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'Slum' Upgrading and 'Slum' Eradication under MDG Seven Target Eleven[1]

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1. Introduction

The modest MDG target on improving the lives of 'slum' dwellers occupies a complex and in some ways contradictory terrain. This chapter reviews the usage of the term 'slum' and its adoption into the Millennium Development Project. The slogan '*Cities Without Slums*', which accompanies the target, has led to an initially unintended emphasis in official communication of the target. In order to explore the deviation between the norm that cities should not have 'slums' and the actual MDG target, the chapter reviews the role of norms and targets within the UN. Turning in more detail to MDG Seven Target Eleven, it compares the origin of Target Eleven with the trajectory that led to the adoption of the other MDG targets. Due to the World Bank's role in the formulation of Target Eleven and its slogan, the chapter reviews World Bank urban policy at the time, as well as the World Bank's subsequent shift to more directly embracing the urban poor and promoting informal settlement upgrading. The position of the urban economy and urban competitiveness within the World Bank's policy of 2000 is relevant to understanding the coining of the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*', as well as its utility to city beautification initiatives driven by the urban competitiveness agenda. The World Bank's subsequent refinement in urban policy is not paralleled in high level

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[1]This paper builds on the author's book "Cities With 'Slums': From Slum Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa" (2011), University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town.

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communication about Target Eleven by UN-Habitat. Too often in high level UN-Habitat communication, the norm of 'slum'-free cities has become the target.

While the first part of the chapter occasionally uses South Africa as an example, in the latter part the chapter turns in more detail to the case of South Africa, as well as that of Kenya, illustrating these country's 'slum' eradication drives and targets, and their links to a somewhat perverse adoption of the '*Cities Without Slums*' ideal. For South Africa, examples are given for direct legitimisation of repressive anti-'slum' measures through the misunderstood MDG obligation of freeing cities of 'slums'.

A central concern of this chapter is the ambiguity and the tendency for miscommunication and misinterpretation inherent in the formulation of Target Eleven, the absence of reflection and refinement in high level UN-Habitat communication over the first decade of the MDG Project, and the absence of corrective guidance to countries such as South Africa. It is hoped that these concerns may help inform a more nuanced treatment of informal settlements in relation to the urban economy in the UN's development agenda for the years remaining to the MDG target dates and beyond.

2. Shifts in the usage of the word 'slum'

The term 'slum' has its origin in Britain's industrialising cities in the early 19th century (Cowie, 1996). By the 1870s British legislation associated the term 'slum' with unhealthy conditions, also empowering local authorities to demolish and replace housing that had been given this label (Garside, 1988). 'Slums' became the antithesis of conditions aspired to under modernism, but in the late 1960s and 1970s many ambitious 'slum' redevelopment schemes in the north, aimed at deteriorating tenement stock, came under attack and gave way to cautious, participatory upgrading (Bodenschatz, 1987).

Through the legacy of colonial planning terminology, the term 'slum' remains in use in a number of former British colonies, India and Kenya in particular. In both these countries, which have a notable presence in the Anglophone development discourse, 'slum' has come to refer not to deteriorated formal housing stock but to unplanned and unauthorised settlements in which poor households have found an urban foothold for themselves. It is from countries like these that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements UNCHS (Habitat) – as of

2002 the United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-Habitat – came to use the term 'slum' interchangeably with 'informal settlements'.

In 1999, the World Banka and UNCHS (Habitat) formed a new organisation, Cities Alliance, with the aim of focussing country governments on the need to upgrade their informal settlements and to accommodate upgrading within city development strategies. Cities Alliance adopted the term 'slum' to span "high density, squalid central city tenements to spontaneous squatter settlements without legal recognition or rights, sprawling at the edge of cities" (World Bank and UNCHS [Habitat], 1999: 1). While promoting informal settlement upgrading, Cities Alliance was launched with the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*'. This slogan appeared in the title its inaugural publication: *Cities Alliance for Cities Without Slums: Action Plan for Moving Slum Upgrading to Scale* (World Bank and UNCHS [Habitat], 1999). This action plan challenged "donors, governments and slum communities to improve the lives of 5-10 million slum dwellers by 2005 and 100 million by 2020" (World Bank and UNCHS [Habitat], 1999:6). In 2001, the figure of 100 million represented over ten per cent of the estimated global population living in 'slums' – it was estimated that worldwide 924 million people lived in 'slums' (UN-Habitat, 2003:2), and that this number would double in the first three decades of the new millennium (UN-Habitat, 2003:2); with the African continent expected to face the highest rates of urbanisation, it was also expected that the global 'slum' population in Africa would double every 15 years (*ibid.*). In relation to these figures, the aim of improving the lives of 100 million 'slum' dwellers was modest.

In 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Cities Alliance 'slum' target, with reference to the '*Cities Without Slums*' slogan, into the Millennium Development Project: "By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least a 100 million slum dwellers as proposed in the 'Cities Without Slums' initiative" (UN, 2000: 5). In 2001, this became Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Seven Target 11.

