Update on Preparations for the Fifth Session
Of the World Urban Forum (WUF 5)

Agenda Item 7

Statement by the Executive Director
Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka

HSP/CPR/35/7

Nairobi, 7 December 2009
Excellencies,

It is now my pleasure to present an update on preparations for the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum which will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 22 to 26 March 2010, under the theme ‘The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide’.

The substantive content of the Forum comprises six dialogues, from which emanated twelve breakout thematic debates; twelve roundtables; 152 networking events; 24 training events; six special sessions; two sessions of the business caucus; 57 side events and an exhibition with 200 booths. Details on the status of preparation of these events and information on how partners can participate, including how to apply to organize an event, are on our website at www.unhabitat.org/wuf, with links provided to Frequently Asked Questions on all aspects of the Forum.

Still on the substantive content, I am happy to confirm that this has been deepened in line with the advice we have received from you, responses we analysed from the participants’ surveys, and evaluation reports. The twelve thematic debates are break out sessions designed to enable deeper discussions of topical issues related to the dialogues. These have provided avenues for involving more of our key partners directly in organizing the substantive contents of the Forum, and in collaboration with the Host Country as well.

The E-debates, which we introduced to you at our last meeting, have turned out to be quite successful, and we have registered high quality participation by partner’s worldwide. Four of the six E-debates have been concluded, the fifth will close today, and the sixth and last will close on 18 December. Highlights of these debates will be fed into the Dialogues in Rio, to enhance the overall quality of the content of the Forum.

Since my last briefing to you in September, there has been a second mission to Rio, from 3 – 6 November, during which all aspects of the Forum were discussed, and we can confirm to date that preparations are on course and have reached an advanced stage. The final Programme outline will be posted on our website during the course of this week.

The online registration for participation opened on 8 October 2009 and, to date, over 3,000 people from over 100 countries have registered. Of course, we are aware that not every one who registers may attend the Forum in Rio, but these figures give us an indication of the current level of awareness and response to the Forum. Allow me then,
Excellencies, to urge you to encourage all partners from your countries to register in time and participate.

Let me also take this opportunity to appeal to as many members of the CPR to attend the Forum in Rio. In the light of your hard work, commitment, guidance and dedication in the preparation for the World Urban Forum, it is only fair to all of us to participate fully in the event itself.

**Budget and Financing**

The Conference Agreement with the Host Country was signed on 21 October 2009 and we have been informed that the agreed sum of USD2.9 million is being transferred to our accounts this week. I wish to thank the Government of Brazil for this commitment.

On 16 October 2009, we sent out our customary letters requesting governments who are in a position to do so, to support the preparations of the World Urban Forum, especially in the area of travels for participants from Least Developed Countries, including Youth and Women, and sponsorship of renowned speakers and experts. To date, we have received encouraging responses from two Governments with promises of contribution. I would like, once again, to appeal to you for assistance in order to fill identified gaps in our preparations.

Excellencies, I would like to express the Secretariat’s sincere appreciation for your support in getting us this far with the preparations for WUF5, and to assure you that indication of interest reaching us so far from our partners, including key Government delegations at Ministerial level, gives us the confidence that we shall not only have a good Forum in Rio, but that, indeed, the Forum is well established as a global platform for discourse on the challenges of an urbanized world. The proposal to launch at this session of the Forum, the World Urban Campaign, which we referred to at the last CPR meeting, is also a significant development that will substantively enhance Focused Area One of the MTSIP.

I would like at this point, with your permission, Madame Chair, to invite the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Brazil to make a presentation.