

# UN teleconference open to urban renewal ideas

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Do you want to debate the relocation of informal residents, share ideas about improving the living conditions of the poor or discuss ways that will affect urban renewal?

What about the “sweatshops” or, to use the sugar coated phrase “workhouses” spread around Durban and Johannesburg? Do you think the painting of buildings improves the conditions of tenants and residents and their safety and security?

Imagine you are able to discuss these and other relevant inner city issues with tens of thousands of people around the world in a kind of global conferencing? The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), together with Canada and IBM, has made this possible by using JAM technology.

Beginning December 1, 2005 at 17:00 GMT and ending on December 3rd, you have a 72-hour period to join in on the dialogue on the website at [www.iamthejam.com](http://www.iamthejam.com). HabitatJam will have "subject matter experts" (SMEs) from around the world to respond to your questions and engage in discussions with you.

My Opening Statement that follows as one of the SMEs is a challenge to you to be part of the global dialogue:

*“Acknowledging that all human beings are dignified and respecting the sanctity of life is just a starting point. We must champion without favour or fear the rights of women, men, children and families for the right to live in an environment that is just and habitable in the same way as we would for our families and ourselves. We give life to mere words and phrases by engaging all stakeholders, creating partnerships and drive the process as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) with and for the people. The conditions of people in the townships, cities and slums unite us in our global village. It turns us into selfless committed persons who must live, dream and die with the passion of improving the lives of others even if it means sacrificing our own against all odds.”*

Chairperson, Organisation of Civic Rights; Member of the KwaZulu Natal Rental Housing Tribunal  
[www.ocr.org.za](http://www.ocr.org.za)