



United Nations

HABITAT III

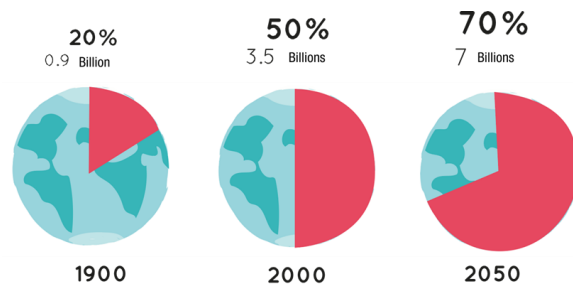
Press Kit
September 2016

17-20 OCTOBER 2016
QUITO, ECUADOR

HABITAT III

Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to take place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October, 2016. In resolution 66/207 and in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the Habitat III Conference to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization, to focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996.

Member States of the General Assembly, in resolution 67/216, decided that the objectives of the Conference are to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable urban development, assess accomplishments to date, address poverty, and identify and address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document. Habitat III is to play an important role in making cities and human settlements equitable, prosperous, sustainable, just, equal and safe.



Habitat III is one of the first United Nations global summits after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It offers a unique opportunity to discuss the important challenge of how cities, towns, and villages are planned and managed, in order to fulfill their role as drivers of sustainable development, and hence shape the implementation of new global development goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

HABITAT I, HABITAT II AND THE HABITAT AGENDA

The United Nations General Assembly convened the Habitat I Conference in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, as governments began to recognize the need for sustainable human settlements and the consequences of rapid urbanization, especially in the developing world. At that time, urbanization and its impacts were barely considered by the international community, but the world was starting to witness the greatest and fastest migration of people into cities and towns in history as well as rising urban population through natural growth resulting from advances in medicine.

The Vancouver commitments were reconfirmed 20 years later, at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, Turkey. World leaders adopted the Habitat Agenda as a global plan of action for adequate shelter for all, with the notion of sustainable human settlements driving development in an urbanizing world.

Forty years later, there is a wide consensus that towns' and cities' structure, form, and functionality need to change as societies change. Cities have continued to expand outwards beyond their peri-urban areas, often due to weak urban planning, poor urban management, land regulation crises, and real estate speculation factors. It is now well understood that slums and related informal settlements are a spontaneous form of urbanization, consisting of a series of survival strategies by the urban poor, most borne out of poverty and exclusion.

Habitat III, and the New Urban Agenda as a result, represents an opportunity to make concrete the ideals of Habitat II in designing policies, planning urban spaces for all, and providing affordable urban services and utilities by looking to the cities as an incredible force of global development and facing the challenge of how to manage the urbanization process to **improve citizens' lives.**

THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Urbanization is an unprecedented challenge. By the middle of the century four of every five people might be living in towns and cities. Urbanization and development are inextricably linked and it is necessary to find a way of ensuring the sustainability of growth. Urbanization had become a driving force as well as a source of development with the power to change and improve lives.



The Habitat III Conference therefore has, as its mission, the adoption of a New Urban Agenda—an action-oriented document which will set global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development, rethinking the way we build, manage, and live in cities through drawing together cooperation with committed partners, relevant stakeholders, and urban actors at all levels of government as well as the civil society and private sector.

The New Urban Agenda was agreed on 10 September 2016, culminating two years of inclusive and participatory preparatory process of negotiations and global debate. The New Urban Agenda is comprised of 175 paragraphs containing guidelines from member states and stakeholders on subjects varying from three principles: leave no one behind, sustainable and inclusive urban economies, and environmental sustainability.

The New Urban Agenda promotes some fundamental concepts and guidelines to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It encourage, among others, urban densification, rather than extending the perimeter of the cities; the mixed use of the land, instead of zoning; the preservation of landscapes and natural resources and public spaces for all.

The New Urban Agenda also reinforces better coordination between local governments national, subnational and as well as a holistic view of urban planning to ensure an effective cohesion, participation and social inclusion.

Find the document at <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>

PREPARATORY PROCESS TOWARDS HABITAT III

The preparatory process towards Habitat III was an inclusive and participatory two years debate comprised of three Preparatory Committees; 11 Regional and Thematic meetings all over the world; Policy Units that developed policy recommendations built on the Issue Papers elaborated by the United Nations Task Team on Habitat III; informal intergovernmental meetings and informal hearings where Member States, local authorities, and relevant stakeholders directly provided their feedback to the New Urban Agenda.

Thematic and Regional Meetings delivered declarations that were official inputs to the Habitat III process, identifying and addressing respectively specific topics of global relevance or regional priorities and views to be taken into account in the New Urban Agenda.