The UN's adoption of a 'slum' target and Cities Alliance slogan into the Millennium Development Goals led to a widespread incorporation of the term 'slum' as well as the vision of 'slum'-free cities into country level policies, strategies and even legislation, as I illustrate later in this chapter. The new 'slum' focus also triggered the production of 'slum' literature, from the development discourse on how to achieve the MDG target on 'slums' (e.g. Hasan, Patel and Satterthwaite, 2005) to Mike Davis' polemic '*Planet of Slums*' (2006).

Recent commentators raise concern over the continued or renewed implicit meaning of the word 'slum' as housing unsuitable for improvement or in need of demolition (Gilbert, 2007; Martin and Mathema, 2010; Perlman, 2010). UN-Habitat, however, came to adopt a definition for 'slums' developed by a UN task force for Target Eleven. It combines "inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential status" (UN-Habitat, 2003: 23). The definition spans informal settlements and deteriorated formal housing and was used as broadly synonymous with "inadequate housing conditions" (ibid.:13).

Yet four years after adoption of Goal Seven Target 11 with the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*', the Task Force that the UN set up for Goal Seven expressed "unease with Target Eleven" and proposed that the wording of the target be extended to include "while providing adequate alternatives to new slum formation" (Saith, 2006: 1194, citing Garau *et al.*, 2005: 21). The Task Force sought thereby to prevent the interpretation of '*Cities Without Slums*' as "endorsement of the failed policies of the past, such as preventing urban migration or bulldozing newly formed informal settlements" and to promote instead proactive and participatory steps (Garau *et al*., 2005: 21). In the African country cases I present below, it is evident that the endorsement of 'slum' demolition remained prevalent and even legitimised legislative support for evictions, and a shift towards proactive and participatory steps has been difficult to achieve.

3. Norms and targets within the UN

The UN is generally associated with the generation and promotion of ideas, either normative ideas, namely broad ideas "about what the world should look like", or causal ideas, which are more operational, and often take the form of a target (Emmerij *et al*., 2005: 214). In the case of MDG 7 Target Eleven, the normative idea is that cities should not have 'slums'. The causal idea takes the form of a target, namely to improve the lives of at least ten percent of 'slum' dwellers by 2020. Here, the distance between the modest 'slum' target and the 'slum'-free city norm must be emphasised, particularly in African cities where 70% or more of the population may reside in informal settlements or 'slums' (UN-Habitat, 2003:15).

The role of the UN is "to serve as a forum for discussion and norm creation" (Giovannini, 2008: 259). However, discussion may be limited by the fact that norms have a "prescriptive

quality" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 892). This implies that "by definition, there are no bad norms from the vantage point of those who promote the norm" (*ibid.*). Once accepted or internalised, norms are not to be questioned:

> Internalized norms can be both extremely powerful (because behaviour according to the norm is not questioned) and hard to discern (because actors do not seriously consider or discuss whether to conform). Precisely because they are not [considered] controversial, however, these norms are often not the centrepiece of political debate and for that reason tend to be ignored by political scientists (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 904).

However, norms have a "life cycle", and many norms of the past have lost their hegemonic status (*ibid.*: 829). A "domestic norm" may become an international norm "through the efforts of entrepreneurs of various kinds" (*ibid.*: 893). The Brazilian domestic notion or norm that there should be a 'right to the city' for all (Fernandes, 2007) is a relevant case in point. Fernandes (2007: 208) defines the 'right to the city' as "the right of all city dwellers to fully enjoy urban life with all its services and advantages – the right to habitation – as well as taking direct part in the management of cities – the right to participation". Across many parts of the world, "[t]here are ongoing efforts to concretize a normative regime" for a right to the city that would "enshrine the legal entitlements of all city inhabitants" (Fajemirokun, 2010: 122).

Promoting a new norm is no easy task, as "new norms never enter a normative vacuum but instead emerge in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 897). In the urban sector, there is a widely accepted norm that cities must be economically competitive at the global level (Turok, 2004). This is to be achieved through, among others, provision of world class amenities and the attraction of highly skilled people (*ibid.*). These aims are at odds with a progressive definition of a right to the city which embraces the poor. This contestation is articulated in a growing body of progressive academic literature (e.g. Mitchell, 2003; Harvey, 2004, 2008). It is important to compare, on the one hand, this contestation between the norm that all have a right to the city and the norm that all cities must be globally competitive with, on the other hand, the uncontested adoption (at least by the UN) of the norm that cities should not have 'slums', captured in the slogan '*Cities Without Slums'*.

The global campaigners, norm entrepreneurs and academics promoting a *Right to the City* in the first decade of the new millennium have not taken rigorous issue with the '*Cities Without Slums*' norm. One reason is that the *Right to the City* movement emanates from Latin America where the '*Cities Without Slums*' slogan and norm did not take root in local politics in the way it did in Anglophone Africa and in parts of Asia.

