



IISD Reporting Services

World Urban Forum Bulletin

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

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THIRD WORLD URBAN FORUM HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 19 JUNE 2006

The third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) opened in Vancouver, Canada with a traditional song and dance welcome on behalf of the First Nations of Canada. In the morning, delegates heard opening statements and adopted the WUF3 agenda and organization of work. In the afternoon, Forum participants convened in six roundtable discussions and numerous networking sessions. *Note: due to a large number of overlapping sessions, IISD coverage focused on roundtable discussions.*



The WUF3 opened with a welcoming ceremony followed by statements from dignitaries and key stakeholders

OPENING CEREMONY AND PLENARY

Eric Falt, Director of the Division of Communications and Public Information, United Nations Environment Programme and Master of Ceremonies, welcomed participants to Vancouver, noting that WUF3 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the first UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat Conference), also held in this city.

Charles Kelly, WUF3 Commissioner General, noted that WUF3 is one step towards realizing sustainability principles, and expressed hope that participants would leave with “actionable” ideas to make a difference for urban development.

Sam Sullivan, Mayor of Vancouver, welcomed delegates and thanked the Prime Minister of Canada for “putting cities first” and attending WUF3. He said the first Habitat Conference had changed the way urban development decisions were made in Vancouver. Urging delegates to work and learn together, he highlighted the need to embrace environmentally responsible urban “eco-structures” to decrease cities’ ecological footprint.

Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia, emphasized WUF3’s theme of turning ideas into action to address urban sustainability challenges, adding that innovations and new technologies give cause for hope. He noted that citizen involvement in Vancouver has resulted in public waterfront access, the maintenance of urban green space, enhanced public transit, and the successful integration of office and living space within the downtown area.

Inga Klevby, UN-HABITAT Deputy Executive Director, delivered a message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stating that over the past three decades the world has become more urbanized, congested and polluted, and less equitable. He stressed that poverty and deprivation are significant, with more than half of the developing world’s urban population living in slums. Highlighting links between opportunities and deprivation, UN Secretary-General Annan called for scaling up efforts to make our planet more just, equitable and sustainable for all its inhabitants.

Opening address: Anna Tibaijuka, UN-HABITAT Executive Director, emphasized that, as half the world’s population now lives in urban areas, sustainable city planning will determine our future. While welcoming the Habitat Agenda’s successes, she suggested that the failure to achieve urban sustainability is due to a lack of political support for proper urban planning. She underscored WUF’s central role in the engagement of civil society in the UN-HABITAT process, urged participants to share ideas, and said she will deliver the WUF3 report to the 2007 Governing Council session of UN-HABITAT. Tibaijuka also requested a minute’s silence in memory of Jane Jacobs and Rafic Hariri, champions of sustainable urban community development.

Keynote address: Underscoring the vision of successful, sustainable and safe cities, Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, noted that urbanization is a powerful phenomenon

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Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, stressed the concept of “enlightened urban statecraft”

gaining momentum in the developing world. He outlined Canada’s history of settlement, exploration and urbanization, and highlighted that Canadian cities rank among the world’s best.

Prime Minister Harper further stressed the concept of “enlightened urban statecraft” with particular emphasis on: achieving fiscal and jurisdictional balance; addressing infrastructure deficit; ensuring environmental sustainability; curbing urban crime; providing affordable housing; averting terrorism; and promoting cultural diversity.

Noting that most population growth in the next 25 years will take place in the cities of the developing world, Noli de Castro, Vice-President of the Philippines, highlighted connections between urban poverty and the struggle for democracy, and prioritized concerted action in establishing development paths consistent with democratic ideals. He underscored the role of WUF3 in addressing slum upgrading, housing finance, gender issues and realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ali Mohamed Shein, Vice-President of Tanzania, addressed sustainable urbanization in Africa and other parts of the developing world. He noted Tanzania’s progress in implementing MDG Goal 7 Target 11 on slum upgrading through housing and land legislation.

OPENING PLENARY: Social inclusion and cohesion:

María Antonia Trujillo, Spain’s Minister of Housing and WUF2 Chair, opened the plenary session by stating that, while past WUFs identified problems, WUF3 should explore how to go from ideas to actions. She stressed learning from positive experiences as WUF3’s central theme.

