The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Representation Office to the European Union and Belgium has the pleasure to invite you to the 2009 European Celebrations of World Habitat Day on Monday 5 October at the European Parliament.

The United Nations designates the first Monday in October each year as World Habitat Day. The idea is to reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right to adequate shelter. It is also intended to remind us of our collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

This year, the United Nations chose the theme Planning our urban future to raise awareness of the need to improve urban planning to deal with global challenges currently being faced. This is because urban settlements are being influenced by new and powerful forces. In both developed and developing countries, cities and towns are increasingly feeling the effects of climate change, resource depletion, food insecurity, population growth and economic instability.

On World Habitat Day, UN-HABITAT launches its 2009 Global Report on Human Settlements, Planning Sustainable Cities. The report assesses the effectiveness of urban planning all over the world and identifies innovative approaches that are more responsive to the challenges of sustainable urbanization.

Now, more than ever, there is an increasing need to improve urban planning to deal with new major challenges of the 21st century. We hope you will be able to join us on this occasion.

UN-HABITAT EXHIBITION

The UN-HABITAT Exhibition will be hosted by the European Parliament from 5 to 8 October 2009.

In accordance with the United Nations Millennium Declaration, UN-HABITAT is the UN Agency mandated to help attain the millennium target set by world leaders to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020 (Millennium Development Goal No: 7, target 11).

The exhibition will therefore offer the opportunity to acquire further information about UN-HABITAT’s initiatives and programmes which have a measurable impact upon urban poor around the world. The exhibition also aims to highlight the importance of urban planning, slum upgrading, cities and climate change towards achieving sustainable urbanization in light of the rapid urban population growth currently being witnessed on a global scale.
Cities embody some of society’s most pressing challenges, from pollution and disease to unemployment and lack of adequate shelter. But cities also present real opportunities for increasing energy efficiency, reducing disparities in development and improving living conditions in general. History demonstrates that integrated urban policy can be a solid path towards development”.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, 2008