In South African, some communities at the receiving end of internationally legitimised domestic '*Cities Without Slums*' or 'slum' eradication campaigns have sought rights-based support in their contestation (Huchzermeyer, 2011). From this rights-based work, it is clear that a meaningful *Right to the City* cannot be promoted without challenging the norm of '*Cities Without Slums*'. The powerful utility of a perceived '*Cities Without Slums*' MDG obligation for those promoting urban competitiveness, therefore cities for economic elites, which by implication deprive poor households of a foothold in the city, has made it difficult to achieve gains within this contestation (*ibid.*).

The process of generating norms plays a role in "international socialisation", meaning that over time, those countries that break the norms would be induced to follow them, or "more and more states adopt and explicitly support the norm at the international level", resulting in "standard behaviour" across regions (Giovannini, 2008: 258). In relation to MDG Seven Target Eleven, as I show later in this chapter, South Africa has promoted the interpretation of an MDG obligation to achieve 'slum'-free cities. The 2005-2009 Minister of Housing Lindiwe Sisulu articulated this as follows: "in line with our commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals we join the rest of the developing world and reiterate our commitment to progressively eradicate slums in the ten year period ending in 2014" (Sisulu, 2005). In her term of office, legislation was passed to increase state powers in relation to evictions. One may argue that South Africa ought to have been singled out as a norm breaker in its use of the '*Cities Without Slums*' norm to legitimise repressive anti-'slum' measures. However, UN-Habitat has long endorsed South Africa's commitment to 'slum' eradication (Tebbal, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2006). In its 2006/2007 *State of the World's Cities Report*, UN-Habitat (2006: 173, also 43,162) repeatedly praises South Africa as a country that "in particular stands out in its efforts to keep slum growth rates down".

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:901) explain that "[s]ome states are critical to a norm's adoption; others less so", and that the decisions of post apartheid South Africa have been "very influential" for norm adoption in other African countries and even "globally". On urban

and housing policy, South Africa played an important role as initial host in 2005 and thereafter Chair of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD). Through this and similar bodies, but also through UN-Habitat's own communication as I show below, South Africa's interpretation of MDG Seven Target Eleven has become the norm and indeed the standard behaviour across several African countries.

4. MDG Seven Target Eleven on improving the lives of 'slum' dwellers

The MDG Target on improving 'slum' dwellers' lives is unique in several ways. Its target date is five years beyond the standard deadline of 2015 and its aim of addressing only 100 million 'slum' dwellers is modest when compared to the reduction by fifty per cent which most of the other Targets seek to achieve. While all the MDG targets are interdependent, the 'slum' dwellers' target, unlike those that are single issue based, intersects very directly with all the targets under MDGs One to Seven (with the exception of Target Nine, which is measured in terms of policy change rather than implementation). 'Slums' are understood as the urban context of extreme poverty and hunger, denial of access to potable water, exclusion from education, inequality and disempowerment, child mortality, ill health and infectious diseases. Given the prevalence of 'slums', improvements in the lives of the world's 'slum' dwellers can be seen as the ultimate indicator of having achieved these issue-based targets. What happens to 'slums', therefore, should be of fundamental interest to those tasked with achieving any of the issue-based MDG targets.

4.1. The origin of MDG Seven Target Eleven

Most of the MDGs "can be traced to the 1995 World Summit on Social Development" in which NGOs and activists from many countries participated; these goals and targets are therefore approved of by these progressive actors (Nelson, 2007: 2042). Since 1996, a far stronger influence of OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) governments (all of these are 'developed' nations), and the "international financial institutions" came to be associated with the evolution of the MDGs (*ibid.*). This was in particular through the OECD's "Shaping the 21st Century" document and "the World Bank/IMF 2000 paper 'A Better World for All'" (*ibid.*: 2042, 2044).

Fukuda-Parr (2004:398) identifies an advantage in the fact that "international cooperation [between the Bretton Woods institutions and the UN] is gradually being aligned with MDG priorities". With the MDGs, the UN intended to motivate increased 'pro-poor' development

within a 'pro-growth' context (terms used by Lemanski, 2007). But Barrientos and Hulme (in this book) point to the tension within the MDG project between human development and economic growth, the latter having been incorporated as a means into the MDGs, in order to bring on board powerful global decision makers. They also point to the possibility of tensions between political processes at national level and norms set at the global level through initiatives such as the MDGs. As I will show in this chapter, this uneven triangle of tension, in which economic policy dominates over social ideals expressed through the MDGs, has shaped the outcomes of Target Eleven. In relation to 'slums', economic policy and strategies are driven by the global urgency for cities to compete with one another in attracting global investment (Turok, 2004). For this purpose, the removal of 'slums' may be perceived as a necessity (Hasan, 2010).

