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Agenda item 9

THE HABITAT AGENDA: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES,  
COMMITMENTS AND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

Report of Committee I

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mrs. Ayse Esen ÖGÜT (Turkey)

At the ... meeting, on .. June 1996, Committee I approved chapter IV, section E, of the Habitat Agenda and recommended it to the Conference for adoption. The text of chapter IV, section E read as follows:

E. International cooperation and coordination

1. Introduction

143. The goals of ensuring adequate shelter for all and making human settlements and communities more productive, healthy, safe, non-discriminatory, equitable and sustainable contribute to achieving world peace, development, stability, justice and human solidarity. International cooperation takes on added significance and importance in the light of recent trends in the globalization and the interdependence of the world economy. There is an urgent need to redefine and resuscitate the existing processes and structure of cooperation and to evolve new and innovative forms of cooperation with a view to enabling humankind to face the challenges posed by the development of rural and urban areas. Thus there is a need for the political

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will of all States and for specific action at the international level to establish, inspire and encourage new forms of cooperation, partnership, coordination at all levels and investment from all sources, including the private sector, in order to contribute effectively to the provision and improvement of shelter conditions in human settlements, especially in developing countries, taking into account the diversity of the human settlements needs and opportunities among countries.

144. The formulation and implementation of strategies for human settlements development are the primary responsibility of each country at the national and local levels, within the legal framework of each country, and should take into account the economic, social and environmental diversity of conditions in each country. The overall decline in official development assistance, however, is a serious cause for concern. In some countries, this trend has also been accompanied by considerable increases in international flows of capital and by increasing private sector involvement in infrastructure and services development and management. The trend towards a shift from aid to trade clearly points to the need for the participation of the private sector in the shaping of international cooperation. The international community, including multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies, international financial institutions and the private sector, has an important role to play in providing additional resources to reinforce national efforts to foster an enabling environment so as to achieve the objectives of adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of human settlements.

144 bis. Globalization of the world economy presents opportunities and challenges for the development process as well as risks and uncertainties. In this context, international cooperation assumes added significance and importance in the wake of recent trends in the globalization of the world economy, on the one hand, and the continued deterioration of the plight of developing countries, on the other. Problems resulting from poverty, urbanization, lack of adequate shelter, including social housing, rapid population growth, rural-urban migration, economic stagnation and social instability are especially acute.

145. Innovative approaches and frameworks for international cooperation in the development and management of human settlements must be sought and developed to include the active participation of all levels of government, the private and cooperative sectors, non-governmental organizations and community-based

organizations in decision-making, policy formulation and resource allocation, implementation and evaluation. These approaches and frameworks should also include new and improved forms of cooperation and coordination between and among countries, multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies, international financial institutions, international organizations, and various organs and bodies of the United Nations system, including South-South, North-South and South-North exchanges of best practices, and the continuous development of tools and instruments for policy, planning and management, such as the application of shelter and urban indicators, human resources development and institutional capacity-building.

145 bis. These innovative approaches should not only promote international cooperation but also include new forms of partnerships and cooperation involving civil society organizations, the private sector and local authorities. This implies recognition of complementary forms of decentralized cooperation and relations between and among local authorities and of their participation in international cooperation within the legal frameworks of each country, as well as their contribution to the process of defining human settlements policies. Governments, as well as bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, should commit themselves to encouraging cooperation between local authorities as well as to the strengthening of networks and associations of local authorities.

145 ter. International economic imbalances, poverty and environmental degradation, combined with the absence of peace and security, human rights violations and the varying degrees of development of judicial and democratic institutions, are all factors affecting international migration. Orderly international migration can have positive impacts on both the communities of origin and the communities of destination, providing the former with remittances and the latter with needed human resources. International migration also has the potential of facilitating the transfer of skills and contributing to cultural enrichment. However, international migration entails the loss of human resources from many countries of origin and may give rise to political, economic or social tensions in countries of destination. These factors have a profound impact on the spatial distribution of city populations.

