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STATEMENT BY THE 

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**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION  
OFFICE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS (ILO)**



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**Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III); First session**

**Statement by: Ms. Jane Stewart, Special Representative and Director,  
ILO Office to the United Nations**

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Mr. / Madam Chair, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great pleasure to contribute to the Habitat III process. Labour is a fundamental part of the Summit. The ILO has a track-record of urban initiatives, such as, the production and promotion of conventions, recommendations and other instruments pertinent to housing and sustainable urban development; policy advice to local governments; and activities with local enterprises, workers and communities.

Habitat III emphasizes the need for sustainability. Labour cuts across its three pillars: social, economic and environmental. Cities and towns will not be sustainable if the livelihoods of their residents are not properly addressed.

Urban poverty is extensive throughout the world. In addition to its direct consequences on livelihoods, poverty also limits the ability of urban workers to fully contribute to the economy and to the greening of cities and towns. Conversely, well-trained workers and entrepreneurs, working in adequate conditions, constitute a crucial asset for promoting housing and urban development.

Due to decentralization, local governments and other local actors are more and more directly involved in labour issues. Local governments have increasingly faced with the challenge of improving livelihoods in their

also feel the impact of unemployment and underemployment through revenues, increased welfare expenditures, and the escalation of crime and While many actions to support livelihoods have been accomplished, much be done, given the decent work challenges in urban areas.

The Decent Work Agenda of the ILO has four pillars: employment creation, workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue. In 1996, Habitat II highlighted the need to generate employment. While this remains important, the other pillars are also crucial for housing and sustainable urban development. In this account, it is proposed that Habitat III takes a step beyond Habitat II, by encompassing and integrating all the elements of the Decent Work Agenda.

ILO's work in urban areas has ample room for contributing to Habitat III and, in the process, building synergy with many actors, given the fact that urban sustainability requires efforts from different perspectives, and at the same time is intrinsically linked to decent work.

The development of a Municipal Decent Work Programme is a practical way to go ahead in a given city or town. It can be a conduit for localizing the Decent Work Agenda. This builds upon the Habitat II process, and at the same time represents a leap forward.

The ILO looks forward to working together with you in this process.

Thank you for your attention.