Diane Finley, Canada’s Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and WUF3 Chair, invited delegates to assess progress and respond to challenges posed by cities. She said WUF offers a unique opportunity to serve as a medium for global exchange, focusing on pragmatic and innovative ways to deal with cities. She stated that while cities play a pivotal role in economic development, preserving a healthy rural environment is also important to a balanced economy and social wellbeing. She urged participants to make WUF3 outcomes practical and action-oriented to forge meaningful networks.

Adoption of agenda and organization of work: WUF3 Chair Finley introduced, and delegates adopted, the provisional agenda proposed by the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT (HSP/WUF/3/1) and organization of work for WUF3 (HSP/WUF/3/INF/1 and 2) without amendment. They also approved the establishment of a WUF3 advisory group (HSP/WUF/3/INF/6) that will assist the UN-HABITAT Executive Director in the organization and conduct of the Forum.

Alphonso Jackson, Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, stressed that home ownership can make cities stronger, safer and more prosperous. He explained the goal of establishing an ownership society in the US with a special focus on minorities and the poor. He stated that home ownership is essential for accumulating wealth, financial independence, stability and social benefits, and that housing has been the key to the growth of the American economy.

Kumari Selja, India’s Minister of State for Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, highlighted the global consensus that has emerged in the past 30 years on the need to base global initiatives on local solutions for human settlement management. She outlined India’s actions towards sustainable urban development and noted the emergence of the private sector as a partner in this agenda. She urged the promotion of cities to ensure local economic development and service rural communities.

Naokazu Takemoto, Japan’s Senior Vice-Minister of Finance, noted Japan’s longstanding interest and engagement with UN-HABITAT, and remarked on the importance of civil society engagement. He recalled the commitment that world leaders made at the Millennium Review Summit in September 2005 to sustainable growth and poverty reduction, noted the importance of strong governance and social stability, and described Japan’s involvement in the UN Panel on System-wide Coherence. He concluded by highlighting Japan’s relief efforts in Iraq and areas of Asia affected by the 2004 tsunami.

Smangalis Mkhathshwa, Co-President, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), addressed WUF3 on behalf of the UCLG presidency, noting that his organization represents over half of the world’s population. He highlighted the completion by UCLG of the guidelines on the framework for decentralization,



Smangalis Mkhathshwa, Co-President, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), highlighted his organization’s guidelines on the framework for decentralization, discussed at the recent UN-HABITAT Governing Council

discussed at the recent UN-HABITAT Governing Council, which emphasize community involvement in addressing the challenges of urbanization.

Enrique Ortiz, President of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), outlined developments since the first Habitat Conference, which he said represented a milestone for global awareness of urbanization. He lamented that the lack of political commitment and market policies have undermined realization of the Habitat Agenda principles in the past, and urged a new approach to address global urban challenges. He called for public-private partnerships to be participatory and productive and include people's perspectives.

During the opening plenary session, a World Youth Forum participant delivered a message to WUF3, calling on governments to take action on sustainable human settlements development.

ROUNDTABLES

Convened in the afternoon, roundtable discussions sought to provide stakeholders' perspectives on the WUF3 agenda and, more broadly, human settlements development.

Ministers' roundtable: Held under the theme "Vancouver + 30: The Changing Role of Cities and Global Sustainable Development," this roundtable was organized in cooperation with the Government of Canada.

Moderator Huguette Labelle, Chair, Transparency International and Chancellor, University of Ottawa, opened the roundtable, noting the presence of ministers from over 50 countries, and introduced three themes: the role of governments in urban sustainability; the potential for partnerships; and linking national governments' international agendas to the local level. In her introductory remarks, Tibaijuka emphasized the importance of governments and strong regulatory and legal frameworks in delivering the MDGs.