2. An enabling international context

146. The provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development are increasingly influenced by the global economy. The process of urbanization is linked to economic development, social development and environmental protection, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. In this context, it is imperative to enable all countries, especially developing countries, to improve living and working conditions in human settlements. This calls for an enabling international environment and for integrated approaches at the national and international levels that take account of the efforts of countries to implement programmes of economic reform or economic transition. Furthermore, technological developments are leading to major changes in the structure of employment. It should be recognized that in social and economic terms housing is a productive sector. [Achievement of the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development at the global level would be facilitated by, inter alia, actions on the questions of financing of development, external debt, international trade and transfer of technology to developing countries.]

147. The international community should support Governments in their efforts to cope with the impact of these changes on human settlements within a framework of enabling strategies. The international community should promote:

- (a) The establishment of an open, equitable, cooperative and mutually beneficial international economic environment;
- (b) The coordination of macroeconomic policies at all levels to achieve an international financial system that is conducive to economic development, social development and environmental protection, as components of sustainable development;
- (c) An international financial system that is more conducive to stable and sustainable human settlements development through, inter alia, a higher degree of stability in financial markets, a reduction of the risk of financial crisis, and lower real interest rates;
- (d) An environment in all countries that attracts foreign direct investment and encourages savings and domestic investment;
- (e) Enterprise development, productive investment and expanded access to open and dynamic markets in the context of an open, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, predictable, transparent and multilateral rule-based

international trading system and access to appropriate technologies and know-how for all people, especially those living in poverty and the disadvantaged, as well as for the least developed countries;

(f) Capacity-building in all developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, and in countries with economies in transition;

(g) The strengthening and improvement of technical and financial assistance to developing countries to promote sustainable development and to facilitate their full and effective participation in the world economy.

148. With specific reference to sustainable human settlements development and the provision of shelter, the international community should:

(a) Ensure that the benefits of global economic growth improve people's quality of life in all countries, whether they live in urban or rural areas;

(b) Mobilize national and international financial resources from all sources for shelter provision and sustainable human settlements development;

(c) Facilitate increased access by all levels of government and the private sector in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition to international financial resources so as to enable them to attract investment in shelter and infrastructure for sustainable human settlements development;

(d) In a manner consistent with national legislation, strive to promote the ability of local authorities, and relevant organizations to link with global capital markets, and to have access to financial markets, in accordance with prudent safeguards in those markets, as well as national monetary policies, in order to finance shelter and infrastructure programmes, mechanisms and instruments to facilitate risk-sharing and credit enhancement;

(e) Encourage the adoption of policies for the creation and development of the private sector and promote strategies for substantial and well-directed public and private investments in construction and development of shelter, infrastructure, health, education and other basic services through, inter alia, the provision of appropriate technical and financial assistance; in addition encourage Governments to promote strategies to ensure that the private sector, including transnational corporations, comply with national laws and codes, social security regulations, applicable international agreements, instruments and conventions, including those related to the environment, and other relevant laws, and adopt policies and establish

mechanisms to grant contracts on a non-discriminatory basis; recruit women for leadership, decision-making and management and provide training programmes, all on an equal basis with men; and observe national labour, environment, consumer, health and safety laws, particularly those that affect women and children.

(f) Encourage international cooperation in order to address the negative impact of international migration through, *inter alia*, technical assistance, management know-how and exchange of information;

(g) In consultation with Governments, continue to provide support to displaced persons, including refugees, other displaced persons in need of international protection and internally displaced persons, in order to meet their needs, bearing in mind the recommendations emanating from regional meetings on international migration, internally displaced and refugee return, and assist in assuring them a just, durable solution in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and international law, noting, with due regard to the principle of voluntary repatriation, that sustainable human settlements should preferably be established for them in their land of origin;

(h) Facilitate access to international financial resources, for all developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries, to benefit from the growing international financial markets in order to promote investments in shelter, including social housing, and infrastructure for sustainable human settlements;

(i) Facilitate access to growing international financial markets for countries with economies in transition in order to promote investments and to support the implementation of housing reforms as part of the realization of the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in those countries.

