Progress Report on the Preparations for the Fourth Session of the World Urban Forum

Agenda Item 6

Statement

By

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HSP/CPR/27/6

CPR Meeting: 6 December 2007
Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to address you once again and to bring you up to date on the preparations for the Fourth session of the World Urban Forum, which will be held in Nanjing, China from 13-17 October 2008.

New developments and progress made in the preparations since our last meeting on 27 September 2007 are as follows:

**The theme** remains *Harmonious Urbanization* as earlier reported. But to provide more clarity, the subtitle, *the Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development*, has been added. The theme is divided into six sub-themes, each of which will be the subject of a Dialogue, and therefore a main event at WUF IV.

These subthemes are:
- Socially harmonious cities
- Economically harmonious cities
- Environmentally harmonious cities
- Spatially harmonious cities
- Historically harmonious cities
- Harmonious cities for all age groups.

These Dialogues will be supported by a series of special plenaries, round tables and networking and special events to be organized by and for Habitat Partners and Partner Groups.

UN-Habitat has prepared a draft programme outline for WUF IV, in cooperation with the hosts, the Government of China and the City of Nanjing. It will be further detailed and then posted on the UN-Habitat website.

The highlights of the draft programme and their respective state of preparations are as follows:

**Dialogues**

Upon confirmation of the dialogue sub-themes by the hosts, UN-Habitat has set up in-house teams for each dialogue. The first draft of the concept notes for the dialogues has already been posted on the website. However, these are being constantly reviewed to reflect the findings of the 2008 State of the World Cities Report, which will provide the substantive underpinning for each of the dialogues. UN-Habitat is currently building a roster of potential speakers for the dialogue sessions and would welcome suggestions in this regard. These may be sent to Mr. Eduardo Moreno at [eduardo.moreno@unhabitat.org](mailto:eduardo.moreno@unhabitat.org).
Plenaries

Morning Plenaries and a limited number of additional special high-level sessions will be held to provide space for discussion of topical issues by decision-makers. These will be organized by UN-HABITAT alone or in partnership with major entities of the United Nations System and the Bretton Woods Institutions. Further enquiries on the plenaries and special high-level sessions may be sent to Mr. Lars Reutersward at lars.reutersward@unhabitat.org.

Roundtables

The roundtable segment at the Forum will follow the model adopted at previous sessions of WUF. It will include roundtables of ministers, mayors, parliamentarians, professionals and researchers, the private sector and women’s organizations, to discuss their respective contributions to the theme and subthemes in their areas of work and responsibility. All enquiries on the roundtables may be sent to Mr. Oyebanji Oyeyinka at oyebanji.oyeyinka@unhabitat.org.

Networking and Training Events

The call for proposals for Networking Events opened on September 10, 2007 on the UN-Habitat website and the first round of calls for proposals is expected to close by 15 February 2008. The selection of events will be made by an in-house UN-Habitat panel which has already been established for this purpose. For more information please contact Ms. Maria-Jose Olavarria at maria-jose.olavarria@unhabitat.org. There will be also a limited number of training events at WUF IV, and the call for proposals for these will follow the same model as for networking events and will be made through the UN-Habitat website. The opening date for this call will be announced shortly. Interested parties are also encouraged to contact Mr. Raf Tuts at raf.tuts@unhabitat.org.

Side and Parallel Events

Side events will usually be scheduled either early in the morning as breakfast meetings or later in the day as working lunches, or in the evening after the networking events. Side events could be for example, book launches and receptions and similar social
events. Scheduling clashes between side events and other activities at the Forum will be avoided as much as possible. Side events are financed by the requesting organization, but should be supportive of the main thrust of the discussions at WUF IV. Application for side events will be opened six months before WUF IV i.e. by about 1 April 2008. All side events will undergo a screening and selection process in light of the space limitations at the conference site.

In addition, there will be “Parallel Events”, which are closed events which may not have a direct link to the discussions at WUF. They offer an opportunity for professional organizations which attend the Forum to hold, for example, an annual meeting during or before the WUF IV. Hence they would be able to use the WUF, which will draw in many of their members from all over the world, to stage the meeting, thus economizing travel and organizational costs. This is what happened at WUF III. The secretariat is only notified of such parallel events for possible room allocation and other logistical purposes.

**Exhibition**

Adequate space of 12000 m² has been allocated for the exhibition by the Hosts. An online application form will be made available on the UN-Habitat website as soon as information relating to costs and services is finalized with our Chinese counterparts.

**World Youth Forum**

The World Youth Forum (WYF) to be organized by UN-HABITAT will be held three days prior to the WUF IV. Organizing the youth forum prior to WUF facilitates the integration and participation of youth into the discussions at WUF. This worked extremely well in Vancouver at WUF III.

**Conference Venue and Organization of the Event**

The conference venue is currently under construction and there is a commitment from the Chinese side that the facility will be ready for use in August 2008. Furthermore, China has established a counterpart secretariat and hired a professional conference organizer, and this is a big step forward in advancing the preparations. Inspection missions of the Conference site by UNON Conference Services and UN Security are planned for March and August 2008, respectively.

**Funding**

The level of funding to support UN-HABITAT preparatory activities, including funds for documentation, branding, publicity, information dissemination and travel for some
speakers and LDC participants is expected to be confirmed to UN-HABITAT by China in the coming weeks.

**Notification**
To facilitate preparations by Governments and key umbrella partners for WUF IV, and to allow them to make the appropriate provisions in their upcoming calendars of work, the Secretariat will send out a preliminary notification before the end of the year. This will be followed by the formal invitation in April 2008 after further discussions on the different aspects of the programme and review of the final agenda by the Working Group of the CPR during the first quarter of 2008.

**Visa, Travel and Accommodation**
Travel information, including visa application procedures, are currently being discussed with our partners in China and these should be up on the website before the end of this year. Information on hotel accommodation and registration will be posted on the UN-HABITAT website early next year.

Finally, Madam Chair, I would like to thank our hosts in China for approving the theme and sub-themes for the WUF4 and for putting in place the counterpart secretariat for the preparations of the event. As we advance in the preparations, I look forward to continuing discussions with the CPR to ensure that the role of the World Urban Forum as the global platform for engagement with our partners is further consolidated and advanced in Nanjing next year.

I thank you for your attention.