



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Canada to Host United Nations Human Settlement Programme World Urban Forum III in 2006**

**BARCELONA, Spain, September 16, 2004** — Canada will host the next World Urban Forum in Vancouver, BC in June 2006, the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, and the Honourable Stephen Owen, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport), announced today from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme's World Urban Forum II in Barcelona, Spain.

"Canada is proud to have been chosen to host the World Urban Forum III in 2006," said Minister Fontana, who is leading the Canadian delegation to Barcelona.

"Working with UN-HABITAT, the Canadian government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), is looking forward to creating a premier international event, where the international community will have the chance to come together, to share information and best practices that can help us all deal with the challenges facing cities and communities across the globe."

"Vancouver welcomes the announcement of the World Urban Forum 2006," said Minister Owen. "The Government of Canada looks forward to advancing this project with citizens across Canada and the world in the next two years."

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, or UN-HABITAT, is the agency mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities, and help pave the way towards providing adequate shelter for all. Created by UN-HABITAT and held once every two years, the World Urban Forum provides an opportunity for international public, private and not-for-profit organizations, governments and experts to come together, to exchange information, insights and best practices on one of the main challenges of the new Millennium: the transition of our planet to an essentially urban world.

Canada has a long history of supporting UN-HABITAT in this important work. Canada was honoured to host the first ever UN-HABITAT conference, which was also held in Vancouver in 1976. That historic conference helped bring urban issues to the top of the United Nations agenda, and led to the United Nations resolution that created UN-HABITAT. The 2006 World Urban Forum in Vancouver will mark the 30-year anniversary of this historic international event.

Today, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) - Canada Fund for Africa, Canada is contributing \$15 Million to UN-HABITAT's Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, which is dedicated to reducing the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation or clean water. CMHC also makes an annual contribution to UN-HABITAT's other programs.

In addition, in 2005, the Government of Canada, through CMHC, will also become a member of the UN-HABITAT Governing Council, which provides overall policy guidance and direction to the Programme.

"While their effects are felt on the local level, the challenges of urban issues are - first and foremost — global challenges," Minister Fontana noted.

"Only by working together, through such vital international events as the World Urban Forum, can we meet these challenges head on, and help make the objectives of UN-HABITAT a reality."

In preparation for World Urban Forum 2006, a collection of senior government officials and partners were brought together into the Vancouver Working Group to provide support, resources and research to the Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The Government will now be moving forward into the next phase of preparation with consultations with national and international stakeholders on the Forum program and format.

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