INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND COVID RISKS/RESPONSES

- RISKS

  - Social distancing is difficult: overcrowded living conditions (both within slums and within households);

  - limited access to basic services particularly water, sanitation and health services; (and reliance on shared services)

  - reliance on crowded, often informal, transport services;

  - lack of tenure security; poor quality of housing;

  - social safety nets that often do not reach the urban poor; and

  - specific aspects of working in the informal sector (often in crowded places and without social protection to fall back on) that put families at extreme physical and financial risk.

- RESPONSES

- Local government and community level actions have mitigated contagion in many places

  - Mandating quarantines, curfews

  - Public awareness campaigns

  - Assistance: vouchers, food, cash

  - Moratorium on rent, utility bills

  - Handwashing stations

  - Mask distribution

https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/coronavirus

DENSITY NEEDS TO BE QUALIFIED

- Density can be good for cities; provision of services more efficient, delivery costs are lower, and carbon emissions can be lower from shorter trips and lower energy consumption.

- Concepts of "Good versus bad density". Good density comes with proper urban planning and management, urban design that ensures density is well located, coordinated and well designed.

- Bad density results from the absence of urban planning and management and results in traffic congestion, shortages of affordable housing and growing informal settlements.
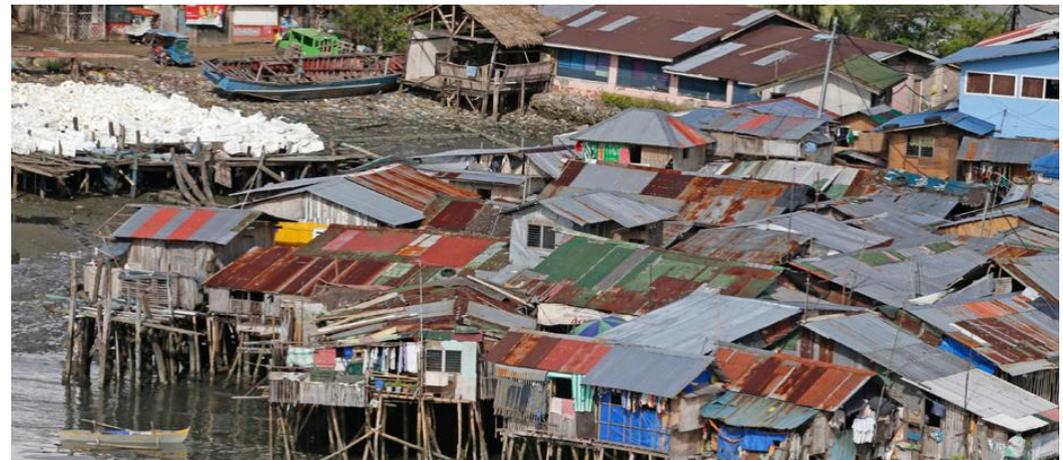
WHAT CAN POLICY MAKERS DO GOING FORWARD?

- Invest in urban upgrading programs

- Many good examples, outcomes can have positive impacts on living conditions, risk reduction, improved health outcomes, better opportunities for livelihoods/home based work

- A few lessons:

  - Link to local government and city planning and infrastructure

  - Adopt functional and flexible standards for infrastructure upgrading to maximize coverage and allow site-specific solutions

  - Project ownership by communities is key

  - Use in-situ upgrading when possible, minimize resettlement

  - Tenure regularization can be achieved over time