### 3. Financial resources and economic instruments

149. The demand for shelter and infrastructural services in human settlements is continuously increasing. Communities and countries, especially developing countries, have difficulties in mobilizing adequate financial resources to meet the rapidly rising costs of shelter, services, and physical infrastructure. New and additional financial resources from various sources are necessary to achieve the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. The existing resources

available to developing countries - public, private, multilateral, bilateral, domestic and external - need to be enhanced through appropriate and flexible mechanisms and economic instruments to support adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development.

150. The full and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, in particular in all developing countries, especially those in Africa and the least developed countries, will require the mobilization of additional financial resources from various sources at the national and international levels and more effective development cooperation in order to promote assistance for shelter and human settlements activities. This will require, inter alia:

(a) Deleted

(b) Deleted

(c) Raising the priority of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development among multilateral and bilateral donors and mobilizing their support for national, subregional and regional plans of action of developing countries;

[(d) Striving to fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of the developed countries for official development assistance, and consistent with countries' economic circumstances and capabilities and with commitments and international agreements, striving to attain the agreed upon target of 0.15 per cent of their gross national product for assistance to the least developed countries as soon as possible and to increase, where appropriate, the share of funding for adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development programmes commensurate with the scope and scale of activities required to achieve the objectives and goals of the Habitat Agenda;]

(e) Deleted

(f) Striving to ensure that structural adjustment programmes are consistent with the economic and social conditions, concerns, objectives and needs of each country, including the need for adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, and protect basic social programmes and expenditures, in particular those benefiting people living in poverty, women and vulnerable groups from budget reductions, and that corresponding investment programmes take account of human settlements development priorities, including local urban and rural priorities;

(g) Inviting the international financial institutions to examine innovative approaches to assisting low-income countries with a high proportion of multilateral debt, with a view to alleviating their debt burden;

(h) Inviting multilateral development institutions and bilateral donors to support countries, particularly developing countries, in their efforts to pursue enabling strategies through which national Governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, communities and the private and cooperative sectors can form partnerships to participate in the provision of adequate shelter and the development of sustainable human settlements;

(i) Deleted

(j) Exploring ways and means to strengthen, support and expand South-South cooperation, including through triangular cooperation, and partnership between developing and developed countries;

(k) Consolidating the solidarity of the international community and its organizations to provide adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development for people living under foreign occupation;

(k bis.) Promoting, in a manner consistent with the legal framework of each country; the decentralized development assistance programmes of local authorities and their associations which transfer financial resources directly from a donor local authority to their partner local authority in a developing country;

(l) Enhancing the effectiveness of official development assistance and other external financial flows through improving coordination between and among donors and United Nations operational activities, and through better integration of those flows into national sustainable human settlements development strategies;

(m) Supporting programmes that increase the effectiveness and transparent utilization of public and private resources, reduce wasteful and untargeted expenditure and increase access to housing and services for all people, particularly those living in poverty;

(n) Recognizing the negative effect of excessive military expenditures and trade in arms, especially of arms that are particularly injurious or have indiscriminate effects, and excessive investment for arms production and acquisition, while acknowledging legitimate national defence needs;



(o) Giving preference, wherever possible, to the utilization of competent national experts in developing countries or, where necessary, of competent experts from within the subregion or region or from other developing countries in project and programme design, preparation and implementation, and to the building of local expertise where it does not exist;

(p) Maximizing the efficiency of projects and programmes by keeping overhead costs to a minimum;

(q) Integrating practical measures for reducing disaster vulnerability in development programmes and projects, in particular in the construction of buildings, infrastructure and communication systems accessible to persons with disabilities, including those financed by the international community, and ensuring that such measures become an integral part of feasibility studies and project identification;

(r) Developing and devising appropriate measures to implement economic policies to promote and mobilize domestic savings and attract external resources for productive investments, and seeking innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development programmes, while ensuring effective utilization of those resources;

