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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 37/221 of 20 December 1982, the General Assembly formally proclaimed 1987 International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, thus launching a major new initiative to stimulate effective action at the national and international levels to combat the critical and pervasive problem of homelessness and inadequate shelter. Responsibility for organizing and co-ordinating the activities for the Year was entrusted to the Commission on Human Settlements at the intergovernmental level and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) at the secretariat level.
2. The year 1987 also marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Commission on Human Settlements and slightly more than a decade since the holding of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Vancouver, 1976), the landmark conference whose substantive recommendations established the framework for current activities in the field of human settlements. 1/
3. Conscious of this triple significance of the year 1987 and aware in particular of the new perceptions of issues and priorities that have emerged in the 10 years since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, the Commission on Human Settlements at its ninth session decided to have as a major substantive theme for its tenth (commemorative) session in 1987 an item entitled "A new agenda for human settlements: review of future perspectives, major human settlements trends up to the year 2000, national action and international co-operation in the field of human settlements". Such an agenda item, it was concluded, would enable the Commission to conduct a thorough assessment of the current state of human settlements including future trends in this field, as well as of the experience in human settlements development activities since the Vancouver Conference. This, in turn, would permit the identification of priorities for human settlements action by national Governments, the international community and the United Nations system up to the year 2000. It was thus envisaged that the deliberations and conclusions of the Commission on this item would provide concrete guidance to national human settlements policies and programmes as well as a framework for support to such national efforts by multilateral and bilateral agencies and institutions.
4. Having considered the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its ninth session, the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1986 adopted decision 1986/162, by which it requested the Secretary-General "to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-second session a comprehensive report on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, including recommendations for an agenda for human settlements for the coming decade, taking full account of the views of Member States and the deliberations of the Commission on Human Settlements at its tenth session, to be held in 1987, the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Commission".
5. The present report has been prepared in response to the Council's request. It consists of an introduction, three other sections and a conclusion. Section II outlines, as a background to the designation of 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the call for a new agenda for action concerning human

settlements, the current state of human settlements and the challenge that it poses for national and international action. Section III examines the responses to the challenge and outlines in particular the efforts to realize the objectives of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless as laid down by the General Assembly, through the activities of national Governments, United Nations agencies, including the Centre itself, and international and non-governmental organizations. Section IV looks ahead to the future: reviews the lessons learned from the Year and their implications for its long-term objectives, as well as for future work in this field, sets forth some specific policy measures for action by national Governments and the international community and outlines a proposal for a global shelter strategy to the year 2000 as recommended by the Commission on Human Settlements at its tenth (commemorative) session.

II. THE STATE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: CRISIS AND A CHALLENGE TO ACTION

6. Both the proclamation of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the call for a new agenda for human settlements may be seen as arising from essentially the same cause: serious concern that human settlement development was far from keeping pace with the demands of the situation, which was thus racing towards a crisis, and the consequent awareness of the need for intensified, concerted and innovative action on a major scale to remedy the situation. To understand the reasons for such concern is to appreciate the scope of the human settlement problem and the urgency of the action it dictates. The final Declaration of Principles of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements correctly identified the issue by stating that "the circumstances of life for vast numbers of people in human settlements are unacceptable, particularly in developing countries, and ... unless positive and concrete action is taken at national and international levels to find and implement solutions, these conditions are likely to be further aggravated ...". ^{1/} What follows is a brief account of the state of human settlements as revealed by current trends in the factors determining the living conditions of people. It is in essence an outline of a crisis and a challenge to which the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the new agenda for action are a response.

A. Demographic trends

1. Population growth

7. As is to be expected, one of the major factors influencing the state of human settlements today has been the high and rapid growth in world population in the recent past, especially in the developing countries. Thus the global population grew from 2,516 million to 4,450 million in the 30 years between 1950 and 1980, and is expected to reach 6.1 billion in the next 20 years, i.e. by the year 2000.

8. Continued differences between the various regions of the world constitute one very significant feature of demographic trends. Thus while the population of Africa was 224 million, or about 9 per cent of the total world population, in 1950, it is expected to jump to 872 million by the year 2000, when it will account for about 14 per cent of the global population. Similarly rapid population growth in Latin America increased that region's share of the total world population markedly from 6.5 to 8.1 per cent between 1950 and 1980: by the year 2000, Latin America will have a population of 546.4 million or 8.9 per cent of the global total. Growth in the Asian and Pacific region during the next 20 years will contribute about 49 million people per annum and will amount to 58 per cent of the total world population increase expected during this period, with the result that, by the year 2000, the Asian and Pacific region (including China) will contain 3,579 million people and will account for 58.8 per cent of world population. By contrast to all of this, the relative contributions of North America and Europe are declining.

9. These demographic trends hold important consequences for the state of human settlements. Firstly, the growth of population creates the need for a corresponding growth in settlements. As long as the number of people in a country is increasing, the Government must face the continuing task of expanding human settlements to accommodate the additions, and the faster the growth of population, the greater the responsibility of government to manage the settlement process. Secondly, the largest and most rapid growth has occurred, and is expected to continue to occur, in the developing countries, precisely those countries least able to afford the economic cost of absorption of the new additions. Thus, for example, of the total increase in world population of 1,934 million between 1950 and 1980, 1,629 million or 84.2 per cent accrued to the developing countries, and these same countries are expected to account for 4.8 billion or 80 per cent of the total global population of 6.1 billion by the year 2000.

2. Population distribution

10. The most significant human settlements phenomenon in the developing countries over the past decades has been the trend towards high levels of urbanization, i.e. the process by which people concentrate in areas classified as urban. Since urban classification criteria are based on size and vary from country to country, and may include, within the same country, urban settlements varying in size from 2,000 to 14 million people, the underlying components of urbanization (natural growth in existing urban settlements, migration from rural areas or from other countries, and reclassification of settlements from "rural" to "urban" etc.) are more revealing in the individual case than the fact of urbanization per se. Nevertheless, the important point to observe is that while the rural-urban population distribution has generally stabilized in the mature industrialized economies, urbanization is still actively transforming the life of peoples in the developing countries, and that, because of this, almost half the world's population will be living in urban areas by the 2000.

11. In 1950, the proportion of the population in developing countries that was urban was only 17.0 per cent. This increased to 29.3 per cent in 1980 and is projected to reach 39.3 per cent by the year 2000. In contrast, the developed

countries had a level of urbanization in 1950 of 53.8 per cent, increased that proportion to 70.2 per cent in 1980, and are projected to reach 74.4 per cent in 2000. Africa, the least urbanized region, is projected to have the third highest level of urbanization by the turn of the century, owing to high rates of urban population growth (4.8 per cent during the period 1980 to 2000). By the year 2000, about 40 per cent of the population of the African continent will be living in urban areas. Latin American had a level of urbanization of 41.0 per cent in 1950, the highest among the developing regions, and this level increased to 65.4 per cent in 1980 and is projected to increase to 76.8 per cent by 2000, a level comparable to that of the developed countries.

12. Urban growth, as distinguished from urbanization, is the increase in the number of people residing in cities. In most countries, and particularly in those recently industrialized and with low levels of rural development, cities grow at a rate higher than the total population growth rate. What is particularly dramatic about this phenomenon is the speed at which it is taking place: a 6 per cent annual growth rate doubles a city's population in 12 years, which gives an indication of the challenge confronting city administrators, who, as a rule, already face tremendous backlogs in housing, services and infrastructure for the existing population.

13. The most widely publicized aspect of urban growth is the appearance of so-called "megacities" (cities with a population in excess of 10 million) in developing countries. Thus, whereas in 1950 there were only 3 cities with a population in excess of 10 million, one of these in the developing countries, if present trends continue, there should be 22 of such cities by the year 2000, all but 4 of them in the developing countries. Although there is no evidence to support the familiar prognostication that the largest of such megacities will become technically unmanageable, the fact remains that one is dealing with population figures that will reach staggering levels by historical standards, demanding the deployment of shelter, infrastructure and services on a scale and of a complexity that will both tax the resource base of city and national Governments as well as stretch the managerial capacity of city officials.

14. A not-to-be-ignored consequence of such urbanization and urban growth is the tendency they have of promoting a concentration of the poor, and thus of the manifestations of poverty, in the urban centres. Poverty has traditionally been associated with rural areas. In 1980 about two thirds of households living in poverty were in rural areas. However, before the year 2000, more than half the poor will be living in urban areas. For the vast majority of the rural poor there are few means available by which to improve their livelihoods. If they remain in the rural areas, the result could be increasing impoverishment caused by population growth and growing landlessness. In certain regions, moreover, the level of poverty would be aggravated by the resulting over-utilization of land leading to deforestation and desertification. For centuries the poor and landless farmers have been able to solve this problem through migration to areas with unused arable land. Today this option is practically excluded and the only alternative for the landless rural poor is to move to an urban area and typically become new inhabitants in squatter settlements or slums.

