

**Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator**

**Speech at the Plenary Session of the UN Conference on  
Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).**

**Casa de la Cultura, Quito, Ecuador**

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**It is timely that the Habitat-III Conference takes place in  
the first year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for  
Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development  
Goals (SDGs).**

**Delivering the SDGs in a world where the majority of the  
population is urbanised requires new ways of  
understanding measuring and addressing poverty,  
inequality, sustainability, security, and resilience.**

**Many more work opportunities are needed to meet the  
aspirations of urban young people, and the aspirations of**

**urban women who, like women everywhere, do not want to be left behind.**

**Threats like that posed by climate change are intensifying. Our cities need to scale up adaptation to its impacts fast, and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions dramatically.**

**Providing these solutions at the pace and scale needed by our planet's fast-growing cities demands big partnerships; thus it is pleasing to see representation here from all levels of government, and from the private sector and civil society.**

### **UNDP's role and offer**

**Implementing the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda will impact on all our areas of UNDP's work in complex and interconnected ways.**

**Eradicating poverty is at the core of UNDP's mandate, and of the 2030 Agenda. But the drivers and determinants of poverty in urban areas differ in important ways from those in rural areas. Approaches to how poverty is measured and eradicated are being revised to be relevant to a fast urbanising world.**

**As more people come to live in cities and towns, the potential risk and impact of crises and natural disasters is heightened. For the poor, home may be on unstable hillsides and/or land prone to flooding and other dramatic impacts of storms.**

**As well, most of the world's critical infrastructure, key development assets, political institutions, and major socio-economic activities are in cities. Thus when disasters and crises rock cities, the spill over impacts are great. Our cities need to be more resilient than ever before.**

**In today's world of record numbers of refugees, internally displaced people, and migrants, many cities are under pressure. Over half the world's 38 million IDPs and thirteen million refugees are in towns and cities. This requires responses which build on existing municipal systems capacities, and economic structures, rather than protracted displacements in camps and informal settlements. Many cities need support for their hosting role.**

**UNDP's mandate enables it to address the interconnected challenges which cities face. Working across poverty eradication, climate action, disaster risk reduction, and building urban governance capacities, we are contributing to the building of inclusive, sustainable, and resilient cities, and we have many experiences to share and lessons learned.**

**UNDP counts on working in partnership with sister agencies such as UN Habitat which have deep technical**

**capacities and experience, and with cities and communities.**

**Working together, we can support cities and countries to  
implement the New Urban Agenda and implement the  
SDGs.**