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## Evaluation Directorate



*June 2007*

# Evaluation of the Third Session of the World Urban Forum

*Final Report*  
**June 2007**



# *Evaluation of the Third Session of the World Urban Forum*

**Final Report**

*Evaluation Directorate  
Strategic Policy and Research  
Human Resources and Social Development Canada*

*June 2007*

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# *Table of Contents*

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Management Response/Action Plan.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>1. Introduction and Context .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview of Third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) .....	1
1.2 WUF3 Objectives .....	2
1.3 WUF3 Organization.....	2
1.4 Conference Theme and Program .....	3
1.5 WUF3 Resources .....	5
1.6 Evaluation Context .....	5
<b>2. Methodology.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Key Findings .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Rationale and Relevance.....	13
3.2 Success.....	15
3.3 Outreach.....	23
3.4 Planning and Delivery .....	29
3.5 Lessons Learned .....	34
<b>4. Key Conclusions.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>39</b>



## *List of Tables*

Table 1	Overview of Event Types .....	4
Table 2	Countries with over 100 Registrants/Participants.....	24
Table 3	Profile of Participants, by Organization Type and Country Rated Level of Human Development* .....	25





# *List of Figures*

Figure 1	Participant Satisfaction with Identification of Practical Ideas for Application to Local Context .....	19
Figure 2	Number of Participants and Non-participants, by Association Type and Level of Human Development of Country of Origin.....	27
Figure 3	Top Five Most Frequent Reasons for Not Attending WUF3, by Country Level of Human Development.....	28
Figure 4	Top Five Most Frequent Reasons for Not Attending WUF3, by Country Level of Human Development.....	32



# *Executive Summary*

## **Introduction, Context and Methodology**

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3), conducted on behalf of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). The World Urban Forum (WUF) is a worldwide event focusing on urbanization issues and held every two years under the auspices of UN-HABITAT. It is primarily a civil society conference at which participation is encouraged from diverse stakeholders. The third session of WUF (WUF3) was held in Vancouver, Canada from June 19 to 23, 2006, and was sponsored by UN-HABITAT and hosted by the Government of Canada. It attracted over 10,000 participants from all over the globe, representing a variety of government, academic, non-governmental and private sector institutions concerned with a variety of urban development issues.<sup>1</sup>

Both UN-HABITAT and Canada shared the objective of hosting a successful conference. In addition to this shared objective, a specific objective for UN-HABITAT was to have participants take away one practical idea with respect to urban issues. Canada's objectives were focused on: positioning Canada as a global leader in urban issues; strengthening domestic partnerships and understanding of sustainable urbanization; having an impact on international and domestic policy discussions; and providing support to UN-HABITAT in developing solutions to urbanization challenges. WUF3 sought to strengthen the level of broad-based participation and focus on solutions, actions, partnerships and best practices, and to ensure that participants left with practical and replicable solutions for sustainable urbanization.

The WUF3 format included a variety of specific types of events, organized by different groups and expected to achieve different purposes: plenary sessions, dialogues/special sessions, roundtables, networking events, exhibits, training events and side events. A global 72-hour Internet event, called HABITAT JAM, was held prior to WUF3 and included moderated sessions during which participants were invited to share views on urban sustainability issues.

The evaluation of WUF3 focused on the effectiveness of the planning, coordination and organization of the conference, as well as some initial post-conference results. There were six lines of evidence for this evaluation:

- Review of relevant WUF3, Secretariat and UN-HABITAT documents, including information on print media coverage provided by the Secretariat;
- Review of UN-HABITAT registration and participant databases;

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<sup>1</sup> For further contextual information regarding the WUF3, please refer to the following website: [www.wuf3-fum3.ca](http://www.wuf3-fum3.ca)

- Onsite data collection during which four team members attended WUF3 and observed a sample of events and exhibits, conducted short interviews with event facilitators/organizers, administered a participant survey at selected events (receiving 499 completed surveys),<sup>2</sup> and facilitated a post-conference discussion with key organizers and selected participants;
- Onsite participant survey, conducted in conjunction with UN-HABITAT. A total of 1,151 questionnaires were received (representing 11% of on-site participants – i.e. excluding conference staff, volunteers etc.);
- Key informant interviews with 55 WUF3 planners and organizers, representatives of advisory and coordinating bodies, and key participants and organizers of specific events; and
- Online survey of participants and non-participants conducted after the Forum. A total of 1,640 questionnaires were received from participants (a response rate of 26%) and 446 questionnaires were received from non-participants (a response rate of 8%).

## Key Findings

### ***Rationale and Relevance***

A key objective for the design of WUF3 was to have a conference that encouraged participant engagement. Key changes following WUF2 were to reduce the number of papers presented, increase the opportunities for discussion and networking (through more interactive networking events and professionally facilitated dialogue sessions) and add roundtable discussions to focus on issues of interest to specific stakeholder groups. Evidence from key informants and participants suggests that this approach was relevant. In addition, the broad participation in WUF3, with participants from 156 countries representing a wide range of organizations, suggests that WUF3 was relevant to a broad range of people.

WUF3 themes were relevant in the context of current global issues, allowed for coverage of key urban issues and addressed issues relevant to both domestic and international contexts. Overall, participants felt that WUF3 themes had met their expectations. Of those participants who indicated that the themes had not met their expectations, most were participants from countries rated as having a high level of human development.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A response rate is not possible for this survey. Attendees were asked to fill out the survey as they exited the events selected for observations, and no accurate count of the number of event attendees exists.

<sup>3</sup> Countries of residence of participants were classified as high, medium or low using the classification in the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2005*. The same classification was used for the analysis of the registration and participant data, as well as all participant and non-participant surveys.

## **Success**

Overall, WUF3 was deemed a successful conference. Most of the objectives identified for it by UN-HABITAT and Canada were achieved. The Forum attracted over 20,000 registrants, an unexpectedly high number given that there had been just over 4,000 participants at WUF2, in Barcelona in 2004. Given that there is no registration fee for WUF sessions, it was expected that a considerable number of people would register without actually attending. As such, it was estimated that 6,000 participants would actually be present at the conference; in the end, WUF3 attracted over 10,000 participants. The format was successfully changed from previous WUF sessions by providing more opportunities for participant engagement and for participant dialogue, networking and sharing of ideas. Not all events were successful in this regard, but the model for making WUF a truly civil society conference was successfully applied at WUF3.

The conference also provided many opportunities for participants to identify solutions to urban issues and for strengthening both formal and informal networks. Key informants and participants were also very positive about the conference facilities and the services provided to delegates.

WUF3 showcased Canada as capable of hosting a first-class conference, in spite of the challenges encountered (e.g., late start in organizing the event, unexpectedly high number of participants). While it provided many opportunities for Canada to showcase its achievements on urban issues, the different lines of evidence show mixed results. Some key informants indicated that the event had successfully showcased Canadian achievements but others (including representatives of the advisory and coordinating bodies, key stakeholders and event organizers) indicated that more could have been done if these achievements had been articulated into an overall strategy at WUF3.

This reaction from key informants was reflected by the views of participants. While three-quarters of respondents to the onsite survey indicated that WUF3 had significantly or fully met their expectations with respect to showcasing Canada's achievements, online survey respondents reflected somewhat limited learning about Canada. Just over half of online survey respondents indicated that they learned, to a moderate or great extent, about Canadian best practices for sustainable urban environments, know-how in urban planning and management, approaches to engaging citizens in urban sustainability issues and contributions to addressing urban sustainability globally.

Of all the WUF3 events, the exhibits appeared to provide the greatest impact in terms of showcasing Canada. Over four-fifths of respondents to the online survey indicated that, to a moderate or great extent, the exhibits had highlighted Canada's work on urban sustainability issues.

Although it succeeded, to some extent, in strengthening domestic partnerships, it is not clear that WUF3 positioned Canada as a global leader in urban issues. The extent to which the domestic partnerships will be sustainable and will have an impact on domestic policy discussions will depend, to a certain extent, on the contributions by the federal government to urban issues in the future, including preparations for WUF4 in 2008.

It is too early to assess the longer-term impact of the conference. Approximately three-quarters of online survey respondents indicated that the range of WUF3 events contributed to the identification of practical ideas that they could apply to their local context. The majority of online respondents also believed that, in the next year, they will likely apply the new practical ideas learned at WUF3 and follow-up with the networks and contacts established there. However, the extent to which the practical ideas shared among participants will have an impact on urban issues will depend on both implementation by individual participants and the extent to which the identified solutions have an impact on UN-HABITAT's agenda and its capacity to support international policy discussions.

### ***Outreach***

Information made available about WUF3 allowed for very broad-based participation in the conference. Although over half the participants were from Canada, an additional 155 countries were represented at the Forum. Participants represented a broad range of associations - the largest single group being the NGO community, which accounted for one-quarter of participants. Even though facilitating participation of the private sector had been identified as a specific Canadian activity in WUF3 planning, most WUF3 planners and organizers interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the level of private sector involvement. Although WUF3 was well publicized and efforts were made to ensure good participation, some key informants felt that there was insufficient targeting and marketing efforts towards some potential participants in Canada and the United States, especially those in the private sector.

A key outreach activity for WUF3 was HABITAT JAM, a global 72-hour online event carried out prior to the Forum in order to bring together the ideas of people who would not have an opportunity to attend a World Urban Forum. It attracted 39,000 participants from 158 countries, approximately three-quarters of which came from three JAM target groups – women, youth and slum dwellers. The post-event JAM report reflected a high level of satisfaction with the event.

### ***Planning and Delivery***

WUF3 represented the first time that UN-HABITAT had worked so closely with the host country to plan the conference. There was considerable shared responsibility for organizing specific events and, overall, respondents were satisfied with the results. Some key informants from the Government of Canada, advisory groups and UN-HABITAT indicated that this working relationship between the Secretariat and UN-HABITAT was challenging. Reasons for this included some lack of clarity in the respective roles and responsibilities, inherent difficulties of working with two different types of organizations with different organizational cultures, delays associated with prolonged negotiations between Canada and UN-HABITAT on protocol agreements, a lack of mutual understanding of the contexts and constraints of the two organizations, and the turn-around times at UN-HABITAT and in Canada.

A strength of the WUF3 planning process was the engagement of a broad group of stakeholders, including the Vancouver Working Group, the National Advisory Committee and the Interdepartmental Committee. Other strengths were the creation of a dedicated Secretariat to coordinate the federal government's inputs and the use of contribution

agreements to engage professional event planners in conference organization. Without these mechanisms, it would have been very difficult for the government to mount such a large, complex conference in the very short time available after the transfer of responsibility for the event from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation to HRSDC.

### **Lessons Learned**

There were two types of lessons learned – lessons that can be applied to future WUFs, and lessons that can be applied to future similar events that Canada or other countries may host. In some instances these are based on good practices that contributed to WUF3's success; in others, they are based on areas that could have improved WUF3.

### **WUF Lessons**

**Accommodating interested individuals:** In some cases, the large number of participants had an impact on the extent to which participants could attend the sessions of their choice (e.g., when rooms were not large enough to accommodate all those interested). Options to handle large numbers of potential participants should be explored, including providing alternative mechanisms for interested people to access the sessions (e.g., through live Internet broadcasts), and ensuring that key stakeholders and/or international participants who have travelled great distances to the conference have access to events that may have limited seating (e.g., by reserving a given number of seats for these participants).

**Networking Events:** Feedback from participants consistently indicated that participants found the networking events to be particularly effective in contributing to WUF3's expected outcomes. As a result, this event type should be included in future WUFs that focus on participant engagement and the identification and sharing of practical solutions to urban sustainability issues.

**Exhibits:** The WUF3 Exposition Hall provided a wide range of mechanisms for engaging participants, including some exhibits that were interactive or included demonstrations or films. The WUF3 Exposition Hall was particularly useful for sharing information about urban sustainability issues. This range of mechanisms used should be considered for future WUFs.

