



UNITED  
NATIONS

HS



Commission on  
Human Settlements

Distr.  
GENERAL

HS/C/4/2/Add.1  
14 February 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fourth session  
Manila, 27 April - 6 May 1981  
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR NATIONAL ACTION ADOPTED BY HABITAT: UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Interim report of the Executive Director

SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 34/116 of 14 December 1979, entitled "Strengthening of human settlements activities", which, inter alia, requests Member States to report every two years to the Commission on Human Settlements on the progress made in implementing the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and, where possible, on the level and sources of international and national funding being devoted to human settlements activities. The purpose of the present report is firstly to provide a summary of the information submitted by Member States in accordance with the above-mentioned resolution and secondly to submit suggestions to the Commission on how to proceed for the following rounds of biennial reporting on this subject.

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its second session, the Commission on Human Settlements adopted resolution 2/6 entitled "Strengthening of human settlements activities", which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/116 of 14 December 1979.
2. In resolution 34/116, the General Assembly, inter alia, requests Member States to report every two years to the Commission on Human Settlements on the progress made in implementing the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and, where possible, on the level and sources of international and national funding being devoted to human settlements activities. 1/
3. Since the Commission had not taken a decision on the modalities for this biennial reporting, the Executive Director, in an effort to assist in this endeavour, sent a letter to all Member States in August 1980 requesting them to supply the information required by the above-mentioned resolution so that it might be summarized for the next session of the Commission. In the request, it was suggested that each country should focus its response on those recommendations for national action which had been given priority attention, on the policies and programmes adopted and the results achieved, on the amount of funds allocated or received through bilateral and multilateral arrangements and on the volume of national resources devoted to the various sectors of human settlements development.
4. Thirty States responded to the Executive Director's request. While all thirty provided updated information directly or indirectly related to the recommendations for national action, very few of them dealt comprehensively with the level and sources of international and national funding being devoted to human settlements activities. All countries that participated in this effort, together with the titles of the reports submitted, are listed in the annex to the present report.
5. Because of the varied nature of the responses in terms of detail and content and because of the timing of submissions, it was not possible to prepare a comparative analysis of the information received. At the same time, it was felt that all the information received should be processed and presented in such a way as to allow the Commission to take note of the progress achieved in implementing resolution 34/116. The Centre therefore proceeded to prepare a summary of the information submitted by each Government. An effort was made to select what appeared to be the most relevant points highlighted by each country, especially those which related directly to the recommendations for national action adopted at Vancouver. Specific information such as references to individual recommendations and quantitative data have been reported as they were in the original text. The summaries appear in chapter I of the present report.
6. The experience acquired during the preparation of these summaries indicated possible appropriate modalities for the future. Chapter II of this report therefore presents suggestions for consideration by the Commission on how resolution 34/116 might best be implemented for the next round of biennial reporting, scheduled to take place in 1983.

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1/ For recommendations for national action, see Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May - 11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E. 76IV.7 and corrigendum), chap.II.

I. SUMMARIES OF THE INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY MEMBER STATES

Australia

7. The Australian Government expressed its regret for not being able to submit the requested information given the lack of a framework of headings under which such information could be collected and compared. It was suggested that such a framework should be prepared and circulated to Member States to ensure standardized and usable responses.

Belgium

8. The report of the Government of Belgium deals mainly with Belgium's approach to international co-operation in the human settlements field.

9. The first section of the report outlines a proposed approach to development problems concerning, for example, the equitable redistribution of means and resources, the satisfaction of basic food, shelter and health needs and the diversification of the economy with emphasis on local resources and self-reliance.

10. The second section offers an interpretation of the Vancouver recommendations and considers some ideas developed by the European Economic Community for formulating human settlements policies while rendering technical assistance to developing countries.

11. The third section deals with Belgium's policy criteria in the field of international co-operation in respect of human settlements problems in developing countries. Attention is drawn to the contribution of Belgium to UNCHS (Habitat) activities, and the importance of using the potential of UNCHS (Habitat) in the execution of projects in developing countries is highlighted.

Chile

12. The Government of Chile recently formulated an urban development policy and housing policy and housing policy based on the country's development model of market social economy.

13. The national urban development policy, approved in March 1979, is based on the following principles. Urban land is not a scarce resource. Its apparent scarcity is the consequence of a lack of harmonization of legislative and technical norms and of supply and demand imbalances in the real estate market. Urban land is a resource which must be exchanged freely within the limits imposed by zoning and technical norms and by the public interest in terms of certain social uses. The phenomenon of the increasing spatial concentration of population is acceptable because of the comparative advantages it brings in terms of economic and social activities. Urban land use must be based on flexible norms defined in the light of market requirements. The formulation of policies dealing with the relationship between the urban market economy on the one hand and the protection of public welfare and the environment on the other is the responsibility of the Ministry for Housing and Urban Planning.

14. Certain policy guidelines have also been established as an integral part of Chile's urban development policy. Planning must be flexible, with minimal state intervention, and must be based on technical norms and procedures of a general nature.

Procedures will be defined and restrictions eliminated in order to permit the natural growth of urban areas on the basis of market trends. Legislation will be enacted to promote the renewal of deteriorating urban areas, especially areas in the vicinity of city centres.

15. The state will promote and support an open housing market, housing production being the responsibility of the private sector. In the short term, public intervention in infrastructure will be concentrated on the completion of existing road networks within cities and on the provision of basic services to those segments of the population most in need of them.

16. The state will also give special consideration to the enhancement and preservation of the historical and cultural heritage and the natural resources of the nation, as long as this does not infringe upon personal property rights.

