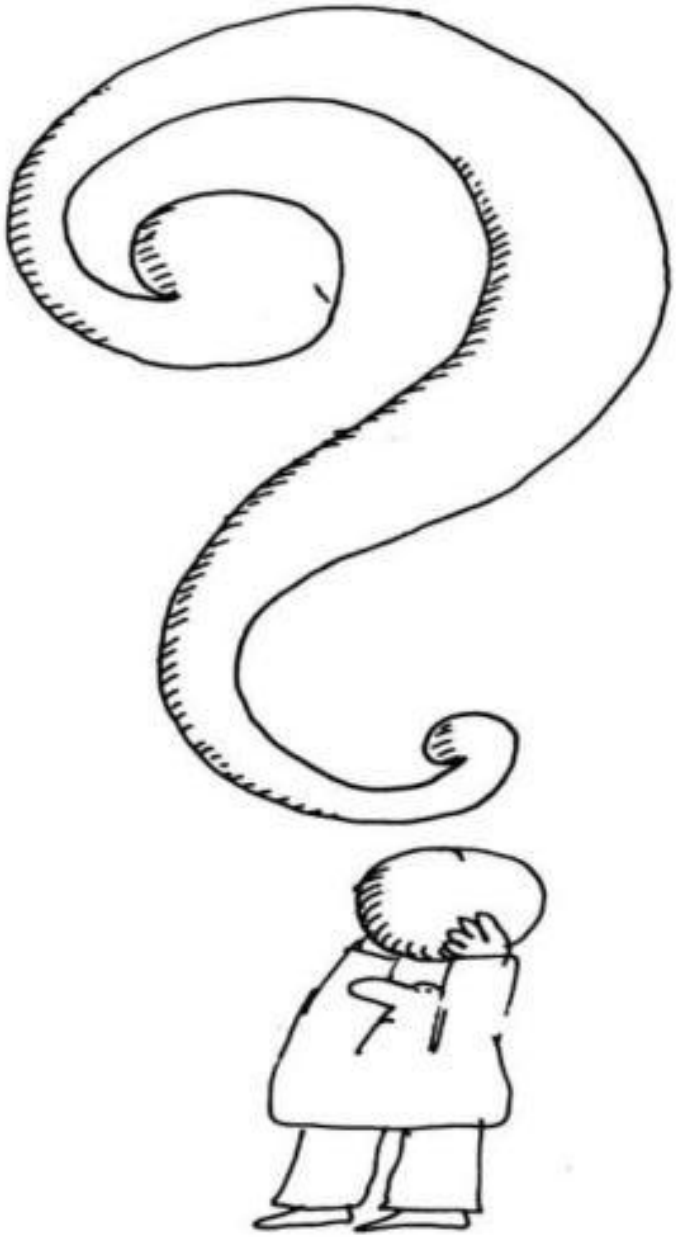
Before, During and After

The Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000 established in its Millennium Declaration a series of millennium development goals-MDG's for humanity in the 21st Century.

