



# UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Lake Erie International Model United Nations

Lake Erie Conference XVIII  
November 3-6, 2011

## CHAIRING STYLE

Hello Delegates,

Allow me to be the first to welcome you to Lake Erie XVIII, and more specifically the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). I am quite pleased to be the President of the UN-HABITAT, for it is one of my favorite councils. This letter is designed to assist you in your research and to provide you an understanding of what I as a chair look for in a superior delegate. However, before I go any further I must address one issue. The research section of this letter was drafted as a launching point. If a delegate shows up to council armed only with the information provided in this letter they will have showed up unprepared. I have purposefully left out information crucial to your success as a delegate.

First, I will address the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure. I cannot stress enough how important the rules are to one's success as a delegate. A great delegate without knowledge of the rules instantly becomes a good delegate; further a good delegate who has mastered the rules instantly becomes a great delegate. However, it is not enough simply to know the rules; one must also demonstrate they know how to use the rules. Having said that, this does not give you liberty to use the rules in order to throw off or intimidate the other delegates.

This brings me to my next point: professionalism. When the gavel falls at the end of opening ceremonies until the final session gavel drops, you are for all intents and purposes a delegate to the UNHABITAT. This is to say please act like one. I will not tolerate any sort of tomfoolery inside my committee room.

The next thing one must do in order to ensure maximum results is fully participate. The only way to ensure one will not score at least in excellent is to not participate. It is hard to explain how frustrating it is for a chair to watch a delegate who clearly has the ability to be an excellent delegate sit around and waste it.

Now I come to knowledge. With proper preparation comes proper reward. Spend the time researching now, or spend the time regretting it afterwards. It is as simple as that. Model UN is hard work, which is why I provide you with a jumping off point for each topic.

In closing, I want to remind everyone that the purpose of Model UN is mainly fun. With that in mind, I hope to have this not only be a well run committee, but to have this be the most fun you have had at a Model UN conference.

More detailed information on the evaluative process, rules of procedure, and conference policies can be found on our conference website, [www.leimun.com](http://www.leimun.com).

## **THE TOPICS**

The UNHABITAT is the United Nations agency for human settlements. Its main goal is to promote policies that will help lead to more socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. The UNHABITAT's work is directly related to the Millennium Development Goal 7, specifically Targets 10 and 11. The main documents outlining the mandate of the organization are the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, the Habitat Agenda, the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and Resolution 56/206.

### **Land & Tenure**

*“Secure land tenure and property rights are fundamental to shelter and livelihoods, and a cornerstone for the realisation of human rights and for poverty reduction. Secure land rights are particularly important in helping reverse gender discrimination, social exclusion of vulnerable groups, and wider social and economic inequalities linked to inequitable and insecure access to land.” –Taken from UNHABITAT.org<sup>1</sup>*

Land Tenure and property rights are cornerstones to thriving societies. Not only do they help to combat social exclusion, but they also aid in poverty reduction. Further they help to foster better environmental attitudes and practices. When one actually owns the land they live on in a secure way, that plot of land becomes an investment into one's future, so naturally, one will strive to maintain it to the best of their ability.

The Millennium Development Goal 7, Target 11 pledged to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. However due to migration and expansion of urban centers the number of slum dwellers is constantly increasing.

While we are seeing advancements in the area of Land Tenure we must not rest on our laurels. We should continue to work towards better policies in regards to women owning land. Further we must assist developing countries in making and implementing policies in order to ensure land tenure for all citizens even those in the poorest of areas.

One should make sure to familiarize themselves with the Habitat Agenda. Further one should read Handbook for Best Practices, Security of Tenure and Access to Land and the Security of Land Tenure Today seminar by Farouk Tebbal.

It is important for you all to remember that as the UNHABITAT, we do not have the authority to force policy changes. Our work is to promote and develop policies and procedures to accomplish the desired outcome. Promotion is the main branch of our work. If people do not receive the information we have discovered then it makes the discovery pointless.