17. Chile's housing policy, also formulated in 1979, is based on the following principles. Housing is to be financed through savings and mortgage credit. Housing subsidies are intended to supplement the financial resources of families who cannot afford to purchase a home on the free market solely on the basis of their own means. Home ownership contributes to family security and to the conservation of the housing stock. The state can temporarily substitute for private entrepreneurship where the latter is lacking. In such cases, particular attention will be paid to identifying the most efficient means of implementation which ensure the best results for the intended beneficiaries.

18. The role of the state is a subsidiary one. It is the task of the private sector to develop the resources and technical instruments required to satisfy housing needs.

#### China

19. In 1978, the Chinese Government invested 3.75 billion yuan in housing in cities, towns and other industrial areas and completed residential buildings with a total floor area of 37.52 million square metres, an increase of 33 per cent over 1977.

20. In 1979, the Government invested 7.38 billion yuan in housing and completed housing with a total floor area of 62.56 million square metres, an increase of 66.7 per cent over 1978.

21. Collective-owned enterprises in cities and towns, as well as individuals, also invest in housing and build a certain number of homes every year.

22. In China's rural areas, commune members generally build houses at their own expense, while the Government provides them with a certain amount of building materials. In 1978 and 1979, 10 million peasant families either renewed or rebuilt their houses, and 50 million commune members moved into new housing.

#### Colombia

23. National human settlements policies are established within the framework of the national plan for socio-economic development (National Integration Plan). This plan is prepared by the National Planning Department, and is based on three fundamental elements, namely regional and urban development, social policy, and the development of basic

infrastructure. Four primary objectives of the plan are indicated as relevant to Habitat recommendations A.4 and A.6. <sup>2/</sup> These objectives are: to develop communication infrastructure and networks; to achieve economic decentralization and regional autonomy; to develop the energy and mining sectors; and to implement a new social strategy.

24. In settlements planning, special attention is devoted to metropolitan and rural areas. Measures to strengthen rural development associations, together with integrated rural development programmes, are being pursued with a view to ensuring the socio-economic development of rural communities. Metropolitan areas have been officially identified as such for planning purposes.

25. Past attempts to develop urban expansion schemes at the national level proved unsatisfactory because of the diversity of local situations, and emphasis is now placed on local planning procedures, as defined in accordance with national criteria. The problems of planning in disaster-prone areas and developing reconstruction strategies for calamity-stricken regions are a priority concern.

26. In the area of shelter, infrastructure and community services, major projects are being implemented in four regions of the country using an integrated approach. With regard to urbanization, housing and community services, standards have been established which are very similar to those recommended by the Habitat Conference. A larger share of public housing funds is being devoted to slum and squatter upgrading, self-help improvement and sites-and-services projects. In the field of transport, new planning schemes are aimed at developing transport-efficient urbanization patterns, while in existing major cities projects are being formulated to increase the efficiency of mass transport systems.

27. The recapturing of land value increases has been the object of intense national debate. After several attempts to enact comprehensive legislation on the subject, the Government is now implementing the administrative, fiscal, legal and financial measures set out in the regional and urban development policies of the national socio-economic plan, measures such as the modernization of cadastral records, the revision of the development tax and the reinforcement of public control over land use in urban and suburban areas.

28. Public participation in the elaboration of municipal development plans is now official governmental policy. Guidelines for the effective participation of various community groups in the planning process are being formulated by the National Planning Department.

29. With regard to administration, major changes have been introduced at the regional and local levels in accordance with the decentralization policies set out in the national plan for socio-economic development. Regional councils with planning and co-ordinating powers have been established.

30. The implementation of integrated urban development programmes has been entrusted to urban development corporations. The financial resources required for such programmes are to be allocated by the recently established National Urban Development Fund.

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<sup>2/</sup> Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May - 11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chap.II.

Cuba

31. Cuba's report deals mainly with the socio-economic progress achieved between 1976 and 1980. Industrialization has been given top priority in the economic development process, and basic industrial production has been growing at the rate of 5 per cent per annum. Electrical production has doubled since 1975, and 74 per cent of dwellings now have electricity. Total investment in construction during the five-year period in question amounted to 7 billion pesos, of which 1 350 000 have been invested in new industrial plant. The groundwork has been laid for 836 kilometres of railway track and 7 800 kilometres of new road. In the health sector, 3 000 new hospital beds have been made available, together with 70 new health facilities. With regard to housing, 83 000 new dwelling units have been built.

32. Substantial growth has occurred in the transport and communications sector. In addition, 445 million pesos have been invested in education, with education expenditures reaching 137 pesos per inhabitant in 1980. Substantial expenditures have also been made to promote cultural development and scientific and technological advancement.

33. Over the past five years, multilateral development co-operation has increased within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), particularly in respect of agricultural production (sugar and citrus fruits), mining (nickel), the manufacture of industrial machinery and computer ware, geological prospection and scientific and technological development. Bilateral agreements have also been concluded with other member countries of CMEA for the execution of development projects and other forms of scientific and technical co-operation. Soft loans and grants have been received from individual Governments and international organizations and have been utilized primarily in the fields of health and education.

Cyprus

34. The major concern of human settlements action in Cyprus has been the resettlement of families displaced from the territories occupied in 1974. Emergency relief and cash allowances have been provided through the special fund established in 1975. Financial assistance to promote self-employment has also been provided. The basic human settlements problem concerns the provision of shelter for the many displaced persons. Concurrent approaches have been adopted, namely the creation of low-cost housing estates and the establishment of sites-and-services projects. During the first three phases of the low-cost housing estate programme, 6 448 housing units were completed, and an additional 3 967 units are expected to be completed by the end of the fourth phase, which began in 1980. Appropriate standards have been adopted in terms of density, open space, sanitation, infrastructure and services. Self-help housing is also based on the estate concept. Self-contained estates of 40 to 100 serviced plots are being developed in the vicinity of towns and other local centres of employment. Grant-in-aid is provided to families who build their houses according to the building specifications formulated by the Department of Town Planning and Housing.