**Internet dialogue:** Based on the post-JAM survey of participants conducted by the International Centre for Sustainable Cities and key informant interviews with knowledgeable stakeholders, WUF3's experiment with HABITAT JAM was determined to be successful. The report prepared following the JAM indicated that if continued, the JAM ought to be open for a longer period, be more user-friendly and support discussions in more languages.<sup>4</sup>

**Engagement of the private sector:** Many WUF3 planners and organizers interviewed noted that WUF3 had not achieved its goal of increasing the participation of the private sector. They identified that an explicit marketing strategy needs to be developed in order to attract and engage this sector.

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<sup>4</sup> HABITAT-JAM, *Summary Report Draft*, International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), June 2006, p. 12.

**Logistics management:** To ease the planning and delivery of WUF3, a dedicated unit within government was set up, and experienced personnel hired to assist with forum logistics. In order to ensure the effective coordination and delivery of future WUFs, similar management strategies, including the hiring of a professional event management firm if such expertise does not exist within the host body or organization, ought to be considered by future host countries.

### **Similar Event Lessons**

**Clear strategic direction:** In order for Canada to achieve the maximum benefits for its investment in hosting large international events, a clear strategic direction needs to be set well before activities associated with the logistics of hosting the event begin.

**Time frames:** A key lesson drawn from the planning of WUF3 for the hosting of large international events is that the planning needs to begin very early, not only for logistics and planning, but in order to have adequate time to define the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders for key functions.

**Organizational Secretariat:** The creation of a dedicated Secretariat was an important lesson learned, as it allowed the government to bring together people with the requisite skills to provide leadership for the event.

**Event planning manual/guidelines:** Those involved in the WUF3 organization recognized that they had little documented guidance on hosting a large, international event. A manual or guidelines on government planning of an event of this nature would have allowed them to be more efficient in their planning.



# *Management Response/Action Plan*

The World Urban Forum (WUF) management concurs with the Report and its main finding that WUF3 was a major success. WUF3 was both a qualitative and a quantitative leap forward from previous Forums and offered many practical solutions to actual urban problems. Beyond the more than doubling in participant numbers and the diversity of their backgrounds, WUF3's program significantly expanded and sharpened the scope of the debate and the search for solutions to the challenges facing a rapidly urbanizing world. Its focus, through more than 200 scheduled meetings over a five day period, on the cross-cutting themes of environmental, economic and social urban sustainability, linked to the objective of sharing actionable ideas (and not just of useful concepts and information) made WUF3 a more enriching experience for all.

WUF management also concurs with the Report that the planning and delivery of WUF3 was a challenging task given the many organizing players involved, varying expectations and often overlapping responsibilities. Thanks are due to the organizers from Canada and UN Habitat who, working together, helped made WUF3 a major success.

WUF management would like to point out two further particularly notable aspects of WUF3: the inclusive nature of the event and the use of new technologies to strengthen awareness in and support for the WUF process.

Vancouver 2006 brought unprecedented global diversity of urban stakeholders together, ranging from local, national and transnational political authorities responsible for urban affairs to youth and women to slum dwellers to urban planners and homebuilders. With more than 10,000 participants from over 150 countries, WUF3 was able to truly reflect the dynamic of urban life around the globe.

The three day global internet dialogue Habitat JAM, held six months before WUF3, played an important role in achieving the success of the Forum. The JAM was both an event in its own right AND an important marketing tool for building awareness and interest in WUF3. Clearly this shows the enormous growth potential of global internet-based dialogue as a tool for knowledge exchange and awareness building, as well as a basis for engendering enthusiasm for international events.

WUF management agrees with the main conclusions of the Report regarding the positive lessons learned from the WUF3 experience. We have already been able to convey these lessons, through direct meetings as well as through the preparation of post-conference reports, to both UN Habitat officials and the Chinese host organizers of WUF4 in 2008. The Canadian experience and assessment of WUF3, including the lessons learned, was warmly received by both parties, who indicated to us that they believed Canada had set a very high standard.

There is no question that it is too early to tell what the longer-term impact of the conference will be on urban policy, both globally and in Canada. We note with satisfaction that the Evaluation Report indicates a large majority of participants felt they learned useful practical ideas on urban sustainability at WUF3, that they intended to try these in their local urban environments and that the Forum was successful in telling the global and Canadian urban story. In this regard, Canada's objectives for WUF3 were fully realized.

# *1. Introduction and Context*

This report reflects the results of the evaluation of the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3), conducted on behalf of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).

## **1.1 Overview of the Third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3)**

The World Urban Forum (WUF) is a worldwide event focusing on cities, shelter and urbanization. The Forum, held every two years, is a high-profile international event sponsored by UN-HABITAT that is designed to engage delegates, transfer knowledge and encourage action on urban issues.<sup>5</sup> UN-HABITAT is a United Nations (UN) agency, based in Nairobi, Kenya, with the mandate to “promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.”<sup>6</sup> It was initially established as the UN Centre for Human Settlements, as a result of Habitat I – the first UN conference on human settlements, held in Vancouver in 1976.

WUFs are civil society conferences, unlike other UN conferences, which are inter-governmental conferences. As a non-legislative forum, formalized processes at WUFs are not applied and informal participation is encouraged from diverse stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, international institutions, academic institutions, private sector, media, and national and local government authorities. The results of the WUF also informed the long-term strategic plans for UN-HABITAT. Local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners participate in WUF in its role as an advisory body to the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.<sup>7</sup> UN-HABITAT’s Executive Director submits the WUF report and her recommendations to the biennial sessions of the UN-HABITAT Governing Council for consideration and appropriate action.

There have been two previous sessions of WUF – WUF1 was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002 and WUF2 was held in Barcelona, Spain in 2004. WUF3 was held in Vancouver, Canada from June 19 to 23, 2006. The next session of WUF is scheduled to be held in Nanjing, China in 2008.

WUF3 was sponsored by UN-HABITAT and hosted by the Government of Canada and the event marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Habitat I held in Vancouver in 1976. WUF3 was the first Forum to be managed as a close partnership between UN-HABITAT and the host government.

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<sup>5</sup> Terms and Conditions for the Delivery of Financial Contributions in support to the 2006 World Urban Forum, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> UN-HABITAT website: [www.unhabitat.org/about/mandate.asp](http://www.unhabitat.org/about/mandate.asp).

<sup>7</sup> “Report of the Third Session of the World Urban Forum, Vancouver, Canada, June 19-23, 2006”, p. 8.

## 1.2 WUF3 Objectives

WUF3 sought to build on previous Forums, by strengthening the engagement and mobilization of civil society in addressing urban sustainability issues. The overall goal of the Forum was to “improve understanding and agreement on ways forward to ensuring sustainable development in cities worldwide in rich and poor countries.”<sup>8</sup> Both UN-HABITAT and Canada shared the objective of ensuring that the Forum was perceived in the eyes of the world to have been well managed. In addition, one objective specific to UN-HABITAT was for the majority of delegates participating in the Forum to leave with one new idea they could implement in their own country that they did not have before coming to the conference.<sup>9</sup>

For its part, Canada had the following specific objectives for the Forum:

- Position Canada as a global leader in sustainable cities and promote federal urban policies and strategies on sustainability and multiculturalism;
- Strengthen domestic partnerships and understanding of sustainable urbanization;
- Impact international and domestic policy discussions, including North-South dialogue; and
- Provide support to UN-HABITAT in developing solutions to urbanization challenges.<sup>10</sup>

The Canadian objectives would be achieved through the following:

- Supporting the Government of Canada in hosting a broadly attended and well-organized conference;
- Facilitating participation of the Canadian private sector, other levels of government and other partners; and
- Developing infrastructure sufficient for the effective delivery of the conference and conducive to the sharing of innovative ideas.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.3 WUF3 Organization

In 2002, Canada announced that it would offer to host WUF3. Part of the motivation for this was the fact that it was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a conference held in Vancouver that led ultimately to the creation of UN-HABITAT. The Minister responsible for Western Economic Diversification (WD) instigated the planning in Canada and set up and funded the Vancouver Working Group (VWG) – a group of British Columbia and Vancouver-based stakeholders – to develop regional linkages and provide regional advice for WUF3 preparations. From 2002 to 2004, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) carried out much of the preparatory work for WUF3, including the establishment of an

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<sup>8</sup> McCarney, P. Executive Summary, Background Paper, *Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Terms and Conditions for the Delivery of Financial Contributions in support to the 2006 World Urban Forum, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Interdepartmental Committee and securing financing for WUF3 in the 2005 Federal Budget. In 2004, CMHC was formerly identified as the lead federal government agency, and launched the pan-Canadian National Advisory Committee (NAC) to advise the minister responsible for WUF3 and contribute to achieving an agreement in principle with the UN on the conference themes and sub-themes.

In 2005, lead agency responsibility was transferred to HRSDC. An HRSDC Secretariat was set up to manage Canada's contribution, and a Commissioner General and Deputy Commissioner General were appointed. In addition, a WUF3 Management Board, chaired by the Deputy Minister (DM) of (then) Labour and Housing, with deputy-level representatives from Infrastructure Canada, CMHC and WD, a former Auditor General and a former Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), was set up to provide oversight for Canada's contribution. An Interdepartmental Committee (IDC), with representatives from a wide range of federal departments, was set up to coordinate input from various departments to both conference events and exhibits in the Canada Pavilion.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.4 Conference Theme and Program

The theme of the conference was “Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action” and the three sub-themes were:

- Urban Growth and the Environment;
- Partnership and Finance; and
- Social Inclusion and Cohesion.

WUF3 organizers sought to build on previous Forums by strengthening the level of broad-based participation at the event and providing a context in which participants were encouraged to move beyond ideas into action. It was designed to focus on solutions, actions, partnerships and best practices and to ensure that participants left WUF3 with practical and replicable solutions for sustainable urbanization.

Developed as an experimental preparatory event for WUF3, HABITAT-JAM, a global 72-hour Internet event, was held in December 2005. The main purpose of the HABITAT-JAM was to bring together the ideas of tens of thousands of people who would not have an opportunity to attend a World Urban Forum. The event included moderated sessions during which JAM participants were invited to share views on urban sustainability issues, related to the conference themes. In total, 39,000 participants from 158 countries participated in the JAM and shared ideas on how to address some of the world's most critical urban issues.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> A Pavilion in the Exposition Hall with exhibits from various Canadian federal government departments.

<sup>13</sup> Summary of the Third World Urban Forum: World Urban Forum Bulletin, IISD, Vol. 125 No. 6, Monday June 26, 2006, p. 16.

The WUF format included a variety of specific types of events, organized by different groups and expected to achieve different purposes. A summary of the events is provided in Table 1.

<b>Table 1 Overview of Event Types</b>		
<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
Plenary sessions	3	Plenary sessions were designed to feature speakers who offered context and perspectives on urbanization issues. They were organized by UN-HABITAT, with considerable input from Canada, as the host country.
Dialogues	6	Dialogues included high profile experts addressing key policy issues with respect to WUF3 sub-themes. The role of the facilitator during these events was to engage participants from the audience in discussion. A number of embedded speakers were to be called upon during the session. UN-HABITAT was the lead organization for these events.
Special sessions	5	Special sessions were designed to engage a larger audience and transmit key messages. Special sessions were convened on issues relating to the wealth of cities; the role of governments; water, sanitation and human settlements; the future of cities and a special session entitled "From Vancouver to Nanjing." UN-HABITAT was the lead organization for these events.
Roundtables	13	Roundtables focused on developing action plans were organized for Habitat Agenda partners. Groups included ministers, mayors, the private sector, youth, women, parliamentarians and others. Some were not open to general participants. Roundtables were organized by UN-HABITAT and Canada, with the participation of stakeholders.
Networking events	160	Networking events were designed to bring together people with common interests to discuss various aspects of sustainable urban development issues centred on the conferences sub-themes. These events were organized by stakeholder groups and were designed to offer an opportunity for participants to share ideas, experiences and best practices. <sup>14</sup> The focus was on sharing practical and replicable solutions to issues. A range of stakeholders (including NGOs, international institutions, academic institutions, national and local governments) proposed over 400 individual networking events. The selection of the 160 events to host at WUF3 was made by UN-HABITAT and Canada.
Exhibition	70	The Exhibition was designed to provide opportunities for a wide range of groups to demonstrate leading edge projects, ideas, case studies, experience and best practices from around the world on the challenges of sustainable cities. The exhibition was included in the Exposition Hall and included presentations, films, interactive spaces, receptions, informal meetings, media conferences etc. A range of stakeholders (including NGOs, international institutions, academic institutions, national and local governments) mounted exhibits and other events in the Exposition Hall.
Training events	9	These were three-hour workshops designed to impart professional skills to urban practitioners. Each session was limited to 40 participants. Most events were organization by UN-HABITAT, but Canada also organized some.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.14.

