



**HABITAT**  
PROFESSIONALS FORUM



# Habitat Professionals Forum Charter

**“The role of human settlement professionals in delivering a sustainable and equitable future”**

Recommended proposal at WUF5, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, March 2010

## Preamble

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The Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF) was established in 1999 under the auspices of UN-HABITAT as an inter-disciplinary partnership of Human Settlement Professionals and UN HABITAT. This followed the visionary initiative of a number of HPF founding members who came together in 1996 at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) in Istanbul, Turkey. HPF was established to promote the delivery of sustainable urbanisation and equitable human settlements development. It consists of international associations of human settlements professions which are democratic, non-profit, non-political and non-governmental.

On 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2009, the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF) was convened in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss the future role of the HPF in the light of the new emphasis on “partnership” in UN-HABITAT’s Medium Term Strategic and Institutional Plan 2008-2013 (MTSIP) and its World Urban Campaign (WUC). The WUC places partnership at the heart of UN HABITAT’s work and the partnership with the Human Settlement Professionals through the Habitat Professionals Forum is seen as central to the quest for sustainable urbanisation.

This Charter records the Vision and Principles on which the work of the Habitat Professionals Forum will be based and sets out the undertakings to which we, the signatories to this Charter, agree. We do this in acknowledgement of the need for enhanced global co-operation between professionals as well as the urgency of the challenges faced in mitigating inequality, the rapid rate of urbanisation in many countries, poverty, the impacts of climate change and the increasing incidence of disasters, and the depletion of natural resources, whilst promoting sustainable environments.

# Vision

We, the members of the HPF, pledge ourselves to ensure sustainable and equitable urban development, in partnership with communities, civil society, the private sector and government, based on the principles of WUC, and in particular:

- *Social, economic and environmental harmony* which seeks to ensure that the strategic management of economic, natural and human resources will promote well – being in increasingly complex, interconnected and rapidly changing urban systems and that development is based on practice which integrates social, economic and environmental issues into policy – making and the design process;
- *Pro – poor and inclusivity* which seeks to ensure that human settlements professionals are responsive to the challenges posed by urban poverty and inequality and are sensitive to cultural differences, are gender aware and are agents for participatory governance;
- *Heritage, culture and sense of place* which seeks to reconcile development needs while maintaining identity, sense of place and protecting heritage in an increasingly interconnected world; natural and cultural heritage needs to be respected and conserved: every human settlement is unique and a sense of place is an attribute to be fostered and cherished.
- *The impacts of climate change and disasters* which will make increasing demands on our knowledge and skills. Human settlements professionals need to be able to plan, design and deliver settlements which are more resilient and carbon-efficient, and where risks are reduced through prevention, adaptation and mitigation.

This will require changing practice and rapid action on the part of HPF members, including the re-engineering of cities at all scales of urbanity, city-greening policies, market responsiveness and increasing partnerships and resources for innovative solutions and new approaches to urban development and management.

# Undertaking

Through this Charter, we, the members of the HPF, commit to supporting the work of UN HABITAT by promoting human settlements, sustainable urbanisation and harmonious and inclusive urban settlement through:

1. increasing inter-professional co-operation and communication for the transfer of knowledge and skills through education, practice and lifelong learning,
2. the global promotion and updating of professional values and ethics consistent with the principles set out in the Vision of this Charter, and
3. promoting innovation and best practice, strengthening professional networks to deliver sustainable urbanisation, especially at the “grassroots”, building up capacity in countries without it, and providing practical support to those of our members who, in seeking to follow these HPF principles, lack local resources and support.