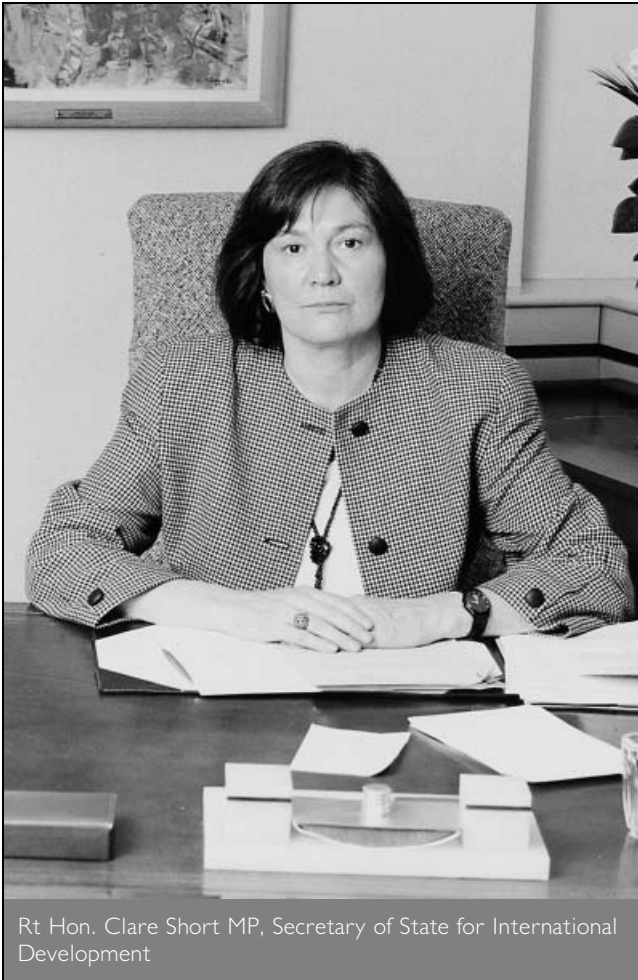




## Foreword

Clare Short



Rt Hon. Clare Short MP, Secretary of State for International Development

The greatest challenge in building a just and sustainable world is the systematic elimination of extreme poverty. One in five of the world's population—two-thirds of them women—live in abject poverty, without adequate food, clean water, sanitation, healthcare or education.

While substantial progress has been made in recent decades, the challenge remains. In the next 25 years around 2 billion people will be added to the world's population—97% of them in developing countries. While rural populations in developing countries are projected to remain at around the 3 billion mark, urban populations are forecast to grow from 2 billion now to about 4 billion by 2025, or from about 40% to about 57% of their total population. Without effective and coordinated

international action, increasing numbers of poor people will find themselves living in appalling squalor, in urban slums.

My department, the Department for International Development (DFID), works with a wide range of international, national and local partners. Together, our objective is the achievement of internationally agreed development targets, which are aimed at reducing the proportion of people living in poverty by 50% by 2015. This means a billion people making the journey out of poverty between 1990 and 2015 and this is, we believe, an achievable objective. The department has recently published a set of strategy papers outlining how the international community can work together in achieving these international targets and setting out the UK Government's own priorities. I commend these papers to you. They are all available on the DFID website [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

The strategy paper entitled *Meeting the Challenge of Poverty in Urban Areas* sets out our analysis of how best we can work to eliminate urban poverty in developing countries. We must empower poor people so that they can participate and benefit from the development process. Legislation and policy must recognise the resources and ingenuity of the poor. We must strengthen the capacity of local and national factors to manage, maintain and deliver basic infrastructure and services. Only in this way can urban poverty be systematically reduced and cities and towns contribute effectively towards sustainable development and poverty reduction more generally.

This edition of *Municipal Engineer*, with its focus on international development, is most welcome. It looks at municipal engineering in an international context with particular emphasis on developing countries. The articles demonstrate the diverse innovation and particular contribution that engineering and planning is making in improving the quality of life for the urban poor and inform our understanding on how to deliver services to maximise benefits for the poor. Clearly, the skills of engineers and planners remain as indispensable now as they were during the fight against poverty in this country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Then it was the municipal engineers who fought to improve water and sanitation and the collection of solid waste which led to a massive improvement in life for the poor in our cities. We now need them to deploy their skills and knowledge to help bring about a similar advance in developing countries.