15. Such a shift within the developing countries of a proportionately large population of poor people from the relatively quiescent rural areas to the more politically active, and sometimes volatile, urban centres is not without implications for the long-term political and social stability of the affected countries, in addition to the effect that it inevitably has on decision-making relative to the allocation of resources between urban and rural areas.

B. Economic trends

16. It is evident that the past decade or so has been by all accounts one of severe economic and financial strain for most developing countries. Such factors as falling commodity prices and a generally unfavourable export climate, large external debt burdens, balance-of-payment difficulties, natural disasters (earthquake, drought, desertification etc.) have combined to weaken severely the economies of developing countries and to undermine their ability to sustain their development plans and programmes. Thus developing countries experienced a major decline in the rate of growth of real GDP from an average of 4.9 per cent during the period 1976 to 1980 to an average of 1.3 per cent for the period 1981-1985. Of a sample of 83 developing countries surveyed, 50 were faced with zero or negative rate of growth of GDP per capita over four successive years from 1982 to 1985. The general slowing down of growth in GDP and world trade, the unsustainable patterns of trade and current-account imbalances, the heightened instability of international financial markets and the high volatility of exchange rates for key currencies indicate continuing uncertainty, as well as continuing difficulties for developing country economies, into the future - possibly up to the year 2000.

17. Unemployment figures, as well as representing a problem in themselves, serve to underscore the stagnant state of many developing country economies. According to projections of the labour force up to the year 2000 prepared in 1986 by the International Labour Office, the labour force in the developing countries will increase by 456 million between 1980 and the year 2000, and this in a situation where there are already high levels of unemployment and underemployment.

18. Poor economic conditions have a particularly adverse effect on human settlement activities. Firstly, public expenditures are reduced and, given the traditional misconception that outlays on housing are not an economic investment but a social welfare expenditure, it is easy to imagine the sort of priority that would be accorded to human settlement expenditures under such circumstances. At any event, quite apart from the question of the availability of such public funds, weak economic conditions generally also imply scarce resources and hence a reduced capacity to fund housing construction even from private sources. Thirdly, to the extent the poor state of the economy is associated with balance-of-payment difficulties, the Government's major concern becomes the generation of foreign exchange, which leads to emphasis on conventional export-promotion and import-substitution activities. As human settlement production is primarily for domestic markets, it does not generate foreign exchange, and so, mistakenly, is relegated to low-priority status.

C. Physical trends: shelter, infrastructure and services

19. It is not difficult to conceive the adverse effect that a combination of the demographic and economic trends reviewed above must have on human settlement conditions, particularly in the developing countries. In practical terms it has led to a huge shelter deficit that is widening by the day. With an estimated 1 billion or more people already living in extremely inadequate shelter conditions today, millions of them literally homeless, and with hundreds of thousands more being added to these numbers every year, the task has become daunting even to maintain the status quo. It is not surprising, therefore, that all the evidence points to a steady deterioration over the past decade in the overall living conditions of people in the developing countries in per capita terms (as measured by available housing and amenities).

20. Shelter for the poor is the area in which most settlements are markedly losing ground, with a noticeable decline in living and shelter standards for the vast majority of the poor in the decade since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements - trends that are most evident in the developing countries but are by no means confined to them. More troubling is the fact that the evidence also clearly indicates that the commitment made by Governments to the provision of affordable housing has been progressively eroded by persistent economic and financial difficulties, with resulting reductions in public expenditure - another trend visible in both developing and developed countries.

21. The growth in size and numbers of urban and rural slums and squatter settlements is a visible pointer to the deteriorating state of human settlements. Although accurate statistics on the extent of slums and squatter settlements are difficult to obtain, partly because of the problems of definition and inadequate data collection, estimates nevertheless indicate that in some cities in developing countries as many as 40 to 50 per cent of the inhabitants live in slums and informal settlements. While large cities in some developing countries have been growing at rates of up to 10 per cent per annum, slums and squatter settlements in some of these have been growing twice as quickly - affecting around one half of the urban population of the developing countries. Some 600 million urban residents currently live in very poor quality housing and, given present rates of growth, this number can be expected at least to double by the year 2000.

22. Related to and affecting the issue of inadequate shelter discussed above is the deficiency in infrastructure and services, such as water supply, sanitation and waste disposal, available to the inhabitants of such poor neighbourhoods. While some progress has been made since the commencement in 1980 of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, especially in extending water supply to urban populations, there is still a very long way to go before the situation could be described as anywhere near satisfactory. Indeed, for still far too many urban and rural residents the situation remains quite appalling. Thus, for instance, with regard to sanitation, approximately 59 per cent of the world's urban population (excluding China) was being served in 1983, which leaves fully 41 per cent without any such service. As to the rural areas, where services are invariably less available than in the urban, sanitation facilities were found, in 1983, to cover only 12 per cent of the population - a decline from the 14 per cent covered in 1980.

23. Indeed, the realities are that population growth trends and the enormous total investment required to cover capital and recurrent costs militate heavily against the possibility of achieving full infrastructure and service coverage for rural as well as urban areas in most developing countries in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, significant progress can be achieved within overall national development resources by a determined effort based on an incremental step-by-step approach and a prudent selection of technologies and standards appropriate to local conditions and resource levels.

D. Summary

24. It is plain to see, therefore, from the foregoing review of the state of human settlements and its determinant factors that the challenge facing the developing countries today is to formulate and implement strategies and programmes that can meet the current need for improved shelter and services for over 1 billion people, while at the same time coping with the additional need created by a population growth of some 80 million each year or 1.2 billion between 1985 and the year 2000. Furthermore, although the prognosis for the first 10 years of the next century shows a slow-down in the yearly population growth rates due to the expected effects of current policies, the population of the developing countries is expected to increase in actual numbers by another 1.2 billion between the years 2000 and 2015, out of which 1.1 billion will be in urban areas. Thus, even if the population policies and programmes implemented by Governments during the rest of this century result in a further slowing down of the growth rates, this would not during the next 20-25 years affect the dramatically growing need for housing and services, something that is related to the number of households and that has been predetermined by the number of children already born.

III. THE STATE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE

A. Overview

25. The following major events at the international level may be said to mark the evolution of the response to the human settlements crisis in recent times:

- (a) The convening of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements
- (b) The establishment of the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat);
- (c) The proclamation of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, a programme directed specifically at the shelter and service needs of the poor;
- (d) The deliberations of the Commission on Human Settlements on a new agenda for human settlement action and the Commission's consequent call for a global strategy for shelter to the year 2000.

1. Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements

26. The international conference convened under the auspices of the United Nations at Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976 was the first concerted attempt by the international community to address human settlement problems as a global issue. Among its many important achievements was the adoption of 64 substantive recommendations for national action in the field of human settlements. These recommendations, grouped around the six subprogrammes of settlement policies and strategies, settlement planning, shelter, infrastructure and services, land, public participation and institutions and management, have provided the basic substantive framework for human settlement activities to date. Furthermore, the recommendation of the Habitat Conference on institutional arrangements for international co-operation in the field of human settlements were to form the basis for the establishment of the United Nations own human settlements programme, as represented by the Commission on Human Settlements (intergovernmental body) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (secretariat).

2. The Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

27. Both the Commission on Human Settlements and its secretariat, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) were established pursuant to resolution 32/16 of 19 December 1977 and have since served as the institutional focus for the promotion and co-ordination of human settlement activities by the international community and specifically by the United Nations system.

28. From the very start, the Commission had enjoined the Centre to focus its work on promoting human settlement development in the developing countries, with special emphasis on the needs of low-income groups, with the result that low-income shelter had long since been a top priority in the Centre's work programme. Furthermore, the first medium-term plan of the Centre introduced three important innovations to the six-subprogramme structure inherited from the Habitat Conference. First, public participation became a component of each subprogramme. Secondly, the subprogramme on shelter, infrastructure and services evolved into two distinct high-priority subprogrammes - shelter and community services and low-cost infrastructure - both placing special emphasis on the development of community-based and affordable solutions to the shelter needs of the poor in the developing countries. Thirdly, a new subprogramme was introduced to reflect a need that had become more apparent since the Habitat Conference: the mobilization of financial resources for low-income housing finance and stressing the relationship between employment-generating activities and non-conventional housing finance mechanisms.

