



THE WUF3 EXPERIENCE | A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

OUR FUTURE: Sustainable Cities | Turning Ideas Into Action

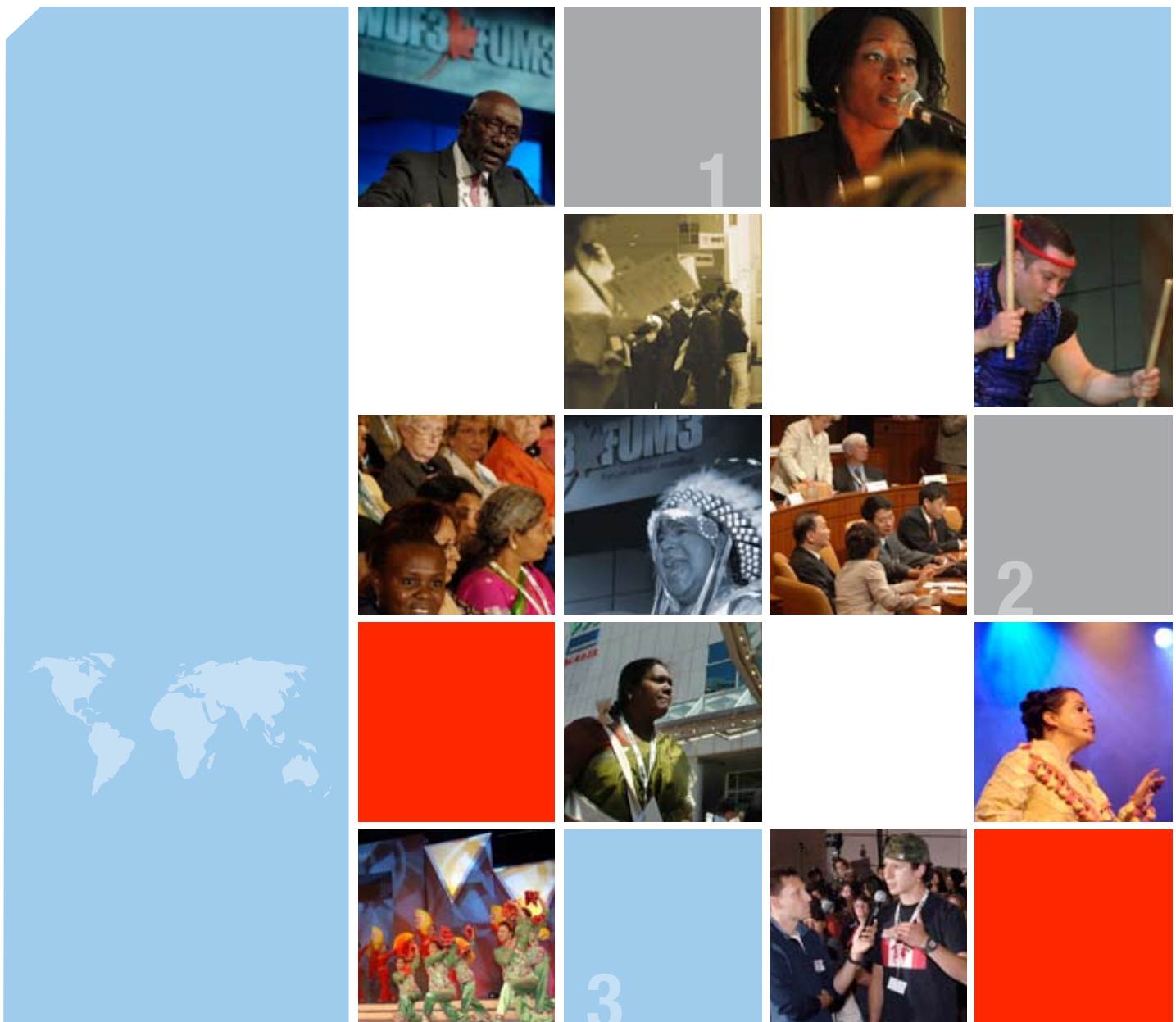


Table of Contents

Preface	3
Part I An Overview of WUF3	
Introduction	6
Major Themes and Events of WUF 3	8
WUF3 Outcomes	9
Part II The Road to WUF3	
The New Urban Reality and the Evolution of WUF	14
Canada's Contributions to Preparing for WUF3	15
The Habitat JAM	17
Part III The WUF3 Experience	
WUF3: The Events and the Coverage	20
Inside the WUF3 events: Issues, Ideas and Best Practices	23
From Vancouver to Nanjing	28



This report on the World Urban Forum 3 (WUF3) experience, and the accompanying web presentation, was prepared by the WUF3 Canada Secretariat, with the assistance of the GLOBE Foundation, who served as the organizing body for the event. The report is provided in English and French, Canada's two official languages, and should be reviewed in conjunction with reports on WUF3 issued by UN-HABITAT.

This Canadian perspective on WUF3 was prepared especially for the benefit of the many people around the world who were unable to make it to Vancouver but would like some insight as to what transpired there. It is not a commentary on or assessment of the Forum.

While it is not possible to include a complete listing of every event, discussion and idea that took place and emerged from Vancouver 2006, the multi-media nature of the online report reflects our intent to offer readers and viewers the opportunity to appreciate more comprehensively the nature, scale and vitality of the Forum. The combination of text, photos and video excerpts seek to capture the spirit and highlights of WUF3. Hyperlinks are included throughout the text to give readers the opportunity to find out more information where available. Part I – An Overview of WUF3 is meant to summarize the overall document and provide readers with a one-stop WUF3 experience.

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1

An Overview of WUF3

PAGE **Introduction**

6

PAGE **Major Themes
and Events
of WUF3**

8

PAGE **WUF3
Outcomes**

9

Part I: An Overview of WUF3

Introduction

The World Urban Forum is a UN-HABITAT-sponsored event held every two years for civil society, national governments, municipal leaders, academics, community-based organizations, private sector representatives and urban professionals to share experiences on how to make our cities and communities better places to live.

Hosted by the Government of Canada in cooperation with UN-HABITAT, and organized by the GLOBE Foundation, the Third Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, June 19-23, 2006. The Forum marked the 30th anniversary of the first United Nations Habitat Conference, also held in Vancouver, in 1976.

