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PROGRESS REPORT ON HABITAT: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Note by the Executive Director

The first progress report on Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was presented by the Secretary-General of the Conference to the Governing Council at its third session ^{1/}. The Governing Council may recall that a note by the Executive Director accompanied the first report.

The attached second progress report submitted by the Secretary-General, is particularly important to the Governing Council in view of the high priority which the Council has consistently allocated to the field of human settlements, in view of the substantial allocation of resources (\$3,000,000) which the Council has approved for the exposition and audio-visual component of this Conference, and because it is the last report before the Conference takes place.

Regarding the progress report, the Executive Director wishes to point out to the Council that the initial stated objectives of UNEP's support for the exposition or audio-visual components of the Conference are largely being achieved. As one indication, by December 1975, 120 countries had indicated their commitment to participate in the audio-visual programme, with about 215 presentations. Approximately 80 of the 120 countries were receiving technical co-operation and/or financial assistance in varying amounts of up to \$10,000 each.

The following are among the specific points in the progress report which will be of concern to the Council:

(a) Proposals by the Habitat Secretariat (paragraphs 50 to 58) for UNEP support to specified follow-up activities to the Conference, including the establishment of a small team of professionals with secretarial and consultant support, in the amount of \$410,000 to \$530,000 over a one-year period. Among other activities, the team would organize, early in 1977, regional consultations to consider in detail the implications of the recommendations of the Conference. This team would be in addition to the posts provided for in the United Nations regular budget for the Conference, which will be retained until the end of 1976. As proposed, the small team

^{1/} UNEP/GC/35.

of professionals would be headed by a Director who would report to the Executive Director of UNEP. The Executive Director believes that there is a case for funding by UNEP of certain additional activities clearly related to UNEP's Interest in this United Nations Conference, for perhaps a six month period. The nature of UNEP's participation in such activities should be discussed with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It would appear that any continuing follow-up of the Conference beyond a six month period should be dealt with in the context of the recommendations of the Habitat Conference itself and the decisions of the General Assembly in 1976 concerning the permanent institutional arrangements for the human settlements field, in which both the existing Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and the UNEP programme are expected to play important roles. The guidance of the Governing Council is requested:

(b) The Council may also wish to express itself regarding several other matters mentioned in the progress report, such as consideration of an evaluation study to assess the results of the audio-visual programme and its contribution to the Conference as a whole, and of establishing, on a permanent basis, a library of audio-visual material on human settlements 2/;

(c) A further project the Council may wish to note in the Habitat progress report is the in situ urban demonstration programme in which up to 1,500 cities around the world will be invited to create traffic-free zones in downtown areas on World Environment Day, 5 June 1976.

2/ In this connexion, the Level Two document (UNEP/GC/61) calls for consideration of the establishment of an information and communications centre for human settlements, drawing on the materials assembled for Habitat.

PROGRESS REPORT

Report of the Secretary-General of Habitat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to review the progress of the preparatory work for Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, to be held from 31 May to 11 June 1976 at Vancouver, Canada. The previous report of the Secretary-General (document UNEP/GC/35) provided background information on the Conference and the preparatory activities up to and including the first session of the Preparatory Committee held from 15 to 24 January 1975. Subsequently, the Secretary-General submitted progress reports to the resumed first session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat (document A/CONF.70/PC/13) and to the thirtieth session of the General Assembly (document A/10234).

II. PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

A. Regional preparatory conferences and other meetings

2. An ad hoc meeting of international consultants was held in London from 10 to 12 February 1975 to review long-range proposals for human settlement research and thus contribute to the substantive documentation to be submitted to the Conference. A list of priority topics for research was drawn up at that meeting.

3. A meeting of international consultants was held at Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, from 20 to 23 May 1975 to seek an intellectual basis for a new interdisciplinary science of human settlements and to assist the Habitat secretariat in evolving an ideological framework to guide the next stages of the preparatory process for the Conference.

4. Three regional preparatory conferences were organized jointly by the regional commissions concerned and the Habitat secretariat. The first, for Asia, was held at Teheran from 14 to 19 June 1975; the second, for Africa, at Cairo from 21 to 26 June 1975; and the third, for Latin America, at Caracas from 30 June to 4 July 1975. In addition, a regional consultation was held at Geneva under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Europe on 30 June and 1 July 1975. The reports adopted at the regional meetings were circulated as background information to participants at the resumed first session of the Preparatory Committee.

