

by [UN News Centre](#)

12 April 2016 – Welcoming Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa to the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today said the world needs a new vision for urbanization – a "New Urban Agenda" – to help protect the environment and limit climate change.



*Yasuni National Park in Ecuador is arguably the most biologically diverse spot on Earth. Photo: UNEP GRID Arendal/Peter Prokosch*

In October, all Heads of State and Government of the United Nations are invited to the Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. Known as Habitat III, the

four-day conference will take place in Ecuador's capital, Quito.

"Habitat III is a historic opportunity for change," Mr. Ban told reporters at a media event with President Correa. "It is happening during the critical first year of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The success of this ambitious endeavour will be largely determined by how we live in, design and manage our cities."

The UN chief underlined that the world's population is living "in the urban century," with more than half the global population in urban areas. He said when planned, built and governed well, cities can be "massive agents of positive change" and "catalysts for inclusion and powerhouses of equitable economic growth."

"That is why we need a new vision for urbanization – a New Urban Agenda," he explained, adding that he looks forward to the success of Habitat III, and is confident that the conference will deliver the impetus for sustainable development the global community needs.

In a separate meeting with President Correa, the Secretary-General commended Ecuador for the support it is providing to the Colombia peace process and for the country's contributions to the work of the UN. He further expressed concern over the impact of drilling activities on the Yasuni National Park.