



Global State of Advocacy 2016

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1. Foreword



Across our global network, we have realized many advocacy successes over the past year. We have seen policy wins in Honduras, Bulgaria and Mexico, among others; we launched our first global advocacy campaign; and we've brought our network together to influence Habitat III, the first global summit on housing and human settlements since the adoption of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. These successes have been significant and important, but as you read this report, I want you to keep in mind how we have positioned ourselves for even more success in the years to come.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Urban Development happens only once every 20 years. In October, over 33,000 people – representatives from the U.N. and members of both the private and social sectors around the globe – gathered in Quito, Ecuador, for Habitat III, where 167 country representatives adopted the New Urban Agenda, which will set the global framework for urban development for decades to come. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of our network, our recommendations on housing, land and community-led development are included in the agenda. But our work doesn't stop there, and the task now is to ensure world leaders keep their word.

The Solid Ground campaign officially launched in March. Already, we have Habitat for Humanity organizations in 27 countries joining our efforts, having influenced policies and systems with the potential to improve land access for shelter for nearly 1 million people. Furthermore, as Habitat for Humanity's first global advocacy campaign, Solid Ground serves not only as a powerful tool to align the organization around the world's top barrier to adequate and affordable housing – access to land for shelter – but also as an opportunity for us to learn from our experience to embark on future campaigns addressing additional issues.

I want us to celebrate what we have accomplished collectively over this past year, but I also want us to look forward to the many achievements our network will have to report on in 2017 and beyond.

Sincerely,
Chris Vincent
Vice President, Government Relations and Advocacy
Habitat for Humanity International

2. Global successes



Habitat for Humanity is thankful for each of the countless advocacy developments throughout our global network, including those mentioned in this report. We have seen progress at every level of government, from local to state to national to global. Each year, our voices grow stronger, and 2016 was no exception. From the momentous launch of Solid Ground, Habitat's first global advocacy campaign, to our myriad leadership roles in the Habitat III process, 2016 saw the culmination of years of research and planning yield exciting results, both in this year and for decades to come.

Working directly with government leaders to promote safe, healthy and affordable housing for all

Habitat for Humanity follows several principles in its advocacy, including being nonpartisan and collaborating with various stakeholders to improve housing policy.

These stakeholders often include the policymakers themselves.

An example of such direct collaboration is a recent partnership that **Habitat for Humanity Trinidad and Tobago** formed with the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Public Utilities to address the need for safe, healthy and affordable housing in the twin-island nation. Both Habitat and the ministry will address the need for improved utility services for low-income families, recognizing that decent housing includes access to safe water and healthy sanitation. Per a memorandum of understanding signed in July 2015, Habitat homeowners in Trinidad and Tobago will have guaranteed access to essential services through the ministry's programs during the construction, repair and completion of their homes.

Habitat's advocacy efforts are:

- **Housing-focused:** We target issues that improve housing and the broader community.
- **Community-centered and supported:** We empower those needing adequate housing to advocate for policies and systems to improve their communities.
- **Informed:** Our advocacy is grounded in our practical, on-the-ground program work, which uniquely positions Habitat to influence public opinion regarding the realities of housing.
- **Evidence-based:** Habitat's policy positions are based on facts, research and data.
- **Outcome-oriented:** We target viable policy changes or other reforms that benefit individuals, neighborhoods and communities.
- **Volunteer-friendly:** Habitat's most important resource is its volunteers. By involving volunteers in advocacy, Habitat maximizes impact and increases ongoing engagement.
- **Cooperative:** Habitat has a long history of bringing communities together to meet critical housing needs. We unite individuals and organizations to advance better housing policies.
- **Mutually supportive:** Across the Habitat network, we ensure that advocacy "lifts all Habitat boats" and does no harm to any Habitat organization.
- **Nonconfrontational:** Habitat advocacy is nonconfrontational, valuing its relationships with policymakers and supporters.
- **Nonpartisan:** Habitat's advocacy is issue-focused and never promotes individual candidates or political parties.

Recognizing the value of government involvement in promoting housing, **Habitat for Humanity El Salvador** signed a letter of institutional cooperation earlier this year to implement a program with the Salvadoran Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Development, or MIGOBDT. The program will facilitate access to credit for housing solutions at the national level and improve disaster resilience and response in areas covered by the ministry. Habitat El Salvador's successful collaborative engagement of stakeholders, including government entities for public policy formulation from a human rights perspective, has won attention from around the world, including earning the Dubai International Award for Best Practices, which was sponsored by UN-HABITAT.