## 1.5 WUF3 Resources

In total, HRSDC received \$21.1M for WUF3, with overall Government of Canada allocations totalling \$27.6M. This investment was complemented by other contributions from participating federal departments and agencies and other funding bodies.<sup>15</sup>

Once the funding was secured, the Secretariat set up contributions agreements with a number of organizations to assist with the planning and management of the conference. The largest of these was a \$14M agreement with the Globe Foundation – a Vancouver-based non-governmental organization (NGO) and professional event management group that managed the logistics for WUF3 and HABITAT JAM. In addition, the Secretariat had a \$2M agreement with UN-HABITAT to help fund its contributions to, and participation in, WUF3.

## 1.6 Evaluation Context

It is unusual for a department in which evaluations are routinely conducted in the context of the renewal of program terms and conditions, to conduct an evaluation of a one-time event such as an international conference. However, given the size of Canada's contribution to this conference and the importance of learning lessons for similar future events, an evaluation of the conference was seen as appropriate. Using the WUF3 Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) as a starting point, the following evaluation issues were identified for the evaluation:

- Rationale and relevance – the extent to which the design, themes, content, activities and training provided during the Forum were relevant to both the domestic and international context;
- WUF3 planning and delivery – the effectiveness of the organizational structure and conference infrastructure;
- WUF3 outreach – the extent to which the conference and HABITAT JAM reached their intended audiences and provided an effective Internet-based dialogue;
- WUF3 success – the extent to which WUF3 contributed to a better understanding of urbanization issues, to a sharing of practical and replicable solutions to domestic and international urbanization issues, and to strengthening domestic and international networks; and
- WUF3 lessons learned – the lessons that could provide guidance to both Canada and UN-HABITAT for future international events.

The evaluation took place between May and November 2006.

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<sup>15</sup> Terms and Conditions for the Delivery of Financial Contributions in support to the 2006 World Urban Forum, p. 16.





## 2. Methodology

The approach used to evaluate WUF3 is based on multiple lines of inquiry. That is, more than one method was used to assess each of the evaluation questions. There were six lines of evidence for this evaluation, described below. The lines of inquiry or methods are cross-referenced with the evaluation questions in Appendix A.

### Document review

A review was conducted of relevant WUF3, Secretariat and UN-HABITAT documents, including government management documents relating to the history, planning and implementation of the Forum and information on WUF3 media coverage provided by the Secretariat. Other documents included the WUF3 Terms and Conditions, Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) and Risk-Based Audit Framework (RBAF); other relevant policy documents; print media; and supplementary documents and links provided by key informants and stakeholders.

### Secondary data analysis

A review of UN-HABITAT registration and participant databases was conducted to develop a profile of WUF3 participants and non-participants. The evaluation team's analysis indicated that 20,268 people registered prior to the conference (excluding staff, volunteers, suppliers etc.) and 10,121 participated in WUF3 (excluding staff, volunteers, suppliers etc.).

UN-HABITAT provided the evaluation team with copies of two databases – one for registrants and one for participants. The evaluation team cleaned the databases (to remove duplicate, blank or non-legitimate records) before analyzing the records to identify the “true” participants (excluding those who registered solely to get the identification badge required to access the WUF3 site, such as suppliers, performers, security staff etc.) and develop the sample for the post-conference online survey. UN-HABITAT's own analysis of the registration and participation databases produced slightly different results than those provided in this report.<sup>16</sup>

### Onsite data collection

Four team members (plus one representative from HRSDC Evaluation) attended WUF3 for all 5 days of the conference to observe events and the exhibition, interview facilitators/organizers, administer an event participant survey and facilitate a post-conference discussion. These methods are described below.

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<sup>16</sup> UN-HABITAT's *Report on the Third Session of the World Urban Forum* currently available on the WUF3 website, <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=41>, identifies that there were 9,689 participants.

### ***Event observation***

The team observed a sample of 34 events. The sample was initially drawn randomly and then modified to ensure that the events sampled were representative of the overall proportion of different types of events (plenaries, dialogues sessions, networking events etc.), organizers (NGOs, government etc.), WUF3 sub-themes areas, and, for the networking events, the geographic location of the organizers. The team used a structured observation protocol to guide the assessment of these events.

### ***Exhibit observation***

The evaluation team observed and assessed a total of fifteen selected exhibits in the Exposition Hall. The selection of the exhibits was random, based on the list of exhibits provided in the conference program. Protocols were developed to assess the exhibits on the following criteria:

- Type of partner exhibiting;
- Focus of the exhibit with respect to the conference themes;
- Country hosting the exhibit;
- Whether the exhibit was staffed;
- Nature of the exhibit content (posters, pamphlets, videos etc.);
- Extent to which the exhibit presented specific ideas that would contribute to identifying solutions to urban issues (e.g., a focus on specific urban issues, rather than promotion of the presenting organization); and
- Overall quality of the presentation (e.g., clarity of the message, ease of understanding, visual attraction of the exhibit).

### ***Interviews with Facilitators/organizers***

Short interviews were conducted with facilitators/organizers of four sampled events. The number of interviews was limited because the facilitators/organizers were busy after the events with the larger-than-expected number of participants – many of whom wanted to talk to the organizers/facilitators. A number of the organizers who were not interviewed were subsequently interviewed by telephone and the questions about event facilitation and organization were integrated into that interview.

### ***Event participant survey***

The team administered a paper survey to participants in specific WUF3 events. As participants were exiting events selected for observation, evaluation team members and WUF3 volunteers invited participants to complete the survey.<sup>17</sup> In total, 499 questionnaires were completed – on average, fourteen completed questionnaires for each event – and provided information on the demographic profile of respondents, impressions of the particular event and expectations regarding the impact of the event.

The profile of participants who completed the survey is quite similar to that of the overall WUF3 participants, particularly with respect to representation of participants from countries of different levels of development. Since the sampling for the distribution of the survey was based on the event sample, and the number of participants in each event is not known, it is not possible to calculate a response rate. The analysis focused on the comparison of participant impressions of the different types of events. The results presented in the report do not include the “non responses.”

### ***Facilitate post-conference discussion***

Evaluation team members were asked by the WUF3 Secretariat and UN-HABITAT to facilitate a post-conference discussion to identify perceptions of the conference and lessons learned for the WUF4 to be held in Nanjing, China in 2008. The Secretariat and UN-HABITAT invited 40 people to participate in the discussion. Potential participants were selected based on their perspectives regarding the overall event as either organizers or key participants (identified by the WUF3 Secretariat and UN-HABITAT based on conversations over the course of the week). However, a change in the time of the discussion meant that it ran concurrently with two special sessions and other networking events. Possibly as a result of this, 21 people attended out of the 40 invited.

The discussion was structured around four key questions focused on lessons that could be learned from the preparation, format and logistics for WUF3. Insights from the discussion are incorporated in this report, where appropriate.

### ***Team member observations***

In addition to the more structured mechanisms for observing WUF3, the team members were onsite for the week of the conference and, as a result, some findings in this report are based on observations by the evaluation team that go beyond the observations of specific events.

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<sup>17</sup> Volunteers were made available to the evaluation team by the conference organizers. In addition to inviting and encouraging participants to complete the event participant survey, they also informed participants about, and encouraged participation in, the general participant survey (on behalf of UN-HABITAT). Prior to deploying the volunteers, the evaluation team provided a training session to enable them to answer questions about the two surveys – including the questions in the survey instruments, use of the survey results and issues related to confidentiality.

## **Onsite survey of Participants**

The team assisted UN-HABITAT with the design and administration of an onsite survey of WUF3 participants. The evaluation team developed the questionnaire based on an initial design by UN-HABITAT.

The survey questionnaires were initially distributed to all participants in the delegate's package. Additional copies were made available during the conference and collection boxes were placed at various locations across the conference site. The survey collected demographic information and information on participant perceptions of WUF3.

Although the 12,099 people at the conference site would have had access to the questionnaire, it was intended only for the 10,121 "true" participants (i.e. excluding conference staff, volunteers etc.). Even though it is possible that some of the 2,000 other people on site may have completed a questionnaire, the number of true participants has been used as the denominator for calculating the survey response rate. Using this number, the 1,151 completed questionnaires received represent a response rate of 11% of the true participants. Survey data was weighted to correct for known differences related to the profile of respondents, compared to the profile of participants, using the following variables: gender, affiliation and level of development of the country of residence of the respondent.

The confidence level for this survey was calculated to be 95%, with a confidence interval of +/- 2.7%, 19 times out of 20. That means that if 50% of the respondents said "yes" to a question, the actual response lies between 47.3% and 52.7%.

## **Key informant interviews**

In-person or telephone interviews were conducted with 55 key informants, including:

- WUF3 planners and organizers (UN-HABITAT, Secretariat, Globe Foundation) (10);
- Advisory and coordinating bodies (Management Board, NAC, VWG, IDC) (30); and
- Key stakeholders and organizers of specific events at WUF3 (NGOs and international bodies) (15).

The WUF3 Secretariat provided the initial list of possible key informants. The team supplemented the list with a few additional names based on the team's observations at WUF3. Of the final list of some 80 names, the team was able to complete 55 interviews. The time frame did not allow the team to conduct key informant interviews prior to the conference, and some key informants were unavailable after the conference. The interviews were conducted using a structured interview guide.

The roles of the three key informant groups placed them in varying proximity to core activities relating to the planning, organizing and delivery of the conference and, as such, their responses would be given a different weight depending on the question. To qualify responses, the term "most" has been used in cases where approximately three-quarters or more respondents from any one of the three key informant groups tended to agree on an issue. The term "some" has been used in instances where between approximately

one-quarter and three-quarters of respondents within any one of the three key informant groups tended to agree on an issue. Isolated comments have been included in cases where the key informant's role brought them in close proximity to specific issues or where the issue raised appeared substantial in relation to the overall evaluation results.

## **Online Survey of Participants and Non-participants**

After WUF3, the team administered an online survey, which was distributed to participants and non-participants who had agreed to have the contact information they provided during the registration process shared with UN-HABITAT partners. The survey was sent to:

- 6,548 participants (excluding WUF3 staff, volunteers etc.). The contact information was incorrect for 317 participants, leaving 6,231 participants as potential respondents. A total of 1,640 completed questionnaires were received from this group, representing a response rate of 26%; and
- 6,790 people who registered but did not attend. The contact information was incorrect for 1,300 registrants, leaving 5,490 registrants as potential non-participant respondents. A total of 446 completed questionnaires were received from non-participants, representing a response rate of 8%.

This survey data was not weighted because the profile of both participant and non-participant respondents (based on gender, affiliation and level of development of the country of residence of the respondent) was very similar to that of overall participants and non-participants.

In addition, the evaluation team compared the profiles of those who received the online survey with those for whom the contact information was incorrect. Only a small percentage (approximately 12%) of the records of registrants/participants who agreed to share their contact information did not have accurate contact information. The comparison of the profiles showed similar distributions on the variables contained in the administrative data (e.g. gender, affiliation and level of human development of country of origin).

The participant survey collected demographic information and information on participant perceptions of the Forum. The non-participant survey collected demographic information and information on respondents' reasons for not attending. The two surveys were combined in one instrument, with skips appropriate to each respondent type. The survey instrument began with common questions for all participants and then branched into different questions, depending on whether respondents reported that they had participated in WUF3.<sup>18</sup>

The confidence interval for the online survey of participants was +/-2.42, for a confidence level of 95%. That means that if 50% of the respondents said "yes" to a question, the actual response lies between 47.58% and 52.42%. The confidence interval for the online survey of non-participants was +/-4.64, for a confidence level of 95%. That means that if 50% of the respondents said "yes" to a question, the actual response lies between 45.36% and 54.64%.

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<sup>18</sup> A number of those for whom the registration database indicated that they participated in WUF3 indicated in the survey response that they had not, in fact, attended. They were counted as non-participants.

## Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology

The methodology for this evaluation included multiple lines of evidence. The lines of evidence allowed the evaluation team to collect information from the broad range of stakeholders involved in WUF3, including UN-HABITAT and Canadian organizers, event organizers, knowledgeable observers, and participants and non-participants, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

There are four main limitations to the methodology:

- The WUF3 evaluation was more comprehensive than previous WUF evaluations, which consisted of participant surveys only. In addition, WUF3 is a unique event for Canada, with no similar evaluations to use as a basis for comparison. While such opportunities were limited, comparisons to previous WUFs were made when possible.
- Although the team was able to interview 55 key informants, some groups were somewhat under-represented in the sample of key informants – representatives of UN-HABITAT, VWG and NAC chairs, and facilitators of specific events.
- Although the response rates to the surveys are reasonable, particularly for the online participant survey, there are possibly non-response differences in the survey responses. When appropriate, data was weighted to correct for known differences, based on the profile of respondents. However, such weighting cannot correct for unknown biases – likely related to whether or not a participant or non-participant chose to complete the survey.
- The methodology did not allow the team to assess the extent to which WUF3 had an impact on urban issues. The post-conference online survey was administered fairly soon after WUF3 so that respondents would be addressing issues related to the delivery of the Forum while there was still good recall of the event. Although it was too early to assess whether or not participants had been able to apply the ideas learned from WUF3 or benefit from any networks established or renewed, respondents were asked to assess whether or not they were *likely* to apply practical ideas learned or follow-up on networks created or renewed at the Forum.

## 3. Key Findings

The key findings for this evaluation are organized around the five groups of issues identified for the evaluation – rationale/relevance, success, outreach, planning and delivery, and lessons learned – and address the specific evaluation questions identified for each group of issues. Throughout this section, when possible, the information provided is attributed to one or more of the lines of evidence. However, in some cases, when the same information was provided by participants through all relevant methods (i.e. the three participant surveys and key informant interviews), the term “participants”, without reference to a specific methodology, is used.

### 3.1 Rationale and Relevance

#### **Rationale and Relevance**

- Q1. To what extent did the design of WUF3 allow for the achievement of its domestic and international objectives?
- Q2. To what extent were the themes, content, activities and training provided by the WUF3 conference of domestic and international relevance?

#### **Design for Achieving WUF3 Objectives**

There were a number of objectives for WUF3 (see Section 1.2 for the specific objectives). These objectives focused on achieving impacts at a number of levels:

- The conference itself – hosting a successful conference;
- The participants – having participants take away one practical idea with respect to urban issues and having an impact on international and domestic policy discussions;
- Canada – positioning Canada as a global leader in urban issues, and strengthening domestic partnerships and understanding of sustainable urbanization; and
- UN-HABITAT – supporting UN-HABITAT in developing solutions to urbanization challenges.

The general format of, and types of events offered at, WUF3 were consistent with the two previous WUF sessions. However, the document review and interviews with key informants indicate that a concerted effort was made when designing WUF3 to strengthen participant engagement. This format focussed on the individual participant and was designed to facilitate participants taking away one practical and replicable solution to address urban issues. Key changes following WUF2 were to reduce the number of papers presented, increase the opportunities for discussion and networking (through more interactive networking events and professionally facilitated dialogue sessions), and add roundtable discussions to focus on issues of interest to specific stakeholder groups.

Key informants noted that the theme and sub-themes were comprehensive, allowing for key urban issues to be covered in the Forum and, as a result of the involvement of various stakeholders in the organization of the 160 networking events, opportunities were there for discussions on very wide-ranging topics. The events did, in fact, cover the comprehensive WUF3 themes. Analysis of the WUF3 program shows that the sub-themes were reflected in all types of WUF3 events. In addition, the participant data reflects broad participation in WUF3, with participants from 156 countries<sup>19</sup> and representing a wide range of organizations (NGOs, governments, private sector and academia). This contributed to achieving the individual-level objectives for WUF3.

One objective that was uniquely Canadian was to position Canada as a global leader on urban issues. Interviewees indicated that this meant showcasing Canada's accomplishments in sustainable urban development, as well as positioning Canada as a leader in addressing urban issues. In practice, however, key informants indicated that this met with some difficulties for the following reasons:

- Urban affairs and urban issues are considered to be primarily a provincial, not a federal, area of intervention;
- While a number of departments and agencies have mandates that touch on urban issues, the government's approach to urban issues was not articulated into an overall strategy at WUF3;
- Some departments were slow to commit support for WUF3 because the links between their departmental mandates and urban issues were not immediately evident; and
- This WUF3 objective was defined prior to a federal election held in early 2006. After the election, the new Government's five priorities did not include urban issues.

According to key informants, the above factors affected the ability of Canada, as host country, to optimize its profile at WUF3 and to provide a comprehensive overview of its accomplishments in urban sustainable development (see Section 3.2). However, the WUF3 design provided many opportunities for Canada to contribute to the program and did position Canada well to demonstrate its achievements.

## **Relevance of WUF3 Themes**

WUF3 themes and sub-themes were chosen by UN-HABITAT, with input from Canadian stakeholders, and built on themes from previous Forums. Key informants and onsite participant survey respondents agreed that the themes were relevant and, specifically that they were relevant in the context of current global issues and addressed issues relevant to both domestic and international contexts.<sup>20</sup> Although onsite participant survey respondents generally agreed that WUF3 themes were relevant (78%), respondents from countries rated as having a high level of human development were significantly more likely to indicate that

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that just over half the participants came from the host country, Canada.

<sup>20</sup> 78% of onsite survey respondents indicated that their expectations were significantly or fully met in terms of the relevance of the topics and themes. 85% of respondents indicated that their expectations were significantly or fully met specifically with respect to the relevance of the topics and themes in the context of current global issues.



the themes had not at all or somewhat met their expectations (25%), than were participants from low (9%) and medium (18%) level of human development countries.<sup>21 22</sup>

## 3.2 Success

### Success

Q3. To what extent did WUF3 help to enhance the understanding of international urbanization issues?

Q4. Was WUF3 conducive to sharing practical and replicable solutions to address domestic and international urbanization sustainability issues?

Q5. To what extent did WUF3 help to strengthen the domestic and international networks in urban sustainability?

These three questions were developed to measure WUF3's successes. The design of WUF3 (see Section 3.1) also focused on improving participant engagement opportunities at the conference and on providing opportunities for showcasing Canadian strategies and achievements. These two factors are also addressed in this section.

### Participatory Nature of WUF3

The level of participant engagement can be assessed in a number of ways – beginning with the overall participation at WUF3 and extending to opportunities for individual participation in specific events. The attendance at the Forum was very high. The organizers initially expected approximately 6,000 participants but the registration data indicated that there were 10,121 participants on site, of which just over half came from Canada.<sup>23</sup> The total represents a substantial increase from the just over 4,000 participants at WUF2. The team's observations and the online participant survey confirm that high attendance was maintained throughout the week.

The profile of participants reflects a very broad-based participation with participants coming from a wide range of countries and organizations. This contributed to setting the conditions for participant discussion and networking by ensuring a good mix of participants in the events. Overall, over three-quarters (78%) of respondents to the event participant survey indicated that there had been, in fact, an appropriate mix of participants at the events.

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<sup>21</sup> Countries of residence of participants were classified as high, medium or low using the classification in the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2005*. The same classification was used for the analysis of the registration and participant data, as well as all participant and non-participant surveys.

<sup>22</sup> The statistical significance of differences between proportions was tested using the Chi square statistic. The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

<sup>23</sup> There were, in fact, over 12,000 people onsite, but approximately 2,000 of these were staff, volunteers and suppliers who are not counted among the true participants.

However, the extent to which there were opportunities for participant discussion varied considerably across the events. The team observed that at least some dialogue/special sessions, roundtables and networking events provided opportunities for discussion and networking. Only the plenaries did not provide such opportunities.

The design worked well. UN-HABITAT was happy with the roundtables and networking events, which were different from Barcelona. Shortened dialogues were much more effective. The Exposition Hall was also very successful.

(Source: Key informant interview with WUF3 planner)

- Three-quarters (75%) of respondents to the onsite participant survey indicated that, to a moderate extent or a lot, the various WUF3 events provided opportunities for informal networking and discussion. Online survey respondents identified that the order, from most to least, in which the event types provided opportunities for discussion was as follows: networking events (85%), exhibits (78%), training (75%), dialogue sessions (68%) and roundtables (64%).<sup>24</sup> It should be noted, however, that for training events, Canadian participants were less likely to state that they provided, to a moderate extent or a lot, opportunities for participant discussion (68%), than non-Canadians (81%).

## Targeting Participation

Some interviewees noted that although, in general, the conference publicity was focused on key partners of UN-HABITAT and those interested in urban issues (the Habitat Agenda), there was no apparent explicit marketing strategy to ensure that key players in civil society, government and the private sector were encouraged to participate in WUF3. For example, participation from the United States was not as high as one would have expected given its proximity to the event – it represented only 7% of total participation - and there was a concern that WUF3 marketing to some key players, especially in the private sector, could have been improved. This approach could have perhaps ensured better representation by all the key stakeholders internationally that have an interest in urban issues and sustainability.

The evaluation team also noted that there were limited mechanisms for ensuring that key stakeholders and/or international participants in the conference were given priority access to events. The online survey indicated that two-thirds or less (48% - 67%) of respondents were moderately or very successful in being able to attend all the events related to their chosen sub-theme. This may mean that some key international stakeholders had difficulty attending some events due to the higher than expected attendance.

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<sup>24</sup> Based on those who indicated that the event type contributed to a moderate extent or a lot to opportunities for participant dialogue.

## Participatory Events

The team observed that, to a large extent, the level of participation in events depended on the skills of the event organizers and/or facilitators. This was reflected, at a minimum, in the ability of some facilitators to set aside time for questions and answers after presentations. However, some facilitators organized their events with time for small group discussion and other group activities (e.g., role playing). In the event participant survey, the percentage of respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilitation of events was high (83%). However, respondents gave the highest level of satisfaction with event facilitation to the networking events (86%) and lowest to the plenaries (79%). The team noted particularly the skills of some professional media representatives in facilitating the dialogue sessions. In some cases, opportunities for dialogue and networking were limited by the crowded conditions in the event rooms and some participants were frustrated at not being able to access their chosen events.

UN-HABITAT obviously took the feedback [from WUF2] into account. But improvements are still needed – the balance isn't right yet. There are still too many events when “experts” present, but little time for discussion.

(Source: Key informant interview with key stakeholder)

## Enhanced Understanding of Urban Issues

Both key informants and participants judged that WUF3 was successful in helping to generate new knowledge, generate discussion and promote action on urban issues. In fact, 71% of respondents to the onsite participant survey indicated that WUF3 events had either significantly or fully met their expectations with respect to providing useful information on best practices in urban sustainability. Participants from countries rated as having a high level of human development were less likely to report their expectations were fully met (24%), when compared to participants from medium (34%) or low (35%) level of human development countries. In fact, the team did observe that the events, particularly the plenaries and the roundtables, tended to focus more on urban issues in developing countries, than those of more developed countries.

Participants were asked to comment on the usefulness of the information provided at WUF3. Information on urban issues came from a number of sources:

- Background paper in delegate packages<sup>25</sup> – The background paper provided a summary of the ideas for each of the three sub-themes. Two-thirds (68%) of respondents to the online participant survey indicated that they had read the background paper.
- Results of the HABITAT JAM<sup>26</sup> – The results were reflected in a document distributed to delegates that identified 70 actionable items (see Section 3.3 for more details on HABITAT JAM).

<sup>25</sup> *Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action: Background Paper*, WUF3.

<sup>26</sup> *HABITAT-JAM, Summary Report Draft*, International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), June 2006.

- WUF3 events – Generally speaking, participants responding to the onsite survey indicated that they found WUF3 events to be useful. However, the responses varied by type of event, with 89% of respondents identifying networking events and 84% identifying dialogue/special sessions as being useful or very useful. Somewhat less likely to be identified as being useful or very useful were the closing ceremonies (74%), the roundtables (73%) and the opening ceremonies (65%).
- Exhibition – Of those who responded to the onsite survey, 84% identified the exhibits as being useful or very useful. Respondents to the online survey were equally positive about the exhibits. The majority (94%) indicated that they had visited the exhibits. They agreed to a moderate or high extent that the exhibits had presented useful information (94%), were generally well designed to communicate clear messages (92%), highlighted the work of NGOs in urban sustainability issues (91%) and highlighted work in Canada on urban sustainability issues (87%). Slightly lower ratings were given to the extent to which they provided practical ideas that they could apply to their local context (72%) and highlighted the work of the private sector in urban sustainability issues (73%).
- Daily International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) WUF3 bulletins – Daily bulletins were available in both hard and electronic copies. These bulletins summarized selected events. Just over half (54%) of the online participant survey respondents indicated that they had read the daily bulletins. Of these, nearly three-quarters (73%) read the hard, as opposed to electronic, copy.
- Side events – These included presentations, films, receptions, informal meetings, theatre events and the building of a Habitat for Humanity house. Although the side events were not included in the evaluation, key informants did note that they contributed to the understanding of urban issues.

From a Canadian perspective, information from the document review and some key informants suggested areas in which WUF3 may have strengthened domestic understanding of urban issues:

- The Government of Canada’s preparation process for WUF3 increased understanding within federal government departments of their role in urban issues. Key informants indicated that the engagement of departments was slow until they became increasingly aware of the links between their mandates and urban issues; and
- Since WUF3 received good media coverage, this might be expected to have enhanced Canadians’ understanding of urban issues. WUF3 received daily national television, radio and newspaper coverage in Canada and some international coverage in the UK and through online providers internationally.<sup>27</sup> Media reports throughout the week publicized the issues and challenges associated with urbanization. The conference theme was consistently highlighted and reports early in the week noted the size of the conference, as well as its diversity, bringing together members of civil society, urban professionals, academics, governments and local authorities. Some media reports noted

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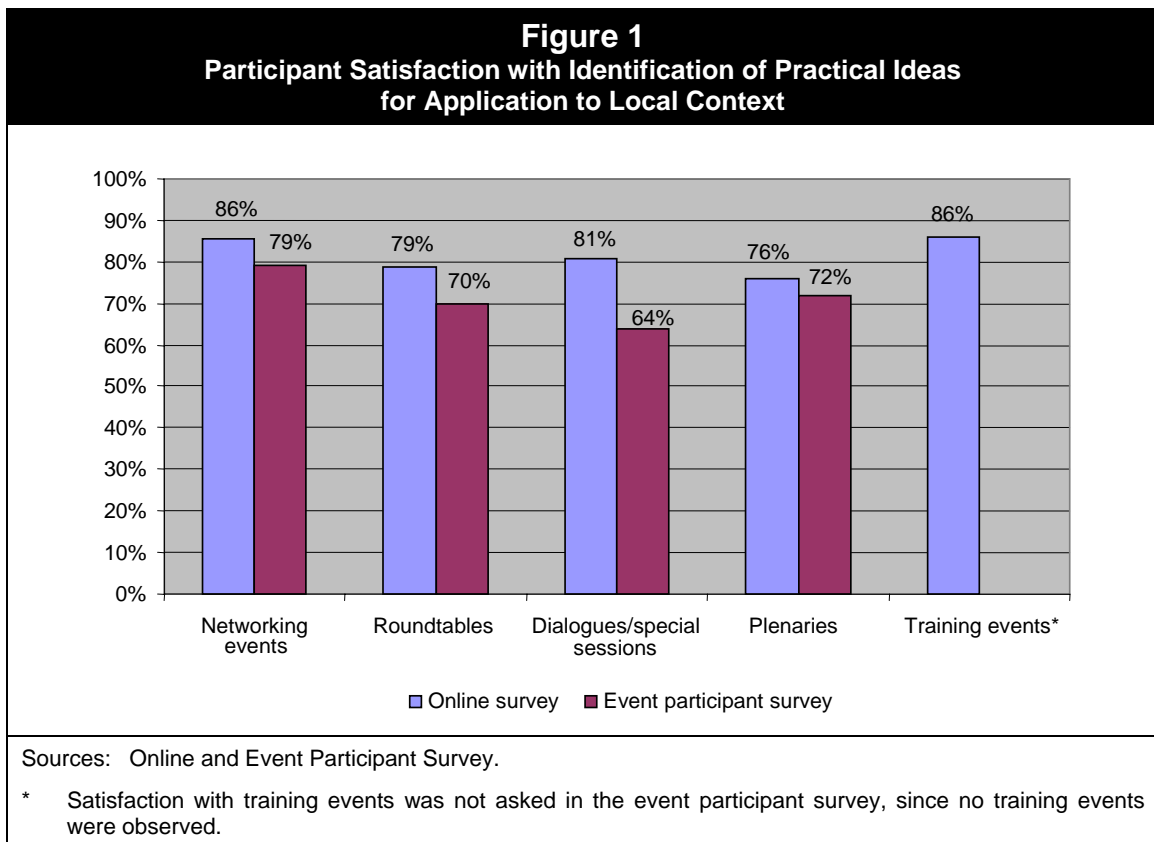
<sup>27</sup> Media rollup June 19-27<sup>th</sup> provided by HRSDC WUF3 Secretariat, Communications.

the conference to be “expert” and “policy driven” and questioned whether the ideas would trickle down into action at the local level.

### Sharing Practical Ideas and Replicable Solutions

A key focus of WUF3 was on the identification and sharing of practical ideas and turning ideas into action. Nearly eight out of ten (78%) participants responding to the onsite survey indicated that WUF3 met or significantly met their expectations with respect to identifying practical ideas that they could apply in their local context.

Similar results were reported from the online participant survey (see Figure 1). Over three-quarters (76% to 86%) of respondents indicated that they agreed, to a moderate extent or a lot, the various WUF3 events provided practical ideas that they could apply in their local context. However, online survey respondents indicated that different event types contributed differently to this objective. The order, from most to least, in which participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the event type identifying practical ideas was, as follows: networking events (86% of participants), training events (86%), dialogue/special sessions (81%), roundtables (79%) and plenaries (76%).



For some event types, Canadians were less likely to state that they contributed, to a moderate extent or a lot, to the identification of practical ideas they could apply in the local context:

- Dialogue sessions – Canadians (70%) and non-Canadians (76%);
- Networking events – Canadians (76%) and non-Canadians (84%);
- Exhibits – Canadians (68%) and non-Canadians (74%); and
- Training events – Canadians (61%) and non-Canadians (74%).

The overall results from the survey of participants at specific events were similar. Overall, 74% agreed or strongly agreed that the event provided at least one practical solution that could be applied in their local context. However, the responses for specific event types were somewhat different: networking events (79%), plenaries (72%), roundtables (70%) and dialogue/special sessions (64%).<sup>28</sup>

Participants responding to the event participant survey also indicated the extent to which the event they had attended contributed to the identification of solutions for developing or more developed countries. Overall, two-thirds (68%) of respondents indicated that the events contributed to the identification of solutions for developing countries and nearly two-thirds (65%) to solutions for more developed countries. However, there was some variation for dialogue/special sessions. While 60% identified that the dialogue/special sessions had contributed to solutions for developing countries, only 39% identified that these sessions had contributed to solutions for more developed countries.

In addition, nearly three-quarters (72%) of the participants responding to the online survey, who had read the daily WUF3 bulletins, indicated that the bulletins were moderately or very useful for identifying practical ideas applicable to their local context and, of the two-thirds (68%) who read the background paper, over three-quarters (78%) indicated that it was useful for identifying practical ideas. In general, 60% of participants responding to the online survey indicated that they were likely or very likely to apply the ideas they learned at WUF3 within the next year. However, only 52% Canadian respondents felt they would apply ideas learned at WUF3 in their local context, compared to 68% of respondents from other countries.

## **Strengthening Domestic and International Networks**

There are several dimensions to the question of whether WUF3 contributed to strengthening networks. Key informants noted that sometimes this could involve creating new networks or strengthening existing networks. There is evidence to suggest that both formal (normally networks of groups or institutions) and more informal (usually among individuals) networks were strengthened.

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<sup>28</sup> This difference may be attributable to the sample of events at which the event participant surveys were distributed.

Key informants and the *WUF3 Experience: a Canadian Perspective Report*<sup>29</sup> provided examples of the creation and/or strengthening of networks between or among organizations that occurred as a result of the planning for, or participation in, WUF3. These examples included:

- The Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia is working with other universities (initially on the west coast of Canada and the United States) to establish a nascent network of universities (mainly North American and Europe universities, but will also include Asian universities) concerned with urban issues;
- Infrastructure Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Bank on the development of indicators of the sustainability of cities that, after development, will run as a pilot project in Canada and four South American cities leading up to their rollout at WUF4 in 2008;
- WUF3 provided the occasion for a meeting of Canadian federal/provincial/territorial ministers responsible for local government and provided the opportunity to strengthen these links;
- The Minister of Housing in South Africa forged a formal partnership with the Federation of Urban Poor (a Shack Dwellers International affiliate in South Africa), which included giving approximately 230 million Rand in subsidies to purchase land and build housing in insecure and impoverished communities; and
- The formation of a partnership between the Mumbai Police Department and the slum dwellers of Mumbai, where slum dwellers have been allowed to form assemblies to hear and resolve disputes, thus allowing them to police their own slums and help to reduce crime.

Just over half the participants who responded to the event survey indicated that WUF3 events had provided opportunities for networking, with different event types contributing to a different extent. The order in which participants identified that the event types provided networking opportunities was as follows: networking events (59% of participants agreed or strongly agreed), roundtables (55%), plenaries (48%) and dialogue/special sessions (28%).

Responses to the post-conference online survey were somewhat more positive. Over 70% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the extent to which the events allowed for participant discussion. The event type for which the highest level of satisfaction was identified was the networking events (85%). The lowest was for the roundtables (71%). When respondents were asked specifically to rate the contribution of the different event types, networking events were rated the highest – 85% saying that these events provided a moderate or a lot of opportunities for participant discussion. Other event types were rated somewhat lower, with the lowest being the roundtables (64%).

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<sup>29</sup> From “WUF Experience: A Canadian Perspective. Our Future – Sustainable Cities: Turning Ideas into Action”, Government of Canada, 2006.

Four-fifths (82%) of respondents to the onsite survey indicated that they were likely or very likely to maintain the networks and contacts established at WUF3. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of post-conference online survey respondents indicated that they were likely to follow-up with networks and contacts established at WUF3 in the next year. However, Canadian respondents (51%) were significantly less likely to say they would follow-up with networks and contacts than those from other countries (79%).

## Showcasing Canadian Achievements

As one key informant noted, WUF3 showcased Canada just by being hosted by Canada, particularly on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Habitat I, held in Vancouver in 1976, which had resulted in the establishment of the UN agency for urban issues. However, a more detailed assessment of this issue from the different lines of evidence shows mixed results.

Canadian organizations contributed to the organization of 60% of WUF3 events, with over a third of these sponsorships coming from NGOs. In the case of the dialogue/special sessions, Canadian organizations sponsored, at least in part, nearly three-quarters (73%) of the sessions. However, in none of the plenaries, dialogue/special sessions or roundtables observed by the team were Canadian achievements the primary focus of the event. They were the subject of some discussion in three plenaries, but not addressed in one plenary. Canadian achievements were the primary focus in five of the twenty networking events observed by the team. Canadian activities in the area of urban issues were very visibly highlighted in the Canada Pavilion in the Exposition Hall.

