UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD URBAN FORUM

Current status of Habitat JAM

The Habitat JAM is an internet based forum where 6 key topics will be discussed during a 72-hour event. From December 1st to 3rd, 2005, the Habitat JAM will gather input and create actionable ideas for the Vancouver World Urban Forum agenda and add richness to the Forum's content. During the three-day Habitat JAM, people from around the world will take part in discussions. The JAM will help forge a holistic view on some of the most urgent and controversial issues that face a rapidly urbanizing planet – issues that can only be solved through broad, global consensus.

The Habitat JAM web site (www.habitatjam.com) went live on October 8, 2005. Registration is now open.

The International Media Launch was held in London on 4 November, with the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, Charles Kelly, Commissioner General of the Canadian WUF III Secretariat and a senior IBM representative. A subsequent media launch was held in Nairobi 10 November 2005. Additional promotional activities are being planned by the Regional Offices, HPMs, Habitat Agenda Partners and through Internet marketing mechanisms.

Current Status of Networking Events

Networking Events are a key element of the World Urban Forum. Networking events are geared towards a smaller and more specialised audience than Dialogue sessions and are primarily hosted by HABITAT Agenda Partners, governmental and non-governmental organisations. Networking Events provide an opportunity to discuss and debate local experiences and practices as well as normative issues. They offer an intimate information-sharing venue where ideas and experiences can be effectively exchanged. Networking Events unite people with a common interest and allow participants to liaise and interact with one another. The ultimate aim of Networking Events is to build knowledge, strengthen partnerships, create new ones, and provide platforms for novel ideas and practices.

At this stage, UN-HABITAT has received numerous proposals to host Networking Event sessions from organisations that include Habitat for Humanity International, Women in Cities International, the Commonwealth Association of Planners and the World Bank. Building on the tremendous success of Networking Events in Barcelona, there will be twice as many Networking Events at WUF III than at the previous World Urban Forum, for an approximate number of 140 Networking Events in total. Priority will be given to networking events with close relevance to the dialogue themes, and organisations based within developing countries and countries in transition. Requests for Networking Events are currently being received by the WUF Secretariat. Deadline for submission is 30 November 2005.

* The present note reflects the state of preparations as of 14 November 2005, the deadline for the submission of documentation for the 19th regular session of the CPR. At the December 1, 2005 19th CPR, further progress will be reported both by the Secretariat and the Chairman of WG III.
Current Status of Dialogue Events

“OUR FUTURE: SUSTAINABLE CITIES – TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION”

An external organization or institution will be selected to prepare a 25 page report reviewing the state of knowledge in the area of urban sustainability, focusing on the urban planning and management dimensions of cities and human settlements. The purpose of this background document is to serve as a starting point for discussions during the dialogue portion of the work urban forum. It is meant to be highlight accessible and engaging so as to spark a lively exchange of views and ideas.

The review will cover, from a global perspective, the following aspects:

(i) The ways in which sustainability has been conceptualized from a human settlements perspective, including definition of basic terms and description of key concepts;

(ii) Global trends and impacts on urban sustainability since Habitat I, showing, among other things, the changing global patterns of these impacts in terms of their magnitude, thus building a rationale for the World Urban Forum Dialogue sessions;

(iii) Action oriented policies and strategies addressing urban planning and management dimensions of cities and human settlements.

The document will be divided into three chapters, and will seek to highlight innovative thinking, best practices and critical questions for debate during the world Urban. Contributions made during the Habitat Jam will also feature prominently through-out the document.

Chapter 1

“SUSTAINABLE CITIES: URBAN GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT”

The urban environment, at a time of rapid growth, has become a global concern. Sound planning and management will be a major factor in ensuring sustainable urban development.

This chapter will focus on the following two areas:

“The Shape of Cities: Urban Planning and Management”

This dialogue will address the contribution of participatory planning and management as a vital tool for:

- Examining the past problems of planning, and then identifying current approaches and methods that overcome these obstacles. Principles underlying new planning approaches will be explored, and particularly how the concept of sustainability has driven the new planning agenda and linkages with good urban governance;
• Ensuring the environmental sustainability of cities, through for example, rational land use, compact or “smart” cities, and the design of more liveable spaces.

“Energy: Local Action, Global Impact”

This dialogue will address the growing demand for energy due to the rapid growth of cities and their role as engines of economic growth and production. Two key sets of issues will be addressed:

• At the global level, measures for reducing energy consumption of cities and minimising their contribution to global warming;
• At the local level, sustainable transport and the need for urban energy policies and strategies that promote affordability and efficiency.

