Concept Notes on the 12 Roundtables

RTB1: Ministers’

Harmony
In ancient Chinese philosophy, harmony implied moderation and balance in all things. Today, the concept of harmony applies to social development and environmental sustainability, including gender equality, pro-poor growth and participatory governance. Harmony entails the synchronization and integration of physical, economical, cultural, political, historical and social assets.

How can one create harmony between the physical, environmental and cultural aspects of a city and the human beings that live there? A harmonious city should promote unity within diversity, wealth within sustainability. The reconciliation of contradictory and complementary elements is critical to creating harmony within cities. Not only through economic growth is harmony possible, harmony within cities is also dependant upon three pillars: social equity, good governance and environmental sustainability.

The 2008 State of the World’s Cities Report (SWCR) will elaborate on the concept of Harmonious Urbanization as a theoretical framework in order to understand today’s urban world, and also as an operational tool to confront the most important challenges facing urbanization and development processes. The Ministers’ Roundtable which is the High-Level Segment of the World Urban Forum, will consider the key issues raised in the SWCR, a UN-HABITAT biennial flagship publication which will be launched in Nanjing on the occasion of the 4th session of the World Urban Forum.

Government’s Role in Urban Development
Changing the approach to today’s world urbanization calls for enlightened leadership with clear long-term political commitments, progressive sectoral and institutional reforms, and massive mobilization of domestic resources to scale up actions and ensure sustainable urbanization. For the purpose of this Ministers’ Roundtable, the following issues highlighted in the SWCR 08 will be addressed: spatial disparities; socio-economic inequality; environmental degradation; and cultural diversity and historical heritage.

To explain the current trends in urban population growth, spatial or regional disparities can be analyzed through a regional and urban analysis. Understanding which cities are experiencing economic and demographic growth is crucial to maximizing gains, locate or relocate investments and opportunities and to plan for more sustainable development. Understanding which cities or parts of cities, metropolitan areas and regions are experiencing a decline in their populations is important for decision-makers because it allows them to anticipate trends, design recovery policies and rethink strategies for keeping people and opportunities in cities. Governments should be more cognizant of the spatial consequences of social and economic policies.

Social inequalities result from high levels of both wealth and poverty in cities. Around one billion people, nearly one-third of the world’s urban population, live in slum conditions. In many parts of the world, slums are not always recognized by local and central authorities while informal parts of cities are growing faster than formal parts. Slum dwellers live with varying levels of deprivation: extreme, moderate or low, with diverse health and education conditions according to geographic locations. Income inequality within cities is high in the developing world and larger cities are more likely to have higher levels of inequality. Cities cannot be harmonious if large sections of its population are deprived. By disaggregating the type
and level of shelter deprivations (i.e. severe or non-severe), policy makers will be in a better position to devise policy responses that are better focused and targeted.

Environmental degradation and climate change are determined by several factors: consumption patterns, lifestyles, income levels and urban sprawl. Cities do consume a large share of the world’s energy and are responsible for increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Lifestyle and consumption patterns must be closely assessed and adjusted. To improve environmental harmony within cities, Governments need to be innovative and find ways of introducing new energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly solutions to reduce the environmental impact of urban development and lessen environmental hazards. Green policies that enforce energy-efficiency, reduce pollution levels, diminish biodiversity loss and lessen carbon emissions should be investigated and adopted.

Cultural and generational harmony largely depends on the citizens’ capacities of owning material, spiritual and social resources. Social networks, emotional support and integration, participation in public life and a sense of belonging are all important in creating human harmony. Governments should protect intangible assets, such as symbolic and historical heritage, cultural diversity, inter-generational relationships and different forms of societal relations and resources to create a more harmonious city.

Governments have a responsibility to meet the challenges of urbanization through interventions made in the key areas outlined above: spatial or regional planning; protection of the environment, reduction of socio-economic inequalities; and preservation of cultural and historical assets.

**Questions which may be addressed by Ministers:**

**General:** How are domestic resources mobilized in your country to achieve ‘harmonious urbanization’? What pro-poor growth policies have been adopted? Can you share some examples and best practices?

**On Spatial Harmony:** To what extent are regional and national spatial planning integrated? What are the policies and incentive mechanisms put in place by your government to develop regional and spatial harmony in your country?

**On Social Harmony:** How are shelter shortages assessed in your country? What policy responses have been developed? What type of policies and programmes should be put in place by Governments to make slums history by 2020?

**On Environmental Harmony:** What green policies has your country adopted to address climate change and enforce energy-efficient urban development? What are the policies, mechanisms put in place by your Government to reduce city-generated greenhouse emissions? To improve the urban environment?

**On Cultural and Generational Harmony:** What measures has your Government taken to protect and promote public spaces and cultural diversity? To preserve the historical heritage? To improve inter-generational solidarity in the living environment?