35. Land-use zoning is being implemented in accordance with the Habitat recommendations for national action on land in order to control development, to safeguard the amenities and aesthetic value of the coastline and to preserve the architectural features of Nicosia.

36. The main international contributor to the development of the various low-cost housing projects has been UNHCR. The funds received over the period from 1975 to June 1980 amounted to \$US 42.5 million for the various low-cost housing projects and \$US 10 million for the various self-help housing projects.

37. The national resources devoted to the development of human settlements (1975-June 1980) amounted to about \$US 65 546 000 for the construction of the various low-cost Government housing estates and about \$US 18 736 000 for the self-help housing projects. A further sum of about \$US 11 494 250 was allocated to the rehabilitation of abandoned Turkish Cypriot villages.

#### Denmark

38. Denmark's national policies in respect of human settlements have incorporated many of the essential recommendations adopted at Vancouver in 1976. Particular attention in recent years has been paid to the question of energy in relation to human settlements development. The 1976 Energy Plan outlined the country's energy policy and strategies, which provide, among other things, for subsidies and grants and insulation standards for new buildings. However, the Government realizes that the energy conservation target for 1985 cannot be achieved. This problem is attributed in particular to the difficulty of persuading the public to participate.

39. In terms of bilateral aid, Denmark has supported a substantial number of programmes aimed at improving the quality of life of the poor in developing countries. For example, assistance has been given to Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka for the provision of safe drinking water in rural settlements. Denmark is also co-operating with UNCHS (Habitat) in the identification of a joint project on training in public participation in developing countries.

40. In 1980, 4.9 per cent of Denmark's national budget was spent on activities related to human settlements.

#### Finland

41. Development objectives and action guidelines for urban and regional planning and construction were outlined in 1979 in a policy document produced by the Planning and Construction Council, an advisory body appointed by parliament. This policy document advocates a new approach aimed at improving the attractiveness of residential areas through the diversification of housing types, the provision of better neighbourhood services, the expansion of possibilities for social intercourse and the introduction of environmental and energy conservation criteria. Existing plans not taking these criteria into account will have to be revised, as will plans that are based on unrealistic growth expectations or that are simply out of date. Existing procedures for the preparation, approval and control of urban plans are also being revised.

42. The national ten-year housing programme, launched in 1976, is being implemented according to schedule. As foreseen, the total production of new dwellings has slowly declined, although it still ranks among the highest in Europe in terms of units per 1000 inhabitants (over 10). Trends show an increase in the floor area of dwellings and a marked preference for single-family and terraced houses, with a decrease in the proportion of apartment-block dwellings. The proportion of state-subsidized dwellings has shown a definite increase in the past three years, reaching 61.6 per cent in 1979.

43. The value of human settlements construction in Finland in 1980 was approximately 21 600 million marks, of which house building accounted some 16 500 million marks and other construction (relating to agriculture, industry, business, transport, schools, hospitals, other official and underground buildings and land and water construction) for 5 000 million marks. In 1978, the construction industry accounted for 18.9 per cent of GNP (13.7 per cent for house building and 5.2 per cent for other construction).

44. The contribution of the construction industry to gross fixed capital formation in 1978 fell by some 0.5 per cent compared with the previous year. During the period 1977-1979, investment in residential buildings fell by 0.4 per cent of GDP per annum. The proportion of investments related to maintenance and to the renovation and modernization of dwellings is growing rapidly.

#### France

45. The measures taken by the French Government in the field of housing have been based on the objectives set out in the housing aid reform of 1977, namely to facilitate access to ownership, to promote the construction of high-quality dwellings, to improve existing dwellings and to adapt housing expenditures to the situation and resources of families. These objectives are being attained through a partial transfer of government investment aid directly to families (loans are related to income and interest rates are protected by a ceiling) and through the development of a system of aid for the improvement of existing dwellings.

46. In 1979, 245 000 housing starts, or 57 per cent of homes under construction, received aid from the government budget, as compared with 54 per cent in 1974. The number of homes improved with direct government aid rose from 20 000 in 1974 to 120 000 in 1979.

47. Given the complexity of national funding for human settlements, information on the subject is limited to the housing sector. In 1979, 155.2 billion francs were invested in housing, of which 114.1 billion francs were spent on new housing and the remaining 41.1 billion on the modernization and rehabilitation of old dwellings. The total investment accounted for 15.7 per cent of GDP.

#### German Democratic Republic

48. The report submitted by the German Democratic Republic describes the development of housing construction in the period 1971-1980, concentrating in particular on the period 1976-1980. In the course of the ten-year period in question, the number of dwellings built annually doubled. More than 85 per cent of new dwellings were erected with the use of industrialized construction techniques and about 70 per cent of those were built using the large-panel construction system. Particular attention is paid to providing housing for large families and young married couples. In addition, housing construction is accompanied by the development of public services (crèches, kindergartens, schools).

49. The five-year plan for the period 1981-1985 provides for the further growth of housing construction, with an annual rise in output of about 5 per cent. The mechanization and industrialization of the building sector will continue.

50. One new objective of the five-year plan is the conservation of energy and raw materials. Energy demand for room heating is to be reduced by 30 per cent through better insulation and the development of more effective heating systems.



51. The report also describes the economic, scientific and technical co-operation of the German Democratic Republic with the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

#### Hungary

52. Hungary's report describes the results achieved in the implementation of Habitat recommendations in those areas which have been assigned high priority, namely housing and housing policy, land use, settlement policy, settlement planning and the participation of the population in urban development and management.