Since its inception, Target Eleven is linked directly to the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*'. As I will show, the slogan has dominated high level communication about Target Eleven but contradicts the wording of the target in two fundamental ways. Firstly, the target aims to improve the lives of those living in 'slums' which, though improved, will remain a feature of cities. In cities such as Rio de Janeiro where the physical upgrading of informal settlements or *favelas* has been practiced at scale, the upgraded *favelas* remain visually distinct from the fabric of the formally planned city. Secondly, as already mentioned, the target is addressed only at a small percentage of the estimated global 'slum' population. Even if the living environments of ten per cent of the 'slum' population were transformed beyond recognition, cities would still have 'slums'. Critics have taken issue with the modesty of Target eleven, arguing that even if the target were met, the remaining ninety per cent of 'slum' dwellers will continue to endure 'slum' conditions (Leckie, in UN-Habitat, 2006: 38; Pieterse, 2008: 113; Amnesty International, 2010). However, with the vision of '*Cities Without Slums*' confused with the target, these ninety per cent are also threatened by deprivation of their urban foothold, by being 'eradicated' in the South African sense of being displaced instead to less visible forms of housing poverty such as transitional relocation areas on the urban periphery or back into rural villages and barred from returning to the cities through security measures that prevent the of re-emergence of informal settlements (Huchzermeyer, 2011).

Target Eleven, with the '*Cities Without Slums*' slogan, has its origin within the increasing cooperation between the World Bank and UN-Habitat which led to the formation of Cities Alliance in 1999. Target Eleven therefore did not follow the trajectory that other MDGs

followed from 1995, and remained uninformed by activism against evictions, 'slum' demolition and poorly conceived relocation programmes which were largely being carried out in the interest of city beautification motivated by growth in the land market and urban competitiveness. This stands in contrast to a progressive and mobilisation-based emergence (even if later modified and compromised) of the other targets, for instance the struggle for access to generic medication (Ooms, Hammonds and Gonsalves, in this book). In 2000, the UN placed the target of the '*Cities Without Slums*' initiative under 'Development and poverty eradication' (UN, 2000). A year later, in the official listing of the MDG targets, the 'slum' dweller target was placed not under development and poverty eradication, but under 'Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability' (Nelson, 2007: 2043). This is a substantial difference in emphasis, linking the environment rather than poverty or people to the '*Cities Without Slums*' campaign. Given that informal settlements almost by definition are dictated to occupy environmentally sensitive areas, spaces leapfrogged by formal development due to their unsuitability, many calls for informal settlement improvement pit, if not investors, then conservative environmental lobbyists and consultants against those representing the rights of the urban poor.

The transition from the initial Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the actual formulation of the list of MDG targets one year later can be understood, as Giovannini (2008:25) suggests as "a disappointing departure from how they were conceived and framed in the 2000 Millennium Report". As the UN experiences pressure from its member states to translate its initiatives that may have a "radical ethical mandate ... into achievable and measureable goals in order to satisfy member states' eagerness for practical results", this departure may be due to "a political compromise among member states" (*ibid.*: 255).

Member states' strategic thinking may take a separate course from that of their global agencies. At a minimum, there is a time lag for strategic shifts in global agencies to be represented in country strategies and action. In 1999, when the World Bank coined the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*' for the Cities Alliance, it was also drafting the urban strategy it launched in 2000, *Cities in Transition: World Bank Urban and Local Government Strategy* (World Bank, 2000). This rested on four pillars, competitiveness, bankability, good governance and liveability (*ibid.*). The Cities Alliance was tasked with a twin agenda of promoting 'slum' upgrading as well as city development strategies, which sought a greater focus on poverty than the World Bank's policy at the times (Pieterse, 2008:71). However,

this did not counter pressures for urban competitiveness. In South Africa, the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup helped motivate state expenditure towards an urban competitiveness drive, exemplified by generous funding for highways, world class stadium precincts and a speed train, throughout the first decade of the new century (Haferburg, 2011).

By 2010, and in the face of criticism of its urban economic policy, the World Bank had adjusted its urban policy through a new strategy – *Systems of Cities: Harnessing Urbanization for Growth and Poverty Alleviation* (World Bank, 2010). In a more nuanced set of five business lines, 'slum upgrading and urban poverty'; 'land markets, housing and growth'; and 'environment, disaster mitigation and climate change' feature prominently alongside 'governance, management and finance' and 'economic growth'. The finance and economic approaches in *Systems of Cities* are informed by lessons from the 2008 global economic crisis. MDG Seven Target 11, with its powerful slogan '*Cities Without Slums*' had been coined at the height of enthusiasm for unchecked urban competitiveness and economic globalisation for the developing world. Whereas the World Bank subsequently moderated this aspect of its urban policy, UN-Habitat, as I show below, increasingly communicated Target 11 as the 'Cities Without Slums MDG'.