Working directly with governments can also include municipal leaders, as it did for **Habitat for Humanity Australia** on the eve of the first day of 2016. Habitat Australia was official charity partner for the City of Sydney's New Year's Eve celebration, granting the organization a high-profile launch for its "Building Hope 2016" campaign. With a worldwide reach of over 1 billion people, Sydney's New Year's Eve event is one of the biggest annual celebrations in the world. This made it a huge opportunity to elevate global attention to the need for safe, healthy and affordable housing. Working with city leaders, Habitat placed illuminated messages on the Harbour Bridge throughout the New Year's Eve celebration, and thousands of people entered to win a Habitat Global Village trip to Fiji as part of the Building Hope campaign. Passers-by answered the question, "*What is your hope in 2016 for those without a safe and decent place to live?*" on the back of origami homes before folding and placing them within a larger home-shaped structure. Together, Habitat Australia and city officials prompted the entire city and beyond to start the year with the need for housing at the forefront of their minds.

In a difficult political environment, **Habitat for Humanity Hungary** was able to engage in several policy

dialogues and influence two important new policies. The first helps families in debt restructure their finances and ensure security of tenure. In the first year, it will help 13,800 people. The second policy aims to provide affordable housing solutions for Roma families and decrease the segregation of Roma communities. It will help 23,250 people. The government has allocated approximately \$9 million for the implementation of these programs.

Among the list of principles that describe Habitat's advocacy, two are unwritten: patience and persistence. After many years of research and planning, **Habitat for Humanity Haiti** continues to see significant progress on land rights in the country. The Haitian earthquake of 2010 destroyed not only lives, homes and businesses, but also thousands of land title documents. This destruction further weakened Haiti's already-fragile land titling system. In 2011, Habitat Haiti and Habitat for Humanity International began collaborating with local legal experts, global governments, local government officials and nongovernmental organizations from around the world to establish the Haiti Property Law Working Group and address this critical issue.

Over the past six years, the group has grown to include more than 200 members working to establish a robust land system in Haiti. The group has written two innovative manuals on how to properly and legally buy and sell land. It also has trained diverse groups from across the country to translate the lessons from the manuals into concrete policy recommendations. To date, well over 1,000 copies of the manuals have been distributed, and more than 1,000 people have received training on both manuals to help facilitate secure tenure transactions.

An energy -efficient home is a more affordable home

Recognizing that energy poverty is one of the most serious forms of inadequate housing across Eastern Europe, **Habitat for Humanity Europe, Middle East and Africa** prioritized this issue at the regional level by running the Residential Energy Efficiency for Low-

Income Households, or REELIH, project in Armenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on that experience and further research, Habitat EMEA also is raising awareness about this issue – including launching a new website, getwarmhomes.org – and is advocating for better policies at the national and regional levels.

To advocate for increased funding and better community facilitation to reduce energy poverty, Habitat EMEA participated in several key conferences, the culmination of which was the Sixth U.N. Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in October 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia. Habitat EMEA and Habitat Armenia enjoyed an advocacy victory that involved three little words: “particularly in buildings.” The inclusion of this phrase in the action plan resulting from the forum marks a critical win for residential energy efficiency.

Managing multi-unit building and improving the energy efficiency of such buildings is one of the biggest challenges of nations in Eastern Europe. To help, **Habitat for Humanity Macedonia** has launched the Register of Apartment Buildings and Apartments at different municipalities, and for years it has been raising awareness about energy efficiency. As a result of Habitat's multiyear effort, Karposh municipality in Skopje approved a new action plan for the energy-efficient renovation of residential buildings and allocated \$2.8 million, which is expected to help 5,600 people.

In 2012, the Bulgarian government launched a national program to rehabilitate multifamily buildings in 36 cities. The program is based on a pilot project run by the United Nations Development Programme in 2005-10 to renovate the energy efficiency of multifamily buildings with the support of **Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria**. The program provoked a great deal of enthusiasm, but it performed poorly, and by the end of 2014 only two buildings had been renovated. Habitat Bulgaria continually advocated for decentralizing the management and funding of the program from the national government in favor of a market-based approach. Habitat Bulgaria

Habitat III

Speaking of patience and persistence, it had been 20 years since the United Nations last hosted its Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, also known as the “Habitat” conference. The first such conference, at which UN-HABITAT, the U.N.’s agency for housing and human settlements, was formed, took place in 1976. In 1996, the second conference underscored the need for the world to think globally about the housing crisis.

In 2016, Habitat for Humanity led the engagement of civil society organizations from around the world in Habitat III and was honored to be part of the United States’ national delegation.

At the October conference in Quito, Ecuador, leaders from governments, businesses, research institutes and nonprofit organizations gathered to unveil an outcome document, The New Urban Agenda. Thanks to Habitat’s advocacy, the document provided a focused, forward-looking and action-oriented plan to address rapid global urbanization. Recognizing the potential to define urban priorities, guide national governments and shape housing policies around the world for the next several decades, Habitat successfully ensured that housing and security of tenure were prominently featured throughout.