**Organization of the Round Table**

1. **Objectives and expected outcomes**
The High-Level Minister’s Roundtable segment on ‘Harmonious Urbanization’ has five main objectives: a) to make critical recommendations to UN-HABITAT Governing Council; b) to provide practical and concrete recommendations to regional groups such as the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI), the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) and the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APAMCHUD); c) to present specific recommendations to UN-HABITAT for activities to be carried out to strengthen the normative capacity of the organization; d) to provide specific recommendations to bilateral agencies and partners that support technical cooperation at country level to harmonize urbanization, especially with regards to social and environmental challenges; and e) to advance the national and local implementation of the MDGs and promote harmonious cities.
2. **Theme and topics to be discussed**
Towards Harmonious Urbanization, with focus on territorial, social and environmental harmony.

3. **Agenda of the Round Table**
   i. **Key Note address:** there will be a 15-20 minute key-note address from the Chair who will highlight key urbanization issues from a Chinese perspective and concentrate the debate on global issues.
   ii. **Discussant panel:** Four speakers from AMCHUD, APAMCHUD, MINURVI and OECD regions respectively will have 10-15 minutes each to address the round table and provide their views on what harmonious cities means to them in reference to the above-mentioned theme.
   iii. **Debate among Ministers.**

4. **Chair: Minister of Construction, China**

5. **Vice Chairs:** Sweden (on behalf of OECD countries); Africa (To be determined, Nigeria?); LAC (To be determined, Brazil?); India (Chair of GC-21)

6. **Participants and size of the event:** 200 participants

7. **Duration: Morning Session** (3 hours)

8. **Expected contribution from Chinese co-host**
   a. To act as a co-host with UN-HABITAT on the preparation and organization of the roundtable
   b. To make comments on the theme, structure and selected speakers and co-chairs
   c. To invite and sponsor participants through bilateral channels
   d. Together with the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, to send joint invitations to participants
   e. To designate a focal point/ contact for the event
   f. To provide sponsorship to LDC countries
   g. To provide full language translations in English, Spanish, French and Chinese
   h. To open the Round-Table through a key-note address by the Minister

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**RTB2: Mayors’ Background:**
The general theme of the fourth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF IV) provides evidence of the central place that cities have taken in our common search for a sustainable development. Cities are the true reflection of the world’s heritage, but they are also the future of mankind. They are the present and the hopes for tomorrow. “Harmonious Urbanization” is all about cities that can promote unity in diversity, cities that are inclusive and peaceful.

Apart from the involvement of representatives from local authorities and their associations in previous sessions of the World Urban Forum since its inception – from Nairobi (2002) to Vancouver (2006) – which has contributed to the success of this global event, city managers and their networks have demonstrated a keen interest in advancing the debates on the role of local authorities as “full partners” for harmonious urbanization, as the ultimate outcome of a sustainable urban development.

**Theme and objectives:**
The proposed Roundtable of Mayors will focus on the idea that the crucial political actions that are need to achieve the vision of “harmonious urbanization” should include the local dimension of urbanization and involve local authorities and their associations as much as possible in the planning, as well as implementation strategies.
The event will stress the important contribution of local authorities to ensure harmonious urbanization, based on the fact that – if local authorities were responsible for implementing policies to respond to changing conditions in increasingly multicultural societies – they must be internationally “recognized” and nationally “empowered” in order to create an environment that is conducive to sustainable development for all.

It is self-evident that the ongoing debates on the role and responsibilities of local authorities in assisting national governments are closely related to the issues of powers and resources at the disposal of those in charge of world’s cities to allow for a successfully delivery on their duties.

**Main topics:**

The WUF 4 Roundtable of Mayors will provide the participants with the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss two main issues: (i) role of mayors and local authorities in search for “harmonious urbanization”, (ii) “relevance of decentralization in promoting urban harmony and social inclusion”.

During the discussions, a particular emphasis will be put on the following questions:

(i) Which ways towards achieving social harmony at the city/local level?
(ii) Decentralization remains key in that process, but what are the next steps after the approval of the international guidelines on decentralization by the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT?
(iii) Is participatory planning a model that can work out positive results in any given context?
(iv) Are participatory processes instrumental in building strategic partnerships and promoting harmony at the local level? Can local authorities, grassroots organizations and the private sector play a complementary role?
(v) What are the limits of the transfer of resources from central to local governments? What are the benefits? How does financial autonomy affect the delivery of basic services at the local level?
(vi) How can we ensure social inclusion? How can harmonious urbanization prevent the emergence of slums and informal human settlements? How can we create a culture of solidarity in urban centres?
(vii) Taking into account the above thematic questions, what are the main capacity gaps local authorities are facing, both in terms of human resources development and organizational strengthening? How can these capacity gaps be filled in a sustainable manner to enable local governments to take up a more proactive role as partners and facilitators of local implementation of the MDGs?