Having Vancouver as the site of WUF3 was not only important for historical reasons, but also because it is considered a model of sustainable urban development.

Twenty-five thousand people registered for WUF3 and over 10,000 participants came to Vancouver from more than 150 countries. This was more than double the participation level at the Second Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF2) in Barcelona in 2004, making WUF3 one of the largest United Nations meetings held in the last two years.



Although participation from the Americas was very strong, participation from outside of North America was also impressive, with almost half of the top ten countries represented in Vancouver coming from the developing world.

Canada and UN-HABITAT were committed to ensuring that the Forum was as inclusive as possible, with balanced participation from public, private and civil society sectors as well as by region. National governments sent 70 ministers to WUF3 and 400 mayors attended. Financial support from numerous sources helped many of these and other urban partners from around the world participate in record numbers in Vancouver. These included representatives of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, slum dwellers, the private sector, youth, women (almost 50% of participants were female) and aboriginal peoples.

For the first time in history, the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas. The more than 100 speakers that addressed WUF3 emphasized the growing and central importance of cities and communities in the affairs of humankind. Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in his address, spoke of the enduring reality of cities: "urbanization is a powerful, irresistible phenomenon... throughout history great cities have been a hallmark of successful societies".

Anna Tibaijuka, the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, reinforced the Prime Minister's words and highlighted the need for political attention on urban issues: "Clearly, if the evolution of urban governance is to keep pace



with the revolution of urbanization, our politics must also become urbanized. New ideas, from urban policy and urban finance, investment priorities, to tenure reform and participatory decision-making, can help update the political landscape by planting the city – as the essential ‘community of communities’ – squarely in the mainstream of national and international politics”.

Speakers and participants at WUF3 emphasized that meeting the challenges of rapid urbanization did not mean stopping the growth of cities, but determining how they could grow in a sustainable way. As Katherine Sierra of the World Bank confirmed: “attempts by governments to control urban-rural migration flows have all ended in failure. We think it is time, rather, to focus on the positive impacts of urbanization, and to introduce policies to make cities more inclusive and more efficient”.

The co-chair of WUF3 and Canada's Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and Minister responsible for Housing, Diane Finley, focused on the key objectives of the Forum: “As host of the World Urban Forum, Canada's goal is to make this meeting practical and action-oriented. We want to help you forge meaningful networks and partnerships. To pick up workable concepts. And to come with the energy and enthusiasm to turn good ideas into great actions”.



Major Themes and Events of WUF3

Under the theme “Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action”, WUF3 provided the opportunity for participants to share innovative approaches and practical solutions to urban challenges in over 200 Forum meetings, plus many other activities that took place around Vancouver before and during the five day Forum.

The overarching theme was supported by three sub-themes: Urban Growth and the Environment; Partnership and Finance; and Social Inclusion and Cohesion.

- **Urban Growth and the Environment:** Sound planning and management are major factors in ensuring sustainable urban development. Issues include: how to involve citizens in planning; ensuring new innovative approaches to planning to create livable spaces; and how to reduce the energy consumption of cities to lessen their contribution to global warming.

- **Partnership and Finance:** Cities with strong and vibrant economies depend on the partnership efforts of many stakeholders at local, national and international levels. Issues include: balancing the need for a strong fiscal base while attracting foreign and domestic investment; encouraging the economic empowerment of youth and women; and preventing crime and conflict to contribute to economically productive and culturally vibrant cities and communities.

- **Social Inclusion and Cohesion:** Good urban governance and leadership are key to preventing marginalization, social exclusion and urban poverty. Issues include: how to reach the water, sanitation and slum upgrading targets of the Millennium Declaration; and ensuring urban policies and strategies benefit from public engagement and consultation.

These sub-themes were explored throughout the Forum’s many events, but especially during its plenary meetings, which included dialogues, special sessions and keynote speakers. Experts and leaders offered context, insight and inspiration, and skilled facilitators helped to engage participants in the discussion.

Networking sessions formed a key component of the Forum program. Over 400 organizations from around the world partnered to organize 163 sessions on various topics relevant to the main themes. Community-based organizations, the private sector, governments, United Nations agencies and urban planners came together to share their knowledge and best practices for creating sustainable cities with Forum participants.

WUF3 also highlighted the role of local governments in meeting the Millennium Development Goals as well as urban challenges in general. Mayors and municipal officials demonstrated their leadership in dealing with the challenges of urbanization.



WUF3 Outcomes

At the concluding session of the Forum, an initial report on the Forum's events prepared by the Advisory Board to the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT was tabled. The report outlines key messages that kept coming back during the Forum, including the need for municipal leaders to take risks and innovate; the importance of transparency and accountability; and the need for citizens to be informed of challenges and steps taken by government to address them.

In addition, the International Institute for Sustainable Development generated daily reports in English and French to document the various sessions of the Forum. Photos of the different sessions and events were also available. The daily reports, final report and photo highlights are available on the International Institute for Sustainable Development website.

Overall, participants agreed on a number of key principles such as the need for partnerships among public, private and civil society sectors, and the importance of adopting an inclusive approach that includes slum dwellers, women, youth, the private sector and local authorities.

Approaches based on the power of technology and urban agriculture for sustainable development were also considered critical to promoting and ensuring urban sustainability.

Participants shared new ideas and exchanged best practices, agreeing that the networking and information exchange was a valuable outcome of the Forum. Although they stressed that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, they were able to learn from what others in the developed and developing worlds are doing in their cities.