The three **Preparatory Committee Meetings** were held over the course of the last two years in New York, Nairobi, and Surabaya, respectively. The second session marked the start of a consultative process to feed into the intergovernmental negotiations culminating in the First Draft outcome in April 2016. The third session released the last version of the New Urban Agenda debated in the informal negotiations held in New York, September 2016, which saw the agreement of member states on the document to be adopted in Quito.

Over the course of the process towards the Habitat III Conference, the Habitat III **Urban Dialogues** host a series of electronic discussions (e-discussions) in order to gather views from all interested players to bring forward new and emerging thinking on urban issues in the elaboration of the New Urban Agenda.

The Conference in Quito, 17 to 20 October 2016, will provide a critical opportunity to achieving the New Urban Agenda and will be a global arena for active discussions, the creation of new pathways in response to the challenges of urbanization and opportunities, and sharing integrated urban solutions and forging

new partnerships towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.



THE LEGACY

The Habitat III process has focused not only on the outcome of its Conference, but more importantly on the legacy of the Conference. Over the last two years a number of initiatives launched as part of the process shows an innovative and inclusive nature leaving to the international community an important legacy in terms of debate and collective experience. The Quito Implementation Plan is the platform that will allow to gather commitments by all kind of urban actors to the New Urban Agenda.

In Quito, besides of the renovation of venue, the legacy of the Conference will be represented by the Habitat III Village, an innovative initiative that will bring planners, associations of civil society and artists from around the world to make interventions in two neighbourhoods leaving a tangible and live laboratory of the New Urban Agenda (see the Habitat III Village section). By training hundreds of young people as Habitat III volunteers, the Conference will also leave a great human capital especially sensitive to sustainable development issues.

THE CONFERENCE

The Habitat III Conference welcomes the participation and contributions of all Member States and relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, civil society organizations, regional and local government and municipality representatives, professionals and researchers, academia, foundations, women and youth groups, trade unions, and the private sector, as well as organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations.

The Conference will be composed of eight plenary meetings, including Opening and Closing ceremonies, six high-level roundtable sessions, and a wide range of events including special sessions, dialogues, stakeholders roundtables, networking, side and training events, cultural activities, an urban journalism academy, among others.

In addition, relevant spaces such as the Pavilions -ONE UN, Quito and Ecuador-, the Exhibition and the Habitat III Village will be hosting a programme of events.



THE EXHIBITION

The Habitat III Exhibition will be one of the most vibrant and active areas of the conference where member states, organizations and institutions, civil society, and the private sector can showcase proposals and commitments to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and advocate their work on housing and sustainable urban development. It will provide space for informal discussions, side events and presentation of urban innovations.

Designed to attract a large audience, the exhibition will be open to the public and to Habitat III delegates from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily from 15 to 20 October 2016.

HABITAT III VILLAGE

The Habitat III Village is a unique, pioneering and innovative urban live laboratory that will embrace the effective participation of creative and proactive synergies of local and international urban actors in the city of Quito during the Habitat III Conference.

The Habitat III Village is part and result of the participatory process towards Habitat III that engaged contributions from all type of stakeholders who will now meet in the Habitat III Village to exchange expertise and ideas on how to create and plan cities for all.

The Habitat III Village will be the first showcase at a street level of the New Urban Agenda. It will contribute substantively to the United Nations Conference, enabling participants from all over the world to live a collective, urban experience and to bring back to their cities all the knowledge and thoughts shared in the Habitat III Village.

See the [Habitat III Village Communications Kit](#).

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Dr. Joan Clos is the Secretary-General of the Habitat III Conference. He is also the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, at the level of Under Secretary General by the United Nations since October 2010.

Born in Barcelona on 29 June 1949, he is a medical doctor with a distinguished career in public service and diplomacy. He was twice elected Mayor of Barcelona.



Dr. Joan Clos said:

"The Conference it is a unique opportunity to rethink the Urban Agenda in which governments can respond by promoting a new urban development paradigm able of integrating all dimensions of sustainable development and promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity."

"The agreement on a draft New Urban Agenda is a first huge step towards a shared vision on sustainable cities and a historic opportunity to work together on improving the way we plan and manage our cities. Member states and stakeholders have committed to this collective vision and we should all celebrate it".

"The New Urban Agenda is about enabling each citizen of humanity to build an equitable, thriving and environmentally responsible urban future for themselves and their communities".

THE CITY OF QUITO, ECUADOR

Quito, the capital city of Ecuador, is located at 9,200 feet (2,800 meters) above sea level. With a population of 2,6 million people, Quito is the second most populous city in Ecuador, after Guayaquil.

The historic centre of Quito has one of the largest, least-altered, and best-preserved historic centres in Latin America. Quito, along with Cracow, was the first World Cultural Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO in 1978.



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