3. International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (Shelter and services for the poor)

29. One other realization, which had become even more apparent from research, technical co-operation and information dissemination work in human settlements, was the growing gap between needs for and delivery of low-income shelter. While an

increasing number of people needed access to land and minimal-standard housing, housing authorities persisted in seeking to provide conventional dwellings built according to excessively high standards and using expensive materials and technological solutions. The widening of this gap, which was particularly dramatic for the poorest of the poor and the literally homeless, prompted the call, six years after the Habitat Conference, for an International Year of Shelter for the Homeless to focus specific attention on this problem (see subsect. B below).

4. A new agenda for human settlement action and a global strategy for shelter to the year 2000

30. The realization of the imperative need for further and sustained action in the human settlements field, both as a follow-up to the International Year and to the conclusions deduced from its review of the experience of the past decade and the implications of future trends, persuaded the Commission on Human Settlements to consider at its tenth session a new agenda for human settlement action and to propose as an important next step the adoption by the international community of a global strategy for shelter to the year 2000. Further elaboration of these proposals appears in section IV of the present report.

B. The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

1. Background and objectives

31. The proposal for an international year to address the plight of the homeless was first considered at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly in 1980. In its resolution 35/76 of 5 December 1980, the General Assembly, reaffirming that adequate shelter and services were a basic human right, and noting with concern that, in the years that had elapsed since the convening of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in 1976, the conditions of human settlements in developing countries had, by and large, worsened, particularly in the urban areas, expressed the view that an international year devoted to the problems of homeless people in urban and rural areas in the developing countries could be an appropriate occasion to focus the attention of the international community on those problems.

32. The General Assembly considered the matter again at its two subsequent sessions, in 1981 and 1982. In its resolution 36/71 of 4 December 1981, the Assembly decided, in principle, to designate 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The following year, in its resolution 37/221, adopted on 20 December 1982, the General Assembly formally proclaimed the year 1987 International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and designated the Commission on Human Settlements as the intergovernmental body responsible for organizing the Year, and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as the secretariat for the Year and the lead agency for co-ordinating the relevant programmes and activities of other organizations and agencies concerned.

33. In that resolution the General Assembly stated two main objectives for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless: the first, to be met by 1987, was to secure a measurable improvement in the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor

and disadvantaged, particularly in the developing countries, the second, with the year 2000 as a target, was to demonstrate ways and means of improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of all the poor and disadvantaged around the world.

34. In order to reach the above objectives, special attention was to be given to (a) securing renewed political commitment by the international community, (b) consolidating and sharing all new and existing knowledge and relevant experience gained since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, in order to provide a full range of tested and practical alternatives, (c) developing and demonstrating new approaches and methods to assist directly and to augment the present efforts of the homeless, poor and disadvantaged to secure their own shelter and in order to provide a basis for new national policies and strategies and (d) exchanging experience and providing support among countries to meet the objectives of the Year. The Assembly also urged that the main thrust of the specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the year should take place at the national and local levels.

2. Goals and accomplishments: overview

35. The programme formulated under the guidance of the Commission on Human Settlements to fulfil the objectives of the Year followed closely the General Assembly's guidelines. The four objectives noted above became the specific goals of the programme, with emphasis being placed from the very beginning on action at the country level before, during and after the Year.

36. Emphasis was also placed, and maintained throughout, on a practical and action-oriented strategy for the programme. No major global United Nations conference would be held, while regional and subregional technical meetings would be organized to discuss practical solutions and co-ordinate activities. Action would focus on concrete projects and on national strategy formulation and implementation. The information/dissemination component of the programme would also concentrate on specific solutions, training and direct project support. Even more importantly, no new secretariat or intergovernmental body would be established; instead these functions would be performed by existing institutions: the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Commission on Human Settlements respectively. Substantively the Centre would also reshape its own regular work programme activities to take full account of the immediate and long-term objectives of the Year.

37. The programme was divided into three phases. The first phase, from 1983 to 1986, would be devoted to disseminating information on the goals of the Year and on the national and international action to be undertaken to secure new national shelter policies and develop projects related to the Year. Activities in 1987, the second phase, would concentrate on an evaluation of all relevant knowledge, experience, programmes and projects accumulated in preparation for, and during, the Year. The third and final phase, from 1988 to the year 2000, would be the period of implementation of the new strategies for national and international action emerging from the work of the previous two phases.

38. It would be appropriate to assess the accomplishments of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless from the point of view of (a) success in meeting its overall objectives, and (b) success in advancing its specific programme goals.

(a) Improved shelter and services for the poor by 1987

39. The immediate objective of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless was to secure an improvement in the shelter and neighbourhoods of some of the poor and disadvantaged by 1987. There are, of course, obvious difficulties in making a conclusive assessment of accomplishments in this regard, among these the fact that (a) it is not possible to say that all projects designated by Governments and others as International Year of Shelter for the Homeless projects were necessarily developed solely as a response to the Year, that is, would not have been developed but for it, (b) the improvement of shelter and neighbourhood conditions cannot adequately be measured in purely quantitative, and hence recordable, terms such as the number of new housing units built or rehabilitated, or the amount of infrastructure put in place, (c) Year-related activities and even specific projects have probably benefited a large number of people who cannot necessarily be described as poor or disadvantaged and (d) official assessments of accomplishments of the Year based on government reports may well exclude many important initiatives, especially at the grass-roots level, inspired by the Year but not necessarily reported as "projects".

40. Nevertheless, sufficient basis exists for inferring major success in accomplishing the Year's objective of securing improvement in shelter and services for some of the poor by 1987. Abundant evidence of this appears in the reports on national action for the Year reviewed in the ensuing sections of the present report. To cite some examples: the Government of China has reported a project to build 150 million square metres of apartment houses in the cities and 650 million square metres in the rural areas during 1987, a programme that is expected to benefit some 50 million people; plans for the period 1986-1989 reported by the Government of Brazil envisage the construction of 1.7 million housing units, 70 per cent designed for rental to people with income below a minimum wage level; and the Government of Nigeria has reported the setting up of an infrastructure development fund designed to assist state and local governments in identifying and financing infrastructure improvement projects in urban centres.

(b) Demonstrating ways and means of improving shelter and services for all the poor and disadvantaged

41. The long-term objective of the Year was to "demonstrate by the year 2000 ways and means of improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor and disadvantaged". This suggests that the year 2000, or very close to it, would be the appropriate point at which to form a judgement on the degree of success in meeting this objective. While this may be so, it is nevertheless instructive to inquire whether any progress has been made during the period 1983-1987 in achieving this long-term objective. Formulated in these terms, the answer can only be positive. A very substantial body of practical and technical knowledge has been accumulated, and selected national experiences well enough documented to demonstrate that the goal of improving the shelter conditions of all the poor and

disadvantaged can be reached, perhaps even by the year 2000, provided the necessary national political commitment exists and Governments adopt appropriate policies and strategies at the national and local levels.

42. Many technical publications, including project monographs, and reports on technical co-operation, training and information activities undertaken by UNCHS (Habitat) in support of the Year relate to ways and means of improving shelter, infrastructure and services for the poor. In addition, a set of specific documents addressing the objectives after 1987 have been placed before the Commission on Human Settlements and circulated to Governments. Two major documents, "A New Agenda for Human Settlements" (HS/C/10/2) and "Shelter and Services for the Poor: A Call to Action" (HS/C/10/3), were considered by the Commission at its tenth (commemorative) session in April 1987. There is thus a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise that has been accumulated during the four-year period covered by the Year and its preparatory phase on ways and means of improving shelter and services for the poor and disadvantaged, the utilization of which could form the core of follow-up activities up to the year 2000.

(c) Specific programme goals

43. Two of the most important specific goals of the programme of the Year were to achieve (a) increased commitment by the international community and (b) new national policies and strategies based on the development and demonstration of new approaches and methods. Success in these areas is illustrated in detail in the sections appearing below on national and international action. Three examples can, however, be cited at this point to illustrate the extent of increased commitment to the Year's objectives on the part of the international community, quite apart from the large number of national and international conferences, exhibits and publications generated in response to the Year. Firstly, the World Bank, in recognition of the importance of shelter and human settlement issues in the context of overall development, has increased its lending to reach a total of \$US 1 billion in new loans each year. Secondly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through its Development Assistance Committee, held a major meeting on urban development in the developing countries, with assistance to urban shelter being one of the points of the agenda, the results of which will have important implications on the attitude of OECD donor countries towards human settlement and shelter issues. Thirdly, the Year has been an important catalyst for the renewed impetus given to international activity on the part of non-governmental organizations in the area of shelter for the poor, both in terms of increased participation and commitment and the opening of new communication and co-operation networks.

