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**Five projects that
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A Primer on the Habitat III Conference

BY JOHN PAPAGNI

THE UNITED Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) will take place in Quito, Ecuador on October 17-20, 2016. Held every 20 years, Habitat III follows the 1996 conference in Istanbul (Habitat II) and 1976 conference in Vancouver (Habitat I). This gathering of housing

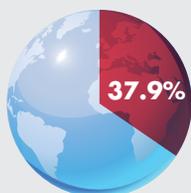
and community development (HCD) stakeholders will focus on challenges that cities, towns and villages face as drivers of sustainable development. NAHRO is registered as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) with the United Nations (U.N.); NAHRO members have participated in earlier Habitat conferences, and have sent delegations to the U.N. Habitat World Urban Forum that

takes place every two years.

Habitat III will be the first major global conference held after the adoption of the “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” by U.N. member states and the COP 21 climate change agreement announced in Paris in December 2015. Forty years after the first Habitat conference, there is consensus that towns and cities

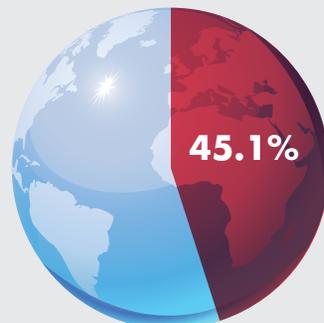
World Urban Population

Habitat I—1976



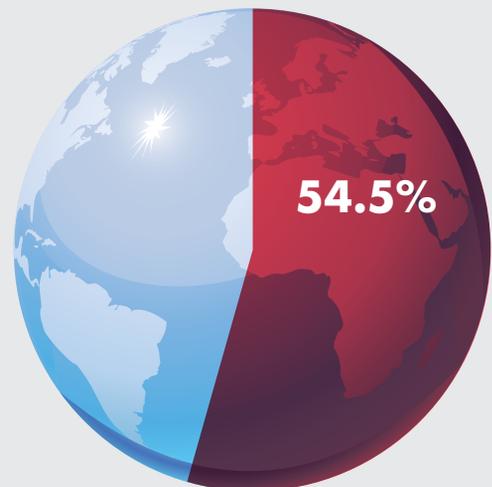
1.5 BILLION

Habitat II—1996



2.6 BILLION

Habitat III—2016



4 BILLION



need to adapt as societies change. A legacy of the twentieth century is growth of cities outside their boundaries to satellite towns and suburbs. In developed countries, the result can be unplanned suburban development that consumes farmland and provides limited access to transit. In developing countries, the result can be informal settlements, or slums, on the edge of cities. In 2010, the U.N.-Habitat reported that 827 million people were living in slum-like conditions worldwide.¹

Underlying the dialogue regarding development and change is an understanding that the world is becoming increasingly urban. For the first time in history, more than half of the world's population lives in urban centers. By the middle of the next century,



PHOTO COURTESY HABITAT III SECRETARIAT, UNITED NATIONS

committee is meeting three times between September 2014 and July 2016 in New York, Nairobi and Indonesia. A series of regional planning meetings covering a broad range of topics are taking place between September 2015 and March 2016. Habitat III will also host a series of online dialogues leading up to the conference.

One of NAHRO's international partners, the International Urban Development Association (INTA), has launched a specific initiative for Habitat 3 that will gather hundreds of local authorities and urban actors across continents, particularly in the Americas, focusing on innovation in the production or regeneration of the sustainable city. For more information, see the article on page 20.²

To learn more about Habitat III, visit www.habitat3.org ■

² To learn more visit www.inta-aiun.org/en/activities

that number will rise to 80 percent. Habitat III will focus on the challenges of urbanization at all levels and promote dialogue that can lead to appropriate policies bridging urban, suburban and rural areas. Of particular interest to NAHRO members will be dialogue regarding decent housing accessible to people at all income levels.

Like other U.N.-Habitat conferences, Habitat III is an opportunity to elevate the global dialogue on urban issues. A preparatory

¹ Source: United Nations, "United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, Quito 2016", September 2015.