For more information on this landmark event and Habitat for Humanity’s role, see page 16.

also recognized the need for making professional maintenance services available after a building is renovated in order to preserve the energy efficiency benefits.

The government of Bulgaria agreed. By 2015, the government had adopted all of these changes, successfully concluding a two-year advocacy campaign for Habitat Bulgaria and Decent Home, a national coalition of housing stakeholders established and led by Habitat Bulgaria. Consistent with Habitat’s advocacy strategy,



48,438 people
with improved
housing conditions

Bulgaria:

There’s a reason Habitat is patient and persistent: Once a policy change is made, its impact can last for a lifetime – and beyond. According to official reports of the number of buildings that have signed contracts for renovation so far, 48,438 people have been helped by improvements in housing conditions, decreases in energy costs, and increases in market value of their homes. Almost US\$500 million was mobilized from European Union and government funds.

Mexico:

In fiscal year 2016, Habitat for Humanity Mexico, in coalition with the Social Production of Housing Network, or PSVA, helped 133,830 people and mobilized US\$65 million. It has achieved this success despite challenges and changes in rules regarding government subsidy disbursements. Habitat Mexico continues to advocate for clarification of the rules and for production of social housing to meet the country's needs.

Habitat Bulgaria was patient yet persistent, using proposals, meetings, press conferences and letters to government officials. The end result is an effective program that drastically reduces energy expenditures for the renovated buildings, saving residents up to 60 percent on their energy bills.

Habitat Young Leaders Build

Habitat's advocacy welcomes voices of all creeds, religions, races, nationalities – and ages. During this past year's events, 1.7 million volunteers from across the Asia/Pacific region participated in the Habitat Young Leaders Build, Habitat for Humanity's largest annual

youth movement, volunteering, fundraising and speaking out in support of affordable homes. For the first time this past year, grants for advocacy activities related to housing were awarded to 26 youth supporters in eight countries in the region. The young people involved recognize that housing provides stability to move people onto a path of opportunity.

Celebrities in several countries across Asia joined the young people at campaign events. In Chennai, India, for example, Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez led #JacquelineBuilds to help families rebuild homes that were destroyed by massive floods in 2015. Actor-singer Wilfred Lau from Hong Kong also joined volunteers to build houses in Guangdong, China. Jacqueline and Wilfred are appearing with seven other Asian celebrities in a new video encouraging young people to join the Young Leaders Build campaign.

In the words of Rick Hathaway, Habitat for Humanity International's vice president, Asia/Pacific, "Young people play a big part in building a better future, and by joining together for the Habitat Young Leaders Build campaign they are helping families to gain strength, stability and independence through shelter." During the several months of the Habitat Young Leaders Build, events took place in 16 Asia/Pacific countries and Hong Kong, inspiring young people to confront global housing issues.



More than **38,000** people reached through advocacy and awareness raising during Habitat Young Leaders Build.

3. Solid Ground



On International Women's Day, March 8, 2016, Habitat for Humanity officially launched Solid Ground, its first global advocacy campaign. The launch of the three-year campaign to promote access to land for shelter for 10 million people around the world was a historic moment for Habitat's advocacy work and the culmination of years of planning. The campaign is changing the policies, laws and systems governing land that stand in the way of a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Challenges involving access to land – or space to live – differ from country to country and region to region. In the United States, for example, whether on the first or 41st floor, many families struggle to find affordable space to live. In Nairobi, Kenya, even where written laws dictate otherwise, discriminatory practices

“Shelter takes different forms and shapes around the world, but no matter where you live or what you live in, you depend on land for shelter.”

– Anne Myers, Solid Ground campaign director, Habitat for Humanity International

SOLID GROUND

Four key subthemes:

1. Secure tenure

2. Gender equality

3. Slum upgrading

4. Disaster resilience

around property ownership leave women without the security that homeownership provides. In Nepal, people still struggle to return to their land after recent earthquakes. In Brazil, families living in slums are being evicted from their homes because they can't get legal title, even to a place they've occupied for years. And in South Africa, residents of informal settlements want to improve their land and their homes, but need to first know that they can stay to enjoy the improvements.

The Solid Ground campaign aims to address all of these challenges by focusing on **four key subthemes: secure tenure, gender equality, slum upgrading and disaster resilience**. The global campaign involves the efforts of a growing list of national Habitat organizations, already including Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Cote d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Kenya, Macedonia, Mexico, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Zambia.

Secure tenure

Secure tenure refers to the ability to use and control the use of land without the fear of eviction or penalty. In other words, it's the peace of mind of knowing that your home won't be taken away without warning.