44. Two other specific goals of the Year, in furtherance of which UNCHS (Habitat) has played a more direct role, the consolidation of new and existing knowledge and experience and the exchange of experience and country support, are illustrated in the section below devoted to the role of the Centre as the secretariat for the Year (see paras. 64-69 below).

3. Goals and accomplishments: action at the national level

45. In accordance with the broad guidelines endorsed by the General Assembly for the Year, Governments have implemented shelter demonstration projects as a prelude to larger national programmes, major policy changes and the formulation of long-term shelter strategies. The number of such projects designated for the Year currently stands at more than 600.

46. In response to Commission on Human Settlements resolution 9/2 and General Assembly resolution 41/190 of 8 December 1986, over 100 countries have reported on their programmes, policies and achievements relating to the Year to date. The analysis of these reports reveals a wide range of measures undertaken by Governments to improve shelter conditions for their people, a variety of policy initiatives and legislative reforms, as well as major steps towards formulating strategies to meet shelter needs towards the year 2000. A summary of some of the highlights of these reports follows.

(a) New strategies for shelter and services for the poor

47. At least 10 developing countries reported that they already have a long-term shelter strategy in place but have stepped up the rate of housing production to a level sufficient to ensure steady improvement in the overall housing conditions throughout the country. Another 25 developing countries reported varying degrees of progress towards the formulation of new or revised shelter strategies or the undertaking of major reviews of their current shelter policies.

48. Among the countries reporting activity in this area were Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Fiji, the Gambia, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. 2/

(b) Shelter, infrastructure and services

49. Almost all developing countries have reported projects of varying scale in this area, with a very sizeable number reporting major programmes of shelter and services for low-income families. These cover such areas as the upgrading of squatter settlements, the provision of sites and services, the construction of low-income housing by public entities, large-scale rural housing programmes, the grant of legal titles to land and a variety of measures to facilitate and support self-help and private initiative in the provision of shelter and services. A mix of formal housing and self-help characterizes the national programmes of several countries, mainly in Latin America, in which the physical targets in terms of housing units or housing solutions planned appear quite impressive.

50. Among the countries reporting activity in this area were Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamajiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Nicaragua,

Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

(c) Construction industry and access to affordable building materials

51. Twenty countries have reported projects relating to building materials and the construction industry. These cover the use of indigenous building materials, research in building materials and technology, the setting up of low-cost demonstration houses in urban and rural areas and the holding of low-income housing design competitions. One country reported a programme for the distribution of building material kits and an innovative mechanism for the supply of building materials to poor families at affordable prices through non-profit "building material banks" has been successfully tried in four countries.

52. Among the countries reporting activity in this area were Colombia, Comoros, Ghana, Jamaica, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Solomon Islands, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

(d) Land for housing the poor

53. Security of tenure was confirmed as the keystone of the shelter programmes of a number of countries. Far-reaching legislative measures conferring land titles on urban squatter and landless rural families were reported by several countries, while others reported more limited action to provide security of tenure to low-income families within specific projects. Other action reported included a policy to issue 99-year leases on communal land so as to enable rural households to provide security against loans for housing and other purposes. One country provided information on a massive rural resettlement programme prompted by over-population on limited arable land and conditions of severe and prolonged drought, and another reported on an innovative approach to land distribution to low-income families for farming and shelter through private initiative.

54. Among the countries reporting activity in this area were Barbados, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, India, Mauritius, Mexico, Panama, Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago.

(e) Housing finance addressing the needs of the poor

55. Many developing countries have recently taken stock of this issue: the implications of raising new resources for the sector, the institutional mechanisms required for this purpose and the specific actions needed to improve the access of the poor to housing loans. The establishment of new institutions, as well as the restructuring of existing ones, is planned in several countries to increase the availability of funds for housing. Examples of innovative methods of raising resources for housing have also been provided by several countries and special efforts were reported by a number of countries to make housing loans accessible to low-income families who would normally not be in a position to comply with bank conditions for credit. Reports from several countries reveal a new emphasis on affordability and cost recovery in shelter programmes as a whole, in order to generate the resources required to tackle the problem at the appropriate scale.

56. Among the countries reporting activity in this area were Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Pakistan and Turkey.

(f) Urban management

57. An increasing number of Governments and international development financing institutions are becoming concerned about the institutional capacity in many developing countries to deal with the administrative and managerial aspects of providing and maintaining shelter facilities and services in rapidly expanding urban centres. The Year has provided a good opportunity to address this issue. Specific projects to strengthen urban institutions were reported from a number of countries, most of them being supported by UNCHS (Habitat).

58. Among the countries reporting activity in this area were Bangladesh, Bhutan, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lesotho, Mexico, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and the United Republic of Tanzania.

(g) Community participation

59. A common thread that runs through the majority of programmes and projects reported on for the Year is reliance on extended participation by the future beneficiaries of low-income shelter programmes. Such participation is sometimes explicit in more recent projects, promoted either by public or private agencies, which incorporate serviced sites, core houses, starter homes, self-help, co-operative action and community participation. More often, participation is an implicit component of programmes of settlement upgrading, infrastructure provision in spontaneous settlements, regularization of illegal subdivisions, granting of secure tenure, and home improvement in squatter areas, where a large stock of housing and services has been built by the efforts and ingenuity of the people themselves. This applies to nation-wide programmes as well as to specific projects in urban and rural areas.

60. Acknowledging the important role of community participation in shelter programmes at the tenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, several countries also drew attention to the special case of women-headed households, abandoned children, the handicapped and other vulnerable groups.

61. Among the countries reporting activity under this subject area were Argentina, Botswana, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Mexico, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Zambia.

(h) Increased public/private sector co-operation

62. Another thread running through many of the shelter programmes reported by countries in the context of the Year, and one that is quite in line with one of the main ideas propagated by its programme, is an increased emphasis on improved co-operation between the public sector and the private sector, whether formal or informal, in efforts to attain the objectives of the Year. Considering the scale and complexity of the problem of inadequate shelter and services, many Governments

found it more productive and cost-effective to withdraw from or reduce their involvement in certain activities, such as the direct production of low-cost housing, in favour of a more active role in the overall management of the shelter-delivery process. Non-governmental activities in the shelter sector could range from self-help efforts of individual families, informal sector employment, communal or co-operative organization of land settlement, shelter and infrastructure construction and management, and rudimentary services and activities of non-governmental organizations to the more conventional activities of private enterprises and developers. The nature and scale of activities to be executed by the non-government sector differs from country to country. Many reports highlighted the valuable contribution of non-governmental organizations to the successful implementation of shelter programmes.

(i) Raising global consciousness of the shelter issue

63. A major prerequisite to eliciting the massive political and financial support required to carry through the objectives of the Year is the raising of individual and communal awareness of the deplorable living conditions to which a vast number of human beings are subjected. The raising of consciousness of these conditions world wide has been, therefore, an important aspect of the programme. Apart from a series of events that have already taken place at the national and international levels during the preparatory period of the Year from 1983 to 1986, a variety of events were scheduled for 1987 itself. These events, organized by international agencies, Governments, municipalities, universities, professional bodies and non-governmental organizations, aimed at further raising consciousness about the overall problem of inadequate shelter and the kinds of action that could be taken and the options available to improve the situation. Since shelter is an issue with which everyone identifies, these events were marked by great variety and enthusiasm. As may be expected, there was a large number of seminars and meetings of a general as well as substantive nature, many of them supported by UNCHS (Habitat), including major regional non-governmental organizations meetings on the Year, held in Africa, Asia and Latin America. UNCHS (Habitat) was also notified of a range of other specific activities for the year planned for 1987, including exhibitions, contests, information campaigns through the press, radio and television, the issue of special postage stamps and similar initiatives. Most of these events were highlighted in the Calendar of Events, which is a standard feature of the Bulletin of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless produced and distributed by the Centre.

4. Goals and accomplishments: action at the international level

(a) Organizations of the United Nations system

(i) Human settlement policies and programmes

UNCHS (Habitat)

64. As the Centre is the organization of the United Nations system with a specific mandate for human settlement matters, all of its work - research and training, technical co-operation and information dissemination - is geared towards promoting human settlement development, particularly in the developing countries and with special emphasis on the needs of low-income groups. The entire work of the Centre thus serves the ends of the Year on a day-to-day basis. Given its mandate and expertise, the Centre, appropriately, was designated by the General Assembly as the secretariat and lead agency for the Year. While the thrust of activities for the Year is at the national and local levels, UNCHS (Habitat) has undertaken a range of activities to lend support to national action and to stimulate the interest and assistance of developed countries, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations world wide in an effort to tackle the problem of homelessness and inadequate shelter.

65. During the preparatory period for the Year, the technical co-operation and research activities of the Centre were especially geared to its objectives. As at December 1986, UNCHS (Habitat) was executing 167 technical co-operation projects in 83 countries, of which 61 were in 27 least developed countries. Fifty of the projects were in the area of institution strengthening and management, which has been identified as a key area of assistance to developing countries in tackling the problem of shelter and services to low-income families on a sustained basis; 40 of the projects are more directly related to shelter and community services to people.

66. The Centre has also provided substantial support to Governments through its research and development work. The research activities of UNCHS (Habitat) are a response to critical issues in human settlement development in developing countries and to concerns expressed by Governments from time to time. The broad fields identified in the quest for solutions to the problem of shelter for the poor are the macro-economic policies of Governments, urban management, access to land for housing, access to housing finance, the problem of slums and squatter settlements, building materials and technologies, and physical infrastructure such as water supply, low-cost sanitation, waste disposal and transport.

67. In addition to its work in the substantive field to support the objectives of the Year, UNCHS (Habitat), as the secretariat for the Year, undertook a number of initiatives to promote it and to enhance its success. During the preparatory period the Centre, with the co-operation of Governments, developed a network of 139 national focal points. Many of these were inter-agency committees presided over by high-level government officials, often entrusted not only with the task of overseeing the activities for the Year, but also of monitoring the impact of present policies and devising long-term shelter strategies to the year 2000. Close contacts were maintained with national focal points, other national organizations

involved in human settlements, focal points for shelter-related activities in United Nations agencies and a variety of non-governmental and private organizations during the entire preparatory period as a constant reminder of the Year's objectives and the need to draw lessons from related projects in the eventual formulation of national shelter strategies to the year 2000. The network established for the Year has proved invaluable in monitoring national and international activities for it and greatly facilitated the preparation by the secretariat of progress reports on the Year to the Commission on Human Settlements in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987 and to the General Assembly in 1985 and 1986.

68. In order to assist Governments to gain access to current information on the latest developments in the field of shelter for the poor and to exchange experience with one another, a series of 10 subregional meetings were organized, most of them at the policy-making level. The principal objectives of these meetings were to review progress made by Governments in their national programmes for the Year to consider specific issues in the provision of shelter for the poor and disadvantaged in their respective subregions and to increase the commitment of high-level policy-makers to shelter and its role in national development. Meetings were held at Lusaka, Zambia, for the countries of southern Africa; at Nairobi, Kenya, for the English-speaking countries of Eastern Africa; at Bujumbura, Burundi, for the French-speaking countries of Central and Eastern Africa; at Lagos, Nigeria, for the countries of West Africa; at New Delhi, India, for the Asian countries; at Lae, Papua New Guinea, for the South Pacific countries; at Dubai, United Arab Emirates, for the Arab States; at Bogota, Colombia, for the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; at Kingston, Jamaica, for the English-speaking Caribbean countries; and at Kiev, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, for the Eastern European countries. A summary of the recommendations of these meetings was presented to the Commission on Human Settlements at its ninth session.

69. The Centre also prepared and distributed widely to Governments and organizations a number of printed materials relating to the Year. Among these were guidelines for the development of shelter demonstration projects; reference sheets for national action covering all important aspects of the Year, including the role of national focal points and the formulation of long-term shelter strategies; special posters publicizing the declaration of the Year and highlighting the problems of homelessness; and a Bulletin of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless illustrating shelter problems and reporting on the latest developments in the context of the Year. The Centre also supported the production of special films aimed at calling global attention to the shelter conditions of the poor in developing countries.

(ii) Development assistance

The World Bank

70. Until recently the World Bank had been lending about \$US 750 million a year on average for shelter and urban projects in developing countries. In recognition of the importance of shelter and human settlement issues in the context of overall development, the World Bank has increased its lending to reach a total of \$1.0 billion in new loans each year and expects that the shelter and urban share of

total lending will continue to increase in the coming years. In collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat), the World Bank, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has established a joint urban development strategies project, designed to assist developing countries in such areas crucial to low-income shelter operations as urban land, infrastructure investment and maintenance, and municipal finance and management.

United Nations Development Programme

71. UNDP provides the major source of funding for the technical co-operation projects of UNCHS (Habitat), accounting for 70 per cent of the total amount expended in 1985-1986, and is thus the United Nations agency most closely associated with the work of UNCHS (Habitat) in executing projects that promote the objectives of the Year. As at 31 December 1986, 112 of the ongoing projects were supported by UNDP, most of them addressing the needs of low-income families in developing countries.

Regional commissions

72. All the regional commissions are participating in the International Year. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has designated two regional projects for it: a study of the methods of upgrading slums and squatter settlements and a training seminar on rural settlements. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is focusing on local management of plans and projects, planning of services and development of technologies for a complete habitat. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has included in its work programme projects relevant to the Year and to the human settlement situation of developing countries, among them new techniques to collect and process land-use data and a study of building codes and regulations. ECE has also analysed and reported on its experience of housing policies that are relevant to developing countries.

(iii) Industrial development and employment policies

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

73. In a review of its programmes especially prepared for the Year, UNIDO stresses that any meaningful strategy for the provision of shelter to the homeless must include a shifting of the housing production methods of the building material and construction sectors to a more intensive use of indigenous resources and labour. UNIDO will therefore place greater emphasis on assisting Governments to develop the capacity for the production of building materials.

International Labour Organisation

74. ILO programmes relating to shelter particularly concern employment promotion, vocational training and skill development, strengthening co-operative societies and small enterprise units, promoting appropriate building technologies, improving work and living conditions and supporting the activities of employers' and workers' organizations. In recognition of the significant contribution that ILO can make to

the achievements of the objectives of the Year, the Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee of ILO has adopted policies that form the basis for programmes and activities of ILO in the field of shelter. The immediate activities include a revision of long-standing recommendations on workers' housing and the organization of a Tripartite Round Table on Workers' Housing in Asia and the Pacific, held in March 1987. A resolution was also adopted at the recently concluded General Conference of ILO (June/July 1987) strongly supportive of the objectives of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the overall work of UNCHS (Habitat).

(iv) Natural resource management policies

United Nations Environment Programme

75. In co-operation with UNCHS (Habitat) and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, UNEP co-sponsored a training course on the integrated planning of human settlements to improve environmental conditions. Also in connection with the Year, UNEP prepared a paper entitled "Environment and Shelter - More than a Roof" to demonstrate how the functioning of settlements as part of ecosystems may be improved.

Food and Agriculture Organization

76. FAO has placed emphasis on the strengthening of inter-agency co-operation to reach the targets identified by the programme for the Year and has presented some practical proposals. First, shelter should become a special issue for the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination Task Force on Rural Development. Secondly, UNCHS (Habitat) should continue to participate in inter-agency missions on following up and developing the recommendations of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. Finally, UNCHS (Habitat) should be associated with the agricultural land settlement projects of FAO whenever a housing component is involved.

(v) Health and social development policies

World Health Organization

77. WHO has reviewed the current knowledge about the relationship between shelter and health and has outlined the future role of WHO in supporting health-promoting improvements in human settlements. Specific activities undertaken by WHO for the Year have included technical discussions at the 39th World Health Assembly and subregional seminars, case studies and projects focusing on policy, strategy and activities in respect of health and habitat in recognition of the common target groups that the Year and the WHO programme of Health for All by the Year 2000 seek to address. In this context an estimate has been made of some of the global mortality and morbidity factors directly traceable to poor housing conditions and the future role of WHO in attaining health through promotion of shelter improvements has been outlined. The recently concluded fortieth World Health Assembly of WHO (May 1987) adopted a resolution strongly supportive of the Year in recognition of the critical linkage between health and adequate housing.

United Nations Children's Fund

78. UNICEF has noted that in the 1980s its assistance focused on strengthening the capacity of governments in planning, implementation and management. Support has also been provided for reaching a significant portion of children and women of the urban poor in each city and town in cost-effective ways. For the future, UNICEF will focus more sharply on the "absolute poor" children, women and their families who are the ultimate homeless.

World Food Programme

79. WFP has reviewed its activities in order to contribute more effectively to improving the living conditions of the rural poor in developing countries, including projects that provide shelter for the homeless in rural areas and help improve shelter-related physical and social infrastructure. WFP also supports a broad range of projects in the field of rural settlements and within urban and refugee settlements and has for several years maintained a highly successful collaborative arrangement with UNCHS (Habitat) to strengthen the housing components in WFP aid programmes.

