The Habitat II Conference, or the City Summit, organized by the United Nations, took place June 3-14, 1996, in the city of Istanbul, Turkey.

Participants included the U.N. member nations and the so-called “partnerships”, the various actors involved in the field of human settlements: the business sector, academics and non-governmental and community-based organizations, and others. These partners played an important role in the deliberations and the drafting of the concluding documents. The central themes of the conference were: Adequate Housing for All and Sustainable Human Settlements in an Urbanizing World.

By the turn of the millennium, more than half of the world's population will live in cities. Urban problems will multiply everywhere, especially in the poorest regions. Thus we are facing a scenario in which cities, and human settlements in general, will be generating or contending with problems difficult to resolve.

Housing represents a central element of settlements and is key to the quality of life of the inhabitants. The serious housing deficits and the deterioration of existing stocks will require urgent measures if these deficiencies are to be overcome.

As a result of such reflections, the Conference approved the Habitat Agenda, which defines lines of action on various levels regarding the range of housing and human settlements issues.

This handbook is the product of a collective initiative and effort of Habitat International Coalition and its Mexican partners, and includes references to:

- Human Rights
- Habitat and the city
- Alternative Social Project
- Housing
- Women & Habitat
- Quality of life
- Participation
- Finance and Mobilization of resource
- Environment