Secure tenure is more than the home's occupant having or not having ownership of land; it's a continuum that involves various forms of right to land. Regardless of what form it takes, tenure security is foundational to improving housing conditions because occupants who know they will be able to enjoy sustainable and long-lasting improvements made to their home are more likely to make them. Secure tenure also promotes stable community development. In short, with security of tenure, people self-invest in their home and future.

Here are a few examples of how Solid Ground is improving security of tenure:

In Brazil, lack of secure tenure is one of the main causes of conflicts in urban areas. In Pernambuco, a Brazilian state with over 8 million people, it is estimated that half of the population lives without secure tenure. Most settlements are informal, developed without structure or guidance from the government. Real estate speculation and the boom in civil construction have increased interest by private companies in buying informal settlements, filing lawsuits for repossession and evicting residents from their homes. The populations most affected are socially and economically vulnerable groups, often with women as the heads of household.

To address these issues, **Habitat for Humanity Brazil** is working toward three major objectives:

- 1) Developing policy recommendations to ensure public defense for vulnerable families involved in urban land conflicts and advocating for their adoption and implementation.
- 2) Providing affected populations and relevant government entities with public information

on legal cases involving evictions in informal settlements in Pernambuco.

- 3) Mapping areas at high risk of eviction in order to prevent future forceful removals.

Joining Solid Ground provided Habitat Brazil with additional funds and support to expand its work, which as of the date of writing had provided legal support for regularization to more than 2,100 families and legal support for securing tenure to more than 2,500 families since 2011.



Why is it important to improve women's property rights?

- Households headed by women are considered among the most socially and economically at risk, and are at an even greater disadvantage if they lack secure tenure to their housing.
- A significant portion of women still face gender-based legal barriers that prevent them from acquiring formal title to land.
- Women tend to share the benefit of improved tenure security among all household members, which is especially important for creating a more stable environment for their children.

Gender equality

Despite the fact that women make up more than half the global population, produce the majority of the global food supply and perform 60 to 80 percent of the agricultural work in developing countries, women own significantly less titled land than men worldwide. Although progress has been made in some countries over the past few decades, women continue to face significant legal and social obstacles to enjoying the full and direct benefits of land reform programs because of discriminatory regulations and norms related to land distribution, titling and inheritance.

Solid Ground seeks to empower women both politically and socially, especially when it comes to land rights and land policies. We're seeing positive results in several countries already, including:

In rural southern Kenya, a country where women are too often excluded from official decision-making, women are finding other ways to make an impact. Young Maasai women are defending community resources from misuse and changing land and property laws by using their voices in a way you might not expect to impact real-world decisions: Facebook groups.

On one page created by a Facebook group, called the Village Voice, members monitor community land rights and serve as whistleblowers when problems arise. Local officials are paying attention and often respond with phone calls to the activists, which lead to face-to-face meetings. The women have had success in reforming governance of community land and natural resources, all the while improving gender and community relations.

Habitat for Humanity Kenya is engaged with the same sets of concerns as rural women, including combating gender stereotypes and cultural issues that impact their land rights and their ability to fully employ the natural resources on which their families and communities

rely. The organization is piloting a participatory model for addressing land-related gender issues and confronting the legal barriers that continue to disempower women. Habitat Kenya has contracted research and has an active coalition through which

“Across Africa as well as many other parts of the world, the story is the same: Whoever owns the land is the one who calls the shots. ... Women inheriting land and gaining title is rare – too rare – especially when constitutions across the region say both men and women are equal.”

– Lynette Injette, country director, Habitat for Humanity Kenya

it is building platforms to inspire change in the lives of women. Building and developing close relationships with policymakers was a key to success and is integral to changing the landscape for women in Kenya.

Upgrading informal settlements

As property values in cities continue to rise, affordable land becomes increasingly scarce, and housing solutions are left to market forces. In many parts of the world, this has led to the creation of informal settlements where people live in unplanned and poorly serviced shelter. Population densities, land values, competition over land rights and forcible evictions are pushing people out of their homes, to the edge of cities and into living conditions that are far from safe or healthy.

Informal settlements, also called “slums,” lack important factors that make a house a home, such as having sufficient living area, access to water, access to sanitation, durability and secure tenure. Today, 1.6 billion people live without adequate shelter, and 1 billion of that number live in slums. That’s 1 in 7 people on the planet! In some countries, the percentage of the urban population living in slums is as high as 90 percent. Solid Ground recognizes that transforming slums into sustainable communities requires a partnership between the residents of the slums and the private and public sectors.