Among the many innovative approaches, mechanisms and concrete actionable ideas exchanged in Vancouver were the following:

- The Global Urban Sustainability Solutions Exchange (GUSSE): An online tool to discuss, review and apply best practices;
- CITIZENShift: An interactive platform from the National Film Board of Canada to explore social issues;
- MetroQuest: Software for users to see how decisions being made by city planners will affect communities;
- Measuring Up Toolkit: A guide to help make cities more inclusive and accessible;
- Habitat JAM: A global, online discussion on urbanization held in preparation to WUF3 that produced 70 actionable ideas;
- The commitment by Vancouver to create 2010 new garden plots before the next winter Olympics in 2010;
- An agreement between the City of Porto Alegre, Brazil, and GEOMAX International to demonstrate how to better manage municipal information;

- The Sustainability Corner where WUF3 participants were invited to share their own solutions and ideas;
- The announcement by the International Development Research Centre of 1.2 million dollars (CDN) in new funding for its Focus Research Cities program;
- A photo contest by the International Development Research Centre that showcased creative ways people are tackling the challenges of urban living;
- Millennium Campaign's "voices against poverty box": a recording booth that travels to major global events to build public support the Millennium Development Goals;
- Government of South Africa forming a formal partnership with slum dwellers to buy land and build houses;
- Partnership between the Mumbai Police Department and slum dwellers in Mumbai for community policing;
- AIMF project to increase the tax base of the local government of Niamey, Niger;
- Draft World Charter on the Right to the City and Aberdeen Agenda at the Commonwealth Local Governments Forum;
- Development of the book, "The Place of Children" to show how young people living in poverty are helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals;
- The announcement that the Canadian International Development Agency will provide over \$14 million CDN to several urban development partners for projects that seek to improve local governance and the local environment;

- Thinking Big: Responding to Urbanization in the Developing World, a Canadian International Development Agency booklet with excerpts from leading urban/development thinkers and successful urban projects;
- The Land and Poverty Observatory: decision-making tool that helps keep better track of urban and housing programs; and
- Action-planning workshops on HIV/AIDS and housing.

In addition to these and many other ideas and best practices discussed and exchanged at WUF3, numerous memoranda of understanding on specific urban issues and initiatives were signed during the Forum.

Further reports on aspects of WUF3 and next steps are and will be available on UN-HABITAT's website.

The next (fourth) session will be held in Nanjing, China in 2008.





2

The Road to WUF3

PAGE **14** **New Urban
Realities and
the Evolution
of WUF**

PAGE **15** **Canada's
Contributions
to Preparing
for WUF3**

PAGE **17** **The
Habitat
JAM**

New Urban Realities and the Evolution of WUF

At the first Habitat Conference in Vancouver in 1976 (Habitat I), urbanization and its impacts were new issues for the United Nations which was created just three decades earlier, when two-thirds of the world's population was still rural. By 1976, however, the world was starting to witness the greatest and fastest migration into cities and towns in history.

That Habitat I event led to the establishment of the UN Center for Human Settlements in 1978, now known as UN-HABITAT.

In 1976, one-third of the world's people lived in cities. Thirty years later in 2006, cities are home to half the world's population. The data suggest this proportion will continue to grow to two-thirds of the world's population - or 6 billion people - by 2050.

This projected urban population growth rate is equivalent to adding one new city of 1 million people, every week, for the next 30 years.

Unprecedented urban growth has been a double-edged sword. While resulting in rising national incomes, it has led to increased urban poverty. Without concerted action, the urban slum population is projected to increase to 1.4 billion by 2020, making 1 out of every 3 of the world's urban citizens impoverished, living in over-crowded and insecure living conditions.

The starkness of this reality was highlighted most recently by UN-HABITAT in their third State of the World's Cities Report (which was released during WUF3). The Report broke with previous thinking in its analysis that revealed the urban poor are suffering disproportionately. "For a long time, we suspected that the optimistic picture of cities did not reflect the reality on the ground", said Anna Tibaijuka, UN-HABITAT's

Executive Director. "This report provides concrete evidence that there are two cities within one city – one part of the urban population that has all the benefits of urban living, and the other part, the slums and squatter settlements, where the poor often live under worse conditions than their rural relatives."

Developing a concerted global action plan to tackle the challenges of poverty, including their urban dimension, was a key outcome of the 2000 UN Millennium Summit. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS by the target date of 2015, and to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million urban slum dwellers by 2020.

Two years later, in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the international community focused attention on how to turn its MDG and Agenda 21 commitments on poverty reduction and sustainable development into reality. The Report adopted at World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, recognized the importance of action at the local level and in urban areas.

UN-HABITAT's recently established World Urban Forum was described in the Plan as an event that "could serve to stimulate links among all levels for local action". It was at this time that Canada announced its offer to host WUF3 in 2006 in Vancouver.

Canada's Contributions to Preparing for WUF3

WUF3 built on the success of WUF2 held in Barcelona, Spain, in 2004. Canada, in partnership with UN-HABITAT and through a close alliance with the GLOBE Foundation in Vancouver, launched a marketing and communications campaign to raise awareness of the importance and the challenge of stimulating action at the local level. The World Urban Forum is a unique international conference open not just to officials but to everyone. To meet the challenge from UN-HABITAT to make the event more interactive and inclusive, several strategies were adopted to promote the widest possible participation.

Within the Government of Canada, a dedicated secretariat was established under the authority of the Minister responsible for Housing and tasked to co-ordinate Canada's hosting responsibilities, working closely with other federal departments and agencies and with other Canadian urban partners.

The Government also hired a professional event organizer – the Vancouver-based GLOBE Foundation – to manage the marketing and logistical requirements of the Forum. A detailed website with practical information about the Forum was subsequently created, and newsletters circulated periodically to over 20,000 people around the world.

To ensure broader Canadian partner engagement, the Government established a National Advisory Committee (NAC), comprised of over 40 people representing different sectors of society and regions of Canada. The NAC was co-chaired by Madame Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International and Chancellor of the University of Ottawa, and the Honourable Michael Harcourt, former Premier of British Columbia and Mayor of Vancouver. The Committee provided input to Canada's recommendations to UN-HABITAT on the themes, design and program of WUF3.

A more localized partners network – the Vancouver Working Group (VWG) - was also established with the

support of federal authorities to mobilize and focus the enthusiasm of local players from all parts of society. The Working Group involved over 50 organizations representing academic institutions, federal, provincial and municipal governments, and non-government organizations, including the private sector. They contributed advice, resources, partnerships and research in preparation for WUF3. For example, a series of research papers on urban issues were produced through a partnership involving the Province of British Columbia, the Environmental Youth Alliance, the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the Canadian Institute of Planners, the International Centre for Sustainable Cities and others.

The VWG also coordinated local events that occurred in conjunction with WUF3, such as the World Youth Forum and the World Planners Congress. In addition, monthly breakfast meetings were sponsored in cooperation with the Greater Vancouver Regional District to share information and build awareness and momentum leading up to WUF3. The decision by the Regional District to continue funding this breakfast series is an example of the local legacy of WUF3. Local sustainability practitioners will continue to network and to learn from each other.