(b) Bilateral aid agencies and multilateral financial institutions

80. Analysis of aid flow from bilateral and multilateral sources indicates that only a small portion of aid now flowing to developing countries is directed to projects to improve the shelter and living conditions of the poor in those countries. This is partly because shelter and urban development have not in the past featured high on the list of development priorities of many developing countries. It is also because many donor agencies have traditionally directed their aid programmes towards rural development. The Year has, however, contributed to a growing recognition in the developing countries that shelter and services for the poor constitute an issue with major implications for overall national economic and social development. At the same time a number of donor agencies are beginning to give greater attention to urban problems in realization of the inevitable and critical role of cities in national economic development.

81. The World Bank's level of funding for loans in the field of shelter and services has increased recently and its programmes now include not only large sites and services and upgrading schemes but also multi-sectoral and multi-city projects, addressing a range of issues within the field of urban management. As already noted, the World Bank and UNCHS (Habitat) are co-operating in a programme to address the critical issues of management of urban settlements, the strengthening of local governments and better access to land for housing, and note has also been made of the major meeting convened in October 1986 by the Development Assistance Committee of OECD to consider increased attention to urban issues in the development co-operation programmes of member countries.

82. Specific mention should also be made of the following contributions:

(a) The Government of Finland, which has been actively co-operating with UNCHS (Habitat) in developing methodologies for the preparation of shelter

programmes in developing countries and disseminating these widely, has embarked on a further collaborative arrangement with the Centre for the formulation of national shelter strategies in a number of developing countries;

(b) Denmark, through its Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), has recently decided to extend its existing co-operation agreement with UNCHS (Habitat) for the promotion of community participation in human settlements activities in developing countries;

(c) In order to better integrate women and issues of particular concern to women (access to land, access to credit, equal legal capacity etc.) into the mainstream of human settlements development efforts, UNCHS (Habitat), with the support of the Government of Norway, is organizing a series of workshops in the various regions to promote the involvement of women in the planning, implementation and management of shelter, information and services projects;

(d) France is undertaking extensive development co-operation programmes in the field of shelter and has produced a variety of monographs describing a range of projects in developing countries;

(e) In connection with the Year, the Government of the German Democratic Republic is sponsoring a project in support of an African national liberation movement;

(f) The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden), the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands have undertaken a review of their aid policies in the field of shelter and services with a view to achieving greater impact;

(g) The United States Agency for International Development has prepared two reports especially for the Year, based on its long experience in the administration of a housing loan guarantee programme;

(h) The group of Socialist States of Eastern Europe has produced, especially for the Year, a report on the role of housing in national economic development based on the experience of centrally planned economies, and also a set of recommendations that was circulated at the tenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements.

83. While aid programmes have, in the vast majority of cases, alleviated some immediate problems, the overall impact of past aid programmes in shelter and services appears to have been limited. Some of the common features of the bilateral programmes in the field of shelter and services can be summarized as follows:

(a) Aid projects in this field have until recently tended to be selected on an ad hoc basis in the absence of overall plans for shelter and services at the national or local level;

(b) Many aid projects have addressed specific localized problems, without influencing the more critical issues in the sector, and have, therefore, contributed only in a very limited way to the development of local capacity to sustain a continuous process for addressing key problems;

(c) The experience reveals a need for greater co-ordination of aid projects at the recipient country level in order to avoid duplication and to maximize the impact of assistance;

(d) As a result of some of these weaknesses, aid projects may create a situation of continuous dependency on the part of recipient country agencies as well as the creation of isolated show-case projects that benefit only a limited number of people.

84. It must, however, be noted that the nature of the problems in the provision of shelter and services is such that national action, rather than international action, is critical for formulating and implementing effective and sustainable solutions. Many of the problems in this field lie in the development support areas of legislation, training, information and institutional framework. Nevertheless, inadequacy of resources continues to be a major problem for developing countries in this area. The present and foreseeable economic situation of the majority of the developing countries and the current high levels of external debts limit the capacity of Governments to service loans repayable in foreign currency. There is therefore a need to consider ways and means of directing aid projects in a manner that increases self-reliance at the national and local levels.

(c) Non-governmental organizations

85. Non-governmental organizations in many countries play an important role by mobilizing low-income communities for the construction and improvement of shelter and the provision of related basic services, thereby reducing the financial and management burden of public authorities. Through their grass-roots linkages and experience, non-governmental organizations have demonstrated a capacity to produce a range of shelter options that are both affordable by the poor and acceptable to Governments. Their actions are often characterized by an emphasis on community participation and focus on particular communities or neighbourhoods, thereby complementing the wider level of operations of the public agencies. The role of non-governmental organizations has increased in cases where the government agencies have adopted enabling strategies in their policies and programmes for shelter and services for the poor. The role of non-governmental organizations in the provision of shelter for the poor has been reviewed extensively as part of the programme of the Year. Many local, national and international non-governmental organizations have taken stock of their contribution to shelter, their relationships with governmental agencies and community-based organizations. To this end, regional non-governmental forums were organized in four developing country regions in the framework of the Year. The shelter and services projects and programmes of non-governmental organizations were assessed and future lines of action considered.

86. The Habitat International Council, an umbrella organization of non-governmental organizations in the human settlements field in collaboration with

other international and regional and non-governmental organizations organized a global non-governmental organization forum at Nairobi during the week preceding the tenth (commemorative) session of the Commission. This forum, which was attended by several hundred participants, representing national and international non-governmental organizations, multilateral, bilateral and private aid agencies, was the most important non-governmental organization meeting on shelter and human settlements issues since the Habitat Forum held at Vancouver during 1976 on the occasion of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements. The global forum provided the occasion for extensive discussion of various issues for improving the contribution of non-governmental organizations to shelter and services for the poor in different parts of the globe, taking advantage of the momentum already generated by the programme of the Year. The NGO Plan of Action, adopted by the forum, concerns, among other matters, ways of developing the relationships between non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations; strengthening their relationships with Governments; increasing media attention on the problems of homelessness; strengthening partnerships with international non-governmental organizations; the development of regional non-governmental organization institutions to facilitate links between locally based non-governmental organizations and aid agencies and to improve the mechanism through which funding flows could be increased; and creation of national and regional non-governmental organization networks for greater exchange of information and for increasing the scope for co-operation among non-governmental organizations.

87. The formal private sector involved in the real estate industry has also reviewed its role in improving the availability of shelter. These reviews were undertaken at the national and international levels. The Second International Shelter Conference, held at Vienna in September 1986, provided an extensive analysis of the positive contribution of shelter to national economic and social development and to the growth of financial institutions, including savings and loans associations, and made recommendations on ways and means for increasing effective partnerships between the public and private sectors in specific national situations.

IV. THE STATE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: BEYOND 1987 AND TOWARDS A GLOBAL SHELTER STRATEGY

A. Some lessons learned

88. Work in the field of human settlement development in the 11 years since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, including especially the programme of activities for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, has produced some important lessons, which prudence dictates must guide the efforts of the future in this critical area of endeavour. The most significant of these lessons are recalled here as a contextual background to the proposals outlined below that the Commission on Human Settlements has made for continued and sustained human settlement action beyond 1987.

1. Promoting a new perception of human settlements

89. One of the perceptions that emerged at Vancouver, and that has been reinforced since then, is that human settlements are an integral element of development and should therefore be considered a high-priority issue at the national level. However, the connection between the goals of human settlement development and those of overall national development, though important, are not readily recognized by national economic planners. Hence it remains, and must remain, an important objective of human settlement action to strive to bring about the integration of human settlement policies into general development policies.

90. A second important point relates to the perception of human settlement issues as a global concern. Although it is correct to view human settlement action as primarily a national responsibility, there is also a global perspective that must be recognized. Firstly, human settlements in every country are part of a global network of economic centres, each with its own role to play in the world development structure and each linked to all other human settlements by economic and functional ties. As the interdependence of all elements of the global economy becomes more fully recognized, so Governments must admit the need for human settlement policies that define national and global roles for every unit in the human settlement hierarchy. Secondly, human settlement issues must be seen as global in the sense also that no country has yet met all its human settlement aspirations and that no country can do so without interchange of ideas and resources with other members of the global community. It follows, therefore, that although the formulation and realization of human settlement policy are a national responsibility, this responsibility can best be taken up on the basis of a global exchange of experience, particularly between developing countries, and by mutually supportive actions to improve strategies, approaches and skills, and to expand the available materials resource base.

2. Growth for better quality of life

91. Within the international community, great concern is being expressed on issues of economic growth, terms of trade, debt servicing, financial instability and so on, and measures are being proposed to fit these issues into what appears to be a purely economic model, as if merely making the processes work is an end in itself. However, it is pertinent to ask what good is in fact achieved by merely making the processes work. Economies should not grow merely for the sake of growing; goods should not be exported and imported merely for the sake of increasing trade; and budgets should not be balanced merely for the sake of removing deficits: the purpose of all these achievements is to improve the quality of life, and policies that increase economic growth but do not improve the quality of life cannot be adjudged a success. The necessity of finding policies that not only increase economic growth but also bring about growth in a way that benefits people implies the need for a framework that transforms economic concerns into development concerns, i.e. into improvements in all the indicators that make up the quality of human life. Human settlements development provides such a framework.