By the numbers

- **1 in 3 urban dwellers in the developing world live in slumlike conditions.**
- **1 billion new houses are needed by 2020 to accommodate 50 million new urban dwellers per year.**

Habitat for Humanity South Africa is putting this into practice in Langrug, an informal settlement near Cape Town. Like many slums in the world, the settlement was formed by migrant workers seeking employment and moving closer to cities, where employment is more likely. More than 12 million other people in South Africa face similar challenges. Recognizing the scale of the problem, Habitat South Africa is advocating for holistic and participatory community development. The national organization is facilitating workshops, trainings and other learning opportunities to equip community partners with the tools, knowledge, skills and partnerships they need to improve their community and develop safe and healthy housing.

Disaster resilience

Disasters affect about 188 million people each year and often have sudden and destructive impacts on housing. Poor and marginalized communities, including those without secure tenure to their homes, are among the most vulnerable. People living in unregulated and informal settlements are more prone to death, injury and loss of housing after a disaster for a variety of reasons:

- Informal settlements are often located in areas vulnerable to natural hazards, such as steep slopes and flood plains.
- Housing in informal settlements often does not comply with construction and safety standards and is usually unable to withstand the forces of nature.
- When people live with the threat of eviction, they are less likely to invest in house improvements conducive to strengthening and disaster mitigation.

Recognizing that for many disaster-affected families, lack of secure land rights is also a major obstacle to reconstruction, Solid Ground advocates for disaster resilience. To build stronger cities that can withstand the effects of disasters, cities need to incorporate resilience strategies in their planning policies. By integrating disaster resilience into sustainable development, communities can tackle predictable disasters;

better cope with the increasing impacts of extreme weather patterns; and mitigate potential damage to people, housing and infrastructure.

As a member of Solid Ground, **Habitat for Humanity India** takes a holistic approach to disaster mitigation, response and relief programs, all with an emphasis on land. Habitat India is already advocating for affected families at the state level, including through its ongoing Rebuilding Tamil Nadu Project, which addresses the housing vacuum created by the region's floods in 2015.

Building on Solid Ground

Solid Ground is the culmination of years of research drawn from the expertise of Habitat's global network. Designed to put a spotlight on the issue of land, Solid Ground also promotes learning from – and replicating – successes around the world. **Habitat for Humanity Honduras**, for example, has demonstrated how advocacy at the municipal level can start a positive, countrywide trend. Although Honduras is among the least urbanized nations in Latin America, the nation's cities are growing – and fast. These booming cities are struggling to meet the housing demands of the growing number of urban residents. Although some cities have implemented social housing programs to assist low-income families, these programs tend to put more emphasis on short-term social housing projects than on long-term policy change, leaving barriers to land access.

To address these concerns, Habitat Honduras is promoting housing policies at the municipal level by forming a diverse commission to formulate, recommend and review the policy proposal. Habitat Honduras then ensures the policies are implemented and monitored in each community. As a result of Habitat Honduras' advocacy during FY2016, 55 municipal social housing policies were approved, and an additional 26 policies are under negotiation and are expected to be approved in the first months of FY2017. We expect the approval of the initial 55 policies to allocate US\$22 million and improve access to land and housing for over half a million people.



Solid Ground Challenge Grants

To catalyze advocacy activity and spur engagement with Solid Ground, Habitat for Humanity International offered challenge grants that would boost capacity and develop tools and examples that support the network as a whole. Twenty countries responded, demonstrating strong interest in advocacy and the campaign itself.

The following seven countries were awarded the first round of grants:

Habitat for Humanity Brazil

Goal: Monitor the implementation of laws that guarantee the “social role of property” in cities, and develop policy proposals to be shared with government officials and the Councils of the Cities.

Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria

Goal: Amend national and municipal legislation in order to facilitate secure tenure and access to land and public infrastructure for vulnerable populations, particularly Roma, based on original research.

Habitat for Humanity Cambodia

Goal: Facilitate effective implementation of the National Housing Policy in Cambodia, including by building the capacity of Cambodia’s General Housing Department.

Habitat for Humanity Dominican Republic

Goal: Inform national policy addressing land conflicts, via mapping and diagnostic research on the topics of land conflict and evictions.

Habitat for Humanity Honduras

Goal: Influence local governments by conducting local analysis of municipal housing and land issues, convening relevant actors to evaluate the research and formulate municipal policy recommendations.

Habitat for Humanity Kenya

Goal: Increase the percentage of women with property rights and the ability to acquire land property or tenure documents in their name.

Habitat for Humanity South Africa

Goal: Ensure the proper implementation of South Africa’s Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme, or UISP.

4. Lifting our collective voice



With nearly 1,400 affiliates in the United States and operations in more than 70 countries, Habitat for Humanity is working on every continent except Antarctica. While that geographic coverage is impressive, the presence of Habitat for Humanity's network is even more than the sum of its parts. We are accomplishing our shared vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live by sharing wisdom, best practices and other resources.

