

# PRESS RELEASE



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## Fourth Session of World Urban Forum in Nanjing now to be held between 3 -7 November 2008.

Nairobi, 12 March 2008—The Government of the People’s Republic of China has confirmed that the Fourth Session of the World Urban Forum, which is to be held in the city of Nanjing, will now take place between 3-7 November 2008. UN-HABITAT Executive Director Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka thanked the Chinese government saying that it was a great honour to have them host this increasingly popular event in the UN calendar, especially as the meeting is dedicated to discussing urban issues and China is now one of the fastest urbanizing countries in the world.

“We are looking forward to being in Nanjing for this landmark forum, particularly as China has a lot to offer the world at large in terms of lessons learnt in sustainable urbanisation,” she said.

The theme for the forum is ‘Harmonious Cities’. The Chinese authorities are keen to promote this concept since China’s urban population has risen from 191 million (9 per cent of the whole population) in 1980 to 380 million (30 per cent of the whole population) in 1997, which has imposed significant strains on city administration. Moreover, the number of cities has soared from 223 in 1980 to 668 cities and 17,000 towns in 1997.

“When the world converges on Nanjing, the global urban population will have passed the half way mark and more people will be living in cities than in rural areas,” said Mrs. Tibaijuka. “In this era of rapid urbanization, compounded by the complexities of climate change, we look forward to a stimulating exchange of ideas on how best to make the process of urbanization more harmonious and less divisive.”

The World Urban Forum is a biennial gathering that is attended by a wide range of partners, ranging from non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, urban professionals, and academics, to governments, local authorities and national and international associations of local governments. It gives all these actors a common platform to discuss urban issues in formal and informal ways and come up with action-oriented proposals to create sustainable cities. For further information about WUF4, click onto the website: [www.unhabitat.org/wuf](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf).

The third session of the World Urban Forum was hosted by the Government of Canada in Vancouver in 2006 the second one was staged in Barcelona in 2004; and the first was held in Nairobi in 2002.

The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanisation and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies. It is projected that in the next fifty years, two-thirds of humanity will be living in towns and cities. A major challenge is to minimize burgeoning poverty in cities, improve the urban poor's access to basic facilities such as shelter, clean water and sanitation and achieve environment-friendly and sustainable urban growth and development.

*For further information, please contact: Head, Press & Media Relations Unit & Spokesperson, or Media Liaison, Press & Media Relations Unit, UN-HABITAT, Nairobi; Tel: (254 2) 7623153, 7623151, Fax (254 2) 7624060, (Cellphone) (254 2) 733 760332, E-mail: [habitat.press@unhabitat.org](mailto:habitat.press@unhabitat.org), Website: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)*