92. Simultaneously, it must be recognized that economic growth does not automatically create the conditions for social advancement and for broad-based improvements in living standards, as was once believed. Measures to improve the quality of life have to be planned, just like any other, as a conscious concern of national policy, although these measures must, of course, be reconciled with and enhance the measures that generate economic resources. If quality-of-life concerns are ignored, living conditions for the overwhelming majority of people will continue to deteriorate, regardless of statistically measured economic progress, and growing dissatisfaction and hardship are bound to have adverse consequences for political and social stability in the affected countries.

3. Managing settlement trends

93. Both developing and developed countries are undergoing a process of transformation, propelled by shifting economic priorities and technological innovation, which is in turn changing the nature and functions of both urban and rural settlements. In developing countries, the outstanding feature of the transformation under way is the change from a predominantly agrarian economy to an urban one. Although this process is more advanced in some countries than in others, the majority of developing countries are moving in the direction of a modern economy in which urban centres will play a major role. Already, on the average, 50 per cent of GDP in developing countries is generated by towns and cities, and this figure is expected to increase to two thirds of GDP by the end of the century. Moreover, parallel to this process, another equally significant change is taking place: the agrarian economy of developing countries is in the process of modernization, with emphasis on technology-based and market-oriented production.

94. Consequent on these developments, the economic importance of cities is rapidly increasing, and future national growth is becoming dependent on the ability of urban centres to perform crucial functions within the national economy and to lead the development effort. Similarly, the ongoing and projected changes in agricultural production in rural areas, brought about by a need to increase production for national consumption and export, will only be possible in the context of a network of efficient rural centres that are in a position to provide vital services to the agricultural sector. The demographic trends associated with these twin processes of structural economic transformation, i.e. urbanization and rural-urban migration, should, therefore, be understood not simply as population phenomena but rather as changes propelled by changing economic priorities.

95. Similarly, in industrialized countries, the transformation under way, which is having a profound effect on human settlement development patterns, is propelled by the interplay between economic forces and technological change. The decline of traditional sectors of industry in many developed countries has had a profound effect on the predominantly urban economies of these countries, and this had led to an increasing deterioration of the social and physical environment as well as of the economic (and fiscal) base of many once prosperous urban centres. At the same time, the shift towards a service and high-technology economy in most industrialized countries, coupled with the facilities made possible by the

communication revolution, has influenced some location decisions away from old urban centres to new, usually small- and intermediate-sized towns. This is producing, in turn, shifts in population and changes in the age structure of the urban population in developed countries, with consequent implications for policy.

96. The real challenge to settlement policy over the next decade, therefore, is not so much to devise measures to reverse these processes of transformation in both developed and developing countries, even assuming this can be done, as to shape programmes and establish policy priorities that can ensure that the transformation is successful, and is directed in favour of, and not against, the improvement of the quality of life for all, and particularly for the most vulnerable groups of society.

B. Specific policy measures

97. Based on the experience of the past decade and the demands of the critical shelter and services situation in many countries, a situation which, as has been shown, will get far worse in the coming years barring a major countervailing effort, a number of specific policy measures have been proposed for immediate adoption by national Governments, international organizations and agencies and non-governmental organizations. These measures, which are outlined below, were considered and endorsed by the Commission on Human Settlements, which requested Governments to give them wide circulation and to provide information on their application within their respective countries as an input to the formulation of a global strategy for shelter to the year 2000.

1. National action

(a) Integrated approach to shelter issues

98. In order to be successful, shelter strategies require a co-ordinated contribution from many sectors in their planning and implementation. Natural resources have to be found and processed into building materials, infrastructure put in place, land markets organized, structures built, credit mobilized, skills enhanced, legislation enacted and community participation promoted. These are but a few of the tasks that government has to manage. Shelter strategies therefore have to incorporate several aspects of national planning issues, including economic and finance policies, environmental and natural resource issues, rural development, regional and urban development, and health and social welfare policies. Many of the linkages between these and shelter and services can be strengthened and policies in the respective sectors formulated so as to be mutually supportive.

99. The foregoing, therefore, requires that an appropriate institutional framework be set up at the national, state and local levels for the effective co-ordination of all the sectoral inputs in shelter and services and to secure a regular delivery of these to the poor and disadvantaged at the required scale and at affordable prices.

(b) Shelter programmes in overall economic development policies

100. In drawing up an overall national development strategy, there is need to focus more attention on self-reliance and the generation of economic growth through the use of domestic natural and human resources, and on the mobilization of domestic savings. Programmes in shelter and services involve investments in construction and the production of materials, components and equipment, and also involve a variety of economic activities, most of which are labour intensive, in both the formal and informal sectors. A substantial increase in shelter and infrastructure production would therefore have a positive effect on the GDP of developing countries. In addition, many informal sector income-generating activities from which the poor derive their income are centred in the home. Thus improved shelter and related infrastructure will also improve these income-earning activities.

(c) The potential of small- and intermediate-sized settlements

101. The rapid growth of large cities in developing countries is an unprecedented phenomenon and has given rise to urban management problems of a magnitude not experienced before. The most difficult problem to solve is decent housing and services for the poor, who constitute the bulk of the urban population. There is reason to believe that the development of small- and intermediate-sized towns as viable alternatives to the largest cities could make the problem of shelter and services to the poor more manageable by reducing migration to these cities, while at the same time providing important services to the rural hinterland.

(d) Reorienting housing and public works policies

102. The options from which a Government may choose for policies for shelter and services to the poor have been identified on the basis of world-wide experience since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and during the preparatory phase of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The need now is for Governments to select the most feasible options and to adapt them to local conditions and gradually to increase the scale of the shelter and service programmes to a level where production meets need. Among the measures to be considered in this context are:

(i) Adoption of enabling strategies.

The scale of the shelter and services needs is such that Governments, particularly in developing countries, cannot be expected to meet all those needs directly. The most feasible alternative, therefore, is to seek to maximize the productivity of the people themselves, especially the poor, by facilitating their efforts to provide shelter for themselves. Policies and strategies in shelter and services should therefore be of an enabling and facilitating nature. This would lead to a new approach in which Governments took full responsibility for the overall programme but transferred the implementation to the formal and informal private sector and to co-operative and self-help efforts;

(ii) Security of tenure and increased supply of land.

Land, with secure tenure, is essential for the production of housing and particularly for any meaningful self-help effort by the poor themselves. Such land needs to be in suitable locations at affordable prices and may be made available through public or private initiative. Government intervention to remove existing constraints in the land market on behalf of the poor is essential to ensure that land is available for new development on the necessary scale. The nature of the intervention will vary, depending on political and legal system, the degree of delegation to state and local authorities and the existing state of land policies and land markets. Efficient land policies and land supply mechanisms should provide an alternative to squatting through a variety of measures. Existing squatters could for instance be granted security at affordable prices over public land that is suitable for housing. Governments could further assist squatters on private land to purchase or to obtain long-term leases. Special attention should also be paid to the legal security of the many tenants in squatter communities;

(iii) Increasing availability of financing to the poor.

The basic objectives of a housing finance policy should be: firstly, to increase the volume of financial resources flowing to shelter and services through the creation of additional sources of finance; secondly, to ensure that the available finance is deployed to maximum effect to the largest number of beneficiaries possible; and thirdly, to develop specific institutional mechanisms that would provide poor households with greater access to affordable credit and that also contain adequate administrative arrangements for maximum recovery of loans. These objectives can be achieved through a variety of measures, including devices for greater mobilization of domestic savings, the channelling of funds from specific public sector institutions to the housing sector, the provision of appropriate incentives for the construction of rental accommodation, providing lending facilities that suit the irregular income patterns and incremental building methods by the poor, establishing revolving funds for land assembly and infrastructure construction;

(iv) Strengthening urban management.

In many countries the capacity and efficiency of urban authorities need to be improved to cope with the growing array of problems of urban management, including issues such as solid waste disposal, traffic management, land use control, abatement of pollution, employment generation and social services. This need can be addressed through a number of actions: a clearer definition of the role of central, state and local bodies in the management of urban development, substantial upgrading through training of the skills of technical and administrative personnel, and the widening of the resource base of local authorities, including their access to institutional finance;

(v) Encouraging community participation.