At the request of the Government of Canada, the GLOBE Foundation also developed a green meeting strategy for WUF3. The WUF3 Climate Legacy was designed to

offset greenhouse gas emission generated due to the event through the direct purchase and retirement of verified emission reduction credits. The WUF3 Green procurement strategy reduced the ecological footprint of the event by using recycled and natural materials for participant bags and conference materials and requiring more than 75% of motorcoaches fuelled with B5 and B100 biodiesel. Participants were given free passes to the city's public transportation system and participant bags were made by Mothercraft/urban Aboriginal women. The implementation of the strategy by GLOBE has been evaluated by Meeting Strategies Worldwide Inc. and WUF3 has received a 4 Star MeetGreen Certification, making it the top-ranked green meeting using this certification process.

For Canada, the WUF3 greening strategy will be a potential model for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver/Whistler.

Canada and UN-HABITAT agreed that the greater involvement of city officials in the WUF3 program would be critical to its success. The Forum had to be relevant for mayors and other local government practitioners. To this end, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities was engaged to work closely with the Barcelona-based United Cities and Local Governments Secretariat to help shape the program, especially the key local government sessions. Together they developed a Mayors' roundtable; incorporated the Global Municipal Village into the Exposition; introduced a training series; and designed a municipal government day at WUF3.

Recognizing the important role of sub-national governments in local sustainability, and the value of partnerships among orders of government, Canada engaged the provincial and territorial ministries responsible for local government during the WUF3 preparations, and while in Vancouver for WUF3 the provincial and territorial ministers held parallel meetings with Canada's Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Minister, Lawrence Cannon, and joined the ministerial roundtable on June 19. To fulfill UN-HABITAT's request that WUF3 be "as inclu-

sive as possible", the Government of Canada provided financial support to both UN-HABITAT and directly to other partners in order to facilitate wider and balanced participation. This funding allowed hundreds of people from developing countries to participate at WUF3. A number of other governments also provided financial support to enable the travel of additional participants to Vancouver.

Ensuring that there was a useful balance of participants by not only region but also sector and gender was important. As a result of the efforts of Canada, the GLOBE Foundation, other donors, UN-HABITAT and key NGO partners, participation was very strong from a number of different sectors with a role to play in urban issues. Ministers from over 50 countries and hundreds of mayors attended the Forum. Participants in unprecedented numbers from non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, youth, aboriginal and women's groups came to Vancouver.

In an effort to encourage maximum interaction at WUF3, Canada, with additional support from China and the Russian Federation, planned significant interpretation services for the FORUM. As a result, more than two-thirds of the over 200 events at WUF3 were accessible in 2 or more languages, and almost all of the plenary sessions were accessible in the six official UN languages.



The Habitat JAM

Perhaps one of the most innovative and inclusive-supporting features Canada introduced in the lead up to WUF3 was an internet-based preparatory process called the Habitat JAM. The JAM was made possible through a partnership between Canada and IBM Corporation with support from the GLOBE Foundation. IBM's advanced online tools and technical support enabled a capacity for global and real-time dialogue and exchange. As a result, the JAM's participants helped set the agenda for WUF3.

The JAM brought together 39,000 people from 158 countries from December 1– 3, 2005, for 72 hours of online discussion on urban issues. It brought a new dimension to the preparations for WUF3, helping people meet online and pioneering a dynamic new way to build interest and engagement in the World Urban Forum. It was the first of its kind – the largest public consultation ever held on urban sustainability.

Over 400 partner organizations were involved in the JAM to ensure that the objective of inclusiveness was met. Organizations such as the Huairou Commission, the World Urban Forum Youth, the Mazingira Institute, Slum Dwellers International and many others were asked to help disadvantaged groups to access the JAM.

Thanks to their efforts, as many as 25,000 people without Internet access were able to share their ideas and stories with others in the JAM through live workshops, focus groups, JAM and Internet Cafés.

In addition, screen reading technology allowed visually impaired people to participate in the JAM. “I think this JAM is a great opportunity for people with disabilities to share our knowledge so we are creating a better world for all people” said a visually impaired ‘Jammer’. “It incorporates the special considerations that make it possible for people with disabilities to succeed, have fun and thrive like all others.

Overall, 91% of participants agreed that the JAM brought together people who might otherwise never be able to share ideas/information. Nearly 80% of participants agreed that the JAM is a valuable preparatory event for World Urban Forums. Please click here to view the JAM report.

Following the JAM, the International Centre for Sustainable Cities led a team of researchers and writers to analyze the transcripts and identify over 600 ideas generated by the JAM. Of these, 70 ideas were summarized in a workbook and accompanying CD and given to attendees of WUF3. The workbook and CD are intended to encourage people to move from ideas to action. They were designed for participants to keep notes of the actionable ideas discovered at the World Urban Forum to bring back to their own communities.

A special networking session at WUF3 was held to celebrate the legacy of the Habitat JAM. It was a chance for those who participated, as well as those who did not, to relive the excitement of the JAM and discuss the future of JAMs in the context of the World Urban Forum. Participants called for it to be an annual or bi-annual event with focused topics and target groups, and suggested that it could eventually progress to a global video conferencing event. They agreed on its usefulness as a tool to empower the disenfranchised and recommended a Habitat JAM for WUF4.





3 The WUF3 Experience

PAGE **20** **WUF3: The Events and the Coverage**

PAGE **23** **Inside the WUF3 events: Issues, Ideas and Best Practices**

PAGE **28** **From Vancouver to Nanjing**

This part of the report will describe not only what activities occurred during the Forum but also some of the ideas, approaches and implementation strategies that participants were exposed to and hopefully took back to their communities.

WUF3: The Events and the Coverage

The WUF3 program began with an opening ceremony and session that included a mix of entertainment and speeches by dignitaries.



Three plenaries organized around the three sub-themes, featured renowned speakers and media personalities to offer context and thought-provoking views that led smoothly into the Dialogue Sessions. Leading journalists and personalities moderated the dialogues to engage participants from the audience to join in on the discussions. The dialogues allowed slum dwellers, women, youth, mayors, government officials and others to engage in dialogue together, speaking freely to one another.

For the first time Roundtables were offered on June 19th and June 21st, they brought together ministers, mayors, parliamentarians, youth, women and other peer groups into smaller sessions to share experiences and views on the topics related to the Forum. UN-HABITAT, the Government of Canada, the GLOBE Foundation, and the partner organizations that planned the roundtables, designed the agendas of these sessions to ensure that they centered on the themes of the conference. Many of the roundtables touched upon multiple themes, including partnerships, social inclusion and urban planning.

Networking events were a major focus of the conference. Over 400 organizations partnered to put on 163 sessions. Non-governmental organizations, local, provincial and national governments, academics and community-based organizations combined to show how their partnerships were enabling action in urban areas. Participants had the opportunity to build knowledge, strengthen partnerships and share ideas and best practices. These partner-led events ranged in format

from debates to simulations to panel discussions. Sessions were on diverse topics such as the role of sport in sustainable urbanization, empowering women in local governments, urban safety, rebuilding communities after disaster and conflict, and engaging the private sector in sustainable urban development. Participation in the sessions was overwhelming and rooms overflowed with people sitting on the floor and waiting outside for the chance to participate.

Training Events were also introduced at WUF3. These sessions were designed to impart professional skills to urban development practitioners. They were organized by United Nations Development Programme World Campus in cooperation with other organizations such as UN-HABITAT, United Nations Environment Program, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In an effort to bring ideas to action to the Forum these sessions were practical, hands-on courses designed to provide participants with practical tools that they could bring back to implement in their communities. “It’s so easy to dismiss the UN as a bunch of people who get together for conferences and waste taxpayers’ money” said an urban planner. “In fact, UN-HABITAT is providing training and tools to people who are making change happen in their communities.”

New special sessions were included in this Forum. These panel presentations where experts shared topical information on specific subjects relevant to the Forum included “Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements, From Vancouver to Nanjing, and The Future of Cities”.

Wednesday, June 21st, was Local Government Day at WUF3, providing a local focus to the events. The Local Government Session highlighted the local government experience and leadership in achieving sustainability. Panelists from Africa, South America, North America, Europe and Asia provided a diverse range of perspectives. The Mayors' roundtable brought together over 100 Mayors and senior municipal leaders to discuss actions and solutions to addressing the challenges that local government face in achieving the MDGs. A variety of networking sessions that were of special interest to municipal officials were also held throughout the week. The Exposition was a highlight of the Forum. It showcased 70 international exhibits with leading-edge projects, ideas, case studies, experiences and best practices. There were exciting exhibits from Canada, Sweden, China, the City of Montreal, Slum Dwellers International, UN-HABITAT and many others. The high energy of the Forum was evident in the Exposition, which provided a welcoming atmosphere for informal meetings, lectures, discussions, debates, performances and award ceremonies. The video theatre, CinéUrbana, provided opportunities for delegates to see "ideas into action" through the use of video.

Canada, as host of WUF3, had a large interactive pavilion within the Exposition. The Canada Pavilion demonstrated how partnerships - among government, the private sector and community organizations - contribute to strong and healthy cities and communities. Several Government of Canada departments along with their non-governmental partners participated in the Pavilion. The main feature of the pavilion was the town hall stage where visitors attended presentations, participated in discussions, watched films and celebrated culture. A highlight of the week was National Aboriginal Day when aboriginal culture was celebrated through dance, music and food. The International Development Research Centre had a large section where demonstrations of research and projects around the world were showcased. Through the Municipal Global Village, Federation of Canadian Municipalities brought together regional, national and global associations of municipal governments to represent their regions. The Village in

the Canada Pavilion was a meeting place for municipal officials and others to develop networks and exchange ideas.

A booth in the Exposition area for Habitat JAM served to further highlight the experience of the JAM. It featured the new Habitat JAM movie, interviews and videos from participants and stakeholders around the world. It promoted Habitat JAM in future WUFs and other international events.

The UN Plaza provided space for organizations to give presentations or address the media. Many groups took advantage of the space, and the numerous press conferences, cultural events and presentations added flavour and excitement to the Exposition during the whole week.



To mark the 30th anniversary of the first Habitat Conference, the Exposition featured special memorabilia of previous Habitat events to remind everyone of where we have come from and the action that has been taken so far. The longest bar that was the special feature of Habitat Forum in 1976 was recreated at WUF3. The organizers of WUF3 wanted to honor the previous discussions around urban issues and to take stock of the progression of thought and action in urban issues. The National Film Board film *Reflections: Habitat 76* was assembled by award-winning filmmaker Donald McWilliams from the archives of the first Habitat Conference in Vancouver and was presented at the breakfast for Alumni from the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm 1972, Habitat I in Vancouver 1976, and Habitat II in Istanbul 1996.

The WUF3 Closing ceremony celebrated the achievements of the conference and looked to the future. The Report from the Representative for the Chair of WUF3 was presented and accepted at the closing ceremonies. Various civil society groups commented on their forward planning as a result of the outcomes of the Forum. Nanjing, China, was introduced as the next host city for World Urban Forum 4 in 2008. WUF3 closed with a truly unique, Canadian theatrical event: the Cirque Fantastique. Performers impressed WUF3 participants with their acrobatic feats, strength and elegance choreographed in a performance exclusive to the Forum.

One of the successes of WUF3 was the variety of cultural and other related events that took place in Vancouver during the Forum but not part of the official program. These Side events included the Mathare Youth Sport Association's photo exhibit and book launch, Habitat for Humanity Greater Vancouver building a home outside of the conference facility to demonstrate Operation Home Delivery that helped those affected by Hurricane Katrina, and many other presentations, videos and receptions.

Stakeholder groups such as the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Simon Fraser University and Canada Green Building Council organized tours around Vancouver to locations that illustrated real-life sustainable development. These tours included a walking tour of Granville Island, a bicycle tour of the University of British Columbia, and tours of urban agriculture projects. They provided participants with the opportunity to leave the confines of the conference centre and see Ideas to Action in practice, inspiring them to bring innovation ideas home.

Beyond these side events were also a number of other related activities that took place during the month of June in Vancouver that highlighted urban issues and the WUF3 agenda. These Satellite events included the World Youth Forum, Super Saturday, the World Planners Congress, the Women's International Academy and the Earth Festival. The organizers of these events wanted to build on the momentum and energy that the Third Session of the World Urban Forum was bringing to the city to develop complementary elements and synergies. The theme of the World Planners Congress was "Sustainable Urbanization: Turning Ideas into Action". Ideas from the Congress were reported and discussed at WUF3 as

the President of The Canadian Planners Institute chaired the dialogue session on Urban Growth and Environment.

WUF3 sparked enormous interest from the media not only on the event itself but on urban issues in general. Over 300 accredited media brought much needed attention to the issues of urbanization and the future of cities.

The radio, newspaper and television pieces served to bring urban issues to the forefront of the minds of the public. Here are just some examples of the media interest on the subject:

- On Monday, June 12th, there was a special information supplement in The Globe and Mail. It had information on the World Urban Forum but also on some of the exciting projects that Canadians are taking part in domestically and internationally;
- The Canada Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) cityspace offered extensive coverage of WUF3 and stories of cities in Canada and abroad. It produced radio and video stories on issues such as garbage, high-density living, urban agriculture and many more;
- The British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) Urban Planet website provided visitors with a place to read stories on urban issues, view BBC documentaries on urban growth, and have their say on whether cities are growing too fast. To read stories on topics such as Hong Kong high-density growth and the opinions of experts on the state of the world in 50 years;
- The Vancouver Sun's 15 Days to Save the World featured articles on events in Vancouver in June 2006 such as the World Urban Forum and the World Peace Forum;
- Front page stories and major spreads on cities and urbanization were featured in all major Canadian newspapers, the Financial Times, the London Guardian, Le Monde, El Pais, Newsweek and others;
- Press agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France Press, the Pan African News Agency carried stories about WUF3; and
- Many articles about WUF were published by media in developing countries such as The Hindu, The Times of India, The Nation in Kenya, The Citizen in Tanzania.

Inside the WUF3 Events: Issues, Ideas and Best Practices



“It’s all about networking. Some call it a talking shop, but I prefer to think of the Forum as a machine for raising awareness and getting things done”, said Anna Tibajuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT. The Third session of the World Urban Forum was the place for networking, as the leader of a women’s group from earthquake-devastated Jogjakata, Indonesia, experienced when she got tips on disaster relief from a Sri Lankan psychologist who worked with tsunami victims, or a mayor from Chad speaking with the Minister of Housing in Afghanistan about rebuilding war-torn neighbourhoods.

The past 30 years have seen a revolution in technologies that can be used to make positive change in an open and democratic way to create sustainable cities. WUF3 exemplified how technologies are currently helping the sharing of best practices and actionable ideas. New partnerships and communities were also formed that will continue to influence the future of cities.

The initial Advisory Board report prepared at the conclusion of the Forum highlights a number of important issues discussed during the event. For example it stresses the contribution that women and youth make to cities and the importance of meeting their needs as well as those of people with disabilities. The report also talks about the willingness of governments and local authorities to engage with all urban actors, and the importance of planning as a tool for urban development and a means of preventing slum growth.

Here are some others of the many approaches and ideas that were discussed at WUF3 in Vancouver:

- In many of the dialogues, participants and speakers noted the need to go beyond talking. For example, in the Shape of Cities dialogue session, speakers warned of the gap between rhetoric and action.

- An emphasis on partnerships was highlighted at the Forum. For example, over 400 organizations partnered to lead 163 networking sessions. Sessions were chosen that had multi-stakeholder partnerships, bringing together national governments, community-based organizations, local governments, and others.

- The current reality is that public-private partnerships are essential to sustainable urban development. Cities will not be able to meet the infrastructure or essential services needs of their citizens without actively engaging the private sector. Cities such as Porto Alegre, Brazil, have actually enacted a private sector policy in order to formalize the relationship between the public and private sectors.

- Inclusion was one of the most often repeated ideas that came out of WUF3. Participants commented on the need to move past participation towards real active engagement and inclusion in decision-making and implementation. During the Future of Cities special session, a representative from the slum dwellers in India noted that with their knowledge and money, participants are the key to meeting the Millennium Development Goals. This message was repeated again and again by women, slumdwellers, indigenous peoples and others.

- In the women’s roundtable participants spoke about the solutions they are implementing in their communities. “Long before there were Millennium Development Goals” one of them said, “we are achieving the Millennium Development Goals in my community”. Poor people are the number one experts on poverty and must be engaged in order to improve the living conditions of the urban poor.

- Enrique Penalosa, former Mayor of Bogota, said that, “a citizen on a \$30 bicycle is equal one in a \$30,000 car”.
- Doug Ragan, organizer of the World Youth Forum, said young people around the world are working on solutions to problems in areas ranging from gender equality and leadership to environmental and economic issues.
- A slum dweller during the special session on the Future of Cities asked, “What do we mean when we say a city without slums?” It is important to include those affected in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Housing from the Government of South Africa described a lesson that she learned from the World Urban Forum in Barcelona. She noted how in Barcelona she had come to represent her country where urban poor constitutes 30% of the population. In Barcelona they challenged her right to speak on their behalf. That lesson stuck with her and at WUF3 she came prepared to speak on their behalf.
- Local-level implementation of strategies to promote MDGs. Participants at WUF3 highlighted the special role of local governments in sustainable urbanization. Local Government Day was a chance for municipal officials to promote their leadership in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.
- At the Ministers’ Roundtable, most of the Ministers from over 50 countries expressed support for decentralization and enhancing partnerships among the different orders of government. Co-chair Ted Menzies, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation of Canada, emphasized the importance of respecting local governments and several other countries outlined their experiences with the relationship between national and local governments in achieving urban sustainability.
- Many participants and speakers remarked on the need to meet the financial challenge of sustainable development. It was recognized that we must move past relying on international development finance and donors to building local financial capacity. The ability of cities to pay for additional infrastructure and upgrade current ones will be the difference between awful realities and sustainable cities.
- The Forum was especially important in highlighting the need for information sharing and exchange of best practices. During the networking session on Gender mainstreaming, the African Local Governance program brought together 14 African women, each holding the position of mayor or councilor, to give presentations on their experiences of mainstreaming gender equality in local government. “It is only by disseminating information, sharing knowledge and encouraging women to break down barriers that they will be able to take up positions within local governments”, Jane Edna Nyane, a councilor and Chair of the Women’s Caucus of the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana said. Participants noted the need for a more systematic exchange of best practices between the local, national and international levels.
- The need to honor the commitments made by governments at the Millennium Summit in 2000. Speakers and participants called for an end to forced evictions, which are not the solution to ending urban poverty. Slum dwellers commented that until permanent solutions are found people will build slums elsewhere.
- During the Forum there was consensus that there is no one-size fits all solution. Kalpana Sharma from The Hindu in India remarked, “Don’t make Bombay into Shanghai”. We need to find indigenous models of development that celebrate local culture and differences.
- The Forum highlighted the power of technology to reach to citizens that may not otherwise be consulted. Habitat JAM is an example of how we can combine innovation with our values of social inclusion and equality. In the feedback, one of the JAMMERS noted that, “technology can be a powerful tool of communication and inclusion”.