(s) Strengthening financial and technical assistance for community-based development and self-help programmes, and strengthening cooperation among Governments at all levels, community organizations, cooperatives, formal and informal banking institutions, private enterprises and international institutions, with the aim of mobilizing local savings, promoting the creation of local financial networks, promoting socially responsible corporate investment and reinvestment in local communities, and increasing the availability of credit and market information to low-income individuals, women, and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups for shelter and human settlements development;

(t) Facilitating access to global finances for those Governments and local authorities that are initiating or are involved in public-private partnership programmes;

(u) Establishing and supporting linkages of informal credit mechanisms to the global pool of resources and increasing the access of the majority of the population to housing finance through participatory processes involving communities, non-governmental organizations, credit unions, international financial institutions and other relevant actors;

(v) Attracting international flows of public finances for shelter provision and settlements development through appropriate economic instruments;

(w) Considering means of facilitating foreign private sector investment in sustainable human settlements projects, including public-private joint-ventures or partnerships, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and transportation;

(x) Implementing effective and equitable pricing mechanisms for adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements, infrastructure and services and assisting countries in particular developing countries, for that purpose, in order to induce greater flows of private, domestic and global funds, while ensuring transparent and targeted subsidies for people living in poverty;

(y) Examining appropriate debt-equity swapping measures in favour of shelter and infrastructure development in human settlements;

(z) Developing innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for human settlements development and creating a supportive environment for the mobilization of resources by civil society, including beneficiary and individual voluntary contributions;

(aa) Providing assistance for activities in the field of shelter and human settlements development in favour of people living in poverty, particularly women, and vulnerable groups, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, street children, migrants and the homeless, through specific targeted grants;

(bb) Deleted

(cc) Recognizing the need for adequate shelter for all and human settlements development in order to address the special conditions of some countries experiencing natural and human-made disasters and the urgent need to reconstruct their economies and human settlements;

(cc bis.) Giving high priority to the critical situation and needs of African countries and least-developed countries in implementing the objectives of provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development;

(dd) Cooperating with the small island developing States, in accordance with the Declaration of Barbados, in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States by providing effective means, including adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources in accordance with chapter 33 of the Agenda 21, inter alia, to support the improved availability of shelter and the improved economic and environmental quality of human settlements for small island developing States in accordance with chapter 7 of Agenda 21;

(ee) Providing international support and assistance to the land-locked developing countries and supporting these countries and their neighbour transit developing countries in their efforts to implement the outcome of Habitat II, taking into account, as appropriate, the challenges and problems characteristic of those countries;

(ff) Agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes.

(gg) deleted

#### 4. Technology transfer and information exchange

151. The use and transfer of environmentally-sound technologies that have a profound impact on consumption and production patterns are prerequisites for sustainable human settlements development. Advanced and appropriate technologies and the knowledge-based systems that support their application offer new opportunities for more efficient use of human, financial and material resources, more sustainable industrial practices and new sources of employment. International organizations have an important role to play in disseminating and facilitating access to information on technologies available for transfer. It is understood that the transfer of technology will take into account the need to protect intellectual property rights.

152. The international community should promote and facilitate the transfer of technology and expertise in support of the implementation of plans of action for adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, inter alia, through:

(a) Encouraging the establishment or reinforcement, as appropriate, of global networks among all interested parties to facilitate exchange of information on environmentally sound technologies, particularly those related to shelter and human settlements;

(b) Seeking to ensure that the process of technology transfer avoids the dumping of environmentally-unsound technologies on the recipients and that the transfer of environmentally-sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, is on favourable terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights;

(c) Facilitating, developing and/or intensifying, as appropriate, technical cooperation with and among all regions, including South-South cooperation, in order to exchange experiences, particularly on best practices, foster the development of technology and technical skills and increase the efficiency of shelter and human settlements policies and management, with the backing of coordinated and complementary support from multilateral and bilateral arrangements;

(c bis merged with d bis) Encouraging and supporting the use of appropriate building technology and the production of local building materials, as well as supporting the development of international, subregional and regional networks of institutions involved in research, production, dissemination and commercialization of locally produced building materials;

(d) Placing special emphasis on the funding and promotion of applied research and the dissemination of the results thereof, an innovation in all areas that could contribute to enhancing the capabilities of all developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries, to provide shelter, basic services, infrastructure and amenities to their communities;

(e) Enhancing the identification and dissemination of those new and promising technologies related to human settlements that generate employment, especially those which can lower the cost of infrastructure, make basic services more affordable and minimize detrimental environmental impacts, and also identifying specific roles for existing United Nations organizations which would promote these goals.