The drive and the ingenuity of the people are a major untapped resource for shelter and services in many countries, especially for the major task of upgrading the existing squatter areas and slums and poor rural shelter. This resource should be mobilized through effective avenues of community participation, with government efforts fostering and complementing those of the people. Community participation can be promoted in a number of ways. For instance, decentralization of planning, decision-making and implementation can facilitate close co-operation with communities, and co-operative housing and infrastructure production and management has proved to be an effective way of harnessing the people's participation in many countries.

(e) Strengthening industrial development and employment policies

103. Shelter programmes, on the scale required, can only be successful if combined with a substantial increase and improvement in the capacity and productivity of domestic industry in the formal and informal sectors. This includes production of materials, components and equipment for housing and infrastructure. Dynamic policies are needed in order to support industrial development for shelter and service production on a scale commensurate with the needs. As most of these enterprises are very labour intensive, such policies could prove essential for national employment programmes. Governments could take specific measures to encourage and improve the performance of the small-scale producer. These could include measures in the areas of credit, training, research, adaptation of building codes, redesigning public contracting procedures, encouragement of associations and co-operatives among small producers and improving their access to raw materials.

(f) Resource conservation and environmental policies

104. The poor are generally the ones who suffer most from the problems of a poor environment. They often have to settle on marginal land, in disaster-prone and polluted urban slums and squatter areas. At the same time their poverty and lack of options are often in turn the cause of serious environmental problems, such as deforestation, desertification and erosion. Some of the most obvious areas of concern are with respect to use of wood, bamboo, fibre and other organic material for construction and for domestic energy purposes, the choice of agriculturally fertile land for the development or expansion of settlements, the problem of pollution and recycling of waste in urban areas. Solutions to the problem of providing shelter and services to the poor are therefore linked to sound resource conservation and utilization policies.

(g) Health and social development policies

105. Lack of decent shelter is a major cause of ill health and high child mortality rates, which can reach dramatic proportions not only in urban slums and squatter settlements but also among the rural poor, with women and children being the most seriously affected. Since the causes of such ill health are almost always linked directly or indirectly to the lack of decent shelter, basic infrastructure and

environmental sanitation in the neighbourhood concerned, action will need to be taken jointly in the field of shelter and services as well as in the health sector to be effective.

106. It is also necessary that there be social welfare programmes to identify the vulnerable groups and individuals, who risk being missed even in shelter schemes that reach the majority of the poor. These include the destitute, the handicapped and the elderly. Particular difficulties are also faced by the large number of women-headed households in poor settlements and by the increasing number of abandoned and homeless street children. Only by linking shelter and sound welfare programmes will it be possible to give these vulnerable groups special assistance. Non-governmental organizations with special programmes for and among the poor can also be of invaluable assistance in programmes for the most vulnerable groups.

107. Women in poor communities represent a dynamic but untapped resource for the improvement of shelter and services. They can become more effective in shelter programmes through a variety of actions, especially greater focus on women's problems and potentials in planning and implementation of shelter programmes, equal legal capacity to deal with real estate, better loan and credit facilities, special training and government support of women's co-operatives and community organizations.

2. International support of national action

108. The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless has been an appropriate occasion for the international community to review its policies and priorities and to give more support to shelter and services for the poor in developing countries.

(a) Bilateral and multilateral development assistance

109. The financial and other difficulties being faced by most developing countries in meeting even basic needs in shelter and services make it urgent for the aid community to review its assistance in this field. Only a small proportion of aid now flowing to developing countries is directed to projects to improve the shelter and living conditions of the poor in those countries. In 1982 less than 5 per cent of concessional aid (including grants) and some 6.5 per cent of official non-concessional aid was allocated to housing, urban and community development, water supply, solid waste disposal and the production of building materials.

110. A level of international support of national action will be needed for many developing countries in the immediate future. It is of the utmost importance that this assistance be based on the new strategies and priorities of developing countries, as well as be supportive of one integrated approach of major sectoral policies. Serious consideration needs to be given to increasing the grant level of shelter-related aid and to formulating loan repayment conditions that are in keeping with the financial capacity of developing countries.

111. At the global level, co-ordination is necessary for a consensus on aid policy objectives and to secure funds commensurate with the needs and effective mechanisms for aid. Progress in this area should be the object of regular evaluations.

(b) Assistance by the United Nations system

(i) Strengthening co-ordination at the secretariat level

112. The role of UNCHS (Habitat) as the lead agency in the system-wide effort to support programmes in shelter and services for the poor could be reinforced through the creation of a formal co-ordination arrangement. A task force on human settlements could, for instance, be established within the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to serve as the co-ordinating mechanism.

(ii) Increased emphasis on shelter and services in individual programmes of relevant United Nations organizations and agencies

113. All United Nations organizations and agencies that have programmes of relevance to shelter and services could increase their emphasis on these activities. Thus, for instance, with respect to funding of development activities, UNDP and the World Bank could substantially increase their allocation to programmes related to shelter and services for the poor. In the area of health and social welfare, WHO, UNICEF and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs could reorient their programmes to reflect more closely the direct linkage between the availability of shelter and services and improved health and social well-being. With respect to industrial development and employment generation, the work of UNIDO and ILO could benefit from a substantial increase in focus on shelter and shelter-related activities and services for and by the poor. With respect to agricultural and environmental matters, FAO and UNCTAD could play an important role in assisting Governments to focus on the shelter and services needs of the poor and landless, particularly in rural settlements. In addition, such organizations and units as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs could help to bring consideration of shelter and services for the poor into the national economic and social development strategies of countries, and the education, training and research programmes of UNESCO could contribute to the creation of a cadre of professionals required in this area.

114. At the regional level, the regional commissions could allocate more resources to regional human settlements issues, monitor trends and, in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat), devise appropriate responses that would complement country activities.

C. Action by the Commission on Human Settlements

1. Orientation of future work

115. The third phase of the programme of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless as envisaged in resolution 37/221 contemplates follow-up action, after 1987, to be embodied in national shelter strategies to the year 2000. In its resolution 9/12, adopted at its ninth session, in 1986, the Commission on Human Settlements invited the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) to ensure the integration of the programme of the Year into the regular programme activities of

the Centre in order to safeguard the achievements reached during the Year. This would require that the structure and content of the two medium-term plans scheduled to cover the period to the year 2000 - the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 and the medium-term plan for the period 1996-2001 - should contain provisions that directly carry forward the objectives of the programme for the Year. The fortunate coincidence of the preparation cycle for the 1990-1995 medium-term plan and the tenth session of the Commission enabled the latter to consider the medium-term plan and the agenda items on a new agenda for human settlements and the Year at the same session. It also made it possible to reflect in the medium-term plan document before the Commission the principal proposals contained in the Executive Director's reports on a "A New Agenda for Human Settlements" and on "Shelter and Services for the Poor: A Call to Action", both of which were well received by the Commission.

116. The Commission accordingly approved the Centre's medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995, with appropriate amendments, satisfied that it provided for a coherent and integrated follow-up to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, and reflected the proposals on a new agenda for human settlement action that it had endorsed.

2. A global shelter strategy to the year 2000

117. The conclusion reached in the final analysis by the Commission following its deliberations on the two major items on its agenda at its tenth session, the new agenda for human settlements and the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, was embodied in its resolution 10/1 of 16 April 1987, in which it calls for the adoption of a global strategy for shelter to the year 2000 and recommends to the General Assembly a draft resolution to that effect. By the proposed resolution the Assembly would approve the formulation by the Commission of a global shelter strategy to the year 2000, including a plan of action for its implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-third session through the Economic and Social Council.

118. The overall objective of the strategy would be to promote and stimulate, as well as mobilize support for, the development and implementation of national strategies that would facilitate action to ensure adequate shelter for all by the year 2000. As with the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, action is contemplated primarily at the national level, with appropriate support from the international community.

V. CONCLUSION

119. The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless as an international year has clearly been immensely successful in achieving its goals: it has stimulated improvements in shelter and services in many countries from which millions of the poor and disadvantaged have benefited and, perhaps more importantly, it has created that strong consciousness of the problem of homelessness and inadequate shelter and the need for remedial action without which a solution to a problem of such

magnitude could not even be realistically contemplated. Despite the success of the Year, however, the scourge of homelessness and inadequate shelter is far from having been eradicated, nor can it be, except in the face of concerted, sustained and massive action over a period of time by Governments, organizations and individuals all acting together. The need to follow up on the achievements of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless is, therefore, obvious. Commission on Human Settlements resolution 10/1 points the way to such further action.

Notes

1/ See Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May-11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7), chap. I.

2/ As national reports were not always clear or specific as to the subject areas of the activities reported, the list of countries shown under each subject heading in the present report is only illustrative and not necessarily exhaustive.
