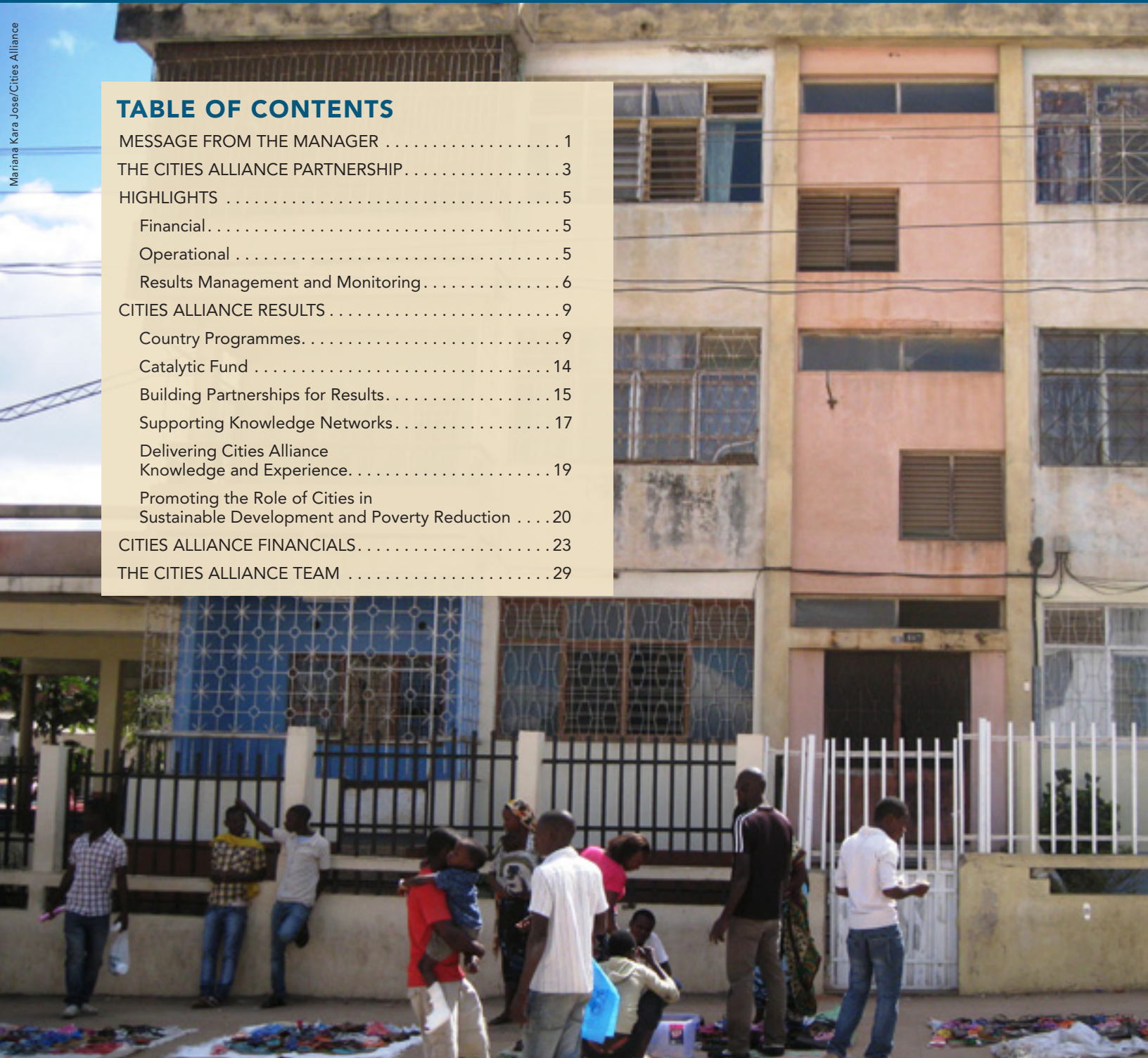


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Street vendors in Nampula, Mozambique.



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

This Annual Report covers a particularly important year in the life of the Cities Alliance—one characterised by solid, substantive progress and the consolidation of the new business model, which has enabled the partnership to become increasingly focused, strategic, and effective.

The five Country Programmes are each at a different stage, but all are showing the kind of progress and promise we envisaged when first developing the model. Building upon well-known (and generally ignored) lessons of development, these are some of the key elements on which our Country Programmes have focused: local leadership, a long-term and consistent commitment, partnerships amongst members and partners alike, local capacity, simultaneous action across different tiers of government, the meaningful involvement of communities, the role of the private sectors, and linkages to investment.

Above all else, the Country Programmes are consistently demonstrating their value as platforms or frameworks for incorporating additional levels of activities organised around a common strategic objective, which can be summarised as the goal of sustainable urbanisation, and cities. There is no magic and no silver bullet of the type that is avidly sought by so much developmental practice.

Other elements of the new business model are also showing their value, as in the case of the Catalytic Fund, which attracted a great deal of interest in its call for proposals addressing “Youth and the City.”

The Cities Alliance is now paying far more attention to other essential components of the partnership’s strengths: Knowledge generation and the better documentation and dissemination of lessons from its extensive and varied portfolio. And, long overdue and therefore all the more welcome, 2012 saw extensive progress in the development of a Results-Based Framework for the Secretariat and the partnership, and which is now being applied to the Country Programmes with great effect.

Possibly the greatest benefit that has emerged from our new Charter and Business Model is the redefined role of the Secretariat, which now has much greater clarity in its role in facilitating the work of the organisation and in forging the partnerships necessary to achieve our agreed goals. This is evident not only in the extremely intensive work involved in establishing the Country Programmes (which have also been valuable in strengthening our operational relationship with the World Bank), but also in the development of the Joint Work Programme for the Middle East and North Africa, in partnership with the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), and our Joint Work Programme in South Asia, as well as country-level partnerships in Brazil, the Philippines, and South Africa. Joint Work Programmes with UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and its affiliates are already having important results.

Better servicing the entire Cities Alliance membership is already producing positive results and will become increasingly evident in the year ahead, not least because of the unanimous decision of the Consultative Group that the Secretariat should relocate to Brussels in 2013 and begin the next phase of this unique and vibrant partnership.

William Cobbett, Manager