53. Between 1970 and 1980, the growth of the housing stock was greater than population growth, thus reducing density of occupation per room and per dwelling. The 1976-1990 long-term plan for housing includes both quantitative and qualitative targets: 1.1 million new dwellings with an average floor space of 70 square meters are to be built, and utilities and services are to be improved.

54. Land-use policies emphasize the preservation of land for productive and environmental purposes and the control of urban growth. Physical and economic planning are being harmonized at the national level through the Settlements Network Development Scheme approved in 1971 and revised in 1977. Physical planning is carried out at the regional and local level. Emphasis is placed on the creation of a balanced system of settlements based on the existing settlements network rather than on new town development projects. The report also describes the institutional procedures followed to ensure public participation in the planning process.

#### Iran

55. The basic human settlements priority of the Iranian Government is to provide housing for the homeless and for low-income families. Two major steps have been taken to this end: the nationalization of unutilized urban land and the establishment of housing institutions. The Housing Foundation has so far received 428 000 applications for homes and 375 000 requests for land. 112 000 housing lots and 2 500 housing units have been assigned, with 8 800 more dwellings under construction.

56. Financial flows in the private housing market have doubled because of the elimination of interest and the introduction of easier instalment conditions for housing loans. After a period of stagnation, private housing construction regained momentum towards the end of 1980, mostly in the Teheran area. However, it has become clear that reliance on housing credit policies alone, without a concomitant expansion of housing supply, leads to further increases in prices. Public investment in housing, building and urban development has decreased during the past year. Consequently, and despite the considerable increase of small, low-priced housing units in large cities, the housing crisis still persists. The establishment of a clear-cut housing policy co-ordinated with other economic sectors is identified as a foremost priority.

#### Luxembourg

57. In the period 1978-1979, significant developments occurred in the field of human settlements in Luxembourg. These involved a radical reform of housing aid policies and the revision of existing legislation on the protection of the natural environment.

58. For the first time, the state assumed direct responsibilities in respect of housing construction and the housing market. The new housing policies place a definite emphasis on

the informal sector for the provision of infrastructure and on individual involvement for the allocation of financial aid. Both the provision of financial aid for housing purposes and the assignment of low-rent public housing are based on the economic status of the beneficiaries and are designed to favour the less privileged groups. Land policies have also been reformed. Land can be expropriated by public authorities for housing purposes, and land development by private owners can be made compulsory. New housing and environmental policies also involve measures to foster public participation. For example, inhabitants of run-down urban areas now have the legal right of initiative with regard to having measures taken by the municipality to upgrade their neighbourhoods. In the environmental field, provisions have been introduced to allow action groups to take active part in the protection of the environment; these provisions include legislative measures giving associations the right to sue in environmental cases.

#### Malaysia

59. Malaysia is now beginning implementation of its fourth national development plan, the goal of which is the eradication of poverty. Malaysia's report describes the progress achieved in the attainment of the targets set for the human settlements components of the third development plan (1976-1980), namely land-development and settlements programmes, regional development schemes, urban and industrial development schemes and housing programmes. Major accomplishments are reported in new land development and in private housing construction, which has exceeded the planned production target. However, the most interesting aspect of Malaysian human settlements policies and programmes is perhaps their high level of integration with economic development schemes, especially in rural areas. For example, several regional development schemes have been based on the growth centre approach, and power and water supply programmes are designed both to stimulate industrial development and to improve the health, welfare and living conditions of the population in rural areas.

60. Malaysia's report contains detailed information about national public development expenditure during the period 1976-1980, including expenditure on housing, social and community services, health, transport and rural development. Financing from multilateral and bilateral sources for the same period is also described.

#### Mauritius

61. Settlements planning and housing are the areas of the Vancouver recommendations for national action which have been given priority attention.

62. A National Physical Development Plan, with proposals for the long-term planned development of human settlements, has been formulated and approved in principle by the Government. The National Physical Development Plan provides a framework for orderly physical development; its goals are the protection of good agricultural land, the development of growth poles, the decentralization of industry, the control of the urban growth and the development of tourist and recreational zones.

63. In defining a national human settlements policy, the National Physical Development Plan states that it conforms with recommendation A.3 of the Vancouver Conference <sup>3/</sup> and that, since it proposes a policy of growth poles, it gives consideration to the various components of recommendation B.5. <sup>3/</sup>

64. In the housing field, public-sector housing programmes have been implemented in accordance with most of the criteria enumerated in recommendations B.2, B.14 and C.3. <sup>3/</sup> All new housing estates are being provided with basic infrastructure and socio-economic

facilities. Furthermore, standards are selected to suit the local context, and due account is taken of the risk of natural calamities.

65. As to international funding devoted to human settlements activities, the following funds have been secured through bilateral agreements for housing construction: European Development Fund, MauRs 55 million; USAID, MauRs 1.8 million; World Bank, MauRs 0.2 million.

66. In 1975 national investment in housing amounted to MauRs 264 million, accounting for 23.2 per cent of fixed capital formation and 8.5 per cent of the gross national product. In 1979, investment in housing increased in both absolute and relative terms, amounting to MauRs 725 million and accounting for 31.5 per cent of fixed capital formation and 13.5 per cent of GNP.

#### Mexico

67. The Government of Mexico has already published two reports on the implementation of the Vancouver recommendations for national action. The two reports, issued in 1978 and in 1980 respectively, were distributed to all delegations attending the second and third sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements. They provide an extensive review of the progress achieved in the implementation of each of the 64 recommendations for national action.

