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## Canada's Urban Story

Canada is pleased to partner with UN-HABITAT to host the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3). It was also in Vancouver, 30 years ago, that the first UN Conference on Human Settlements took place leading to the creation of UN-HABITAT.

WUF is an opportunity for participants from around the world to share knowledge and ideas on urban issues that affect quality of life, successful economies, clean environments, and good governance.

In keeping with the theme of WUF3, *Our Future: Sustainable Cities: Turning Ideas into Action*, Canada hopes participants of WUF3 will benefit from an exchange of best practices and take home interesting actionable ideas for implementation.

### Canadian cities and communities

With almost 80 per cent of our population living in cities, Canada is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. Two in three Canadians live in cities of 100,000 or more and 50 per cent of our GDP is generated by 10 cities: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. Greater Vancouver, the host of WUF3, is expected to double to four million in the next 50 years.

Canada's approach to urbanization is focused on tangible improvements to Canadians' quality of life, the competitiveness of our economy and the environment, and ensuring transparency and accountability to Canadians.

### Canadians at WUF3

Canada will bring to WUF3 its urban experience, expertise and approaches in areas such as governance, public participation, social cohesion and inclusion, urban and housing technologies and research.

- **Municipal participation:** The cities of Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Montreal and Halifax will offer networking events on topics such as best practices for urban growth, the revitalization of urban areas and citizen participation in improving policy, program and service delivery co-ordination. Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver, and the Greater Vancouver area will be part of the exposition.

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- **Provincial participation:** The provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec will address social cohesion and the inclusion of newcomers to Canadian urban areas, preserving agricultural lands around urban areas, urbanization management strategies and a project to help rebuild homes in Sri Lanka after the tsunami. Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia will also be part of the exposition.
- **Government of Canada departments and agencies:** At 12 networking sessions a number of departments and agencies will share information and best practices about urban development in the Far North, homelessness, international housing partnerships, diversity and culture in cities, urban Aboriginals and public-private partnerships. The Canadian pavilion in the exposition area will feature 15 Government of Canada departments and agencies and their partners.
- **Canadian Civil Society:** Canadian universities, non-profit groups, charitable organizations, non-governmental organizations and professional networks will share their experience in over 20 networking events, several roundtables, and in the exposition area. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and its international partners are organizing a local government session on the themes of decentralization, access to basic services and local finance.



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A Message from the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development,  
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Canada is pleased to partner with UN-HABITAT to hold the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) in Vancouver, one of Canada's most beautiful and sustainable cities. It was in Vancouver, 30 years ago, that the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements took place. That historic meeting led to a new understanding about cities and communities, the urgent need to make them sustainable and to preserve a mutually supportive urban-rural balance.

Thirty years later, urbanization around the world is occurring at an ever more rapid pace, and we face important challenges to ensure that this happens in a sustainable way. I believe that government can play an important role in building strong communities, working closely with local organizations and individual citizens. I invite all concerned to come to WUF3 and share your ideas for action to make the world's cities and communities better places to live, work and visit.

**The Honourable Diane Finley**

**Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada**

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#### Biography

The Honourable Diane Finley

Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada

Diane Finley was first elected to Parliament in 2004 and was then re-elected in 2006. Since her election, she has served as Official Opposition Critic for Agriculture and Agri-Food. On February 6th, 2006, Ms. Finley was appointed Minister for Human Resources and Social Development by the Right Honourable Stephen Harper.

Fluently bilingual in English and French, Ms. Finley's professional career began as an administrator of The University of Western Ontario's highly regarded French Immersion School. Prior to her election, she held several senior positions in both the public and private sectors encompassing health care, transportation, agricultural equipment manufacturing, printing and publishing, and aviation. While working with the Laidlaw group of companies, Ms. Finley built Canada's largest publicly funded ambulance service company.

Beyond her work, Ms. Finley has been Board Chair of the Brant Community Care Access Centre, and has been active with a number of other organizations, including The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, The National Standards Committee of the Paramedic Association of Canada, The Aurora Club, The Canadian Strategic Leadership Forum, The Ambulance Service Alliance of Ontario, and the Ontario Government Health Policy Advisory Council.

Diane Finley has received many awards for her activism, including The University of Western Ontario's *Coupe du président*. She was also named "one of Canada's future leaders" by the prestigious Governor-General's Study Conference 2000.

Ms. Finley was raised in Port Dover and Charlotteville, Ontario and, today, resides in Simcoe, Ontario with her husband Doug.

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