Some key informants indicated that the level of showcasing was sufficient, given that it would not have been appropriate for Canada to dominate the agenda. On the other hand, other key informants (including representatives of the advisory and coordinating bodies, key stakeholders and event organizers) indicated that more could have been done if Canada's achievements in the area of urban issues had been articulated into an overall strategy at WUF3.

As the host, Canada maintained a presence at the event, while at the same time showed deep respect for the participation of other parties. As a civil society conference, Canada did not have an official delegation as such, or a federal policy line.

(Source: Key informant interview with member of coordinating body)

The engagement of, and participation from, the greater Vancouver area, notably led by the Vancouver Working Group, contributed to a strong profile for that metropolitan area at WUF3. The media coverage of WUF3 often highlighted the host city, Vancouver, which was reported to be a "liveable city."

The key informants' perceptions were, to some extent, supported by the views of participants. Online survey respondents reflected somewhat limited learning about Canada. Just over half of online survey respondents indicated that they had learned, to a moderate or great extent, about Canada in the following areas:



- Canadian best practices for sustainable urban environments (59%);
- Canadian know-how in urban planning and management (59%);
- Canadian approaches to engaging citizens in urban sustainability issues (58%); and
- Canadian contributions to addressing urban sustainability globally (56%).

However, the views of Canadian respondents were less positive than those of participants from other countries. Canadian participants were significantly less likely to say that they had learned, to a moderate or great extent, about:

- Canadian best practices for sustainable urban environments – Canadians (53%) compared to participants from other countries (66%);
- Canadian know-how in urban planning and management – Canadians (54%) compared to participants from other countries (65%);
- Canadian approaches to engaging citizens in urban sustainability issues – Canadians (51%) compared to participants from other countries (66%); and
- Canadian contributions to addressing urban sustainability globally – Canadians (48%) compared to participants from other countries (64%).

The exhibits provided the greatest impact in terms of showcasing Canada. Three-quarters (75%) of all respondents to the onsite participant survey indicated that WUF3 had significantly or fully met their expectations with respect to showcasing Canada’s achievements. Overall, over four-fifths (87%) of respondents to the online survey indicated that to a moderate or great extent the exhibits specifically had highlighted Canada’s work on urban sustainability issues. However, Canadian participants (84%) were significantly less likely to agree with this statement than participants from other countries (92%).

### 3.3 Outreach

<p><b>Outreach</b></p> <p>Q6. To what extent did the HABITAT JAM and WUF3 attract the intended target audience?</p> <p>Q7. To what extent was the Internet-based dialogue useful for discussing ideas and issues to be addressed during WUF3?</p>
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The analysis of the WUF3 outreach focused on the profile of participants and the role that HABITAT JAM played in support of WUF3.

## Profile of Participants and Non-participants

The profile of participants reflects a very broad-based participation. Even though over half the participants were from Canada, an additional 155 countries were represented at the Forum. Table 2 identifies the twelve countries that accounted for 100 or more participants each. In total, these countries accounted for 79% of the conference participants.

	<b># of participants</b>	<b>% of all participants</b>
Canada	5,741	56.7%
United States	675	6.7%
Kenya	225	2.2%
Mexico	184	1.8%
China	184	1.8%
South Africa	175	1.7%
Sweden	147	1.5%
Brazil	138	1.4%
India	134	1.3%
United Kingdom	126	1.2%
Tanzania, U. Rep. of	120	1.2%
Philippines	100	1.0%
Total	7,949	
As % of all participants	78.5%	

Table 3 provides a profile of participants, by organization and country rated level of human development.

**Table 3**  
**Profile of Participants, by Organization Type and Country Rated Level of Human Development\***

Organization Types	Participants	
	#	%
Academic	1,261	12.5%
Government	1,594	15.7%
N.G.O.	2,549	25.2%
UN/Inter-Governmental Organization	383	3.8%
Media	340	3.4%
Local Government	1,608	15.9%
Private Sector	1,353	13.4%
Other	1,033	10.2%
Total	10,121	100.0%
Country Rated Level of Development	Participants	
	#	%
High	7,705	76.1%
Medium	1,621	16.0%
Low	739	7.3%
Other	56	0.6%
Total	10,121	100.0%
<small>* Country level of human development was constructed based on the "country of residence" reported by the respondent. The "level of development" was determined as being "high", "medium" or "low" by using indicators in the <i>Human Development Report 2005</i>. A few countries are not included in the UNDP indicators and they are shown as "Other."</small>		

The largest single group represented at WUF3 was the NGO community, accounting for one-quarter (25%) of all participants. However if national and local governments representatives are combined, they account for over 30% of participants. There was also representation from other sectors, such as the private sector (13%) and academia (13%), primarily from countries rated as having a high level of human development. It was only from countries of low-level of human development that representation from governments (almost exclusively national governments) exceeded the NGO participation. Amongst Canadian participants, there was a significantly higher proportion of participants from local government, but a significantly lower proportion of participants from academia.

Facilitating private sector participation had been identified as a specific Canadian activity in the WUF3 planning. In spite of 13% of participants coming from the private sector, most WUF3 planners and organizers interviewed noted that the level of participation from the private sector was inadequate and that more could have been done to attract representation from this sector. In addition, only 7% of participants came from the United States (see Table 2).<sup>30</sup> Given the number of potential participants from that country and the relative proximity of the conference to the United States, this would appear to be a small turnout.

Some key informants attributed this to the lack of a marketing strategy for WUF3 as a whole. Although WUF3 was well publicized and efforts were made to ensure good participation, some key informants felt that there was insufficient targeting and marketing efforts towards some potential participants in Canada and the United States, especially those in the private sector.

The onsite survey indicated that participants from countries rated as having a low level of development were significantly more likely to have attended one of the previous WUFs (32%) than those from high level (8%) or medium level (10%) human development countries. On the same survey, participants from low and medium level of human development countries indicated that they were significantly more likely to attend WUF4, 85% and 81% respectively, than were participants from high level of human development countries (39%). This suggests that participants from low level of human development countries are more likely to be regular attendees at UN-HABITAT conferences.

There was a number of groups for which the organizers wished to increase WUF3 attendance – participants from Asia, Latin America, Francophone states, Indigenous peoples and least developed countries. A comparison of WUF3 attendance with that of previous WUFs is difficult because of the limited information available on attendance at previous WUFs and the use of different categories. However, the following observations can be made:

- The proportion of participants from least developed countries decreased from a reported 27% at WUF2 to 7% at WUF3.<sup>31</sup> However, it should be noted that this decrease may be due to a number of factors, including the distance of Vancouver from low development nations (when compared to previous WUFs), and the large number of participants from high development countries at WUF3, which may have had a negative statistical effect on low development country participation rates.
- WUF3 participation from Asia was 8%, compared to 6% at WUF2 from Asia/Pacific.<sup>32</sup> This increase may be attributable to the substantial participation from China, where WUF4 is to be held – there were 186 participants from China at WUF3, accounting for nearly 2% of all participants.

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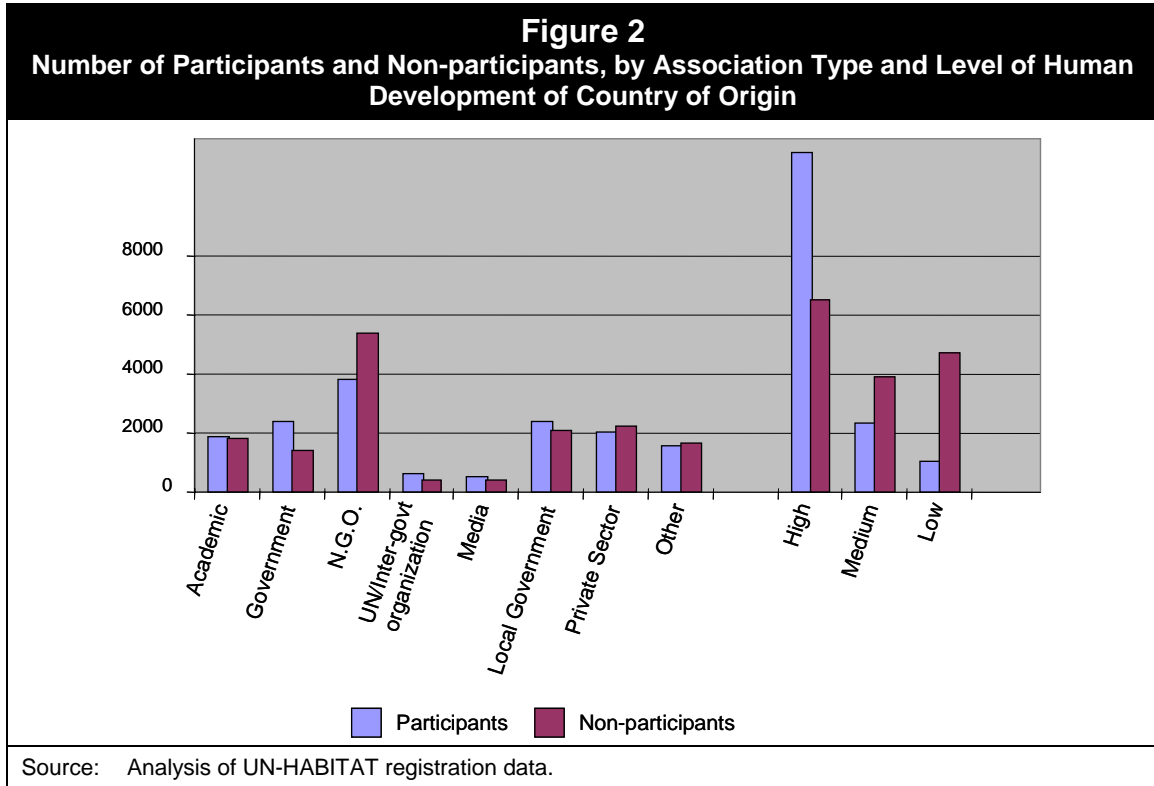
<sup>30</sup> Analysis of UN-HABITAT registration databases.

<sup>31</sup> WUF2 data comes from “Evaluation Report of the Second Session of the World Urban Forum, Barcelona, 13-17 September 2004”, UN-HABITAT, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> From “Evaluation Report of the Second Session of the World Urban Forum, Barcelona, 13-17 September 2004”, UN-HABITAT, p. 6.

- Representation from Francophone countries at WUF3 accounted for 61% of all participants, but this includes the total participation from Canada. Without including Canadian participants, representatives from Francophone countries accounted for 4% of participants.<sup>33</sup>
- Participants from Latin America accounted for 6% of all participants.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the 10,121 participants who actually attended WUF3, there were an additional 10,252 people who registered online for the conference, but did not attend (a breakdown of non-participants and participants can be found in Figure 2).