#### Nepal

68. Rural development is a topic of priority concern in Nepal. The 1975-1979 five-year plan provided for the introduction of a settlement programme in the Terai lowlands. A total of nearly 35 000 hectares of public land were given over to 39 716 farmer families who were either landless or had been forced to evacuate calamity-stricken areas. One of the purposes of the programme is to control illegal encroachment. The new settlers are assisted through the provision of water, health and educational facilities, infrastructure, irrigation and free building materials. Because of the limited availability of land for resettlement, the 1980-1984 economic plan has introduced a new approach. The Hill Rehabilitation Programme, which is now under study, aims at developing small-scale economic activities such as cottage industries, animal husbandry and horticulture in parallel with the improvement of infrastructure, transport and social services in settled areas.

#### Netherlands

69. The overall economic situation and outlook, based as they are on high interest rates, shortage of public funds and decreasing purchasing power, have had adverse effects on housing, building and physical planning. In particular, owner-occupied housing and commercial investment in rental housing are suffering. The shortage of dwelling units is increasing and, according to recent surveys, runs to approximately 110 000.

70. Emphasizing the importance of a well-balanced stock of dwellings for rent and owner-occupancy, as well as an appropriate rents policy, the Government has recently increased financial aid for potential owner-occupiers and taken action on rents. The implementation of urban renewal plans has proved more time-consuming, complex and costly than expected but can be regarded as successful, particularly in respect of the improvement of individual dwellings.

71. Special attention is paid to the housing needs of the less privileged groups of society, the handicapped, the elderly, small household, foreign workers and students. However, though specific measures have to be taken in this connection, the overall policy is still to integrate the needs of such groups into the overall housing programme.
72. The development of housing standards emphasizes energy conservation and environmental considerations, as reflected in thermal and noise insulation requirements.
73. Policies in respect of regional economic and welfare planning are directed mainly towards the more equitable geographical distribution of employment opportunities. The 1978 Investment Account and the Selective Investment Regulation Scheme stimulate investment in the northern and south-eastern provinces, while at the same time curbing the growth of the major metropolitan agglomerations.
74. The establishment of the Central Open Area has proved effective; the net rate of population inflow is slowing down, and in some areas there is actually an outflow.
75. As far as urbanization is concerned, attention is currently focused on a possibly unfavourable development, namely the decline in population of the large western cities and of most nuclei in other city regions.
76. The 1976 Urban Renewal Bill has been radically amended, freeing local authorities of the necessity to have their urban renewal plans approved by the central government and thus decentralizing the decision-making process and speeding up the allocation of central government funds.
77. Commuting problems are becoming more serious, with a relative increase in the use of private transport and rising numbers of long-distance commuters. Government policies emphasize the use of public mass rail transport, the improvement of park-and-ride facilities and the improvement of the accessibility of stations to cyclists through the establishment of special cycling routes. In rural areas, efforts are being concentrated on the improvement of living conditions in small towns and villages through the provision of welfare services, education, public transport, shopping facilities and housing.
78. An amendment to the Physical Planning Act aimed at increasing opportunities for public participation in the physical planning process is currently under debate.
79. In 1978, the Government published a multi-year social research and policy plan intended to improve the co-ordination of research in this field through the National Physical Planning Agency.

New Zealand

80. After the Vancouver Conference, a Town and Country Planning Act was passed in 1977. Its features include the development of regional planning, which is being entrusted to a new level of government, the "United Council".

81. Other policy areas are housing and public participation. The New Zealand Housing Corporation, which makes mortgages available to first home seekers, is now reorienting its policies toward the renovation of the existing housing stock and the transfer of public housing to private ownership. Attempts are being made to channel the modest demand for new housing into inner and suburban areas.

82. Proposals for public works are open to public objection and appeal procedures in the same way as private development proposals.

Norway

83. Housing trends in Norway show that in recent years, in spite of a decline in the number of dwellings being built, there has been an increase in investment in housing. This is partly due to the increased size and quality of new housing units and partly to increased investment in rehabilitation and environmental improvement.

84. Several programmes that are relevant to the Vancouver recommendations for national action have been or shall soon be submitted to Parliament for debate and approval. One of them is a comprehensive housing policy. In the meantime, the Government is encouraging municipal authorities to consider social factors when considering applications for housing loans.

85. A white paper on neighbourhood and local environment planning is also being debated. Another relevant initiative is the law on integrated local and regional planning, which places major emphasis on the impact assessment of industrial projects.

86. During the 1980s, increased attention will be paid to improving living conditions in large urban centres on the basis of an urban policy report drafted in 1979. Efforts will also be made to improve existing methods of resource management, and in particular to link resource policies with central and regional planning policies. Comprehensive research on resource accounting and information systems and on steps to implement practical programmes has been undertaken.

87. Because of the serious shortage of land for building purposes, caused partly by the narrow administrative boundaries of many smaller cities, intermunicipal co-operation is to be strengthened.

88. Despite the abundance of renewable and non-renewable energy sources, action is being taken to improve energy conservation in human settlements. A new building code has been put into effect which establishes energy consumption levels for buildings while leaving as much freedom as possible for the designer and user. A research project aimed at formulating a cost-effective national energy conservation programme for the older building stock is being completed. Research is also being conducted in the field of alternative energy sources. Energy production, distribution and conservation will be a major element in regional and local planning.

Saint Lucia

89. Housing development was a major election issue in 1979. Unsatisfied quantitative and qualitative needs in the housing sector were dramatized in 1980 when almost 3000 housing units were destroyed by Hurricane Allen. Only part of the damage caused to the housing stock could be repaired on the basis of international relief aid.