The role of governments in urban sustainability: Co-Chair John Pombe Magufuli, Tanzania's Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, introduced the theme and described his government's support for human settlement development. Ministers highlighted measures and policies taken to meet urban sustainability challenges within their



John Pombe Magufuli, Tanzania's Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, co-chaired the Ministers' roundtable



L-R: Co-Chair Ted Menzies, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation of Canada; Moderator Huguette Labelle, Chair, Transparency International and Chancellor, University of Ottawa; Anna Tibaijuka, UN-HABITAT Executive Director; and Co-Chair Magufuli

respective countries. Many participants expressed support for decentralization, civil society engagement, and the development of a common language and system of metrics that can be used in discussing sustainability, poverty and urbanization. Participants identified high land costs and an aging population as obstacles to urban sustainability. It was generally agreed that government has a strong role to play in providing guidance, funding and capacity building for local authorities in their sustainability efforts, and that social housing and education should be viewed as investments. Several ministers called for UN-HABITAT to pass a resolution supporting the development of infrastructure for the poor.

Partnership between national governments and other jurisdictions in support of urban sustainability: Co-Chair Ted Menzies, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation of Canada, emphasized the importance of fully respecting local governments and enhancing national-local governmental partnerships. Ministers from several countries outlined their experiences in handling the relationship between national and local governments in achieving urban sustainability. It was generally agreed that urban sustainability requires a multi-disciplinary approach, particularly regarding health and education. Several participants noted that lack of funding and access to information is impeding implementation of urban sustainability initiatives.

Linking national governments' international agendas to the local level: Co-Chair Menzies stressed the advantages of administrative decentralization in achieving the MDGs. Noting lack of finances and capacity can hinder these efforts, he queried what capacity needs to be developed. Some delegates noted that housing is among the most important issues in post-conflict countries. Several others stressed the importance of private investment, providing loans and mortgages and international assistance. Others stressed cooperation between the central government and local governments in achieving international agendas in water and air pollution control, and energy efficiency.

Summarizing the roundtable discussion, Co-Chair Magufuli pointed out that countries have different problems as well as common challenges and that they should find common solutions.



L-R: Adrian Alanis, Senator, Mexico; John Reynolds, Former Member of Parliament, Canada; and Lee Richardson, Member of Parliament, Canada

Moderator Labelle summarized the major points raised at the roundtable, including: housing equity; regulation and planning; secure tenure; lack of water and sanitation; capacity building; decentralizing resources; enhanced public transportation; privatization in housing development; job creation and education; and provision of free land for social housing.

Parliamentarian roundtable: Titled “Vancouver +30 – Parliamentarians Guiding Change for Sustainable Urbanization,” the roundtable provided parliamentarians with the opportunity to discuss legislative initiatives surrounding human settlements, urban development and affordable housing. The session was co-chaired by Adrian Alanis, Senator, Mexico, and Lee Richardson, Member of Parliament, Canada. It was moderated by John Reynolds, former Member of Parliament, Canada. The discussion was divided into two segments: a retrospective of the past 20 years regarding urban legislation, and emerging priorities and future policies in support of urban sustainability.

In her introductory remarks, Klevby described the history and activities of UN-HABITAT. Noting dire conditions in urban slums, Klevby highlighted MDG commitments on improved water and sanitation and slum upgrading. She called for the adoption of pro-urban poor policies and stressed the importance of lawmakers in translating development objectives into action.

Parliamentarians from Germany and the Netherlands drew attention to results from a study of urban policies in Europe over the last ten years, stressing differences among countries in the utilization of various tools, including centers of expertise for regional development, the consolidation of municipal self-government, waste management and environmental assessment.

In sharing experiences from their own countries, delegates emphasized: family planning; national legislation to provide metropolitan planning instruments; an integrated approach among cities with overlapping spheres of influence; and criteria for the success of urban policies. Some participants cautioned that slums and shantytowns have the potential to deepen segregation and generate extremism. Others lamented the fact that sustainable habitats have not become a global priority, and stated that the responsibility for improvement rests on the shoulders of legislators.

In looking to the future, participants explained the importance of putting urban poverty on the political agenda and taking an integrated multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach, and suggested that financial resources directed toward slums and squatters should accompany foreign aid packages. The creation of a fund, similar to the Marshall Fund for post-World War II reconstruction, was also proposed to support housing and urban development in African countries.

Tibaijuka invited delegates to present the Habitat Agenda to their own parliaments.

Private sector roundtable: The roundtable was chaired by John Wiebe, President and CEO, GLOBE Foundation of Canada. Chris Henderson, CEO of The Delphi Group, moderated the discussion.