Chapter 2

“SUSTAINABLE CITIES: PARTNERSHIP AND FINANCE”

Economically vibrant cities are committed to partnerships with a range of stakeholders at local, national and international levels, enabling the leveraging of resources for investment, learning from each other’s best practices, and enhancing productivity. In addition, this sub-theme will address the links between urban safety and security, economic growth and poverty reduction.

This chapter will focus on the following two areas:

“Municipal Finance: Innovation and Collaboration”

Municipalities around the world are facing a paradox: the need for a strong fiscal base to create and maintain infrastructure and services; and lowering taxation to attract foreign and domestic investment. This dialogue will showcase innovative approaches including:

• Partnerships for mobilizing domestic capital markets and innovative financial instruments;
• Promoting and facilitating local and community-based economic development including social enterprise, micro-credit and the economic empowerment of youth and women.


Urban safety and security are pre-requisites for economically productive, culturally vibrant and socially inclusive cities and communities. This dialogue will look at two key sets of issues:

• Effective policies and practices in urban safety, crime and conflict prevention, and caring for the most vulnerable;
Emerging practices in financing risk and vulnerability reduction, and identifying innovative approaches to integrating disaster mitigation into sustainable human settlement development.

Chapter 3

“SUSTAINABLE CITIES: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COHESION”

Marginalization, social exclusion and urban poverty are becoming key challenges facing cities in the urban millennium. Pro-poor, gender sensitive urban policies and enabling legislation at the national and international levels are necessary to help overcome this challenge, while good urban governance and consistent leadership are required to implement effective strategies at the local level.

This chapter will focus on the following two areas:

“Achieving the MDGs: Slum Upgrading and Affordable Housing”

This dialogue will look at innovative strategies for reaching the water and sanitation and slum upgrading targets of the Millennium Development Declaration. It will show that slums and inner cities, which epitomize many of the key challenges facing cities, can also present unique opportunities for realizing economies of scale and multiplier effects in combating urban poverty and social exclusion.

“Public Engagement: The Inclusive Approach”

This dialogue will focus on the issue of engagement of people within a city. They include long-term residents, international migrants, the poor, marginalised groups, or national minorities and indigenous peoples. It will showcase on-going strategies and practices that have useful lessons in civic engagement and citizenship, with a special focus on the integration of migrants and the empowerment of youth and women.

Current Status of Memorandum of Understanding with Host Country

The Memorandum of Understanding with the Host Country is nearing completion with only a few issues outstanding from which a reply from Canada is expected by beginning of December 2005. A security assessment mission to survey the conference site met with Canadian counterparts in early November and a security plan for the conference is being prepared by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the City of Vancouver police department for review by UN security. Expected completion 30 November 2005.
Monday
Jun 19
Opening & Sectoral Round Tables

Tuesday
Jun 20
"Urban Growth and Environment"
0800-0900 Caucus Meetings
0900-1000 Keynote
Coffee Break (in expo)
Dialogue Session 1 | Dialogue Session 2
1200-1330 Lunch Time Guest Speaker Series (6)
1330-1530 Networking Events (15)
Coffee Break (in expo)
1600-1800 Networking Events (15)

Wednesday
Jun 21
"Partnership and Finance"
0800-0900 Caucus Meetings
0900-1000 Keynote
Coffee Break (in expo)
Dialogue Session 3 | Dialogue Session 4
1200-1330 Lunch Time Guest Speaker Series (6)
1330-1530 Networking Events (15)
Coffee Break (in expo)
1600-1800 Networking Events (15)

Thursday
Jun 22
"Social Inclusion and Cohesion"
0800-0900 Caucus, Interest & Delegation Meetings
0900-1000 Keynote
Coffee Break (in expo)
Dialogue Session 5 | Dialogue Session 6
1200-1330 Lunch Time Guest Speaker Series (6)
1330-1530 Networking Events (15)
Coffee Break (in expo)
1600-1800 Networking Events (15)

Friday
Jun 23
0800-0900 Caucus, Interest & Delegation Meetings
0900-1100 Networking Events (20)
1100-1200 Expo Ceremonies
1200-1400 Lunch
1400-1700 Gala Ceremonies

SUNDAY, JUNE 18TH:
0800-1700 Registration Open
1000-1300 Opening Ceremonies (Plenary)
1300-1500 Exposition Opening & Luncheon
1500-1800 Roundtables (6) Networking Events (20)