4.2. Economic stakes in Target Eleven

Cities Alliance has a strong link with the World Bank. Its secretariat operates from the World Bank in Washington, and until recently, the World Bank's "Vice President (Private Sector Development and Infrastructure)" co-chaired Cities Alliance alongside "the Executive Director of UN-Habitat" (Mukhija, 2006: 57). The close relationship between Cities Alliance and the Private Sector Development and Infrastructure arm of the World Bank explains in part why Cities Alliance emphasises a prominent role for the private sector and public-private partnerships in all 'slum' upgrading initiatives (Jones, 2009). This emphasis is incorporated into the World Bank's 2010 *Systems of Cities* strategy (World Bank, 2010).

As in the debates over universal access to medication, the question arises as to whether the means to achieving MDG Seven Target 11 should be market-based or not-for-profit. However, there are other stakes in the 'slum' question than the question as to whether the lives of 'slum' dwellers are improved through private sector or not-for-profit initiatives. The uneven contest is often over investment opportunities in the city that have little to do with the profit to be made out of commitments to improve some 'slum' dwellers' lives. Market-driven evictions have become a major concern since the launch of the MDGs (Durand-Lasserve,

2006). From the Asia Pacific region, Hasan (2010: 293) observes that 'World class cities' shun the upgrading of informal settlements, preferring to relocate older informal settlements to the urban periphery. In Hasan's analysis this is an economic displacement, as urban policy-makers argue that centrally located urban land occupied by low-rise informal settlements, even if upgraded, contributes little to the urban economy when compared to high-rise developments of the private sector. Even in the west, 'gentrification' or market displacement is a 'powerful, if often camouflaged, intent within urban regeneration strategies' (Smith, 2002: 446). 'Slums' are located in the urban land market, sometimes occupying or visibly affecting the most coveted spaces for global capital investment (Douglass, 2002). Leading urban analyst Ananya Roy (2004:308) suggests that concern for urban informality needs to be about "territorial exclusions, about the lack of space, about the spatial ties of livelihood that bind squatters to the most competitive terrains of the city". One may argue that within the MDG initiative around 2000, with the particular global urban strategy emphasis on urban competitiveness, a critical compromise between social and economic policy was struck on Target Eleven. No other MDG target sits so directly at the intersection of high economic stakes and extreme vulnerability.

4.3. Measurement and official miscommunication of Target Eleven

While the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*' is not incorporated into the 2001 wording of Target Eleven, the slogan remains officially attached to the target. In its detailed document *The Challenge of Slums*, UN-Habitat, the UN programme responsible for supporting governments towards achieving Target Eleven, explains that the slogan was intended as a long term vision to accompany the rather modest 20-year target (UN-Habitat, 2003). The report, alongside others, contains detailed discussions on how to improve the lives of 'slum' dwellers. In an Expert Working Group Meeting in 2008, UN-Habitat's Deputy Executive Director Inga Bjork-Klevby (2008) admitted that 'the number one readership of UN-Habitat's publications is academics and students', and not the intended target group of relevant ministries and departments in developing countries. Despite its carefully researched reviews and guidelines, UN-Habitat's executive level incorrectly communicated Target Eleven to country governments. Statements from the Executive Director, on its website as well as in its press releases fudged the distinction between operational target and a long term vision. UN-Habitat officially states that "'Cities Without Slums' is one of the Targets of Goal 7" (UN-Habitat, 2002) and refers to the "the "Cities Without Slums' target, also known as Target 11" (UN-Habitat, undated) or the "Millennium Declaration Goal 7 Target Eleven of 'Cities Without

Slums'" (Tibaijuka, 2005: 111; UN-Habitat/WUF3, 2010); and Without criticism or caution, UN-Habitat (2006: 163) reports that Morocco "set the goal of becoming a slum-free country by 2010".

Saith has noted that "MDG targets, like all others, invite manipulation, misuse and misinterpretation of statistics; and ... more than others, they can potentially lead to distortions in the development policy agenda" (Saith, 2006: 1176, 1179). With official miscommunication about targets, measurement and reporting on progress towards the achievement of targets is compromised. The monitoring of progress towards Target Eleven does not take into account those whose lives did not improve, or instead even deteriorated, be this the result of economic policy or direct state interventions such as 'slum' demolition, forced relocation and displacement, often in favour of urban competitiveness or corporate interests.

From a demographic point of view, Philippe Bocquier (2008: v) cautions that "[m]aking life better by 2020 for at least 100 million slum dwellers might prove much more difficult than expected. ... [T]he world might actually end up more unequal twenty years down the road". Yet ten years after the inception of the Millennium Development Project, UN-Habitat communicates optimistism about progress towards Target 11. In a high level press release it applauds governments for helping large numbers of households 'escape slums', or 'move out of slum conditions' (UN-Habitat, 2010b). While referring briefly to 'slum upgrading', the choice of language departs from that of 'improving the lives of 'slum' dwellers' to one which implies that such improvement requires a removal of households out of the 'slum'. What might have been termed the 'slum improvement target' is referred to in UN-Habitat's (2010b: 2) press release on the 2010 World Urban Forum in Brazil as the "global slum reduction target" (UN-Habitat, 2010b: 2). In the same press release, 'slum reduction' statistics are presented for the African continent. Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia are singled out as success stories. Little is said about the means applied nor about remainder of the continent. South Africa's Deputy Minister of Housing, in her report on the 2010 World Urban Forum in Brazil, refers to the global "progress made in moving people out of slums" (Kota-Fredericks, 2010: 11).