Michael Mutter, UN-HABITAT’s Slum Upgrading Facility, noted that the private sector can contribute management expertise and cost control mechanisms.

Kim Jawanda and Stuart Thomas, Terra Housing Consulting, described their experience in providing social housing in the Philippines and South Africa.

Mazyar Mortazavi, TAS Design Build, noted that communication and education were key for successful partnerships. Discussion also addressed: policy and legal environments; returns on investment; providing neutral ground for partnerships, such as the UN Global Compact; the importance of community and political support; and the need to recognize cultural differences.

On market opportunities, Scott Chubbs, Living Steel Limited, described his company’s program to better understand housing markets and noted developers were more interested in middle- and high-income housing than in low-income. Participants explored how market mechanisms can help increase the scale of successful programs, agreeing that a huge potential market exists, but requires engagement at the policy level.

On strengthening the enabling environment, V. Suresh, CEO, Aerens Goldsok International, addressed the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in low-income housing and legal and regulatory frameworks. Discussion explored factors for success, including: relationships with decision-makers; inclusive processes; self-help initiatives; and transparency.



L-R: Madhumita Ganguli, Housing Finance Development Corporation of India; Chris Henderson, CEO of The Delphi Group; and John Wiebe, President and CEO, GLOBE Foundation of Canada



Participants at the Women's roundtable

On strategies for international community support, Maleye Diop, United Nations Development Programme, noted the need for a transparent tendering process and effective dialogue structures.

Madhumita Ganguli, Housing Finance Development Corporation of India, stressed the importance of infrastructure in spurring international investment.

Klevby closed the session by noting a steady increase in private sector engagement and the challenge of putting the right policies in place.

Women's roundtable: Chaired by Erna Witoelar, UN Ambassador for the MDGs for South Asia and the Pacific, this roundtable focused on the theme "Empowering the Millennium Development Goals: Grassroots Women Meet the Challenge – Women's Lives, Women's Decisions."

Jan Petersen, Hairo, opened the session, noting that the draft recommendations emerging from the Grassroots Academy in Vancouver held prior to WUF3 will be presented to plenary later in the week.

Highlighting maternal health and HIV/AIDS initiatives in Kenya, Violet Shivutse, GROOTS Kenya, pointed out that many grassroots women are already working on initiatives in line with the MDG outcomes without being aware of the existence of the MDGs themselves.

Andrea Laux, Stuttgart Mothers Centers, Germany, shared initiatives ranging from dialogue with local authorities to a national anti-poverty campaign on Mother's Day 2006 called "Move the pram, move the world."

Arlene Bailey, Fletchers Land Parenting Association and Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica, emphasized proper parenting as an important tool against crime and violence and said the Association's initiatives have been replicated in four inner cities.

Noting that aboriginal women in Canada are forced to relocate from traditional lands, and face violence and other obstacles such as lack of property rights, Penny Irons, Aboriginal Mothers Centers, called for meaningful engagement of aboriginal women in policy development and implementation.

Kasturi Chandrasekaran, Covenant Centre for Development, described activities in four provinces of India to address migration, livelihoods and food security challenges. She

highlighted the Herbal Gardens Project as an example of a community-owned enterprise that sustains local livelihoods and improves community health.

Marlene Rodriguez, Cooperativa Las Brumas, Nicaragua, described her NGO's project to create opportunities for ex-combatants by engaging them in grassroots organic coffee production. She also called for support to rural women to be enshrined in national policies.

In response to the presentations, Srilatha Batliwala, The Houser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, noted the need to assess the value of uncompensated contributions made by women in poor communities.

Jeanine Haddad, UCLG, said grassroots experiences should be shared so that they can be transformed into public policies, and Lisa Jordan, Ford Foundation, noted that grassroots activities have touched upon every MDG.

Ardath Paxton-Mann, Deputy Minister of Western Diversification, Canada, presented the Vancouver Agreement, an initiative to revitalize the city's downtown and address hunger, homelessness and encourage female empowerment.

Noting that UN-HABITAT is responsible for monitoring MDG Goal 7 Target 11 on slum upgrading but also addresses Target 10 on improved water and sanitation, Lucia Kiwala, UN-HABITAT, also elaborated on gender implications of sanitation.