**Expected Outputs:**

(i) Recommendations on the way forward in the implementation of the Guidelines on decentralization.
(ii) Political commitment/declaration in support of inclusive cities.
(iii) Local action plan in support of harmonious urbanization.
(iv) Strategic partnerships and networking.

**Organizational structure:**

Time: 4 hours maximum

**Segment I (2 hours)**

4 Panel members, including the Facilitator, will elaborate on the above listed questions in order to facilitate the search for possible answers. However, it cannot be expected that definitive answers to such an open-ended exercise will be provided, but these guiding outlines should provide the focus of the discussions.

**Segment II (2 hours)**
The Facilitator, based on the major points highlighted by the members of the panel in their presentations, should open the floor for an interactive discussion between the panel and the public. The participants will be encouraged to share their views and vision on the above listed issues.

**Participants and size of the event:** 50-60 participants maximum

**Organizing Partners:** Chair: UCLG; Co-Chair: UN-HABITAT

Other partners: Chinese Mayors Association, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), City Network (CityNet) Asia, and United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA)

**RTB3: Global Parliamentarians on Habitat**

1. Date and hours: 14 October 2008 in the afternoon
2. Background: UN-HABITAT recognizes the Parliamentarians of the World as a crucial partner in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s). They are the representative of people and their aspirations in the respective governments and can hold their government accountable for the commitments at national as well as at the international level. Our experience shows that Parliamentarians are playing very important role and supporting regularly our programmes and mandates. They meet during the WUF Conferences. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat (GPH) maintains close cooperation with UN-HABITAT and supports the sustainable human settlements development. GPH in its recent meeting in Monterrey, Mexico during the International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities attended by the Executive Director expressed its commitment to participate and have a share in the WUF IV conference in Nanjing, China. The Executive Director challenged the GPH to work hard and play their role in passing relevant legislations and adopting laws and bylaws in promoting the Habitat Agenda for sustainable urbanization. The Executive Director also invited them to Nanjing to keep the momentum.

A Round Table Conference of Parliamentarians should be appropriate to hold during the IV WUF conference in Nanjing, China as in the past forums. The President of GPH and representatives may be invited in the opening session to deliver a statement and also to participate in dialogue sessions.

3. Objective and expected outcome:

   Main objective is to bring the parliamentarians together for a common understanding and to commit to work in their respective counties to pass relevant legislations and adopt policies and commit some funds for implementing those legislations and policies

4. Theme and topics to be discussed: Cities and Climate change and the role of Global parliamentarians

5. Structure and ways the round table to be conducted: As in the last WUFIII

6. Speakers: Participating parliamentarians and ministers

7. Chairs: Senator Eloy Countu Segovia, President GPH and Hon Kumari Selja, chairperson of GC21

8. Participants and size of the event: about 100 participants

9. Expected contribution from Chinese co-host

   i. To act as a co-host work with UN-HABITAT (GPH, UCLG) on the preparation and organization of the roundtable
ii. To make comments on and finalize the theme, structure, and select speakers and chairs
iii. To invite some participants through its bilateral channels
iv. To send joint invitations to participants
v. To designate a focal point for the event

A small working group shall be set up with members from the Chinese co-hosts, UN-HABITAT, GPH, UCLG.

**RTB4: Habitat Partner Universities**

* Please note that the Habitat Partner University Round Table concept note is currently being finalized by the Habitat Partner Universities, as leads and Chair of this Round Table, and will be made available as soon as possible.

**Title:** Habitat Partner University Round Table  
**Date & Venue:** to be determined  
**Host/Chair:** to be determined (Habitat Partner University)  
**Focal point UN-Habitat:** Lars Reutersward, alternate: Helen Andreasson

**Background – Habitat Partner Universities**

The concept of Habitat Partner Universities stems from the recognition that UN-Habitat needs to enlarge its cooperation with institutions of higher education, as well as facilitate exchange and cooperation between universities in developed and developing countries, in order to promote sustainable urban development.

Habitat Partner Universities are institutions willing to be active in promoting the socially and environmentally sustainable development of towns and cities in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals and the targets and objectives agreed upon at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Habitat Partner Universities further encourage interaction and cooperation between institutions of higher education based upon the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit, as well as promote an integrated approach to the ecological, economic, social and cultural dimensions of the sustainable development of human settlements.

**Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

The Habitat Partner University collaboration concept was launched at WUF3, in June 2006. Two years later, at WUF4, the existing set of Habitat Partner Universities, as well as universities in the process of acquiring Habitat Partner University status, will meet to discuss their different approaches to working with sustainable urban development issues, as well as ways to enhance their collaboration with each other, external universities and networks, and with UN-Habitat.