5. Case studies of 'slum' eradication in the new millennium

Urban competitiveness is never an end state that any city will reach (as might be measured by a target), but an ongoing state of uncertainty. Cities across sub-Saharan Africa, as in other regions, compete for foreign direct investment with the few overly sanitised, iconic and repressive but competitive 'world class' cities. While informal settlements, or more crudely put, 'slums', may be the dominant reality in most African cities, in this millennium the direction that urban development has taken across the continent was inspired and legitimised by practice that excludes and suppresses informal settlements and by implication represses (or at best wishes away) the population that depends on informal settlements for their urban life. In a city that aspires beauty and competitiveness, *in situ* upgrading of informal settlements (rather than complete demolition and redevelopment) remains a hard-won exception (Huchzermeyer, 2011).

5.1 South African 'slum' eradication under Target Eleven

In South Africa, the slogan '*Cities Without Slums*' rather than the modest target to improve the lives of a tenth of the 'slum' population inspired and legitimised a particular focus on doing away with informal settlements. From the beginning of the new millennium, the South African government communicated an MDG 'obligation' to achieve 'slum'- or 'shack'-free cities by 2014 (Huchzermeyer, 2004). The ruling African National Congress (ANC) chose this date due to the ANC's internal targets for the end of its second decade at the leadership of the country. In 2004, it publicised its 'Vision 2014', coined along with a People's Contract to Create Work and Fight Poverty (Mbeki, 2004). Having previously applied the term 'eradication' to poverty and the housing backlog, once Cities Alliance and the UN promoted the '*Cities Without Slums*' slogan, the ANC created a new political focus on 'informal settlement eradication', 'slum eradication' or ' slum elimination'.

Housing Minister Linidwe Sisulu sharpened the 'slum' eradication discourse under the MDGs:

> As government, we have articulated our concerns over informal settlements. These are growing at an alarming rate and this government has indicated its intention to moving towards a shack-free society. The difference now is that we are not dealing with intent, we will now be operational. There will be visible results within the timeframes we set ourselves (Sisulu, 2004, no page numbers).

In the same address, the Minister referred to "our war against shacks", and congratulated her provincial counterpart for setting the shack-free target at 2014 (*ibid.*). A year later, Minister Sisulu indicated that the State had adopted the year 2014 as a national target for informal settlement eradication, associating this directly with the MDGs (Sisulu, 2005, no page numbers).

Provincial governments and city mayors competed with ever bolder and less realistic undertakings by when such eradication or elimination was to be achieved. KwaZulu-Natal Department of Housing set its eradication target date at 2010, though shifting it to 2011 a year later (Pithouse, 2009: 10). In 2005, the MEC (Member of Executive Committee or Minister) for Housing of Gauteng Province committed to achieving shack-free cities by 2010, in time for the FIFA World Cup (SAFM, 2005) and City of Johannesburg vowed "to eradicate informal settlements by 2008" (City of Johannesburg, 2005). While cities and provinces undertook to outperform one another, 2014 remained the official national target. In a naive if not dangerous endorsement, UN-Habitat praised South Africa (alongside the Philippines) for having officially stated its commitment to the 'slum' target (Tebbal, 2005) While UN-Habitat unwittingly served to legitimise South Africa's 'slum' eradication drive, the government's dismissal of criticism from local activists was also indicative of an increasing "conservatizing" of the "ANC in power" and its trend of "centralization and control in policy making" (Prevost, 2006: 127). A focus on simplistic targets, rather than addressing complex causes of city-ward migration, impoverishment and informal settlement formation, sat well with this new trend.

During Minister Sisulu's tenure, government proposed and partly adopted repressive legislation motivated by the urgency of the informal settlement eradication target. The Minister supported the adoption (as example for replication in other provinces) of the KwaZulu-Natal Elimination and Prevention of Re-emergence of Slums Act of 2007 (or KZN Slums Act – KZN Legislature, 2007). The Act contains repressive measures directed at suppressing the symptom rather than addressing the causes of informal settlements (Huchzermeyer, 2010). These include increasing powers for eviction, tightening the criminalisation of land invasion and mandating security measures in the prevention of new informal settlement formation, all used during apartheid but repealed from legislation in the first decade of democracy in South Africa (*ibid.*). After its enactment in 2007, a protracted localised struggle through the courts led to a Constitutional Court dismissal of the central

section (16) of the Act relating to State powers for mandating evictions. Section 26(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 reads that "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of [the right to access to adequate housing]". In his judgement in the Constitutional Court, Justice Moseneke found that Section 16 of the KZN Slums Act