#### 5. Technical cooperation

153. To face the challenges of a rapidly urbanizing world, there is need to ensure that international, regional, national and local networks facilitate more effectively the exchange and transfer of knowledge and experience on institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks and disseminate best practices on sustainable human settlements in rural and urban areas, including, inter alia, those reflected in the outcome of the Dubai International Conference on Best Practices for Improving the Living Environment, held in November 1995. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) should, within its mandate, act as a catalyst in the mobilization of technical cooperation. Opportunities for improved dissemination and exchange of ideas on technical cooperation at the national and international levels could be explored.

154. More specifically, the international community should:

(a) Taking into account existing networks, examine the establishment of cost-effective and accessible global information networks on human settlements, in the form of permanent and "electronic" conferences that will contain updated information on the Habitat Agenda and on best practices, as well as progress reports on the implementation of national plans of action;

(b) Through global human settlements information networks, assist Governments at all levels, all major groups of actors and international development agencies in assessing gender-disaggregated information on the social and environmental impacts of policies, strategies, programmes and projects on sustainable human settlements development and the provision of shelter;

(c) Deleted

(d) With a view to supporting and facilitating national and local efforts in human settlements management, develop and strengthen capacity-building programmes and promote the exchange of experiences and policy responses to urbanization and integrated regional development within the framework of national development strategies;

(e) Enhance the capabilities of national and local authorities to identify and analyse critical human settlements issues, to formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes in response to them, and to manage efficiently the process of settlements development at the local level, including through the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), within its mandate;

(f) Continue to support technical cooperation programmes aimed at preventing and mitigating the effects of natural and human-made disasters and reconstruction activities in affected countries;

(g) To facilitate the provision of technical, legal and institutional assistance to Governments at the appropriate levels, upon request, in closer cooperation with the capacity-building efforts of relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including through the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), within its mandate and existing resources.

#### 6. Institutional cooperation

155. The task of pursuing the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in the face of increasing global economic interaction necessitates international cooperation of public and private institutions operating in the area of human settlements development, whereby resources, information and capacities are pooled for a more effective response to human settlements problems.

156. The Habitat Agenda adds new elements to the agenda for national actions and international cooperation and strengthens a common perception of human settlements priorities. Implementation of the Habitat Agenda should take place within a coordinated framework which ensures that all the United Nations conferences receive comprehensive follow-up and that the agreed programmes of action are fully implemented, monitored and reviewed, together with the results of other major United Nations conferences where they are related to human settlements.

157. Organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, regional and subregional development banks and funds, and bilateral support, where appropriate and in accordance with the legal framework of each country, should:

(a) Establish and/or strengthen cooperative mechanisms to integrate commitments and actions concerning adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development into their policies, programmes and operations, particularly those commitments and actions contained in the Habitat Agenda, building on the results of other recent United Nations conferences where they are related to human settlements;

(b) Establish and/or strengthen partnerships with international associations of local authorities, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations and with all other interested parties to achieve the goals of the Conference;

(c) Develop activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of local authorities;

(d) Intensify their cooperation with associations and networks of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups and community associations, and the private and cooperative sectors in adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development;

(e) Support public-private partnerships in shelter delivery, service provision and other development activities for sustainable human settlements;

(e bis.) Encourage public-private partnerships in socially and environmentally responsible community investment and reinvestment in shelter and sustainable human settlements programmes and make publicly available and accessible the data and best practices developed through them;

(f) Encourage the involvement of all interested parties at the local level in the formulation of local measures, programmes and actions necessary to implement and monitor the Habitat Agenda, and national plans of action through, inter alia, "local Agenda 21" processes, as mandated by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

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