#### **Questions:**

1. What is the current state of my countries Property Rights and Land Tenure Laws?
2. if anything has my country helped to achieve MGD 7 Target 11?
3. Seeing as the UNHABITAT can do very little itself, our main goal is to promote policies and educate the people. How, if at all, can we help to streamline this process and make it more efficient?

#### **Resources:**

<http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=283>

<http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/landtenure/>

*Holding Their Ground: Secure Land Tenure For The Urban Poor In Developing Countries*, by Alain Durand-Lasserve, Lauren Royston

“The formalisation of urban land tenure in developing countries,” by Alain Durand-Lasserve and Harris Selod, <http://selod.ensae.net/doc/039%20Durand-Lasserve%20Selod%202007.pdf>

### **Climate Change & Cities**

*“Half of humanity now lives in cities. This will increase to 60 per cent within two decades.” –Climate Change Strategy 2010-2013 UNHABITAT<sup>2</sup>*

It is virtually impossible to separate climate change and cities. This is for two reasons. First it is because cities are a major contributor to levels of greenhouse emissions. Second it is because it is to the cities that we must look to spearhead our defense against the dangers of climate change.

It is only natural that cities are a major contributor to climate change. The problem is easy to see. Cities not only shelter nearly half of the population, but typically are full of industry as well. When you couple the dense population, the industry, and the consumption of gasoline it starts to bear a large effect. Further cities produce nearly sixty percent of all the carbon dioxide emissions.

For much of the same reasons touched on above we must look to cities as our first source for combating climate change. It is from the cities where the solutions to the climate change problem will come. Further they can also directly affect the causes of climate change; as a major contributor.

Recently there has been a movement towards Climate mitigation. In essence, implementing policies to lessen the affect one is having on the climate. Further, we have also seen a movement towards Climate adaptation policies. In essence recognizing that the affects of climate change will be felt regardless of future greenhouse gas emissions and how best to deal with the changes that will take place, cities designed with their environmental impact in mind. It is my belief that these are central to the situation.

The Goal of the UNHABITAT is to raise awareness of the Climate change problem. Further the UNHABITAT seeks to create strategies to raise and allocate funds to combat Climate change. We also seek to foster the devolpement of policies to combat Climate Change. We as a body can not directly combat Climate Change ourselves however if we raise the alarm then we will have indirectly done so.

### **Questions:**

1. Where does my country stand on the Climate Change issue?
2. Is my country is major contributor to Climate Change?
3. Has my country done anything to help prevent/combat Climate Change?
4. How does my country feel we should address climate change in countries that are less fortunate?
5. How does my country feel on sustainable cities?

### **Resources:**

[Why Cities Hold the Solutions to Fighting Climate Change](http://www.greenbiz.com/)

<http://www.greenbiz.com/>

<http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm>

<http://www.iied.org/theme/1/Adapting%20Cities/projects>

<http://www.economist.com/node/21528272>

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUWM/Resources/340232-](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUWM/Resources/340232-1205330656272/CitiesandClimateChange.pdf)

[1205330656272/CitiesandClimateChange.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUWM/Resources/340232-1205330656272/CitiesandClimateChange.pdf)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/02/science/earth/02climate.html>

*Cities And Climate Change: Urban Sustainability And Global Environmental Governance*, by Harriet Bulkeley and Michele Merrill Betsill

*Rethinking Sustainable Cities: Multilevel Governance and the 'Urban' Politics of Climate Change*, by Harriet Bulkeley and Michele Betsill

### **Housing Finance**

*“The Habitat Agenda recognized that housing finance systems do not always respond adequately to the different needs of large segments of the population, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups living in poverty and low income people.”Taken from UNBABITAT.org<sup>3</sup>*

Housing is a necessity for life. Further providing financing to ensure that all peoples can obtain housing without exceeding their financial limits should be a priority for all governments. As the government of a Country/State/City, your main priority should be the livelihood of one’s citizens.

Bearing this in mind it should only be natural that you would be committed toward them having all the basic necessities.