By lifting our voices together, we will make our vision a reality.

Habitat for Humanity's Involvement in Habitat III

In October, leaders from around the world came together for the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, known as Habitat III. As the first global summit on

“Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda is our great chance to unify and have a solid game plan for the coming decades to perform the work each of us has been called to do.”

– Tjada McKenna, chief operating officer, Habitat for Humanity International

housing and human settlements since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the SDGs or Global Goals, Habitat III presented a critical opportunity to ensure that housing is a priority as the world seeks to address the challenges of urbanization. The global summit drew leaders from nearly 200 countries, including U.N. members; representatives from civil society organizations, governments and municipalities; women and youth groups; trade unions; members of the private sector; and professionals from academia and foundations.

The preparation for the three-day conference took over three years, and Habitat for Humanity was involved every step of the way in shaping the global dialogue around addressing the challenges of urbanization. Recognizing that the outcome document from the conference, known as the New Urban Agenda, will guide policy for decades to come, Habitat ensured that housing remained at the center of the process and in the final framework.

Local, regional and global representatives from Habitat's worldwide network took leadership roles at several points in the Habitat III process, not only at the final conference itself but also during preparatory sessions and by hosting interactive dialogues known as Urban Thinkers Campuses, which were promoted by the World Urban Campaign.

Relations between the Pan African Parliament and **Habitat for Humanity Europe, Middle East and Africa** have progressed. In support of their partnership formed in August 2015, Habitat for Humanity has made presentations on women, land and food security. At the end of 2015, Habitat EMEA participated in the Africities Summit in Pretoria organized by the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, which aimed to evaluate the implementation of decentralization policies in Africa. Habitat made a presentation titled "How to Mobilize Know How, Capacities and Funding to Strengthen Management and Accountability in the City." Habitat

also attended an experts group meeting on Jan. 20, 2016, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organized by the Habitat Secretariat and the U.N. Economic Commission of Africa. At the meeting, Habitat spoke on the environment and climate change. In addition, Habitat for Humanity South Africa attended the Habitat III thematic meeting on informal settlements held in Pretoria, South Africa, in April 2016, where a presentation titled "Informal Settlements and Slum Upgrading in the New Urban Agenda" was made at the introductory plenary.

As the European Union plays a key role in global development and is engaged in the discussion about the New Urban Agenda, Habitat EMEA has raised awareness about the importance of access to housing and access to land. Habitat EMEA organized an event at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, in April on behalf of the Cities Alliance Habitat III Joint Work Program and organized a plenary session at the European Development Days – the high-level annual development conference in Europe – in Brussels in June. Together with UN-HABITAT and other inter-

Devex

In the lead-up to Habitat III, Habitat for Humanity partnered with Devex to host **#NewUrbanAgenda**, a six-month conversation to amplify the conference. Recognizing that we are at a crucial moment for cities and their residents, Habitat and Devex investigated a range of issues such as strengthening the role of local government, improving land rights, fighting for gender equality, upgrading slums and creating disaster-resilient communities. The campaign included thought-provoking articles and analysis from Devex reporters and correspondents, guest commentary, exclusive video interviews, and an engaging webinar.

national partners, Habitat EMEA organized the 3rd Europe Housing Forum in Berlin in November 2016. Keynote speakers included Leilani Farha, U.N. special rapporteur for adequate housing, and several high-level EU policymakers. The 150 participants discussed the issues of affordability, livability and sustainability, which were also the key themes of the EMEA research *Housing Review 2015*, which was published at the event.

Further, Habitat for Humanity co-chaired the civil society working group in the World Urban Campaign's General Assembly of Partners and co-led the housing expert working group ("policy unit") established by the United Nations. In the latter role, Habitat issued a new, comprehensive report that outlined a strategic approach to ensure more affordable, adequate and safe housing worldwide. (See sidebar: "A first for the world.") Additionally, Habitat served on the U.S. national committee and presented at the U.S. regional meeting in Denver, Colorado, hosted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Many voices make light work: Collaborative successes

Habitat's worldwide building efforts exemplify the adage that "many hands make light work." In advocacy, the same is true of our voices. Around the world, Habitat forms coalitions with other nongovernmental organizations, works directly with government agencies, invites the public to advocate with us, and reaches across national borders to partner within the Habitat network. Such partnerships yield exciting results, as demonstrated by the collaboration between **Habitat for Humanity Cambodia** and **Habitat for Humanity Australia** under the umbrella of Solid Ground:

In May 2014, the Royal Government of Cambodia launched its long-awaited national housing policy, but then hit roadblocks in implementation. Cambodia's General Department of Housing, or GDH, which was

created alongside the policy, lacks capacity and isn't sufficiently connected to existing public, private or nongovernmental housing actors. The lack of capacity and connection hamper much-needed progress on decent housing and land tenure at the national level.

A first for the world

Together with the Inter-American Development Bank and 20 global housing experts, Habitat for Humanity co-wrote the *Habitat III Housing Policy Paper*, which outlines a strategic approach that encourages world governments to make programmatic and financial commitments to ensure more affordable, adequate and safe housing.

The report illustrates the important need for all United Nations member states to prioritize housing in their government agenda, improve the lives of the 881 million people living today in informal urban settlements, and ensure adequate housing for the additional 1.18 billion people expected to need it by 2030.

The report marked the first time policies have been created to address the future global urban housing need.

Fortunately, the GDH requested assistance from Habitat Cambodia, and through Solid Ground, both parties hope to make progress.

In a unique partnership, Habitat Cambodia will support the implementation of the National Housing Policy in Cambodia by creating a national multistakeholder coalition, helping to build the capacity of the GDH, and by making accessible versions of the policy and its procedures available to the public and to policymakers. With

support from Habitat Australia, Habitat Cambodia will partner with the GDH and Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction to help enforce new baselines for what constitutes safe, healthy and affordable housing throughout Cambodia.

An ocean away, **Habitat for Humanity Dominican Republic** also joined an impressive coalition to put the need for housing at the top of the national government's agenda. Although the constitution of the Dominican Republic guarantees all citizens the "right to housing," the island country faces a housing deficit of 2.1 million homes. This figure includes homes without access to basic services and the number of additional homes necessary to meet the housing needs of all families. In late 2015, Habitat Dominican Republic, together with other civil society organizations, launched the Casa Ya campaign to bring housing into the national spotlight, including in the upcoming presidential debates. Casa Ya secured commitments from all presidential candidates that they would fill the housing deficit once in office.

In response, the government of the Dominican Republic declared 2016 the "Year for Housing." The Casa Ya campaign continues to support the passage of much-needed policy on land, housing, and services to residents of substandard and informal settlements. Coalitions like Casa Ya bolster Habitat's reach, network and global impact.

Meanwhile in Europe, the current government in Romania started a robust consultation process involving civil society on several social policies. **Habitat for Humanity Romania** took the leading role among NGOs on housing-related policy discussions, and the government invited Habitat to several official policy consultations. Housing was included as a funding priority for the "Anti-Poverty Package," and Habitat contributed a lot to the new National Housing Policy. A national Coalition for Housing also was established, with the secretariat being provided by Habitat Romania.

Replicating good examples

Whether through partnerships within our network or beyond it, Habitat learns from the work of others in order to implement successful and innovative programs in the most efficient and effective way possible.

A potential housing policy solution crossed national boundaries in 2015, when **Habitat for Humanity Poland** modeled a social rental agency program on a

Poland: Expected to provide security of tenure for 240,000 people.

In 2015, the Polish government initiated the Revitalization Act, which creates legal guidelines for the renovation of municipal and privately owned buildings. **Habitat for Humanity Poland** was engaged in the public consultation of the legislative process and ensured that residents in revitalized areas would not lose their homes as a result of the revitalization efforts. The program is estimated to reach 600,000 people, and the inclusion of Habitat's recommendations is expected to improve security of tenure for up to 240,000 tenants living in low-income social housing. At the same time, Habitat Poland was engaged in the public consultation of the Warsaw Revitalization program. Habitat ensured that a significant amount of the total project budget (US\$14 million for seven years) will be allocated to facilitate citizen participation of living in the target neighborhoods.

similar initiative undertaken by **Habitat for Humanity Hungary**, which was featured in the *State of Advocacy 2015* report:

An estimated 6.5 million people in Poland – approximately 15 percent of the nation's population – lack decent housing. To address that need, Habitat Poland is launching a Social Rental Agency, or SAN, similar to the model that Habitat Hungary implemented to put empty housing stock to good use. Poland's SAN increases access to adequate housing by acting as an intermediary between landlords and social renters and ensuring regular rent payments and proper use of the premises. To support this work, Habitat Poland was recently awarded a US\$300,000 research grant. Through research and advocacy, Habitat Poland will incorporate social rental agencies into the official set of tools used in the Polish government's social housing system.

Of course, Habitat operates not only at the national level but also at the regional level. Better land governance and decision-making are crucial to development, and the use of open data and information on land is key for transparency; effectiveness; empowering citizens; and contributing to strong and inclusive political, social and economic institutions. Local and grassroots knowledge, however, is particularly hard to find and might not be available online. In addition, data and available information often are not presented in ways that are accessible to grassroots communities, media and organizations.