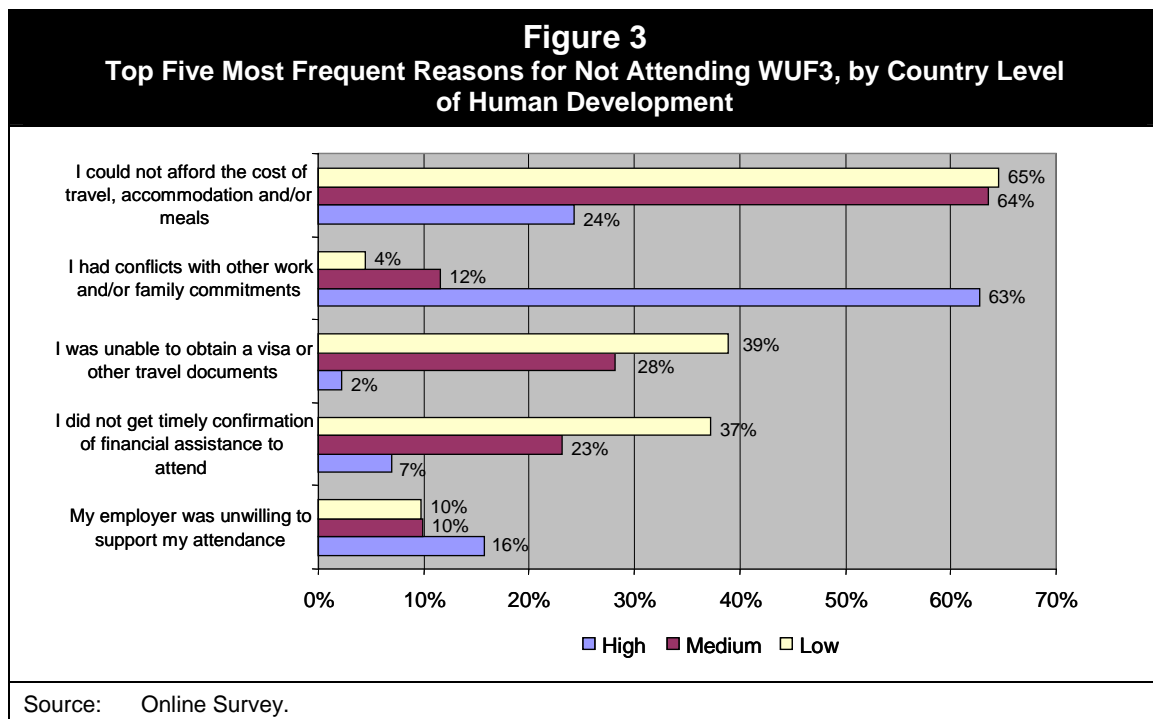


The vast majority of respondents to the non-participant online survey indicated that, when they registered, they did, in fact, intend to participate in WUF3. However, some groups were more likely to participate, once registered, than others. Representatives from governments (not including local governments), representatives from countries rated as having a high level of human development and women (particularly from low level of human development countries) were more likely to attend WUF3 once they were registered than were others. The proportion of people from countries rated as having a low (82%) or medium (75%) level of human development who registered for the conference but did not, in the end, attend was higher than those from high (51%) level of human development countries.

<sup>33</sup> There was no WUF2 data available about participation from the Francophone countries. For WUF3, Francophone countries were deemed to be all countries that are members of the Francophonie, including Canada.

<sup>34</sup> Data is not available for Latin America from WUF2 because the participant data reflects participation from America, as a whole. No data was collected at WUF3 on participation of indigenous people.

Nearly half (47%) of those who did not attend and responded to the online survey indicated that the reason was that they could not afford the cost. A further one-fifth (19%) of respondents indicated that they did not receive timely confirmation of financial assistance in order to be able to participate. Nearly one-third (30%) did not attend because of conflicts with family or work commitments. Nearly one-fifth (19%) was unable to obtain visas or other travel documents. Non-participants from countries rated as having a high level of human development were significantly more likely to indicate that they had not attended because of conflicts with family or work commitments (62%) than those from countries rated as having levels of medium (12%) or low (5%) human development. See Figure 3 for the top five most frequently cited reasons for not attending WUF3, by level of human development.



However, 62% of respondents to the online survey of non-participants indicated that during or after WUF3 they reviewed material about the conference available through the WUF3, UN-HABITAT or IISD Reporting Services websites. This suggests that many of those who registered but did not attend maintained an interest in WUF3 and/or urban issues.

## HABITAT JAM

A total of 39,000 participants from 158 countries participated in the HABITAT JAM over a three day period.<sup>35</sup> Through partnerships with various NGOs (Hairou Commission, WUF Youth, and Mazingira Institute), over 25,000 individuals who did not have Internet access were able to participate. Approximately three-quarters (78%) of the participants

<sup>35</sup> Summary of the Third World Urban Forum: World Urban Forum Bulletin, IISD, Vol. 125 No. 6, Monday June 26, 2006, p. 16.

came from three JAM target groups – women, youth and slum dwellers.<sup>36</sup> HABITAT JAM resulted in the identification of 70 actionable ideas covering WUF3 sub-themes, which were reflected in a report and CD that were given to all delegates.

Key informants indicated that JAM had been particularly successful in terms of outreach to developing countries (notably India, South Africa and Kenya). According to the post-event JAM report, two-thirds (69%) of respondents to the JAM survey were satisfied with the JAM and overwhelmingly respondents somewhat or strongly agreed (91%) that the event brought together people from diverse backgrounds.<sup>37</sup> Key informants also reported that JAM was successful in engaging people – particularly from developing countries – in a discussion of urban issues. They suggested that this Internet-based event had tested a new approach to civil society engagement in the discussion of global issues.

One-fifth (22% or n=360) of respondents to the online participant survey reported having participated in JAM, and of those, one-quarter (27% or n=97) indicated that their participation in JAM had influenced their decision to register for WUF3. A little less than one-fifth (18%) of respondents to the non-participant online survey had participated in JAM and, of these, two-thirds (63%) said that it had influenced them to register for WUF3.<sup>38</sup> This suggests that JAM had a relatively smaller influence on those who attended WUF3 than it did on those who registered but did not, in the end, participate in WUF3.

### 3.4 Planning and Delivery

#### Planning and Delivery

Q8. To what extent was the organizational structure effective at planning and delivering an outstanding conference?

Q9. Was the infrastructure appropriate for the effective delivery of a first-class conference?

Issues related to planning and delivery focused on the mechanisms put in place to ensure an outstanding conference and on the infrastructure for WUF3. Overall, all sources of information suggest that WUF3 was a very successful conference. The contribution of the various planning and delivery mechanisms and the infrastructure are explored in this section.

#### Planning and Delivery Mechanisms

There were two unique features of the WUF3 planning. The first was that the WUF3 planning was done in a new collaborative way. For the first time, UN-HABITAT worked closely with the host country to the conference. This was reflected in shared responsibilities for organizing events such as the plenary sessions, roundtables and training events, and selecting the networking events proposed by stakeholders.

<sup>36</sup> HABITAT-JAM, *Summary Report Draft*, International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), June 2006.

<sup>37</sup> HABITAT-JAM, *Summary Report Draft*, International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), June 2006.

<sup>38</sup> However, this is based on a very small number of responses (n=89).

Key informants from the Government of Canada, advisory bodies and UN-HABITAT indicated that a key challenge faced during the planning process was the relationship between the Secretariat and UN-HABITAT. These challenges were attributed to:

- A lack of clarity in the respective roles and responsibilities of UN-HABITAT and the Secretariat in the new collaborative approach to WUF planning;
- The inherent difficulties of working with two different types of organizations – a UN agency and a dedicated federal government secretariat – and different organizational cultures;
- Delays associated with negotiations between Canada and UN-HABITAT on protocol agreements;
- A lack of mutual understanding of the contexts and constraints of the two organizations;<sup>39</sup>
- Turn-around times at UN-HABITAT; and
- The complexity associated with channelling communications with Canadian stakeholders (notably the Globe Foundation) through the Secretariat, which according to some key informants slowed the process of making logistic arrangements.

Despite the challenges, it was clear to many key informants that this new approach to collaboration between UN-HABITAT and the host country had been a successful one.

The second unique feature – and strength – of the planning process was the engagement of a broad group of stakeholders in Canada. The Vancouver Working Group (VWG) was the group with the most continuous involvement in WUF3. According to key informants, the VWG contributed substantially to strengthening local networks and organized a group of successful side events. Its focus was, by definition, on engagement of local area stakeholders. The National Advisory Committee, on the other hand, engaged a broader, Pan-Canadian group of stakeholders. However, its role was reportedly limited to recommending WUF3 theme and sub-themes.

The key groups involved in the day-to-day planning and delivery of WUF3 were those associated with the federal government. When HRSDC took over the leadership role, a number of mechanisms were put in place that, according to key informants, contributed to the organization of a very successful conference.

There was also discontinuity in going from WED to CMHC and to HRSDC and this led to some ambiguity in roles, but overall it worked.

(Source: Key informant interview with key stakeholder)

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<sup>39</sup> For example, UN-HABITAT works within a framework that requires approval from its governing bodies for many of its activities and the Secretariat works within the framework of Canadian rules about the sharing of information and confidentiality. It was reportedly difficult at times for each organization to understand the constraints of the other.



The key federal government mechanisms were:

- A dedicated Secretariat was established, with staff dedicated to conference organization;
- Contribution agreements were put in place to engage professional event planners in conference organization that reportedly gave the Secretariat the latitude it needed to move quickly on conference logistics. The two key agreements were the agreement with the Globe Foundation for conference logistics and the agreement with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for outreach, to both Canadian and international partner municipalities, while serving to highlight the government’s recognition and commitment to municipalities; and
- The establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee to engage key federal departments in WUF3 planning and delivery. The IDC was the key mechanism for coordination of federal government inputs. Some key informants indicated that the engagement of many federal departments occurred only late in the planning process – occurring only as departments became aware of the role they played on urban issues.

Without these mechanisms, it would have been very difficult for the government to mount such a large, complex conference in the very short time available after the transfer of responsibility to HRSDC. Key informants were particularly positive about the role that the Secretariat played with respect to the coordination of the federal government participation. They were also extremely positive about the role that the Globe Foundation played in delivering a successful conference within the constraints of a short time frame and a larger-than-expected attendance.

## **Infrastructure**

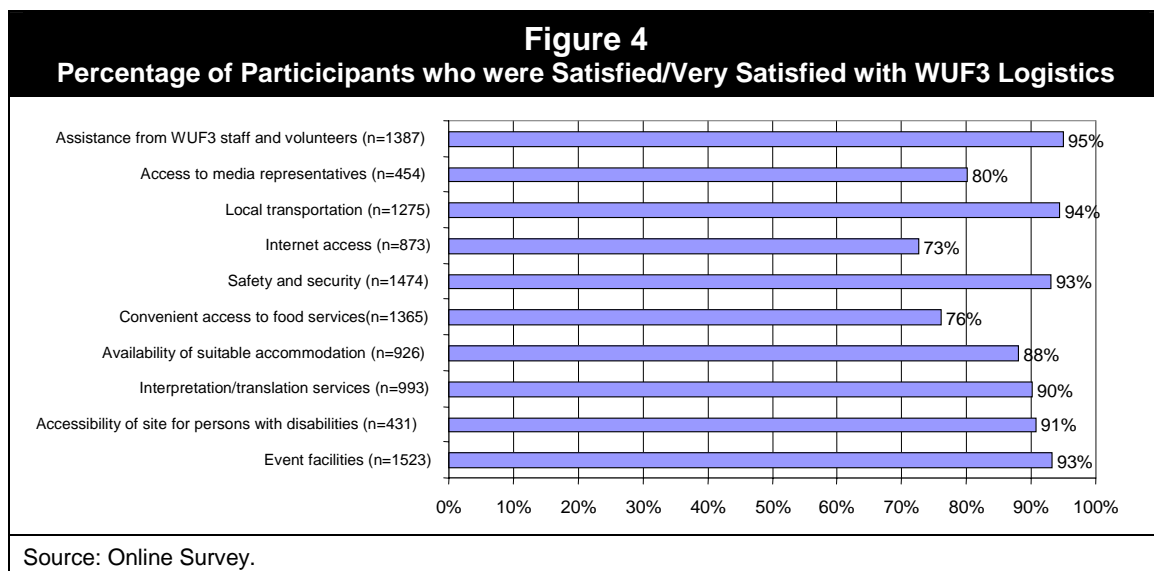
The conference was held in the largest conference facility available in Vancouver. In informal conversations with participants, team members noted that they seemed very pleased with the location of, and view from, the facility. Key informants, the team and participants (in comments on the onsite and online surveys) highlighted the challenge of lack of space, overcrowding in many event rooms and the fact that some people were not able to attend their chosen events. Some events were held in rooms that were too small to accommodate all those who wished to participate. The team observed that, for about half of the events observed, the room was not big enough to accommodate the number of participants.

“Most rooms for networking events were too small. Many people could not enter their preferred events. Public areas too narrow and cramped. They were not conducive for informal discussions...”

(Source: Onsite survey)

However, in spite of this challenge, key informants and participants were very positive about the conference facilities (see Figure 4). Very positive perceptions of the facilities were recorded in the onsite survey, where 87% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the event facilities. Similar overwhelmingly positive perceptions, but with a few additional details, were found in the results of the online participant survey. Respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with:

- Event facilities (93%);
- Safety and security (93%);
- Accessibility of site for persons with disabilities (91%); and
- Convenient access to food services (76%).



Respondents to the onsite survey were also very positive about the conference organization. They indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with:

- Information available before the conference – timeliness of information on the conference objectives (91%), usefulness of information on the conference programme (90%) and the availability of information on the conference logistics (88%); and
- Arrangements during the conference – the availability of support and assistance (93%), the ease of obtaining the photo identification and conference badge (92%), transportation logistics (90%) and communication facilities (including Internet access) (82%).

“I was impressed with the high level of organization and strategy. For a well-attended, international event, it ran amazingly smoothly.”

(Source: Online survey)

Respondents to the online survey also indicated that participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the conference arrangements, including:

- The assistance from WUF3 staff and volunteers (95%);
- Local transportation (94%);
- Interpretation/translation services (90%);<sup>40</sup>
- Availability of suitable accommodation (88%);
- Access to media representatives (80%); and
- Internet access (73%).

Despite the overwhelmingly positive responses to questions about the conference organization, key informants, onsite survey respondents and participants at the post-conference discussion group noted that there was still room for improvement with respect to the conference infrastructure. Some were also confirmed by the team’s observations at WUF3. These include:

- Some respondents to the onsite survey indicated their frustrations with the security procedures. The team also noted that participants had to pass through security several times during the day and, given the number of participants, there were often long line-ups at security check points, particularly those on the upper floor of the adjacent hotel. Despite the challenges, participants at the post-conference discussion noted that the conference ran smoothly and the security people were very respectful and polite.
- Simultaneous interpretation was a particular challenge for some participants. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in the plenaries, dialogue/special sessions and roundtables in five official UN languages. However, organizers of other events were asked to identify interpretation needs in advance of the conference and interpretation in English and French was provided, when requested. However this did not include Spanish interpretation.
- Participants in the post-conference discussion indicated that onsite Internet access had been unsatisfactory. Complimentary Internet access was offered through computer terminals located in the exhibit hall, but participants thought that there were not enough terminals.

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<sup>40</sup> Although still fairly satisfied, Canadian participants (12%) were significantly more likely to say that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with interpretation/translation services than those from other countries (8%).

- Media representatives were onsite during the conference. However, according to participants in the post-conference discussion, media access was identified as an issue by NGOs. They observed that the media was not visible outside the plenary and other special sessions. Discussion participants indicated that the responsibility for generating media interest was left to the organizers of individual events, but that the existence of the media centre was not well advertised.

In spite of these challenges, information from various sources indicates a high level of satisfaction with the conference organization.

### 3.5 Lessons Learned

Overall, WUF3 was deemed a success and a number of lessons can be drawn from the WUF3 evaluation findings. These are broken down into two types. The first type of lessons learned includes the lessons from which organizers could draw to design, plan and deliver future WUFs. In a number of cases, these lessons learned are based on good practices that contributed to the success of WUF3. In other cases, they are based on areas where future WUFs could be improved, based on the experience at WUF3. The second type of lessons learned includes those that can be applied to future similar events that Canada may host.

#### WUF Lessons

- 1. Accommodating interested individuals:** In some cases, the large number of participants had an impact on the extent to which participants could attend the sessions of their choice (e.g., when rooms were not large enough to accommodate all those interested). Options to handle large numbers of potential participants should be explored, including:
  - Providing alternative mechanisms for interested people to access the sessions, for example through live Internet broadcasts; and
  - Ensuring that key stakeholders and/or international participants who have travelled great distances to the conference have access to events that may have limited seating (e.g., by reserving a given number of seats for these participants).
- 2. Networking Events:** Feedback from participants, through the various evaluation surveys, consistently indicated that participants found the networking events to be particularly effective in contributing to WUF3's expected outcomes. As a result, this event type should be included in future WUFs that focus on participant engagement and the identification and sharing of practical solutions to urban sustainability issues.
- 3. Exhibits:** The WUF3 Exposition Hall provided a wide range of mechanisms for engaging participants, including some exhibits that were interactive or included demonstrations or films. The feedback from participants suggests that the exhibits were particularly useful for sharing information about urban sustainability issues. This range of mechanisms used should be considered for future WUFs.

4. **Internet dialogue:** WUF3's experiment with HABITAT JAM was determined to be successful. It contributed to the identification of actionable ideas on urban issues and it tested a new approach to civil society engagement in the discussion of global issues. The HABITAT JAM also engaged target groups that would otherwise not have access to these discussions or be able to attend a WUF session. If it is to be continued, the JAM review indicated that the event should be open for a longer period, be more user-friendly and support discussions in more languages.<sup>41</sup>
5. **Engagement of the private sector:** Many key informants noted that WUF3 had not achieved its goal of increasing the participation of the private sector. They identified that specific outreach activities need to be undertaken to attract and engage this sector.
6. **Logistics management:** Two key factors that contributed to the success of WUF3 was the creation of a dedicated unit within government to coordinate and lead the host country's contribution to the WUF, and the hiring of experienced personnel capable of assisting with logistics management. If such expertise does not exist within the host body or organization, a professional event management organization ought to be engaged to free the government secretariat from having to deal with day-to-day management of the event facilities.

### Similar Event Lessons

7. **Clear strategic direction:** If Canada is going to achieve the maximum benefits for its investment in hosting large international events, clear strategic direction needs to be set well before activities associated with the logistics of hosting the event begin. There needs to be a clear statement of what Canada wants to achieve with its investment in hosting the event and continuous support given to achieve this. This is necessary not only for defining Canada's role at the event but also to ensure maximum advantages for Canada after the event as it continues to engage in networks on issues.
8. **Time frames:** While WUF3 was successful despite the late start to the detail planning phase, a key lesson from WUF3 for the hosting of large international events is that the planning needs to begin very early. This is obviously necessary for the logistics planning. However, it is equally important to start early in order to have adequate time to define the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders for key functions (e.g. planning, logistics, themes and activities, engaging networks, media, etc.) well before the stakeholders have to begin their functions. It is also necessary to ensure that Canada is able to provide substantive input to the event – for example, to secure high profile speakers and adequately showcase Canadian achievements.
9. **Organizational Secretariat:** Creating and adequately resourcing a dedicated Secretariat allowed the government to bring together people with the requisite skills to provide leadership for the event. The creation of a dedicated Secretariat within government to organize Canada's contribution to a large international event was seen as an important lesson from WUF3.

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<sup>41</sup> *HABITAT-JAM, Summary Report Draft*, International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), June 2006, p. 12.

**10. Event planning manual/guidelines:** Those involved in the WUF3 organization recognized that they had little documented guidance on hosting a large, international event. A manual or guidelines on government planning of an event of this nature would have allowed them to be more efficient in their planning.

## ***4. Key Conclusions***

This section highlights the key conclusions of this evaluation.

### **World Urban Forum (WUF)3 was successful as a civil society conference**

Overall, WUF3 was deemed a successful conference. The objectives identified for it by UN-HABITAT and Canada were, for the most part, achieved. It attracted a large number of participants from a wide range of organization types. The format was successfully changed from previous WUF sessions by providing more opportunities for participant dialogue, networking and sharing of ideas. Not all events were successful in this regard, but the civil society conference model was successfully applied at WUF3.

### **WUF3 provided opportunities for identifying and sharing solutions to urban issues**

The conference provided many opportunities for participants to identify solutions to urban issues and participants from countries rated as having a low level of human development were particularly positive about the extent to which the conference achieved this objective. It is too early to assess the longer-term impact of the conference. The extent to which these ideas will have an impact on urban issues will depend on both implementation by individual participants and the extent to which the identified solutions have an impact on UN-HABITAT's agenda and its capacity to support international policy discussions. The online participant survey indicates that while approximately two-thirds of respondents believe that, in the next year, they are likely to apply the new practical ideas learned at WUF3 and follow-up with the networks and contacts established at WUF3, only half of Canadians respondents reported that they would apply ideas learned at the Forum in their local context.

### **A collaborative and professional approach to conference planning and organization was adopted for WUF3**

There were two key strengths of the WUF3 planning process. The first was the collaborative planning with UN-HABITAT. For the first time, UN-HABITAT worked closely with the host country and shared responsibilities for organizing events such as the plenary sessions, roundtables and training events, and selecting the networking events proposed by stakeholders. The second was the engagement of a broad group of Canadian stakeholders, including the Vancouver Working Group, the National Advisory Committee and the Interdepartmental Committee. One of the strengths of WUF3 was the creation of a dedicated Secretariat to coordinate the federal government's inputs, the use of contribution agreements to engage professional event planners in conference organization, and the establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee. Without these mechanisms, it would have been very difficult for the government to mount such a large, complex conference in the very short time available after the transfer of responsibility to HRSDC. In the end, the WUF3 infrastructure was judged to have been very good, in spite of the larger-than-expected number of participants. Key informants and participants were very positive about the conference facilities and the services provided to delegates.

## **WUF3 showcased Canada as capable of hosting a key international conference, but the benefits to Canada may have been somewhat less than expected**

WUF3 showcased Canada as capable of hosting a first-class conference, in terms of its size, venue, program and participation, in spite of the challenges such as the late start to the detail planning phase and the unexpectedly high number of participants. It provided many opportunities for Canada to showcase its achievements on urban issues. However, some interviewees felt the federal government profile and domestic urbanization agenda would have been reinforced further if Canada's achievements in the area of urban issues had been articulated into an overall strategy at WUF3. Although it succeeded, to some extent, in strengthening domestic partnerships, it is not clear that WUF3 positioned Canada as a global leader in urban issues. The extent to which the domestic partnerships will be sustainable and will have an impact on domestic policy discussions will depend, to a certain extent, on leadership provided by the federal government on urban issues in the future and, specifically, leading up to WUF4 in 2008.

### **Lessons Learned**

There were two types of lessons learned – lessons that can be applied to future WUFs, and lessons that can be applied to future similar events that Canada or other countries may host. In some instances these are based on good practices that contributed to WUF3's success; in others, they are based on areas in which WUF3 could have been improved. These lessons learned, discussed in detail in section 3.5 of this report, are drawn from the results of all the lines of evidence, including the post-conference discussion.



# Appendix A

WUF3 Evaluation Question Matrix

Evaluation Questions		Document Review	Secondary Data Analysis	On-site Observation	On-site Survey	Key Informant Interviews	Online Survey
Rationale and Relevance	1. To what extent does the design of the WUF3 allow for the achievement of its domestic and international objectives?	X	X	X	X	X	X
	2. To what extent were the themes, content, activities and training provided by the WUF3 conference of domestic and international relevance?	X	X	X	X	X	X
	3. To what extent did the WUF3 help to enhance the understanding of international urbanization issues?		X	X	X	X	X
Success	4. Was the WUF3 conducive to sharing practical and replicable solutions to address domestic and international urbanization sustainability issues?		X	X	X	X	X
	5. To what extent did the WUF3 help to strengthen the domestic and international networks in urban sustainability?		X		X	X	X
Outreach	6. To what extent did the HABITAT JAM and WUF3 attract the intended target audience?	X	X		X	X	X
	7. To what extent was the Internet-based dialogue useful for discussing ideas and issues to be addressed during the WUF3?	X	X		X	X	X
Planning and Delivery	8. To what extent was the organizational structure effective at planning and delivering an outstanding conference?	X	X	X	X	X	X
	9. Was the infrastructure appropriate for the effective delivery of a first-class conference?		X	X	X	X	X