The high rates of urbanization only serve to magnify to affects of poor housing finance in developing countries. Between 2000 and 2030, urban areas will absorb 95 percent of the world's population growth. In poorer countries, this will mean an increase in unplanned settlements on slums--some lacking any sort of infrastructure.

The UNHABITAT should work towards promoting the need for housing for all. Further the need to finance this housing needs to be addressed. In Some countries the financial responsibility of proper housing is too much.

The UNHABITAT needs to work towards long term solutions. Our ultimate goal is the devise a means for adequate funding from both the private and public sector, to be used for housing development. This should contain a focus are slum upgrades.

### **Questions:**

1. How is the housing finance system in my country?
2. Has high urbanization led to unplanned settlements or slums in my country?
3. How do we propose to combat the spread of slums?
4. Does my country have any ideas on how to assist finance systems for those in less developed and/or less financially stable countries?

### **Resources:**

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/52783205/UN-Habitat-Guide-to-Housing-Finance-Strategy>

[http://www.fig.net/pub/fig2008/ppt/ps02/ps02\\_01\\_mutter\\_ppt\\_3096.pdf](http://www.fig.net/pub/fig2008/ppt/ps02/ps02_01_mutter_ppt_3096.pdf)

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=292&cid=5957>

<http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=1156>

<http://www.unep.org/ourplanet/imgversn/161/tibaijuka.html>

[http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/4625\\_51419\\_GC%2021%20What%20are%20slums.pdf](http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/4625_51419_GC%2021%20What%20are%20slums.pdf)

### **Gender & Social Inclusion**

*“Compared to rural areas, cities generally offer women more diverse work opportunities to increase financial independence, greater ease in accessing education at different levels, better access to healthcare, more chances to socialise outside the home, more opportunities for filling community or political leadership roles and, perhaps most importantly, more possibilities to redefine traditional roles about men and women.” Taken from the UNHABITAT website<sup>4</sup>*

As the world develops all things begin to evolve and change. This statement not only applies to tangible objects such as tools or equipment but also to ideals or belief systems. While women worldwide are beginning to see advancements in the sort of treatment they receive and the amounts of rights they have, we would be foolish to assume the job is completed.

While cities offer plenty of possibilities the truth remains that they are not coming to fruition. Over half the world's population lives in cities; however, women still make up three fifths of the world's one billion poorest people. Further they are still underrepresented in governmental roles.

Further we tend to see even more discrimination against women in poorer areas. In slums and informal settlements women not only struggle to be equals, but for things such as water, sanitation, education, and healthcare.

We must work towards total equality in society. This starts with tearing down the walls of gender discrimination.

Once again the job of the UNHABITAT will be to develop strategies to improve gender equity and then promote these strategies. Remember that we do not have the power to mandate changes in Gender relations.

### **Questions:**

1. Internally what is the current state of women's rights in my country?
2. Does this match up with the public stance we have on women's rights?
3. What if anything has your country done internally to ensure gender equality?
4. What if anything has your country done internationally for gender equality?
5. How does your country believe the UNHABITAT should address issues of Gender equality in those countries who still haven't achieved it? Remember to consider all the reasons for Gender Inequality.

### **Resources:**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21309&Cr=housing&Cr1=>

<http://www.unfpa.org/gender/>

<http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=298>

<http://www.unchcs.org/list.asp?typeid=15&catid=298&start=21&page=2>

<http://www.capacity.org/capacity/opencms/en/topics/gender-and-social-inclusion/index.html>

### **Citations:**

1. <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=2798&catid=283&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>
2. Section The Challenge: Cities and Climate Change; Cities Are Affected by Climate Change Lines1-2
3. <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=292&cid=5957>
4. <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=6522&catid=303&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>

### **Additional Web Resources:**

1. [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org) – The official website of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

2. <http://www.unbrussels.org/agencies/habitat.html> - Contains information on the UNHABITAT and several informative links.
3. <http://www.peacewomen.org/> - A comprehensive website on Women's Rights and the struggle for them.
4. <http://reliefweb.int/> - A strong search engine with a focus on political issues.
5. <http://www.iied.org/> - International Institute for Environment and Development