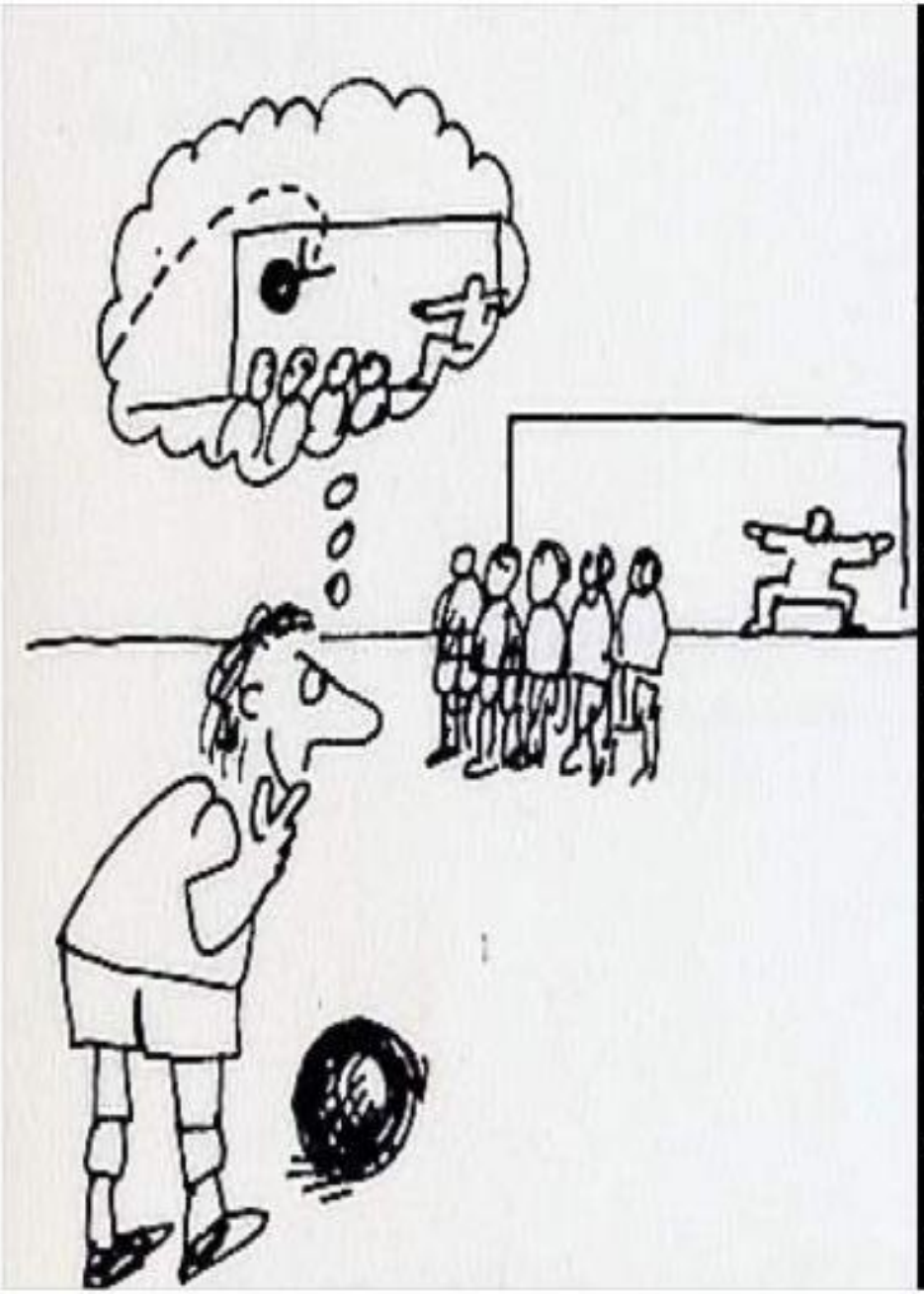
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, which builds upon the Cities Alliance's Cities Without Slums Initiative.

But in order to achieve this target, we must meet some prerequisites and certainly abandon the project focus and bring interventions to citywide scale. Our global effort is twofold: tackle the existing problem and pursue policies that will prevent the growth of new slums.

If we fail, we can expect an additional 800 million new slum dwellers in our cities by 2020.



There are many questions and different answers… But the equation is much more complicated and demand an effort and integrated approach, articulated, multi-sector and multi-institutional… but the political wil is the sine-qua-non condition for success.



The goals and objectives of the policies, programmes and projects must be clearly formulated and integrated. The actors and their actions must be well articulated and isolated initiatives must be avoided.

The cooperation and sharing of lessons learned are fundamental for the success of this global task.

HOWEVER,

we need to ask ourselves a few questions and try to find the best answers before we engage ourselves into slum upgrading initiatives!?

QUESTION 1:

Do we understand the underlying and deep rooted causes of the problem of mushrooming of informal settlements in our cities? What are these causes?

QUESTION 2:

Do we understand the dynamics of informal settlement formation and the mechanisms through which people access land in our cities as individuals and organised groups?

QUESTION 3:

What types and modalities of preventive policies should we design and implement in order to prevent informal settlements to grow in numbers and magnitude? How to implement it?

QUESTION 4:

What kind of remedial policies and approaches can we design and implement to slum upgrading and improve the living conditions in these areas?

QUESTION 5:

What specific roles should be assigned to the local / municipal government in order to tackle the problem of informal settlements and how should it perform these roles?

QUESTION 6:

What specific roles should non-governmental organisations-NGO's have in the process of tackling the problem of informal settlements and how should they perform these roles?

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3. What types and modalities of preventive policies should we design and implement in order to prevent informal settlements to grow in numbers and magnitude? How to implement it?
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5. What specific roles should be assigned to the local / municipal government in order to tackle the problem of informal settlements and how should it perform these roles?
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