

Outcomes from the Consultation Process for Canada and the 2004 World Urban Forum

On behalf of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Western Economic Diversification and Foreign Affairs Canada, we would like to thank all those participants who offered feedback on the consultation paper relating to Canada's approach to the 2004 World Urban Forum in Barcelona.

The World Urban Forum provides a venue for governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, experts and others to come together to discuss issues in human settlements development and to assist in moving the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals forward.

This Forum is an important event for Canada because of Canada's increasing involvement with the UN-Habitat, our new role as a member of the Governing Council in 2005, and our place as hosts to the World Urban Forum in 2006.

Feedback was received from a variety of groups and individuals. These included provincial and municipal governments, federal departments, university professors and graduate students, the voluntary and non-profit sector, and women's and environmental groups.

At a high level, the following is a general overview of the responses received:

- Partnerships between all levels and groups in society are the most effective way of developing and implementing community-based solutions;
- Partnerships must be socially inclusive, including not only all levels of government, community and private sector groups, but under-represented groups such as aboriginals, youth and women;
- Marginalized communities must be part of the decision-making process to ensure their perspectives are prioritized in the solutions and influence the sustainability framework;
- Achieving positive change towards sustainable practices will not be easy. It will require dedication, commitment, true public participation and a break from traditional streams of thought;
- Canada has important existing technologies and adaptable solutions which will be beneficial in human settlement development;
- Sustainable cities incorporate a "holistic" approach to addressing their needs. This means relationships between all elements of society must be considered in any solution;
- Canada needs to look at how we are furthering a sustainable global human settlements agenda at home in addition to internationally.

Many examples of best practices from coast to coast to coast were also provided, which serve to illustrate how organizations and individuals are working to incorporate sustainable and socially inclusive practices in their urban environments.

Thank you once again to those who participated in this consultation. All responses have been helpful in shaping the Canadian approach to the 2004 World Urban Forum.