> may be rendered consistent with section 26(2) of the Constitution and the applicable national legislation only by distorting its meaning or by reading into it numerous qualifications which cannot be readily inferred from the text under consideration. While the goal of the Slums Act may be a salutary one aimed at eliminating and preventing slums and at providing adequate and affordable housing, I cannot find that Section 16 is capable of an interpretation that promotes these objectives ... There is indeed a dignified framework that has been developed for the eviction of unlawful occupiers and I cannot find that section 16 is capable of an interpretation that does not violate this framework. (Moseneke, 2009, s.121, 122)

The 'dignified framework' for eviction is set out in the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land (PIE) Act No. 18 of 1998, which repealed the notorious Prevention of Illegal Squatting (PISA) Act No. 51 of 1951. PIE, in the first instance, focuses on fairness in eviction procedures, the opposite of the emphasis in PISA.

Justice Moseneke's ruling in the Constitutional Court was despite successful attempts by the Provincial Minister to convince the High Court that the KZN Slums Act "had nothing to do with 'forced evictions' and was a measure to address the UN Millennium Development Goals and constitutional goals" (*ibid.*: s49). The Provincial Minister also pointed to "international" alongside "national and provincial legislative and policy obligations which refer to these concepts ... of 'slums' and 'elimination'", as evidence that these "descriptions" are not "disrespectful in any way" (Mabuyakhulu, 2008: s56).

Minister Sisulu also supported the repeatedly proposed amendment to the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land (PIE) Act. These two Amendment Bills (Republic of South Africa, 2006, 2008) sought to tighten the criminalisation of land invasion, thereby resorting to a provision under the 1951 Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act (PISA) used to free the apartheid city from 'squatters'. Both PIE Amendment Bills also sought to introduce a new justification for granting an 'urgent' eviction order, namely if the

court "is satisfied that ... it is just and equitable to grant the order taking into consideration the speed and scale of the unlawful occupation" (Republic of South Africa, 2006/2008: s5(1)bA). This was particularly problematic as it coincided with the city beautification that accompanied the preparations for hosting the FIFA World Cup. It also overrode the newly adopted and legally entrenched policy for informal settlement upgrading, which remained unimplemented throughout Sisulu's tenure. Instead, a single flagship project, the 'N2 Gateway' which was initially intended to pilot informal settlement upgrading, was turned into 'slum' clearance and redevelopment. In the Minister's words: "We need society to buy into the idea behind the N2 Project Gateway – replacing informal settlements with formal housing structures" (Sisulu, interviewed in Mail and Guardian, 2005: 31). Taking their cue from the Ministry, journalists referred to the N2 Gateway as :government's pilot initiative to eradicate shacks" (Merten, 2005) and "an ambitious blueprint for nationwide slum eradication by 2014" (Thamm, 2006).

Gauteng Provincial Government's (2009) *Gauteng Urban Management for Elimination of Slums and Informal Settlements Policy* makes a very clear link between informal settlement eradication and urban competiveness. It states that "Informal Settlement Eradication is an important aspect of the Global City Region" (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2009: 20). The Gauteng MEC for Local Government, mirroring official government documents on this topic, explains that as a "vital national priority", the Gauteng Global City Region is a "drive to develop [the Province] as a globally competitive city region" (Mahlangu, 2007, no page numbers).

In an unexpected turn of events, in 2010, President Zuma announced a new target, namely to upgrade 400 000 (initially 600 000) units in informal settlements. However, for current Housing Minister Minister Tokyo Sexwale, the recent concession to upgrade a select list of settlements *in situ* goes hand in hand with a continued intention to repressively tighten land invasion control (Steenkamp, 2010). Improving lives or securing a place in the aspirant competitive city for a group of select urban poor comes at the price of closing the city to others, a serious concern to rights-based groups. And while preparations for meeting the new 'slum' upgrading target were underway in July 2010, City of Johannesburg's Development Planning and Urban Management Directorate still reported to the Mayoral Committee on its progress towards "eradicating informal settlements by 2014, in line with the national goal of a 'nation free of slums'" (City of Johannesburg, 2010: 39.1).

5.2 Target driven 'slum' eradication in Kenya

Kenya's 'slum' eradication campaign began later than that of South Africa, but aligns with the date for the misinterpreted Target Eleven, namely 2020. The Kenyan Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) emerged in 2000 out of a partnership between UN-Habitat (whose headquarters are based in Nairobi) and the Kenyan government. Under President Kibaki in 2003, the new Kenyan government renewed this agreement, and the official launch of its high profile pilot project in the Soweto section of Naiorbi's iconic 'slum' Kibera followed on World Habitat Day in October 2004. Whereas UN-Habitat initially supported and encouraged the Kenyan government's approach of 'slum' demolition and replacement with multi-storey blocks of flats, in 2006 UN-Habitat restructured its involvement and chose to focus on water and sanitation improvements which it saw to have more immediate effects on 'slum' dwellers' lives (UN-Habitat, 2008). With this unthreatening parallel initiative to the Kenyan 'slum' redevelopment approach, KENSUP gradually changed into a 'slum' eradication programme. Permanent Secretary of Housing Tirop Kosgey, perhaps tenuously, implied UN-Habitat's continued support for this approach: "The government is determined to eradicate slums in all parts of the country by partnering with organisations such as UN Habitat and constructing modern houses to replace the informal settlements" (Mwaniki, 2009).