Technology can also be a valuable tool in helping organizations and municipalities efficiently provide essential services for their citizens. Municipalities should explore new and innovative ways to provide services to achieve sustainable cities.

- Urban agriculture was recognized as playing an important role in sustainable urbanization. Delegates such as Maxensia “Max” Takirambule from Uganda offered a community perspective on the role of urban agriculture and its importance to the urban poor. Max is one of 124 beneficiaries of the International Development Research Centre- McGill university Edible Landscape project in Uganda. A sero-positive widow with four children, Ms. Takirambule was abandoned by her in-laws when her husband died of HIV/AIDS. The plot of land she was allocated as part of the project has given her a new lease on life. Kampala City Council donated the land as part of a strategy to turn unused and underused urban spaces into productive farms. She and other beneficiaries have received training in farming techniques and have begun growing food for their families and for sale. Max’s presence and participation in the Networking event “Partnering with the Poor: Leveraging Land for Change” was a powerful reminder of the people who benefit from these partnerships. Mayors during the networking session on urban agriculture discussed how urban agriculture could be part of solving pressing urban problems such as environmental and poverty reduction.
- The National Film Board is an excellent example of the evolution of technology. In 1976, the Film Board played a key role in the Conference’s audiovisual program presenting more than 200 films and slide shows from 120 countries. Flash forward to 2006 at WUF3 where the Film Board showcased their innovative methods for creating and using media for social change. CITIZENShift is an interactive platform where social issues can be explored through films, photo-

graphy, articles, blogs and podcasts. Focusing on a new theme every month, activists and other creative people can “meet” and share their media. Wapikoni Mobile is a motorized film training and production studio that travels to First Nations communities in Quebec and engages the youth in those communities. The Board also has projects designed for mobile platforms (i.e. cellular phones) such as Content 360. These projects are inspired by the 1960s experiment called Challenge for Change to involve the community in the documentary process. Decades later innovative technologies are helping engage a segment of society previously not given a voice.

- The Global Urban Sustainability Solutions Exchange (GUSSE). GUSSE is an online place where the world can collectively discuss, review and apply the best ideas for sustainable cities. The creators liken it to an “Amazon.com” for urban solutions where you can browse, get recommendations, share and pick up ideas. It is open, inclusive, reliable, practical, independent, and adaptive.
- MetroQuest is a piece of software designed by Canadian developers that allows users to see the impact of the decisions that are being made by city planners over a 40-year time period. The tool allows planners to explore “what if” future scenarios for their cities. The Canadian ski resort of Whistler has already benefited from the software as it altered potentially devastating effects of building up the hillside in its current plan.
- 2010 Legacies has created a new guide entitled Measuring Up that will help cities determine how they can make their communities more inclusive and accessible. As a result of the Measuring Up networking session, the guide will be translated into Arabic and used in several Middle Eastern countries.
- International Development Research Centre’s global photo competition was designed to capture the entrepreneurial spirit and creative energy in the world’s cities and show delegates how people are making their cities

better places to live. Twenty of the best images were on display at the Canadian Pavilion and participants voted for their favourite photo of a solution to an urban problem. The winner of the People's Choice award was "Reflections of Adaptation and Conservation" a picture showing a young Tibetan whose face is reflected in the still surface of water collected and stored in a massive copper kettle once used for brewing yak butter tea. In addition to the People's Choice, a panel of four international judges selected 3 images that best captured the WUF3 theme of turning ideas into action. They were:

- Leah Castillo's (Antipolo City, the Philippines) image "Recycling Trash into Works of Art" that shows an artisan at work transforming aluminium cans into small figurines for sale in retail shops;
 - Laura Berman's (Toronto, Canada) "Success!" that depicts a young woman brimming with pride at the handful of fresh organic carrots she has just plucked from a community garden located in the heart of Toronto; and
 - Brendan Baker (Vancouver, Canada) captured the genius of local metal workers in Dakar, Senegal, who manufactured injection moulds to shape molten recycled plastic into replacement pistons for rope water pumps.
- The Land and Poverty Observatory is a decision-making tool that helps keep better track of urban and housing programs. The goals of the program are to give authorities access to a set of indicators related to housing, land the living conditions of the families. It is also a tool to simulate the evolution of urbanization in the city, to develop a regional plan based on real data and statistics and to establish a scorecard that provides accurate and up-to-date information.
 - Municipal officials from Porto Alegre, Brazil, spent two days with GEOMAX International Inc. preparing an agreement for technical cooperation for the development of a pilot project in order to demonstrate how to better manage municipal information by integrating data among departments. It is expected that a joint

venture will result, allowing the municipality to market and develop GeoMax's technology in the Brazilian marketplace. It is an example of municipalities engaging the private sector in order to provide its citizen with the services they need in an efficient and cost-effective method.

- The "Sustainability Corner" was installed at WUF3 to engage delegates in a dialogue about urban sustainability. Located at the entrance to the Exposition, delegates from WUF were invited to share their own solutions to urban development challenges. A crew filmed short interviews and edited the segments on the spot and uploaded them on a dedicated website.
- Millennium Campaign's "voices against poverty box" in the Global Municipal Village in the Exposition. The recording booth travels to major global events to record "voices against poverty" and to build public support for the MDGs. About thirty mayors, UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka and Deputy Director Inga Klevby, the United Nation's Millennium Campaign, United Cities and Local Governments, and the Canadian civil society campaign Make Poverty History, recorded their pledges to take action to meet the Millennium Development Goals during WUF3 and publicly voice their support.
- The Habitat JAM came up with over 600 actionable ideas, 70 of which have been researched and expanded. The website can be searched by the major themes of WUF3 or by keyword. You can also view the database of postings to the JAM dialogue. There is also a Habitat JAM connect where participants can post general messages and stay in touch with others in the JAM community.
- The development of a book entitled, "The Place of Children" by Children, Youth and Environments Centre for Research and Design. A networking session discussed the selection of cases, and other methodological aspects and strategies that should be included in the book. The book will show how young people living in poverty are helping to achieve the MDGs by working to

improve their communities. It will also review policies and programs supporting young people's engagement in local approaches to urban sustainability.

