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Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to take place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016. Throughout modern history, urbanization has been a major driver of development and poverty reduction. Governments can respond to this key development opportunity through Habitat III by promoting a new model of urban development that is able to integrate all facets of sustainable development to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity. It is time to think urban: how to mobilise the global community and focus all levels of human settlements, including small rural communities, villages, market towns, intermediate cities and metropolises for demographic and economic growth. Habitat III can help systematise the alignment between cities and towns and national planning objectives in their role as drivers of national economic and social development. Urbanization is an unprecedented challenge. By the middle of the century four of every five people might be living in towns and cities. Urbanization and development are inextricably linked and it is necessary to find a way of ensuring the sustainability of growth. Urbanization has become a driving force as well as a source of development with the power to change and improve lives.

Habitat III Conference has the convening power to bring together all actors to achieve these objectives. Solutions for the complex challenge of urbanization can only be found by bringing together Member States, multilateral organizations, local governments, private sector and civil society.