NGOs roundtable: Co-chairs Evaniza Rodrigues, Latin American Secretariat for Popular Housing, and Michael Shapcott, Wellesley Institute, opened this roundtable titled "Assets and Struggles: 30 Years After Vancouver Habitat Forum – Realizing the Right to Adequate Housing, Sustainable Habitat and Inclusive Cities." Shapcott noted that the roundtable's recommendations to UN-HABITAT will be based on five themes: ending forced evictions that violate human rights; supporting community-based values and initiatives; confronting the negative effects of habitat privatization; protection, rights and durable solutions for displaced people; and involving local people in all aspects of post-disaster reconstruction.

Ortiz called for innovative instruments and policies to confront habitat problems of the 21st century.



L-R: Ana Sugranyes, Habitat International Coalition, Co-chairs Evaniza Rodrigues, Latin American Secretariat for Popular Housing, and Michael Shapcott, Wellesley Institute



L-R: Barbra Kohlo and Loveness Mlambo, Housing People of Zimbabwe, discussed issues related to forced eviction, stressed the importance of gender perspective in habitat policy initiatives

On forced eviction, Barbra Kohlo, Executive Director, Housing People of Zimbabwe, noted the importance of NGO work to support community-based initiatives to strengthen monitoring and increase security of land tenure. She called for a gender perspective in habitat policy initiatives.

On supporting community-based values and initiatives, Jockim Arpurtham, President of Shack Slum Dwellers International, called for local solidarity and action to end forced eviction.

On habitat privatization, Knut Unger, HIC, said that the past three decades were characterized by the commercialization of many spheres of city life, yet market responses to housing were part of the problem and not the solution.

On protection, rights and durable solutions for displaced people, Joe Schechla, HIC, said that civil society should demand good governance with respect to displaced people, an issue that was largely neglected in the course of WUF discussions.

On involving local people in all aspects of post-disaster reconstruction, Wade Rathke, Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, US, said that governments must be held accountable in the financing of disaster relief.

Noting housing and land rights challenges, Miloon Kothari, Special UN Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, said governments had lost control of the housing sector, which had come into the hands of private developers and land cartels. He advocated a human rights-based approach to housing, and holding governments accountable through civil society networks.

Researchers' roundtable: Convened under the theme of "Planning and Managing Sustainable Cities: From Research to Practice," this roundtable was chaired by Paula Juron, Housing Institute at the University of Chile. She set the goal of the roundtable as developing the means to link research and action, and said that presenters' cases should focus on research on environmentally sustainable cities. The session was moderated by Patrick Wakeley, University College of London.

Vinay Lail, Director of the Society for Development Studies, New Delhi, spoke about good governance of cities as an outcome of research, and Monika Zimmermann, Director of the International Training Centre for the International Council for Local Government Initiatives, reported on EU research initiatives and their impact on urban policies.

Huang Dingjian, People's Government of Nanjing City, listed a number of projects in which research supported reconstruction of the city. Mark Roseland, Director of the Center for Sustainable Community Development, Simon Fraser University, called for more education and community mobilization of sustainable communities.

Martha Schteingart, Center for Demographic, Urban and Environmental Studies, called for tailored action-oriented research and described a bus rapid transit planning initiative in Mexico City.

Frauke Kraas, on behalf of International Human Dimensions Program and the Urbanization and Global and Environmental Change networks, stressed the need to scale research to a global level, for example, relating urban heat islands, urban hydrology and migration of diseases to climate change.

Jean Lebel, International Development Research Center of Canada, spoke about application of research to good governance, particularly management of sustainable cities with transparency and fairness.

Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, UN-HABITAT, called for a global exchange of information and publication of research results.

Discussion focused on whether policy exigencies and funding constraints could distort research, with participants noting that reduced funding of urban research tends to narrow down commissioned projects.



L-R: Patrick Wakeley, Development Planning Unit, University College of London; Paula Juron, Housing Institute at the University of Chile; and Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, UN-HABITAT

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

The site tour "Restoring nature in the city: A look at efforts in Vancouver's Jericho Park" originally scheduled for Tuesday, will now be taking place on Wednesday, 21 June from 16:00-18:00.

Women's Reception will be held in Ballroom C, Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, from 19:00-22:00 on Tuesday, 20 June.