90. A housing rehabilitation programme has therefore been developed, the particular goal of the programme being to aid the lowest income groups. The provisional budget for the programme is \$EC 600 000 a year. Assistance for this purpose is being sought from special UNDP relief funds.

91. The estimated need for new housing is 1 000 dwelling units a year. Appropriate housing institutions will have to be established to meet this need.

Seychelles

92. The Government has given housing top priority in the national development plan. The ultimate goal of the housing policy in the Seychelles is that "every Seychelles family should own a decent house with reasonable access to social amenities and utilities".

93. During the last four years, four programmes have been developed in the housing sector, which accounts for 12 per cent of the national investment budget. Through the home ownership scheme, the Government provides low-income families with serviced plots, building materials and technical advice. The main source of financing is the European Development Fund, with the United Kingdom Government also contributing to infrastructural development. One hundred self-help housing units have been built, with repayment for building materials and plot costs being made over 25 years at an interest rate of 2 per cent.

94. Under the housing loans scheme, technical advice and cash loans are given to families to buy land and build a house or to purchase existing houses. The main source of financing is the Social Security Fund. Initially, money was borrowed at 7½ per cent and loans given at 7 3/4 per cent, with financial assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany being used to lower interest rates for lower-income families. At present, financing is provided by the Social Security Fund at a zero interest rate, thus making the programme more accessible.

95. Another programme, the improvement loans and grants scheme, provides financing to lower-income groups to improve or extend existing houses. Public housing units are also sold to their current low-income tenants on reasonable terms.

96. Given the high priority attached to human settlements, the Government seeks further international assistance to implement its policies.

Singapore

97. The report of Singapore presents an example of the need for long-range comprehensive planning in the context of rapid urban growth. Two strategic plans have been prepared. The first one, whose target year is 1990, will form the basis of more detailed action plans aimed at promoting and controlling development in critical and priority areas near public transport corridors and in run-down areas where environmental quality is most lacking. The second plan, whose target year is the year 2000, will provide the physical framework for the longer-term development of industry, housing and major infrastructural installations and services.

98. Priority concerns are land availability, transportation, the improvement of environmental conditions, particularly in the central area (to which access is also to be improved), the diversification of activities, slum improvement, the preservation of the existing historical and architectural heritage, improved design, amenities and services in new housing projects and the development of industrialized building methods to offset the labour shortage.

99. A priority issue is the reconciliation of the growing demand for land and infrastructure generated by Singapore's thriving economy with the increasing concern for providing better environmental conditions for a growing population expected to reach 4 million people by the year 2000.

#### Solomon Islands

100. Even in a small country with a population of less than 200 000 people, specific policies are needed to promote sound human settlements development. The Town and Country Planning Act passed in 1979 provides for local planning schemes to be initiated in designated areas by the Town and Country Planning Board. Housing is given highest priority, especially in provincial centres where the scarcity of serviced plots gives rise to speculative activities and high prices, thus squeezing lower-income families out of the housing market. Self-help house construction based on the local traditional style is encouraged and, in this connection, the need to modify existing by-laws and building regulations is emphasized. The report states repeatedly that adequate housing is an essential prerequisite for socio-economic development. Development of the housing industry is also seen as a high-priority complementary goal.

101. The report states that all these measures will have to be based on the use of national resources, since no bilateral or multilateral funding is available.

#### Sweden

102. Sweden has a clear national policy in respect of human settlements development. Two reports (prepared in 1972 and 1979) on the conservation of land and water resources laid down specific guidelines for the planning and management of natural resources. Guidelines for the preservation of farm acreage and for certain mountain and river zones have also been clarified.

103. In order to facilitate the implementation of human settlements activities, municipalities have been given responsibility for development planning. Given an active land policy, municipalities can acquire land for housing. Their power to control land use for housing purposes, to slow down the rise in land and housing prices and to curb speculation has been further reinforced by the introduction in 1975 of the "land condition", which states that as a general rule state housing loans can be granted only in respect of land leased or sold by a municipality for housing purposes and under certain conditions relating to land and construction costs.

104. As far as increasing public participation is concerned, various procedures have now been made available through the 1978 Housing Management Act to enable tenants to assert their rights vis-a-vis landlords. The trend away from rental towards ownership is being encouraged.

105. Research in the area of human settlements has a long history and covers a wide range of activities such as building research, urban planning, housing studies, energy management, etc.

106. Although direct assistance to developing countries in the field of human settlements activities is difficult to quantify, a considerable amount of aid has been given to programmes related to water, health, the training of town planners and so on. Sweden also contributes regularly to UNCHS (Habitat).

#### Thailand

107. Thailand's report deals extensively with each of the six areas covered by the Vancouver recommendations for national action.

108. Settlements policies and settlements planning in Thailand recognize that different types of action are needed in rural and urban settlements. In urban centres, particularly Bangkok, environmental improvement, new low-cost housing, slum improvement and public transport are areas of priority action. In rural areas, integrated rural development, including land reform projects, land settlement projects, co-operative settlement projects, natural resource preservation and the provision of essential community services, and rural infrastructure are the main components of the strategy adopted. Nearly one and a half million hectares of agricultural land have been allocated to landless farmers and co-operatives in order to promote rural development. However, Thailand's overall human settlements strategy spans urban-rural boundaries, since it aims at decentralizing growth from the capital city to designated regional growth centres in strategic areas by attracting investment from industry and other modern sectors.

109. Public participation is seen as an essential means of promoting the implementation of human settlements policies and programmes. In urban areas, public participation is sought in self-help projects and in the planning process. In rural areas, public participation is increasing after the encouraging results of land redistribution schemes implemented with the co-operation of large landowners on the basis of the Government's land reform programme and specific projects such as "Public participation in the development process" and "Land allocation in demonstration villages".