Habitat for Humanity Latin America and Caribbean

has created SueloUrbano.org, a regional hub for sharing information, knowledge and solutions on land tools and responsible land governance. It is an open and collaborative platform whose objective is to support more informed debates and policymaking; to encourage greater adoption and up-scaling of best practices and promising innovations; to activate dialogues, partnerships and capacity building among different actors; and to raise awareness and informed advocacy, leading to improved land governance practice.

SueloUrbano.org is promoted by the Latin America/ Caribbean Urban Land Tools Cluster; it was created in 2015 under the UN-HABITAT/Global Land Tools Network CSO Cluster's action plan. It is a key strategy to advance the Solid Ground campaign in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to contribute to the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. "Good governance is evidence-based and builds upon a shared knowledge base using globally comparable as well as disaggregated and locally generated data," indicates the New Urban Agenda. Joined with the Global Land Tool Network, Habitat for Humanity Latin America/ Caribbean is conducting a land scoping study mapping key land governance challenges, limitations, barriers, opportunities, and actions for change for responsible land governance in the region.

5. Looking ahead

Every year since Habitat added advocacy to its tool kit for addressing the need for decent housing, we have seen a significant increase in our global impact. As we celebrate the numerous victories of 2016, we look ahead to 2017 and beyond. An increasing number of voices are joining Habitat's call to change the laws, policies, systems and attitudes that stand in the way of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. In the year ahead, we will seize the momentum of 2016 and charge ahead with several opportunities for change, including the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the unprecedented growth of the Solid Ground campaign.

Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

The Habitat III conference reinvigorated the global commitment to sustainable urbanization, especially as an increasing percentage of the world's population moves to its cities. The U.N. estimates that 54 percent of the world's population lived in cities in 2014. By 2050, it is estimated that number will be a staggering 6 billion. If people move to cities faster than the cities can adapt, vast informal settlements and poor living conditions for millions, if not billions, of people result. To confront this trend, the Habitat III conference focused on rapid urbanization at the global scale and on making cities as sustainable as possible.

As the lead for civil society organizations and an official member of the United States' delegation to the Habitat III conference, Habitat for Humanity played an integral role in shaping the New Urban Agenda, the outcome document of Habitat III. This document will inform the urban policies of governments around the world for decades to come, and its importance is hard to overstate. The world's work did not end with the conference, however; our efforts now turn to implementing this key document. Our focal points, which

achieved much success in being integrated into the New Urban Agenda, remain:

- **Emphasize housing.** Housing, both in the informal and formal sectors, reduces poverty, generates jobs and economic growth, and is critical to addressing energy consumption and climate change. As the New Urban Agenda is implemented, governments will ensure the availability of adequate and affordable housing in order to foster safe, resilient and sustainable cities.
- **Prioritize security of tenure and access to land.** The New Urban Agenda recognizes that people shouldn't live in constant fear of eviction and deserve to have the ability to use and control their land. As governments respect the foundational nature of secure land rights, they will strengthen and enforce access to land and develop both communities and the cities in which they reside.
- **Foster community-led development.** In implementing the New Urban Agenda, governments will recognize that communities know their needs and will include them in defining their future. We will advocate for women, the poor and vulnerable groups, along with the organizations supporting them, to continue to be included in policy decisions moving forward.
- **Set specific and accountable measures.** As we advocated throughout the Habitat III process, ending poverty requires more than good ideas; it takes specific and measurable commitments that account for how cities will grow and evolve. The New Urban Agenda establishes a strong link to the Global Goals and will result in quadrennial reporting and an extensive review of UN-HABITAT.

Around the world, Habitat will continue to advocate for

governments at all levels to hold firm to the principles of the New Urban Agenda and will provide support and recommendations on how governments can reach their commitments to better cities and better housing for all people.

Solid Ground

In March 2017, Solid Ground will celebrate its first anniversary. By then, the Habitat network will have taken a worldwide focus on each of the four Solid Ground subthemes. In less than one year, Solid Ground has already made significant progress on issues of land policy and secure tenure. With the second wave of challenge grants awarded, recognition of the need for better land policies and the capacity to successfully advocate for them increased exponentially. With the momentum already underway,

2017 promises to be full of campaign victories for the Habitat network.

As of this writing, enrollment in the Solid Ground campaign has swelled to 27 countries and continues to climb. That's already nearly 40 percent of Habitat's global network, and that number includes 10 Solid Ground "champions" committed not only to promoting Solid Ground's global priorities but also to implementing their own Solid Ground campaigns to change land policies and systems in their countries. In addition, 15 organizations have signed on as global campaign partners to assist in building the capacity of our network and expanding the global reach of Solid Ground. As the Habitat for Humanity network and our network of partners engage in advocacy for land for shelter, Solid Ground's impact grows, making lasting, meaningful changes to the lives of millions of people worldwide.



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