**Theme and Specific Topics**

The Roundtable will provide space for very brief presentations from the attending partners on:
- Current focus and activities
- Existing networks and partners
- Ways forward; visions for development of educational/research programmes, possibilities for future activities and focus, possible collaboration with new partners as relevant.

**Structure of the Round Table**
- each existing and prospective Habitat Partner University will be given 5-10 minutes to present their current focus, activities and networks
- open discussion on ways forward for the Habitat Partner University collaboration
  i) modalities and possible areas for future collaboration between Habitat Partner Universities
  ii) thematic issues/areas of collaboration

Participants

Chair: to be determined (tentatively the Norwegian University of Technology)

Existing Habitat Partner Universities: Chalmers University of Technology; Norwegian University of Technology; Helsinki University of Technology

Prospective Habitat Partner Universities: McGill University; University of Venice; Delft University of Technology; University of Nairobi; Maseno University

UN-Habitat representatives

The Roundtable will be open for attendance by other interested parties as observers.

RTB5: Habitat Professionals

Theme: Managing Mega Cities

This roundtable meeting aims to bring together Habitat Professionals committed to improving the lives of the urban poor towards harmonious cities.

Invitees: Representatives of professional groups such as architects, planners, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, lawyers, land economists committed to improve the living condition in mega cities.

Duration: 3 hours
Languages: English/Chinese

Attendance: 50 to 80 participants (upon invitation – observers/media allowed). Room for 120 persons.
Partners: members of the Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF)

Objectives: To bring together professionals on the issue of managing Mega Cities, especially in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and the UN-HABITAT Agenda. The objectives are to present various professional approaches to managing Mega Cities and agree on core business principles of cooperation in this complex area. The meeting should develop a set of recommendations on strategies for future cooperation on improving the living conditions for the urban poor in Mega Cities.

Outcomes: The meeting should produce the following outcomes:

- Recommendations for future cooperation on improving the living conditions in Mega Cities
- Strategies for strengthening the role of the Professional Forum as a key UN-HABITAT partner.

RTB6: Urban Researchers

Theme: Sustainable and Harmonious Urban Development: Issues and Policy Challenges (to be amended, depending on the specific dimension of sustainable urban development chosen for discussion)

Background
The thematic focus of UN-HABITAT’s Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan 2008-2013 (MTSIP 2008-2013) is sustainable urban development, while the strategic objectives of the Plan are:

- To develop and advocate norms for sustainable and harmonious urban development, upgrading and prevention of slums as well as poverty reduction;
- To improve global knowledge and understanding of urban development issues and development strategies; engage in monitoring and dissemination of best practices about progress in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the relevant MDGs;
- To build capacity of governments, local authorities and Habitat Agenda partners through technical cooperation and training; and
- To develop innovative pro-poor mechanisms for financing of housing and urban services and infrastructure and promote their up-scaling by appropriate development actors and investors.

In line with the MTSIP, UN-HABITAT’s normative work, including its flagship reports, will, during the period 2008-2013, focus on different dimensions of sustainable urban development.

**Objective and Scope**

The objective of the Urban Researchers Roundtable at WUF IV will be to explore the fundamental issues and policy challenges in only one of the important dimensions of sustainable urban development that UN-HABITAT’s normative work will need to address during the implementation of the MTSIP 2008-2013.

The Roundtable will focus on one of the following specific sub-themes or dimensions, one of which will be the focus of the 2011 issue of the Global Report on Human Settlements:

(i) Cities and climate change;
(ii) Urban transport and mobility;
(iii) Sustainable housing (focusing on the environmental and technological aspects of sustainability).

**Outcomes**

The results of the Roundtable will provide inputs to the 2011 issue of the Global Report on Human Settlements, as well as a set of research-based policy recommendations on the dimension of sustainable urban development discussed.

**Participants/Invitees**

UN-HABITAT will identify a lead partner research institution to coordinate the Roundtable. Leading researchers on the dimension of sustainable urban development to be discussed will be identified and requested to prepare substantive, research-based, papers for presentation and discussion at the Roundtable. Research institutions, research networks and individual institutions will be invited to participate in the Roundtable.

**RTB7: Business**

**Corporate Responsibility Towards Harmonious Cities**

This roundtable meeting aims to bring together business entities committed to corporate responsibility and improving the lives of the urban poor towards harmonious cities.

**Invitees**: leaders from business and industry, policy experts, representatives of communities and other stakeholders working with the business sector.
Duration: 3 hours

Languages: English/Chinese

Attendance: 50 to 80 participants (upon invitation – observers/media allowed). About 120 persons expected.

Partners: All China Federation of Chambers of Commerce, China Real Estate Chamber of Commerce, and UN-HABITAT.

Objectives: to identify key steps for improving the contribution to the urban poor through bottom-of-the-pyramid market approaches and agree on core business principles to corporate responsibility for sustainable urbanization.

Challenges: Given the challenge of urban poverty, with 1 billion slum dwellers projected to rise to more than 1.4 billion by 2020, UN-HABITAT is well aware that the private sector is not merely a part of the solution, but instead is a vital partner that must be engaged if the world’s cities are to achieve sustainability. The challenge is first and foremost to address the shelter and basic services needs of low-income segments in urban areas. A further challenge is to scale-up operations through new partnerships in order to address the daunting challenge of rapid urbanization. Ensuring harmonious cities starts by dealing with the slums and finding affordable solutions for those deprived of decent housing.

Outcomes
- a set of recommendations to UN-HABITAT and other partners on steps for improving the contribution to the urban poor through bottom-of-the-pyramid market approaches.
- a set of core business principles to corporate responsibility for sustainable urbanization.

RTB8: Women and Harmonious Cities

Women account for a large number of the global poor as they lack security of tenure because they are denied their property rights. They have limited access to basic services, infrastructure and finances, as well as to decision making and governance structures. Women are largely affected by violence, insecurity and the fear of crime both in public and private spheres. They bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change and disasters globally. While spatial, economic, social and environmental planning processes have excluded women and their needs, financing for urban development and gender equality also remains considerably inadequate.

One cannot talk about harmonious cities, balanced territorial development and sustainable urbanization without addressing the issues of inequity and social exclusion which affect millions of the urban poor, especially women, unemployed youth, the elderly and disabled as well as children in difficult circumstances. Although town planning aims at improving the physical, social and health aspects of urban areas to foster greater well-being of communities and promote economic prosperity, in most cases the familiar methods like ‘planning for people’, and ‘universal design’ do not necessarily tackle the needs, issues, priorities and experiences of women in cities and towns, hence the limited achievement of women empowerment and gender equality through planning.

Today, cities and towns are facing the challenges of poverty, climate change, insecurity and growing inequities between the rich and poor. Equity, good governance, gender awareness in planning, inclusive decision making in all spheres of development are some of the key guiding principles necessary for sustainable urbanization. Not only do women play a major role in creating socially and environmentally harmonious cities, they also have a wide range of practices, knowledge and strategies for sharing at the global level.
This roundtable will bring together women from all spheres including women organizations and networks, professionals, institutes, non-governmental organizations, Governments, local authorities, grassroots, researchers and other stakeholders to explore how addressing the needs and issues of women through planning can create sustainable and harmonious environments. The roundtable will provide impetus to the dialogues on harmonious urbanization themes.

Objectives of the Round Table

The women roundtable has three broad objectives:

1. To examine the conditions of cities which exclude women’s realities as reflected in their sustainable urbanization policies and practices.

2. To strengthen linkages among partners working to promote women and gender concerns into the various planning process, and agree on strategies for integration of gender concerns into the WUF IV debates.

3. To explore how women and gender awareness planning can help to create harmonious cities and address the differential impacts of urban development.

China Partners:
All China Women’s federation

RTB9: Youth and Harmonious Cities

Background.

We live in a youthful world where almost half of the global population is under the age of 24; At present, 1.2 billion people on the planet are younger than 15. Any nation’s effectiveness in managing this reality will depend on well thought-out investments into targeted programmes and policy that will improve the situation and livelihood of the world younger generation.

Why invest in young people? There are both economic and social reasons. According to the World Bank report of 2007, children and youth represent the greatest leverage point for investments in human capital and the principal means by which to reduce intergenerational poverty. The current generation of young people is more educated and healthier than previous generations, which is a strong base for countries to build on a global economy that demands more than basic skills. Many also bring to their societies dynamism, openness, creativity, forms of self-organization, and networking skills that are critical assets for development. Particularly in this urbanizing and globalization world, it is the creative energy of the youth that inclusive cities have to take into account in order to be able to talk about meaningful development and productive work force. Issues affecting children and youth are often framed as problems germane to underdeveloped rural areas rather than cities. Indeed, in general, cities appear to foster the healthy development of children and youth, providing easier access to education, health care and employment for young men and women than is available in rural villages. However, not all who grow up in cities benefit from the so-called “urban advantage”.

How can one harmonize and synthesize the various interests, diverse opinions and inherent contradictions within cities? Half of humanity now lives in cities, and within the next two decades, nearly 60 per cent of the world’s people will be city dwellers. How can one create harmony between the physical, environmental and cultural aspects of a city and the human beings that inhabit it? Cities are now the domain of the young in the developing world, and becoming the domain of the old in developed world. How can we assure that cities maintain inter-generational balance and harmony between these generations?
Objectives /Expected outcomes

This round table meeting aims at bringing together youth and adults who are committed to making a contribution towards harmonious urbanization. It will build on the outcomes of the 2006 youth round table that was held during the Third Session of the World Urban Forum which focused on turning ideas into action. The deliberations of the youth round table will be within the context of the WUF-IV theme of Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development. Youth are agents of change and have a role to play. They must be seen as an integral part of an inclusive process in deliberations on the issues of harmonious urbanization and its implications for spatial, socio-economic, environmental, cultural and generational harmony. Youth must also be included in the discussions on other issues such as the role of government and planning, and how the different generational interests in an urban context can be reconciled, particularly how the interest of the youth and older generations can contribute towards harmonious urbanization. One of the main objectives is to bring together various stakeholders groups to discuss and make recommendations for maintaining intergeneration balance and harmony for the management of cities.

But specific the round table will give

a) Concrete recommendations to UN-HABITAT
b) Concrete recommendation to the governments; and,
c) Advance the promotion of Millennium Development Goals World Youth Programme of Action.

Theme: Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development.

Specific topics/ Questions

1. Environmental Harmony.
2. Socio-economic Harmony
3. Cultural and Generational Harmony
4. The Role of Government and Planning

Structure of Round Table:
i) One key presentation for 15-20 minutes.
ii) Discussants views (15-20)
iii) General Debate

Participants: Between 50-100
Chair Prof. Willem van Vliet, Colorado University
Vice Chair Mr. Wang Yu Hopkins Nanjing Center (China)
Environmental Youth Alliance
International Centre for Sustainable Cities
Glocal Forum
Oslo Youth Centre

RTB10: Civil Society Organizations and NGO

1. Background

Historically, the World Urban Forum (WUF) is a very important event for CSOs/NGOs which work in the area of urban development. CSOs/NGOs constitute the largest partner group at WUF. As a result, the round table on CSOs/NGOs is well attended and the topics discussed are of significance for the entire WUF. The CSOs/NGOs round table at WUF3 in Vancouver, for example debated, inter alia, the issues of right to adequate housing, forced evictions and the protection of displaced people. The forthcoming
WUF4 round table in Nanjing on sustainable urbanization and harmonious cities appears to be very relevant for UN-Habitat’s CSOs/NGOs partners.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

An important objective of the round table will be to provide a platform for CSOs/NGOs to discuss issues of sustainable urbanization and the goal of harmonious cities. A corollary objective of the round table will be to strengthen the capacity of CSOs/NGOs with respect to addressing issues of sustainable urbanization and the goal of harmonious cities. Another objective of the round table is to discuss and comment on a draft CSOs/NGOs strategy paper prepared by UN-Habitat. Finally, it is also the goal of the round table to establish collaboration and strategic partnerships.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the round table will bring together umbrella CSOs/NGOs from Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as from other regions, namely Northern America and Europe. This will allow the exchange of experience on sustainable urbanization between developed and developing countries.

The round table discussions will be instrumental in identifying the main strengths and weaknesses of CSOs/NGOs in their capacity to address issues of sustainable urbanization and to achieve the goal of harmonious cities. In this connection, ways and means will be elaborated on how CSOs/NGOs can best influence urban policy formulation at the local, national and international level. Since the UN-Habitat strategy paper will be on the agenda, the relationship of CSOs/NGOs vis-à-vis UN-Habitat will also be subject to detailed discussions. It is expected that the Dialogues, other round tables and networking events will benefit from the discussion and conclusions of the CSOs/NGOs round table.

3. Theme

CSOs/NGOs: Partners and Catalysts for Sustainable Urbanization and Harmonious Cities.

4. Specific topics and questions

Topic 1: Strengthening CSOs/NGOs capacity to address issues of sustainable urbanization and to achieve the goal of harmonious cities.

Questions: How can the capacity of CSOs/NGOs be strengthened? How can increased capacity be made operational and reach as many people as possible? What is the role of South-South and North-South cooperation in exchanging experiences and building capacity?

Topic 2: Influencing international, national and local policies and strategies on sustainable urbanization and harmonious cities.

Questions: How can CSOs/NGOs be engaged in order to influence sustainable urbanization policies and strategies? What are the specific considerations associated with the various levels of intervention?

Topic 3: Up-scaling urban development interventions through strategic partnerships with CSOs/NGOs.

Questions: What are the necessary conditions for CSOs/NGOs partnerships to make urban development interventions go to scale?

5. Structure of the roundtable

The scheduled time for the round table is 3 hours. After a general introduction by the
chair, the three topics will be introduced by selected umbrella CSOs/NGOs. The discussions and conclusions for each topic will last approximately 50 minutes so that there is some time for discussions on the way forward and summary by the chair.

6. Participants

Tentative list: participation will be on the basis of gender and regional balance.

Habitat International Coalition (Chair); Enda Tiers Monde; Slum Dwellers International; Asian Habitat Society; Glocal Forum; United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service

RTB11: Indigenous Peoples in Urban Areas:

Balanced Territorial Development: Addressing Indigenous Peoples Needs in Urban Areas

Lead partner: Government of Canada (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, DIAND)

1. Background

There has been an accelerated migration of indigenous peoples to urban areas, and urbanization itself is also increasingly affecting indigenous peoples in both developed and developing countries. Despite benefits such as proximity to social facilities and job opportunities, indigenous peoples living in towns and cities generally face substantial difficulties as a result of disrespect for their human rights affecting their living conditions. Indigenous women and youth are usually the worst affected by discrimination in these areas.

2. Objectives and expected outcome

UN-HABITAT, within the framework of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG), is coordinating the development of policy guidelines for national and local authorities in order to address challenges faced by indigenous peoples in urban areas, and create required tool kits and training materials.

At this event an expert panel will highlight the main difficulties of urban indigenous peoples in regards to their living conditions. UN-HABITAT and OHCHR will launch their “Policy Guide to Urban Indigenous Peoples’ Housing”, which is the first in a set of policy guides being produced through the IASG. During the event key UN agencies developing policy guides on specific thematic areas, including health, culture, education, employment and human security, will present their progress on these and agree on priority areas for tool development.

3. Theme

The Round Table on Indigenous Peoples particularly links to the World Urban Forum’s main focus of the challenge of balanced territorial development, as well as the Dialogue themes; socially and environmentally harmonious cities. Indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable as regards discrimination, and are therefore often hindered from participating fully in the social, political and economic spheres of the city. Environmental challenges have also been seen to have a particular impact on indigenous peoples, due to climate change effects on their traditional lands, which has aided in accelerating migration to urban areas. Rapidly expanding urban areas also threaten to encroach on indigenous peoples’ lands and cultural heritage sites. Incoming indigenous migrants to cities have particular needs, including spatial needs, in order to be able to exercise their customs and traditions.
4. Topics for Discussion

- Challenges facing indigenous peoples in urban areas
- Working with local authorities to address these challenges; lessons learned, on-going work
- Presentation of and discussion on Policy Guides on specific challenges facing urban indigenous peoples, looking at ways forward

5. Structure of the Round Table

1. Expert panel; discussing challenges particular to indigenous peoples in urban areas
2. Open discussion on these challenges
3. Presentation by relevant IASG partners of Policy Guides- completed and in progress
4. Open discussion on Policy Guides and ways forward, focus on tool development

6. Participants

Chair: to be determined (possibly a representative from the Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues)
Representatives of Indigenous Peoples’ organizations and supporting Government Units
Representatives of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the IASG
UN Agencies producing policy guides (ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, UNDP)
Selected experts
The Round Table will be open for attendance by other interested parties as observers.

RTB12: The Global Land Tool Network

1. Brief Background

Through the 1996 UN-HABITAT Agenda (paragraph 39, Chapter III), States have affirmed their commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, as provided for in international instruments. Many States have constitutional guarantees and specific laws and policies aimed at promoting and safeguarding women’s equal rights to land, property and housing. UN-HABITAT, though its global mandate, has been actively involved in supporting these initiatives through numerous activities. UN-HABITAT’s Global Campaigns for Secure Tenure and Urban Governance have prioritised gender rights, placing women’s security of tenure at the centre of the policy debate and advocacy actions, and promoting approaches to secure tenure which can benefit both women and men equally.

The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) focuses on the development of pro-poor, gendered and large scale land tools which currently do not exist at country and global levels and which will block the delivery of the MDGs, especially number 7 and target 11. The focus is in particular on affordable land record, land tax, land information, land administration and management as well as land planning systems, within a governance framework.

There is an unequal distribution of land, both in urban and rural areas, in many countries in Africa, South America and Asia. In the majority of the countries, elites are holding vast amounts of land and the poor groups in the society are being forced to live on small portions of land. In general, the poor have inadequate land resources for their socio-economic needs, as well as limited (if any) security of tenure. The problem is not being addressed sufficiently, however, often due to lack of political will, but also

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1 This concept note draws on findings published in the GLTN Gender Mechanism of 19-12-06 and the Policymakers Guide to Women’s Land Property and Housing Rights Across the World (UN-HABITAT, 2007).
because there are insufficient technical tools to deliver land reform and tenure security to the poor in the urban and rural areas. Existing and new technical land tools tend to focus on the delivery of land to the middle and commercial classes in the developing countries.

GLTN is a demand driven network, where many individuals and groups have come together to address a commonly agreed global problem. No one partner can solve the issue on its own, and there is a general recognition that this has to be done as a joint effort. Member States and other stakeholders have to have pro-poor land tools to deliver security of tenure, land management and land reform to the poor, and particularly to women. Without such tools it will not be possible to reach MDGs 1, 3, and 7; have sustainable human settlements' development, adequate housing for all and/or food security.

The initiative for gendering land tools is an outcome of a series of meeting organized by UN-HABITAT and its partners on women’s land, property and housing issues in the past few years. It is informed by the wealth of consultations, studies, international principles and review of implementing strategies – which are reflected in the various stages of gendering tools discussed in this mechanism. It was initially formulated through a series of UN-HABITAT meetings and then elaborated though multi-stakeholder consultations, in response to gaps in effective gendered land tools as identified by governments, professionals and civil society.

2. Statement and global context of the problem

Despite progress on women’s rights on some fronts over the last few decades, it is recognized that women’s access to land and security of tenure has noticeably declined. Development approaches to implement women’s land rights driven largely by a poverty-alleviation (pro-poor) agenda have been largely ineffectual. Women are disproportionately affected by gender blind/neutral approaches and are unable to access ‘paper rights’.

Governments, civil society, land professionals and analysts generally point to the paucity of effective and scalable gendered land tools as hindering the realization of these rights. Tools, which have for long been devised on male interests and priorities, need to be developed recognizing women’s experiences, needs and participation, in order to be effective. However, this process of gendering land tools is not concerned with all tools or even all gender tools or land tools but only those scalable gendered land tools which fall within the GLTN agenda as agreed by GLTN partners.

Women-headed households typically represent a high proportion of the poorest living in informal settlements worldwide, for example, 26% of the population in Brazil and 20% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Inadequate housing, poor location, scarce access to potable water as well as to electricity, public transportation, telecommunications, health and education services, all have a great impact on the daily lives of women.

Consequently, there is considerable demand for popular housing programmes of social interest by women-headed households. Women who become single heads of household are particularly vulnerable: since women’s access to land is often through their husbands or fathers, they may lose such access after widowhood, divorce, desertion, or male migration.

Women’s property rights are likely better to succeed where a woman’s right to own land is seen as more than a mere economic asset, and is recognized as a cultural and societal right, such as in Bulgaria or Russia, or where property ownership is seen as a social function, as in the Brazilian constitution, or where collective rights to land must also be recognized, as in Colombia.

3. Objectives of the Round Table

3.1 Objective: Follow up the commitments made by partners at WUF 3 in Vancouver on adopting and implementing the Gender Mechanism of GLTN, as well as the Grassroots and the Islamic Mechanism.
3.2 Objective: Exploring linkages and synergies among ongoing initiatives by partners, as well as within GLTN's, i.e., relating to the gender mechanism, linking up to the grassroots and Islamic land tools initiatives.

3.3 Objective: Intensified commitment by GLTN partners to the GLTN agenda and acknowledgement of the importance of the gender component when spearheading harmonious urbanization.

4. Expected Outputs
Implementing gendered land tools entails addressing existing social, economic and political inequalities in rural and urban areas through a systematic and cross-cutting strategy. Hence, this event and round table by GLTN has linkages to the following Dialogue sub-themes:

i) **Socially harmonious cities** (linkages to all themes incorporated therein)
ii) **Economically harmonious cities** (in particular urban informal economies)
iii) **Spatially harmonious cities** (including planning, rural-urban linkages & mixed land use)

5. Participants
The Round Table event, given the approach by the Global Land Tool Network, the extent of the problem addressed, has to attract a multi-stakeholder audience. Hence, the vision is to invite government representatives, non-governmental and civil society organizations, local authorities, and representatives of UN agencies.

- Total participants attending the Round Table event: 150
- Total participants thereof taking place at the table: 20

6. Number of invitees to be sponsored/self sponsored invitees
GLTN will be funding 30 participants, wherein 15 will be from LDCs. Among the total number, 20 participants will be invited to be represented around the table.

7. Proposed speakers
The attending RT participants will provide input to the discussion. Suggestions for invitees are the partners of the GLTN (i.e., a total of 24 including multilateral – and bilateral organizations, research institutes and civil society organisations):

i. CASLE (Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy)
ii. COHRE (Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions)
iii. FAO (United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization)
iv. FIG (International Federation of Surveyors)
v. Huairou Commission 
vi. IHS (Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies)
vii. International Union of Land Value Taxation
viii. ITC (International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation)
ix. UNECA (United Nation Economic Commission for Africa)
x. UEL (University of East London)
xi. World Bank
xii. CLEP (Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor)
xiii. HIC (Habitat International Coalition)
xiv. IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development)
xv. IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development)
xvi. ILC (International Land Coalition)
xvii. Lincoln Institute
xviii. MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation)
xix. Norway MFA (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
xx. RDI (Rural Development Institute)
xxi. SDI (Slum/Shack Dwellers International)