110. All of the above-mentioned programmes and projects are supervised by government authorities established for the purpose, including the Office of the National Environment Board, which has been responsible for national policies and guidelines for human settlements development, the National Economic and Social Development Board, the National Housing Authority, the Department of Town and Country Planning, which is responsible for all physical planning activities at the local and regional levels, excluding the Bangkok metropolitan area, the Royal Forest Department, the Forest Industry Organization and the Agricultural Land Reform Office.

111. In 1978, 1979 and 1980, Thailand received World Bank support totalling \$US 5 300 000 for the implementation of housing projects.

#### Turkey

112. In Turkey's report, the "urban housing problem" is clearly singled out as the human settlements programme given the highest priority in all the five-year development plans implemented so far. Although licensed housing production in urban areas has been growing steadily over the past 15 years, so has the housing deficit, a problem compounded by the increasing rate of rural-urban migration. To cope with the problem, 20 per cent of the total investment provided for under the 1979-1983 development plan is to be devoted to the housing sector. However, most of the estimated housing demand for this period (new production and renewal) is expected to be covered by private investment; no foreign aid is envisaged for the housing sector.



113. The national policy established in 1980 states that its primary aim is to provide housing for low-income groups in accordance with their social and economic situation. Its principles include the establishment of appropriate administrative and institutional mechanisms, the improvement of the effectiveness of the private sector, the provision of cheap land, the standardization of building materials, the promotion of industrialized construction methods, the extension of squatter upgrading programmes, the more effective utilization of public housing funds and the formulation of housing policies within the context of the general settlements and urbanization policy.

#### United Kingdom

114. A considerable shift in the emphasis of various human settlements policies, and particularly housing policies, has occurred since the change of Government in May 1979. The major points emerging from the United Kingdom's 1980 monograph on current trends and policies in the fields of housing, building and planning concern a more selective approach to government subsidies for housing and regional development, the reduction of unnecessary administrative controls, and more reliance on individual and entrepreneurial efforts to improve human settlements conditions. Public expenditure on housing is expected to fall in 1980-1981, although local authorities will be left free to allocate government subsidies to public housing as such, to grants and loans for private individuals for house purchase and improvement or to grants for housing associations.

115. Home ownership is to be encouraged in both the public and private sectors; efforts are being made to revitalize the private rental sector - which has undergone a marked relative decline in past years - through the introduction of short-hold tenancies at fair rents. Capital expenditure by local authorities on new house building, which has also fallen in recent years, partly because of great emphasis being placed on rehabilitation and improvement, is to be aimed primarily at meeting the needs of special groups such as the elderly and the handicapped. House improvement is being encouraged through the liberalization of the existing grant system.

116. Policies in the construction field aim at improving labour productivity and production efficiency, with major emphasis being placed on research, the promotion of standardization and housing renovation.

117. In the field of urban and regional planning, new criteria are being introduced into the consolidated institutional system at the regional, country and district levels. Government aid is to be concentrated in those areas where the problem of unemployment is most difficult to deal with. A policy of restraint is being followed in respect of new town development, and urban planning policies are being focused on the upgrading and revitalization of inner areas surrounding the centres of large cities through experimental programmes to be implemented in designated "urban development areas" and "enterprise zones".

#### United States of America

118. In 1980, two major policy documents were issued by the Government, namely the National Housing Production Report and the National Urban Policy Report.

119. Private housing construction, notwithstanding an anticipated drop in 1979 and 1980, is keeping pace with new demand. However, new housing production is not sufficient to cover the replacement needs of the aging housing stock, particularly in central cities and older suburbs. Rental housing is also in demand. Federal policies are now oriented towards less direct intervention and more reliance on private market mechanisms. For example, a major tendency is emerging against continuing large subsidies for the construction of costly new housing for lower-income families and toward making greater use of the existing housing stock through direct cash allowance programmes. Successful measures have been introduced to revitalize the housing finance market by issuing high-interest savings certificates and securities.

120. In the field of planning, efforts have been made to co-ordinate local and state planning with the programmes of various federal agencies and departments. Federal planning grants have been introduced to stimulate comprehensive planning at the local level on the basis of long-term goals for land use, housing and community facilities which are consistent with national policies.

121. The 1980 National Urban Policy Report suggested that there is a need to strengthen the 1978 urban policy commitment to help troubled central cities and suburbs adjust to decentralization trends and respond to adverse economic, social, fiscal and environmental conditions. Working in partnership with state and local governments, the private sector and voluntary and neighbourhood groups, the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening urban economies, expanding job opportunities and job mobility, promoting fiscal stability, expanding opportunities for those disadvantaged by discrimination and low income and encouraging energy-efficient and environmentally sound urban development patterns. The two reports presented by the United States Government contain a detailed description of action taken in all these areas.

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
RESOLUTION 34/116 (STRENGTHENING OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
ACTIVITIES)