5. The regional meetings were attended by representatives of over 100 member and associate member States of the different regional commissions. Most delegations were headed by senior officials of the respective Governments and included representatives with a high level of technical competence. A total of 83 specific recommendations were made at the three conferences for consideration by Governments and the world community before, during and after the Conference at Vancouver.

6. The regional meetings revealed a high degree of consensus on the importance of the Habitat Conference and on themes and issues of particular regional urgency and relevance. In each case, the need for concerted action at the national, regional and international levels was recognized. The need to place the Habitat Conference within the over-all context of development and the creation of a new international economic order to include all Governments of the world were also stressed.

7. There was also general consensus on major themes and issues among the main regional groups. At the same time, some differences in emphasis and action priority could be deduced from the discussions, conclusions and recommendations at the various conferences. The chief focus at the Teheran meeting was on the relationship between urban and rural problems. At Cairo, greater emphasis was placed on possibilities of regional and international co-operation. At the Caracas conference, special importance was given to political action to improve the lot of the more deprived strata of each population, mainly in the urban centres, and to policies governing use and ownership of land. The consultation at Geneva emphasized the need for a more equitable distribution of resources and for firm political commitments regarding new approaches to development to be reflected in human settlement policies.

B. Resumed first session of the Preparatory Committee 3/

8. At its resumed first session, the Preparatory Committee endorsed the proposed structure of the Conference in terms of a plenary meeting continuously, Committee I considering, successively, the declaration of principles and programme for international co-operation, and Committees II and III dealing with recommendations for national action (Committee II to cover policies and strategies, planning, and institutions and management; Committee III to cover shelter, infrastructure and services, land, and public participation). In this connexion, it was suggested that consideration be given to joint meetings, or a merger of Committees II and III, before the recommendations for national action were finalized for consideration by the plenary.

9. Other points emphasized included: integration of the audio-visual programme with the work of the Conference; utilization of material contained in national reports; conclusions and recommendations of the four regional preparatory meetings; the solution-oriented nature of the Conference; facilitation of global exchange of experience; and consideration of human settlement issues within the framework of the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. A number of new topics and modifications to some of the proposed topics were suggested.

10. The Committee established an informal working group consisting of delegates of 10 countries from the various regional groups and Canada, the host country, to consider in detail the main substantive item of the agenda

3/ For the report on the resumed first session see document A/CONF.70/PC/18 attached herewith as Annex.

relating to recommendations for national action. On the basis of the report of the working group, the Committee endorsed the proposed agenda for the Habitat Conference for submission to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.

11. The Committee appointed the representatives of five countries as a working group to review and make recommendations to the Committee on the draft provisional rules of procedure. Based upon the report of the working group and subsequent review by the Committee of each of the draft rules, it was decided to take up this question at the second session of the Committee.

C. Meetings of ad hoc Intergovernmental working groups

12. From 22 to 25 September 1975, two Intergovernmental working groups were convened at Geneva, one concerned with the proposed declaration of principles and the other with problems of international co-operation. The purpose of these meetings was to advise and assist the Habitat secretariat, whose task it was to prepare documents on these subjects for consideration by the Preparatory Committee at its second session in January 1976. A report of the deliberations of the ad hoc Intergovernmental working groups is available in document A/CONF.70/PC/20.

D. Thirtieth session of the General Assembly

13. At its thirtieth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 3438 (XXX) of 9 December 1975, noted with appreciation the most recent report (A/10234) of the Secretary-General on preparations for the Conference and requested him to invite to the Conference:

- (a) All States;
- (b) Representatives of organizations which had received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, in the capacity of observers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974;
- (c) Representatives of the national liberation movements recognized in its area by the Organization of African Unity in the capacity of observers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974;
- (d) The specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as interested organs of the United Nations;
- (e) Interested regional intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers;
- (f) Concerned non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly also authorized the Secretary-General to invite other directly concerned intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations of genuine international character which may express the wish by 29 February 1976 to be represented by observers.

14. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the necessary arrangements were made for the effective participation in the Conference of the representatives referred to in paragraph 13, subparagraphs (b) and (c) above, including the requisite financial provisions for travel expenses, per diem allowances and audio-visual presentations.

15. The Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee that 29 February 1976 be a day for the concentration of publicity on human settlement issues and the Conference, agreed that the second session of the Preparatory Committee be held at United Nations Headquarters from 12 to 23 January 1976, approved the provisional agenda of the Conference (see Annex I of attached document A/CONF.70/PC/18), decided that the languages of the Conference would be those used in the General Assembly and its Main Committees, and endorsed the proposed structure of the Conference, as indicated in paragraph 8 above, requesting the Secretary-General to provide the necessary interpretation and other services.

16. Finally, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the results of the Conference, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and to make the necessary arrangements for the preparations which would have to be undertaken after the Conference to facilitate consideration of the recommendations of the Conference by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session.

E. Second session of the Preparatory Committee

17. The main items of the provisional agenda for the second session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in New York from 12 to 23 January 1976, include: the progress report of the Secretary-General, substantive matters, technical arrangements and special procedures for the use of the audio-visual presentations, rules of procedure for the Conference, and host Government Conference preparations.

F. Non-governmental organizations

18. The response to preliminary inquiries addressed by the Habitat secretariat to non-governmental organizations interested and concerned with the issues of Habitat exceeded all expectations, and elicited several hundred requests for invitations to participate.

19. As indicated in paragraph 13 above, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to invite non-governmental organizations directly concerned and of genuine international character which may express by 29 February 1976 the wish to be represented. The Secretary-General of Habitat will report verbally to the Governing Council on the state of participation of the non-governmental organizations.

20. The Non-Governmental Organization Committee for Habitat, with offices in the Hague and in Vancouver, has continued to work in close consultation with its Canadian counterpart on the preparations for a conference of non-governmental organizations, called Habitat Forum, designed to provide for an exchange of views and experience among such organizations and to facilitate interaction with the governmental Conference. Opening on 27 May 1976, the Forum will be accommodated at Jericho Beach, Vancouver, in facilities made available by the host Government.

G. Hosting arrangements

21. Host country preparations are proceeding satisfactorily in three areas: arrangements for the official Conference, plenary and committees; the special requirements of the audio-visual programme; and arrangements for accommodation, transportation and communications for the participants.

H. Information programme

22. Mailings of Conference public information material began in November 1974. As of 31 December 1975 these mailings included 45,000 copies of a Conference leaflet, 25,000 Conference posters, 15,000 poster kits dealing with the audio-visual programme, 4,000 audio-visual brochures and 30,000 copies of two newsletters signed by the Secretary-General of the Conference. The first two issues of a bi-monthly Conference newspaper, Habitat World, totalling 40,000 copies, have also been distributed.

23. Other information activities include the organization of a worldwide series of photographic contests, press "encounters" at each of the regional preparatory conferences, organized in co-operation with the Centre for Economic and Social Information of the Office of Public Information, and a series of television and radio appeals in support of Conference objectives.

24. The secretariat also took part in two meetings of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, at which co-operation with other United Nations bodies in the mounting of Conference-related information programmes was discussed. The Office of Public Information distributed a poster series and a 12 minute film on the human settlement theme.

25. At the resumed first session of the Preparatory Committee, it was suggested that 29 February 1976 be used as a special day to focus publicity attention on the Conference, and this was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly (see paragraph 15 above). Accordingly, the secretariat wrote to all national Habitat co-ordinators advising them that press kits would be made available to major media prior to the day and asking their help in arranging special television programmes on Habitat presentations. Media material will include special slide presentations for television programmes.

26. In conjunction with UNEP, the secretariat is mounting a special in situ urban demonstration programme in which up to 1,500 cities around the world will be invited to create traffic-free zones in downtown areas on World Environment Day, 5 June 1976.

27. Preparations continue for the dissemination of the Habitat exhibit, based on the main Conference issues as outlined in the draft provisional agenda. Plans call for both printed and slide versions of the exhibit to be mailed throughout the world during the months prior to the opening of the Conference. Member States and individual communities and organizations will be invited to arrange exhibit showings.

I. Final stages of planning for the Habitat Conference

28. The Secretary-General of the Conference and secretariat staff have continued their field visits to countries not visited previously. They have also followed up on earlier visits to other countries to assist in the preparation of national reports, in conjunction with the audio-visual programme, in connexion with national preparatory conferences and, in general, promoting activities and programmes relating to the Habitat Conference.

29. The third session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held at Vancouver, from 26 to 28 May 1976, will be mainly devoted to pre-Conference consultations relating to organizational and procedural matters.

30. The final documentation for the Habitat Conference, currently under preparation and due to be distributed early in 1976, includes: (a) background papers, mostly embodying contributions of organizations within the United Nations system; (b) support papers prepared by the Habitat secretariat to serve as a basis for discussion of some of the substantive issues of the agenda; and (c) draft policy papers on the declaration of principles and recommendations for national action and the programme for international co-operation to be submitted for discussion and approval at the Conference.

III. THE AUDIO-VISUAL PROGRAMME

31. Beginning with the illustrated pamphlet, Guidelines for Audio-Visual Presentations, supplementary technical information was distributed to Governments of Member States and their professional staff in order to initiate the audio-visual programme. Four audio-visual workshops were organized in 1975 by the secretariat for the film producers designated by Member States: for Latin America and the Caribbean at Mexico City, from 27 April to 3 May; for Africa at Addis Ababa, from 4 to 10 May; for Asia and the Middle East at Bangkok, from 11 to 17 May; and for Europe and other countries at Geneva on 25 and 26 September. A total of 124 participants from 77 countries were represented at the workshops and some 135 projects were discussed. As a result of these workshops, 46 additional Governments agreed to participate in the audio-visual programme.

32. A slide show about the audio-visual programme was produced for use in Habitat-related seminars and meetings, specifically to illustrate the technical arrangements at Vancouver and the function of the programme during the Conference.

33. By the end of December 1975, a total of 120 countries had indicated their commitment to participate in the programme with about 215 presentations, varying in length from 10 to 26 minutes and each accompanied by a 3 minute capsule which would be available for use in plenary session as well as committees II and III. Approximately 80 of the 120 countries were receiving technical co-operation and/or financial assistance in varying amounts of up to \$10,000 each. As part of this assistance the secretariat also undertook, upon request, to purchase raw film and equipment and arranged the processing of work and release prints for countries which did not have these facilities or services. Over 140 requests for this service were handled by the secretariat in New York.

34. In conjunction with financial assistance, seven audio-visual consultants aided Governments in the production of their presentations. The work of these consultants was co-ordinated with that of another eight producers financed by the Canadian International Development Agency, which also granted additional financial assistance to 32 of the 80 countries and provided substantial technical back-up service to the programme. This included an audio-visual post-production unit located at UNEP, Nairobi, to assist national producers from nearby countries where such services do not exist. The unit serviced requests from over 20 African and Asian Governments.

35. The Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom have provided valuable assistance, both financial and technical, to developing countries.

36. A contract has been entered into for the production of the language versions of the finished presentations. The contract is based on the assumption that the films at the Conference will be available in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Although many countries met the original deadline for presentation submission, fixed at 31 December 1975, other presentations are expected to arrive in January/February 1976 or later. Every effort will be made to process these as indicated, but it is possible that very late submissions will not be available in all Conference languages.

37. A catalogue of all audio-visual presentations is in production with financial assistance from the host Government of the Conference. It describes the arrangements at Vancouver and explains the routines for using the presentations and the 3-minute capsule versions. It also lists the audio-visual presentations in relation to the substantive topics of the provisional agenda of the Conference.

38. Serious consideration has been given to the possibility of undertaking an evaluation study to assess the results of the audio-visual programme and its contribution to the Conference as a whole, and of establishing, on a permanent basis, a library of audio-visual material on human settlements. A preliminary outline has been prepared with a view to securing the necessary financial support.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

39. The original \$1.5 million authorized in 1974 by the Governing Council of UNEP for the financing of the exposition element of the Conference was supplemented at the third session of the Governing Council, when, by decision 37 (III) of 23 April 1975, the Council approved an additional allocation of \$1.5 million from the Fund of UNEP.

40. The broad outlines of the programme, which is supported by the three million dollar allocation from the Fund of UNEP, were stated in the progress report on Habitat submitted to the third session of the Governing Council (UNEP/GC/35, Annex III, pp. 1-5). The analysis set forth below has been prepared along the same lines to describe recent developments with regard to the three major components of the programme. The accompanying table shows proportionate allotments to the three major programme components, and indicates, in round figures, total expenditures and obligations by programme components as at 30 November 1975.

Audio-visual demonstration projects

41. The demonstration projects, which are film presentations of projects throughout the world, chosen for their effectiveness in identifying and solving problems of human settlements under varying conditions, are primarily designed to assist Governments of developing countries to formulate policies and to develop programmes at the national and local levels. The development of the programme for identifying the projects, recording them on film and arranging for the preparation of language versions and for the production of cassettes, is described in the preceding section of this report. The implementation of this programme is the major component financed under the UNEP grant, accounting for \$2,330,000 of the total allocation of three million dollars.

42. Of this amount, \$660,000 has been allotted to direct financial assistance to about 80 countries, and a team of seven audio-visual consultants has provided technical advice and assistance to requesting Governments at an estimated cost of \$358,000. The technical back-up service provided under contract by the National Film Board of Canada will cost \$455,000, and includes the costs involved in establishing the audio-visual post-production unit at Nairobi to assist national producers in the African and Asian regions. The final stage in the programme includes the language versioning and cassette production of the film presentations, which is being handled on a contractual basis.

43. As noted in the preceding section, the audio-visual programme was initiated in 1974 by circulating an illustrated pamphlet, Guidelines for Audio-Visual Presentations. This was followed in 1975 by the organization of four audio-visual regional workshops at a total cost of \$54,000 against the UNEP allocation.

44. Information on bilateral assistance provided for this programme component is set forth in general terms in the preceding section. The audio-visual programme has also been greatly assisted by direct grants to the United Nations from the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany (\$80,000) and the Netherlands (\$40,000) for the purpose of providing direct financial assistance to requesting Governments in connexion with their audio-visual presentations. These amounts are in addition to the \$660,000 allocated for this purpose from the UNEP grant.

45. In addition, the Government of Sweden contributed \$53,000 to assist in covering the costs of the audio-visual regional workshop held at Addis Ababa for African participants from 4 to 10 May 1975.

United Nations exhibit

46. The original submission for this project anticipated an over-all cost of \$300,000. However, in view of the response of Governments to the audio-visual programme, it was decided to reduce the allotment for the exhibit in favour of additional assistance to participating Governments.

47. Charges recorded for this component in 1975 amount to \$10,000 for designers' fees, with the remainder earmarked for expenditure in 1976.

Technical support

48. Activities carried out under this programme component in 1975 include funding participation from developing countries at the regional preparatory conferences and arranging for the preparation and processing of special regional papers prepared by outside consultants for these regional conferences; these two items account respectively for \$66,000 and \$58,000 of the \$470,000 allotted to this programme component over the three-year period 1974-1976.

49. The remainder of the allotment will cover the cost of the salaries of the four regional project officers whose activities were geared to the preparatory and follow-up work for the regional conferences, as well as the travel costs entailed by consultations carried out by the project officers with Governments in their respective regions.

USE OF ALLOTMENT FROM UNEP FUND
(US dollars)

	ALLOTMENTS BY PROGRAMME COMPONENT	EXPENDITURE TO 30 NOVEMBER 1975	BALANCE
A. AUDIO-VISUAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS			
1. Assistance to Governments			
(a) Direct financial assistance	660,000	635,468	24,532
(b) Technical assistance in preparation of demonstration programmes	358,000	298,899	59,101
(c) Production support service	455,000	455,000	-
2. Translations, commentator fees and recording expenses	706,000	694,476	11,524
3. Regional audio-visual workshops	54,000	54,000	-
4. Operating expenses	97,000	73,110	23,890
	2,330,000	2,210,953	119,047
B. UNITED NATIONS EXHIBIT	200,000	10,000	190,000
C. TECHNICAL SUPPORT			
1. Participation from developing countries in regional expert meetings	66,000	66,330	(330)
2. Consultant services for pre- paration of special regional papers	25,000	24,814	186
3. Operating expenses	38,000	33,311	4,689
(a) Personnel costs for regional project officers and supporting general service costs	280,000	209,993	70,007
(b) Travel of regional project officers	61,000	50,077	10,923
	470,000	384,525	85,475
TOTAL	3,000,000	2,605,478	394,522

UNEP/GC/63
Annex

ANNEX

PROGRESS REPORT ON HABITAT: UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS