

## Part 1

**Jeff:** Hi, and welcome once again to *The World Today*. Olivia Peters is with us to talk about some big changes that are happening in the world right now. Good morning, Olivia. Please bring us up to date.

**Olivia:** Certainly, Jeff. We're living at the time of the biggest human migration that the world has ever seen. Right now, as we speak, hundreds of thousands of people all over the world are on the road, leaving poor rural areas for the city, searching for jobs and a better life. In fact, every year, 77 million people move to cities.

**Jeff:** How long has this been going on?

**Olivia:** Well, cities have always been getting bigger. In 1800, most people lived on farms or in small villages, while only 3% of people in the world lived in cities. Now, for the first time in history, more than half of the people in the world, that's 54%, are living in cities. And that's nothing compared to what will happen in the future. By 2050, 66% – over two thirds – of the world's population will be urban.

## Part 2

**Olivia:** This huge migration is leading to a new type of city that's never been seen before – giant cities called megacities. A megacity is a city that has grown and grown until it has more than ten million people – just imagine a city with the entire population of a European country like Greece or Austria. This is happening mostly in Asia and Africa.

**Jeff:** And do the migrants actually find a better life?

**Olivia:** Many do, but most migrants end up in huge, overcrowded slums. Mumbai, in India, is a typical example, where almost half the people in the city live in temporary homes without basic facilities like electricity or running water. Cities just can't deal with such large numbers of people coming to live in them.

**Jeff:** That's terrible.

**Olivia:** Another problem is transport. Take Jakarta, in Indonesia – a city whose population has nearly doubled since the 1990s, and now it's been named the city with the worst traffic in the world. School starts in Jakarta at 6.30 am – any later, and it would be impossible for students to get there on time!

**Jeff:** I wouldn't want to live there!

**Olivia:** And what's more, pollution is very bad in many megacities as well! This is really unhealthy.

**Jeff:** Olivia, you've told us about the problems. So **must** megacities be bad to live in?

**Olivia:** Absolutely not! These problems can be solved. Cities and governments have to build low-cost housing for the people that are coming in. They have to improve transport systems and pass stricter laws on the environment. Cities all over the world should cooperate on this.

**Jeff:** All that'll cost a lot of money, won't it?

**Olivia:** True, but things will only get worse if we don't take action now. It's tough, but it can be done! Jeff, if they plan things correctly, megacities can be wonderful places. They can be economic and cultural centres where people are productive, creative and happy.

**Jeff:** Well, I hope that dream comes true. Thanks, Olivia.

**Olivia:** Thanks, Jeff. Whatever happens, megacities are the future of our planet, and there's no way to change that.