122. The biennial reporting requested by resolution 34/116, following a resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements at its second session, was intended to enhance the central role of human settlements in overall socio-economic development by promoting the allocation of a larger share of national resources to the strengthening of human settlements activities as vehicles of economic and social change and by stimulating an increased allocation of resources to the human settlements sector at the international level through multilateral and bilateral co-operation programmes.
123. Given the global importance of human settlements, it would appear desirable for such information to be as extensive and as widely disseminated as possible. Thus, Member States should have direct access to the information provided by all countries. In this context, it would be the Centre's task to prepare a global overview of the progress made towards the goals referred to in the resolution. To this end, a framework would have to be established for national reporting so as to ensure the comparability of information and data.
124. The Centre would therefore like to offer a number of suggestions for consideration by the Commission. If the Commission endorses the proposed approach, the next round of biennial reporting, scheduled to take place in 1983, would be based on the following principles:
- (a) All Member States would prepare a national report on the progress made in implementing selected recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and on the level and sources of international and national funding being devoted to human settlements activities;
  - (b) The following criteria would be used by the Centre in the selection of the recommendations to be reported on:
    - (i) The recommendations selected should include the human settlements themes reviewed by the Commission;
    - (ii) They should relate to the goals of the 1984-1989 medium-term plan;
    - (iii) They should be relevant to the assessment of the implementation of the goals of the Third United Nations Development Decade;
    - (iv) They should be the subject of existing or perceived concern on the part of developed and developing countries in terms of policy formulation and ongoing actions;
    - (v) They should clearly reveal the need for more sustained efforts on the part of both national Governments and the international community;
  - (c) In order to facilitate the task of Governments and to ensure comparability, the Centre would formulate an outline and submit it to Member States by October 1981. The outline would be designed in accordance with subparagraph (b) above and subparagraph (f) below and would be accompanied by instructions regarding suggested length and format;

(d) Member States would provide the Centre with a copy of their national report by October 1982 for the preparation of an overview paper. National reports should be in one of the working languages of the Commission;

(e) The overview paper prepared by the Centre, which will be translated into the working languages of the Commission, and the national reports would be distributed at the 1983 session of the Commission for information and evaluation;

(f) The contents of national reports would include the following:

- (i) Part I, devoted to progress achieved in the implementation of the Vancouver recommendations for national action. As already stated in subparagraph (a) above, this part would not attempt to cover the whole range of recommendations for national action. Given the frequency of the reports and the advisability of achieving some depth of information and analysis, specific themes would be selected in accordance with the criteria mentioned in subparagraph (b);
- (ii) Part II, devoted to national funding in human settlements activities. This part would contain a breakdown of main items of expenditure according to the suggested outline, taking into account comparability at the global level and between developed and developing countries;
- (iii) Part III, devoted to international funding for human settlements activities. This part would contain a description of programmes and projects being funded or implemented through bilateral and multilateral aid.

ANNEX

INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY COUNTRIES

Australia

Letter to the Executive Director.

Belgium

"Habitat and development".

Chile

Ministry of Housing and Town Planning:

Politica nacional habitacional;  
Politica nacional de desarrollo urban.

China

Data and information submitted by the China State Administration of Urban Construction.

Colombia

Department of National Planning: "Notes on Colombia's urban policy and on the recommendations adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements".

Cuba

"Human settlements priorities for bilateral and multilateral assistance, including the amount of funds allocated or received by various sectors for human settlements development from both bilateral and multilateral arrangements and the amount of national resources devoted to the various sectors of human settlements development".

Cyprus

"Report on the progress made in implementing the recommendations for national action of the Habitat Conference".

Denmark

"Biennial report to the Commission on Human Settlements on the progress made in implementing the recommendations for national action adopted at Habitat United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and brief notes on human settlements priorities for bilateral and multilateral financial assistance".

Finland

"Review of Finland concerning the progress made in implementing the recommendations for national action and the level and sources of international and national funding being devoted to human settlements activities".

"Current trends and policies in the field of housing, building and planning in Finland".

France

Data and information submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"National monograph on current trends and policies in the field of housing, building and planning", 1980.

German Democratic Republic

"Report on the implementation of the recommendations of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements".

"Current trends and policies in the field of housing, building and planning 1980".

"Settlement policies, town planning, housing construction, and protection of the environment: Report for Habitat, Vancouver, 1976".

Stadtebau (Berlin, Bauakademie der DDR, Institut für Städtebau und Architektur, 1979).

Hungary

Ministry of Building and Urban Development: "Habitat follow-up in Hungary: Results of the implementation of the high-priority Habitat recommendations in Hungary".

Iran

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development: "Summary of activities with respect to housing since the victory of the revolution".

Luxembourg

Data and information submitted by the Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Malaysia

"Policies and programmes on human settlements in Malaysia".

Mauritius

Information on the actions being taken by the Government of Mauritius within the context of the Habitat Plan of Action adopted at Vancouver and resource allocation for human settlements at the national and international levels.

Mexico

Reference to: "The application in Mexico of the 64 recommendations for national action approved at Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements", and "Second evaluation of the application in Mexico of the 64 recommendations for national action approved at Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements" (Ministry of Human Settlements and Public Works, 1978 and 1980).

Nepal

"Policies, programmes and results achieved in the field of resettlement projects in Nepal".

Netherlands

"Current trends and policies in the field of housing, building and planning in the year 1979".

List of bilateral projects implemented in the context of technical and financial co-operation between the Netherlands and developing countries.

New Zealand

"Habitat: New Zealand report on housing policy and funding".

Norway

Ministry of Local Government and Labour: "Current trends and policies in the field of human settlements".

Saint Lucia

Data and information submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Seychelles

"Human settlements activities 1979-1980".

Singapore

"Review of human settlements for national and international action: report from Singapore for the fourth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements".

Solomon Islands

"National action on human settlements which have been given priority attention in the Solomons".

Sweden

"Report on the Habitat recommendations for national action given priority attention, and information on bilateral human settlements assistance".

"Housing, building and planning in Sweden, 1980".

Swedish Council for Building Research, Activity Plan 1981-1985.

Thailand

"Report on the adoption of the Habitat recommendations for national action in Thailand".

Turkey

"Housing policy and measures taken in Turkey".

United Kingdom

Department of the Environment: "United Kingdom monograph on current trends and policies in the fields of housing, building and planning", 1980.

United States of America

"Biennial report on progress in implementing recommendations for national action in human settlements submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements".