



World Urban Forum Bulletin

A Daily Report of the Third Session of the World Urban Forum

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THIRD WORLD URBAN FORUM: 19-23 JUNE 2006

The third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) opens today in Vancouver, Canada, and will continue until Friday, 23 June 2006. Held every two years, the Forum examines rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies.

WUF3 is jointly organized by the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the Government of Canada.

This five-day event is expected to bring together some 15,000 participants from over 150 countries, representing governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, urban professionals, local authorities and academia.

Convening under the overarching theme “Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action,” WUF3 has organized its work into three sub-themes: urban growth and the environment; partnership and finance; and social inclusion and cohesion. Participants will meet in plenary, dialogue and special sessions, as well as 13 roundtables, including the Ministers’ roundtable. Some 160 networking events are also scheduled to take place during the Forum.

WUF3 marks the 30th anniversary of the first UN Conference on Human Settlements, which was also held in Vancouver and led to the creation of UN-HABITAT.

While the WUF does not follow formal rules of procedure that usually govern official UN meetings, its reports and recommendations will be submitted by the Executive Director to the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT for consideration and appropriate action.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ISSUES

As a result of the first UN Conference on Human Settlements, which took place in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May-11 June 1976, the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements officially established the UN Centre for Human Settlements as the major UN agency mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities, with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. It is projected that in the next fifty years, two-thirds of the world’s population will be living in towns and cities.

Designated by the UN General Assembly as an advisory body, the World Urban Forum (WUF) is an open-ended think tank designed to encourage debate and discussion about the challenges of urbanization. In its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the UN General Assembly decided that the WUF would be a “non-legislative technical forum in which experts can exchange views in the years when the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme does not meet.” The General Assembly also decided, in the

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same resolution, to transform the UN Centre for Human Settlements into the UN Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT.

HABITAT II: The second Habitat Conference convened from 3-14 June 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, adopted by 171 governments during the Conference, outlined over 100 commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements, emphasizing the themes of partnership and local action. The Habitat Agenda set the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of human settlements. After much debate, the Conference also reaffirmed the commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

ISTANBUL+5: The 25th Special Session of the UN General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat II outcomes took place from 6-8 June 2001 at UN headquarters in New York. At the special session, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, which consists of: a political declaration reaffirming the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda; a review and assessment of implementation of the Habitat Agenda; and proposals for further actions for achieving the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable development of human settlements.

WUF1: The First World Urban Forum was held from 29 April-3 May 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya. The overall theme was sustainable urbanization. Discussions also focused on: the effect of HIV/AIDS on human settlements; violence against women; basic services and infrastructure, including provision of water and sanitation; and the need for secure tenure.

WSSD: The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August-4 September 2002, calls for achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. It also urges action at all levels to: improve access to land and property, adequate shelter and basic services for the urban and rural poor; increase decent employment, credit and income; remove unnecessary regulation

and other obstacles for microenterprises and the informal sector; and support slum upgrading programmes within the framework of urban development plans.

19TH SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING

COUNCIL: Convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5-9 May 2003,

this session focused on urban development and sheltering strategies favoring the poor, and the rural dimension of sustainable urban development. The session reviewed activities of UN-HABITAT, and adopted its work programme and budget for the 2004-2005 biennium, its medium-term plan for 2006-2009, and 18 resolutions covering topics including



UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka

women's role and rights in human settlements development and slum upgrading, water and sanitation, and decentralization and strengthening of local authorities.

WUF2: The Second World Urban Forum took place in Barcelona, Spain, from 13-17 September 2004. Participants discussed progress in achieving Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on environmental sustainability, including Target 10 on water and sanitation, and Target 11 on slums. Participants also addressed gender equality, urban culture, poverty, safety, disaster preparedness and reconstruction.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE SECOND WORLD URBAN FORUM

AMCHUD-1: The First African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) took place in Durban, South Africa, from 31 January-4 February 2005. The ministers adopted a Declaration on the establishment of the AMCHUD as the consultative mechanism on the promotion of sustainable development of human settlements in Africa. They also adopted an Enhanced Framework of Implementation and Related Outputs for more effective African urban development

policies and strategies, with a special focus on poverty as a crosscutting issue applying to water, sanitation and human settlements.

20TH SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING COUNCIL: Attended by nearly 1000 participants, the session took place from 4-8 April 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. The session reviewed activities of UN-HABITAT and adopted its work programme and budget for 2006-2007. Twenty-two resolutions were adopted, including on: post-conflict, natural and human-made disasters assessment and reconstruction; establishment of the AMCHUD; and strengthening the Slum Upgrading Facility. The session could not reach consensus on the proposal to reset the MDG target on improving the lives of slum dwellers from a specific number to a proportion of the world's population.

CSD-13: At its thirteenth session, held from 11-22 April 2005 in New York, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) focused on policies and options to expedite the implementation of international commitments in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. Two areas of contention emerged with regard to human settlements: the extent of decentralization in their planning and management; and illegal settlements. The CSD-13 outcome document calls on governments and UN agencies to mobilize means of implementation and provide an enabling environment for sustainable human settlements development.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT ISSUES IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: Held from 14-19 August 2005 in Kingston, Jamaica, the conference addressed the special circumstances of small island developing States, and the role of academic institutions.

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: This multistakeholder platform convened from 11-13 October 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland with the objective of presenting solutions in the fields of technology, governance, civil society and enterprises from urban areas across the globe.

HABITAT JAM: Organized by UN-HABITAT, this global internet discussion on urban problems took place from 1-3 December 2005 and sought to bring ideas from the public to

leaders and experts preparing for WUF3. According to UN-HABITAT, slum dwellers in poor countries were most active in this online forum.

WORLD YOUTH FORUM: The Forum took place in Vancouver, Canada from 16-18 June 2006, immediately prior to WUF3. Over 400 youth delegates from 46 countries came together to discuss issues of concern to young people around the world, discuss youth-led projects, and have the chance to meet with high-level UN representatives and Canadian leaders.

Forum participants heard keynote speeches and presentations by Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT; Joachim Chissano, United Nations Youth Ambassador; Anantha Krishnan, UN-HABITAT Chief, Partners and Youth Section; the Mathare Youth Sports Association Singers; Hassan Abdikadir and Kevina Power, World Urban Forum Youth Representatives; Ida Chong, British Columbia Minister of Community Development and Women's Issues; and Charles Kelly, WUF3 Commissioner General.

Throughout the weekend, participants divided into "pod" groups to address seven main themes: Health Care: On the Frontline with HIV/AIDS and Other Diseases; Environment: Creating Healthy and Sustainable Communities; Youth as Leaders: Locally, Nationally, Internationally; Safety and Non-Violence: Youth as Peace-Builders; Gender: Achieving Balance and Equity; Indigenous Issues: Redefining the MDGs; and Making a Living: Sustainable Economy.



World Youth Forum delegate Christine Luza presented recommendations on behalf of the indigenous issues pod



Third World Urban Forum takes place in Vancouver, Canada

The goal of the pod discussions was to share current best practices in youth-led development, and to produce text that will form the basis of a World Youth Forum Declaration, which will be officially presented to WUF3 participants on Friday, 23 June. The youth delegates also developed a strategy to influence WUF3 deliberations over the next five days through policy discussions, media and networking events, and alternative modes of expression.

The World Youth Forum culminated in a celebration evening with a reception held at the Aboriginal Friendship Center, followed by a Jam Session and World Urban Forum pre-party.

STATE OF THE WORLD'S CITIES REPORT 2006/7

In conjunction with WUF3, UN-HABITAT released *State of the World's Cities Report 2006/7*, a new study of urbanization. The report demonstrates that slum dwellers in developing countries are as badly, if not worse, off than their rural counterparts. The report provides concrete data that the world's

one billion slum dwellers are likely to die earlier, experience more hunger and disease, attain less education and have fewer chances of employment than those urban residents that do not reside in slums. The study further documents trends in: growth of megacities; population dynamics, including increasing numbers of slum dwellers; access to basic services such as water and sanitation; secure land and property tenure; and environmental degradation.



THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Networking event "The Sustainable City: A Swedish-Chinese Partnership," originally scheduled for Thursday, 22 June, will now be held on Monday, 19 June from 16:30-18:30 in Oceanview 7/8, Pan Pacific Hotel.

Side Event "Regional Programme of Social Housing and Human Settlements. Review of the Regional Action Plan" will be taking place in Room MR18 from 16:30-18:30.

International Institute for Sustainable Development Reporting Services Division (IISD RS)

IISD RS will generate daily reports in English and French at the Third World Urban Forum (WUF3), starting Monday, 19 June 2006.

As part of our vision and the WUF3's efforts to reduce its ecological footprint and to contribute to positive social and economic development, we are encouraging participants to:

- 1) Subscribe to the online version of our daily reports and receive them by e-mail each morning before 8.00AM; or
- 2) Read our reports online on our dedicated website at: <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/wuf3/>

This approach will allow IISD RS and the WUF3 organization to print fewer documents that are otherwise free and easily accessible on the internet.

To join this initiative, please visit: <http://www.iisd.ca/email/wufsub.htm>