- Action-planning workshops organized by African Non-Government Organizations with community housing groups. Participants at a networking session on HIV/AIDS and housing received training materials and a workshop synopsis based on training sessions from South Africa.
- Networking sessions provided like-minded organizations and individuals with the opportunity to meet one another and begin a dialogue. The organizers of the networking session on Land Management in Local Communities have already conducted follow-up with participants from the session that were interested in the Land Management Project.
- The International Development Research Centre announced a new round of funding for Urban Poverty Environment's Focus Cities Research Initiative (1.2 million). The Research Initiative will support multi-stakeholder research teams in cities around the world to promote awareness, policy options and best practices for reducing environmental impacts in poor urban and peri-urban areas. Four cities, two in Latin America and the Caribbean and two in the Middle East and North Africa, will be chosen in this round and will receive funding for four years. This project exemplifies the WUF3 themes of partnership, capacity building and action-oriented projects.
- At the youth roundtable, Muratha Kinuthia, NEPAD Kenya Secretariat, called for a broader perspective on youth issues that focuses on development and goes beyond representation. In the local government session Simon Compaore, Mayor of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, explained that they created a partnership with the International Association of French-speaking Mayors and a local youth organization to carry out work on HIV/AIDS.

The Huairou Commission and United Cities and Local Government are seeking resources for a three-year joint program to sustain women's representation in local decision-making.

- Organizations and governments signed various memoranda of understanding during WUF3, formalizing their partnerships for the years to come.
- UN-HABITAT signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Sri Lanka for slum upgrading which will provide the Government with seed financing and advisory and technical support.
- Nairobi One Stop Youth Information and Resource Centre signed a memorandum of understanding with the Oslo Youth Centre after partnering to put on the "Child and Youth Friendly Cities" networking session. The parties agreed to examine urban youth issues, identify other partners, extend city-to-city collaboration and exchange information.
- UN-HABITAT and the Government of Norway signed a cooperation agreement, providing 17 million dollars over two years for UN-HABITAT's Water and Sanitation Trust Fund and its Slum Upgrading Facility among other projects.
- UN-HABITAT and Environment and Development Action in the Third World will assess the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals relating to human settlements.
- Infrastructure Canada and the World Bank agreed to work together with other levels of government, municipal associations, academics and citizens to develop city sustainability indicators that will be presented at WUF4 in Nanjing.



- Niamey, Niger, reported on an Association Internationale des Maires Francophones project that increased Niamey's fiscal base by assigning addresses in the downtown area, thereby allowing for more efficient tax collection.

- Minister of Housing in South Africa, Lindiwe Sisulu forged a formal partnership with the Federation of the Urban Poor, a Shack Dwellers International affiliate in South Africa. The Federation of the Urban Poor was given roughly 230 million Rand in subsidies to buy land and build housing in insecure and impoverished communities.

- Another example of unique and unlikely partnership is one between the Mumbai Police Department and slum dwellers of Mumbai. It has reached 132 different squatter communities in Mumbai. Zopadpatti Police Panch-ayat is a unique initiative where slum dwellers police their own slums and help to reduce crime. Each Zopadpatti Police Panch-ayat has 7 women and 3 men and hear and resolve disputes within their area. Areas where these community policing initiatives work efficiently have managed to reduce reports to police stations by 25% to 40%.

- During a networking session on Urban Policies and the Right to the City, Henrique Ortiz, Habitat International Coalition, presented the draft World Charter on the Right to the City. Zenaida Moya, Mayor of Belize City, highlighted the Aberdeen Agenda adopted at the Commonwealth Local Governments Forum in 2005, which promotes the right to the city concept. It was noted that these initiatives help localize the Millennium Development Goals.

- Vancouver announced during WUF 2006 that it will create 2010 new garden plots in the city between now and the 2010 Olympics as a result of its participation in the "Growing Better Cities" networking event.

From Vancouver to Nanjing

The most important storyline of Vancouver 2006 was “now is the time for action!”

As Assistant Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Pierre Sané remarked at the closing WUF3 session, “there is no closure to this Forum”. He urged participants to go back home and turn WUF3 global commitments into local action.

Sané’s words were echoed by the Commissioner General of WUF3, Charles Kelly, who told WUF3 participants that they were an integral part of “a multitude of people sharing how to deal with these very difficult problems and to deal with them in a set of very practical ways. So it isn’t one action, it’s thousands upon thousands of actions. It is little actions and big actions but the important thing is the level of engagement and the knowledge that needs to be harnessed here”. Now indeed, is the time for action.



Action by governments. In the closing of the Mayors’ Roundtable, Co-chair Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, of South Africa, remarked that the Millennium Development Goals are “doable” and the mayors should return to their cities, take action and report back at WUF4 on the implementation of their projects.

Action by the grassroots. Sandy Schilen of the Huairo Commission said, “You’ve heard what it means for a movement to grow handshake by handshake and meeting by meeting. This is not a movement that grows by brochures. It spreads mother by mother”.

Action by all, knowing what must be done. “The challenges of urbanization are great but so too are the opportunities” a WUF3 participant noted. “If half the urban infrastructure that will exist in 2050 must be built in the next 45 years, the opportunity to design, construct, operate and maintain new cities better than old ones is exciting and challenging”.

On June 23, 2006, as WUF3 drew to a close, 10,000 participants were challenged, on return to their homes and communities, to implement one concrete action to support sustainable urban development. If even a fraction of these get off the ground, it is a step forward. As the next WUF host in 2008, China will highlight its experience in dealing with urbanization, under the theme of “Harmonious Cities”. Wang Guangtao, China’s Minister of Construction and Lu Bing, Deputy Mayor of Nanjing, extended an invitation to WUF3 participants to come to Nanjing in 2 years to once again share experiences and best practices for managing rapid urbanization and building a better urban future for all.

