



PRESS RELEASE



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Canada Participating in the 20th Session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council

OTTAWA, Ontario, March 31, 2005 — The Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing will lead the Canadian Delegation to the 20th Session of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Governing Council. He will be bringing Canada's views on urban issues to the Council, which will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from April 4th to 8th, 2005.

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.

The Governing Council provides overall guidance and direction to the UN-HABITAT and is expected to attract up to 1,500 government officials and nongovernmental organizations from around the world.

Minister Fontana is the Government of Canada's lead Minister responsible for Canada's preparations for the World Urban Forum (WUF) III which will take place in Vancouver in June 2006.

"More and more people are living in cities around the Globe. This brings new challenges for all countries, including Canada," said Minister Fontana. "The World Urban Forum presents an opportunity for delegates from around the world to share their best practices to address these challenges."

While in Nairobi, Minister Fontana will take part in a number of multilateral and bilateral meetings and contribute to the Governing Council's policy and program discussions. The Canadian Delegation will be composed of Canadian Parliamentarians, Huguette Labelle, co-chair of the Minister's WUF National Advisory Committee, as well as governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

The Government of Canada has had a long history with UN-HABITAT. WUF III will mark the 30th anniversary of HABITAT 1, also held in Vancouver and which led to the creation of the UN-HABITAT. Since its creation, UN-HABITAT and several Canadian governmental and nongovernmental organizations have been involved in successful initiatives such as the Canada Fund for Africa, which has pledged \$15 million to UN-HABITAT's Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. Canada also participates in the work of the Cities Alliance — co-chaired by the UN-Habitat and the World Bank.

Events (Nairobi time):

Official Opening Ceremony

The Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing of Canada, will deliver a speech during opening ceremony
Monday, April 4th, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
UN-Habitat Campus

UN Habitat/Canada Press Briefing with Minister Fontana and UN Executive Director, Anna Tibaijuka

Tuesday, April 5th, 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.

UN-Habitat Campus

Canada Networking Event "Welcome to WUF III Vancouver, Canada" hosted by Minister Fontana

The Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing of Canada,

will deliver a 3-minute speech.

Tuesday, April 5th, 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.

UN-Habitat Campus

Canada-Vancouver Kiosk at the Exhibit

April 4th, 5th and 6th

Presentation promoting WUF III.

UN-Habitat Campus

Note: Minister Fontana will be available for telephone interviews from Nairobi, on Monday, April 4th, at 10:30 a.m. EST.

For more information, media representatives may contact:

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