



National reports from the 171 countries that adopted the Habitat Agenda in 1996 show significant progress has been made in taking these ideas forward. But the major constraint to implementation for developing countries has been resourcing. New models are needed for effective and efficient urban governance, says the Panos report, which cites specific examples from around the world and reviews successes and failures.

One key factor in whether or not they succeed is political commitment, it finds. A project in Porto Alegre in Brazil has introduced "participatory budgeting" where the city's 1.3 million residents have a say in how fiscal resources are spent. Fifteen to 20 per cent of the city budget is allocated through this system and the project has now been adopted in 50 other Brazilian cities. The results are impressive: home water supply rose from 78 per cent in 1990 to 99 per cent in 1999; garbage collection now reaches all homes; and the number of public school enrolments has more than doubled in the last 10 years.

*"Some of the most refreshing and innovative approaches to running cities have been designed by the most marginalised in society – particularly women. But these examples need to be shared and replicated more widely, to ensure that the most basic needs of the poor in cities are finally met."*

Kitty Warnock, Director of the Panos Institute's Trade and Environment programme

As the special session convenes, says the report, governments need to ask themselves if they are willing to put theory into practice and put poor people at the centre of policy-making.

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#### **Notes to editors**

\* The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in June 1996 in Istanbul. It was attended by 171 UN member states.

Printed copies of *Governing Our Cities: will people power work?* can be ordered from the Panos Institute or downloaded from [www.panos.org.uk](http://www.panos.org.uk) as a pdf file.

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