

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 2013 Annual Report covers a period of 18 months, during the course of which the Cities Alliance Secretariat relocated its offices from Washington, DC to Brussels, and changed Trustee from the World Bank to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). This decision arose from a number of factors, including the adoption of a new business model for the Cities Alliance and to move closer to its core donors and partners, as well as expand and diversify its membership.

Initiated at the EXCO meeting in Kampala in June 2012, the organisation undertook an honest and dynamic consultation process that resulted in the Consultative Group unanimously deciding at its 2012 meeting in Hanoi that the best interests of the Cities Alliance would be served by moving to a new geographical location, and a new institutional platform.

Such a significant decision was testament not only to the confidence of the organisation,

but also to the supportive response of the World Bank. All Cities Alliance members acknowledge the instrumental role of the World Bank in joining UN-Habitat to launch the Cities Alliance 1999, and then providing the institutional home to the Secretariat for the next 14 years. Quite simply, the Cities Alliance would not have prospered and flourished at it did without the consistent financial, organisational and substantive support of the World Bank.

In presenting this, the last Annual Report covering our time in Washington DC, we would like to acknowledge and thank the management of the World Bank and, just as critically, salute the hundreds of Bank staff with whom we interacted over the years, both in Washington and in the country offices all over the world. We look forward to continuing our close association from our new base in Brussels.

It is also important to recognise the sacrifices of the Secretariat during this critical

period—both those staff who chose to make the move to Brussels, and those that were unable to make the move, for a variety of reasons. At all times, staff demonstrated the highest levels of professionalism, and balanced personal and organisational interests in arriving at the individual decisions. The organisation owes them all its very sincere gratitude.

The next Annual Report will cover the first year of Cities Alliance operations from Brussels, with the Secretariat operating as UNOPS staff. However, at the time of preparing this introduction, it is possible to record the very encouraging progress that has already been made—the Secretariat has not only quickly stabilised, but has already begun the process of implementing the new business model.

From its new base in Europe, the Cities Alliance is well placed to work with its members in making a decisive contribution to the adoption of a global agenda focused on the role of cities in sustainable development.

William Cobbett  
Director, the Cities Alliance



Residents of at-risk waterfront communities in Port Harcourt, Nigeria march to draw attention to the rights of slum dwellers. Photo: People Live Here campaign