In August 2008, the Kenyan Minister of Housing Soita Shitanda proclaimed that "Kenya was capable of upgrading its slums like Singapore, Malaysia, Egypt and the Asian tigers did" (Ogosia, 2008), implying complete 'slum' redevelopment and not *in situ* improvements. In an ever clearer parallel to South Africa's MDG-inspired, target-driven 'slum' eradication campaign, the media reported that "[t]he government plans to remove all shanties in 10 years" (Kiplagat, 2009). Further, the housing minister confirmed that the project to transfer Soweto residents to "modern houses" was "the first in a series of planned slum upgrading activities, which seek to do away with shanties in 10 years" (Koross, 2009).

In 2008, the Kenyan government conceded to pressures for improving urban competitiveness. It launched the *Nairobi Metro 2030: A World Class African Metropolis* (Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, 2008). The vision speaks to the needs of investors and visitors, and seeks to position Kenya's capital within a competitive city region: "a world class business setting, recognised nationally, regionally and globally" (*ibid.*: v). The first listed 'policy intervention' under 'enhancing quality of life and inclusiveness' reads as follows: "Housing and Elimination of Slums Programme: will include a comprehensive urban

regeneration & renewal plan, fast tracking and up scaling the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) ... and to obviate growth and proliferation of slums" (*ibid.*: 71). The Vision document further underlines a "focus on achieving the vision of a metropolitan [sic] without slums" (*ibid.*: 74).

Nairobi Metro 2030, mentions only two African countries as holding "global best practices" in terms of "world class cities" (Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, 2008). These are Nigeria and South Africa. Sani Tahir (2010: 1) argues that "due to Nigeria's leadership position on the continent", Abuja "is the window through which African countries are viewed". In 2005, Nigerian Federal Capital Territory Minister el-Ruffa'i (2005) vowed to "make Abuja a world class-city", emphasising the Nigerian President's "priority areas" which included "[s]trict enforcement of the Abuja Master Plan" and "[c]ontrol growth and eventual elimination of squatter settlements" (el-Rufa'i, 2005: 6-10). By 2007, housing rights groups estimated that evictions in Abuja had left more than 800 000 people homeless (COHRE and SERAC, 2008). Subsequent evictions in Port Harcourt led NGOs to warn that "'Cities without Slums' projects introduced by the United Nations have been misunderstood by the various [Nigerian] states to mean 'Complete annihilation of the poor community members'" (WEP and FEDUP, 2009: 1).

6. Conclusion

The South African and Kenyan case show how comfortably strategies for urban or city region competitiveness use the vision of 'slum' free cities, as well as the word 'slum', in programmes intended to remove, demolish and redevelop urban living space of vulnerable households. The informal settlement redevelopment paradigm that is openly implied in these visions is distant from informal settlement upgrading or the notion of improving 'slum' dwellers' lives. In South Africa, it has been up to local rights-based groups to expose the perverse logic of '*Cities Without Slums*' within the MDG project. In South Africa, demands for a right to the city, the defence of informal settlements from below and calls for *in situ* upgrading are gradually reducing the dominance of the norm that cities should not have 'slums'. However, in countries such as Kenya, the target of achieving '*Cities Without Slums*' is still gaining political foothold. This calls for an urgent review at the highest level, a programme of corrective action from the UN, as well as support for rights-based groups confronting the anti-'slum' agenda on the ground.

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate that Target Eleven is in some ways out of character with the other MDG targets. Through its overt and official confusion as a target to achieve 'slum'-free cities, it plays excessively to the interests of the urban economy and the global competitiveness of cities. Within city strategies which focus on urban competitiveness, this focus on the economy is not merely a means towards achieving the MDGs but an end in itself. In turn, it undermines the actual improvement of 'slum' dwellers' lives very directly through reduction of rights (as in the South African legislative changes), demolition of urban living spaces, active displacement of the poor from cities, and budgetary commitments that bear no relation to the scale and reality of the urban deprivation. From this perspective, a far more careful usage of terminology, particularly in high level communication, and a more careful separation of norms from targets is called for. The civil society debate and input that the other MDGs benefitted from as of 1995 is still required for Target Eleven. It is here that a contestation between the *right to the city* and the urban competiveness agenda needs to inform the treatment of informal settlements in the decades to come.

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