



NEWS RELEASE

October 2, 2017

CHRA Marks World Habitat Day by Calling for a National Housing Strategy Focused on the Needs of Canada's Most Vulnerable

OTTAWA: The United Nations has designated October 2 as World Habitat Day in 2017 - this year's theme is "Housing Policies: Affordable Homes". The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) is using this day to remind the federal government that the needs of Canada's most vulnerable populations need to lie at the heart of the forthcoming National Housing Strategy, expected to be unveiled in November 2017.

In marking World Habitat Day 2017, the United Nations has said, "This World Habitat Day will focus on promoting all levels of government and all relevant stakeholders to reflect on how to implement concrete initiatives to ensure adequate and affordable housing in the context of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at all levels". In order to properly mark this milestone, CHRA is calling on the federal government to include the following principles in the upcoming National Housing Strategy:

- A legislated right to housing for all Canadians that would, at a minimum, require the federal government to develop ongoing housing strategies and report publicly on progress
- Create and properly fund a distinct urban and rural Indigenous Housing Strategy
- Introduce a financing mechanism that will provide social and affordable housing providers with capital to renovate existing properties and expand the supply of affordable homes.
- A bottoms-up revamped Homelessness Partnering Strategy where solutions to homelessness are driven from a local level.
- Creation of a national rent subsidy program that would ensure no net loss in Rent-Geared-to-Income units, and ideally a growth in RGI subsidized units.
- Implementation of a Sector Transformation Fund that will provide resources to those housing organizations who wish to transform their operations.

"World Habitat Day provides an important opportunity to recognize the strides we've made in providing affordable housing in Canada, but it also reminds us of how much work is required to maintain and grow the stock of affordable housing," said Stephan Corriveau, President of CHRA. "Until every Canadian, most notably every Indigenous person, has access to safe and affordable housing, the goals of World Habitat Day will not be realized," he added.

"As the federal government prepares to unveil its National Housing Strategy in a few weeks, it's imperative that the needs of our most vulnerable populations must be at the centre of that Strategy. Social housing plays a key role in delivering that housing – but the sector needs significant investment if it can continue to carry out its mandate as envisioned in the UN's New Urban Agenda," added Jeff Morrison, CHRA Executive Director.

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