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

Report of Committee I

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mrs. Aysha Ögüt

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

IV. GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION: STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

D. Capacity-building and institutional development

1. Introduction

129. Economic and social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable human settlements development. Economically buoyant, socially vibrant and environmentally sound human settlements under conditions of continuing and rapid urbanization will increasingly depend on the capacity of all levels of government to reflect the priorities of communities, to encourage and guide local development and forge partnerships between the private, public, voluntary and community sectors. This can be achieved through the effective decentralization of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making authority, and sufficient resources, including revenue collection authority, to local authorities, closest to and most representative of their

constituencies, as well as through international cooperation and partnerships, setting in motion a strategic and participatory urban management process rooted in a shared vision [while ensuring and protecting human rights]. This process of decentralization and the envisaged urban management process will place great demands on institutions, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Capacity-building is thus to be directed towards supporting decentralization and the participatory urban management process.

130. An enabling strategy, capacity-building and institutional development should aim at empowering all interested parties, particularly local authorities, the private sector, the cooperative sector, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, to enable them to play an effective role in shelter and human settlements planning and management. Concerted efforts in human resources and leadership development, institutional reform, organizational and management development and continuous training and retooling are necessary at all levels. This can best be achieved by national and international local authority associations/networks and by other national and sub-national capacity-building institutions, although they themselves may first require strengthening. In developing countries and countries with economies in transition, governments should accord a high priority to implementing a comprehensive policy for capacity-building. The international community should help them to develop their capacity, identify and assess their institution-building priorities and strengthen their management capacity.

130 bis. [Empowerment and participation, are prerequisites for democracy/sustainable human settlements development]. Policy formulation and implementation by Governments should be guided by the principles of accountability, transparency and broad-based public participation. Accountability and transparency are imperative in order to prevent corruption and ensure that the available resources are used to the benefit of all people. Each government should ensure the right of all members of its society to take an active part in the affairs of the community in which they live, and ensure and encourage participation in policy-making at all levels.

2. Decentralization and strengthening of local authorities
and their associations/networks

Actions

131. To ensure effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities and their associations/networks, governments at the appropriate levels should:

(a) Examine and adopt, as appropriate, policies and legal frameworks from other States that are implementing decentralization effectively;

(b) Review and revise, as appropriate, legislation to increase local autonomy and participation in decision-making, implementation, and resource mobilization and use, especially with respect to human, technical and financial resources and local enterprise development, within the overall framework of a national, social, economic and environmental strategy, and encourage the participation of the inhabitants in decision-making regarding their cities, neighbourhoods or dwellings;

(b bis) Develop education in citizenship to emphasize the role of individuals as actors in their communities;

(c) Support local authorities reviewing revenue-generating mechanisms;

(c bis) Strengthen, as necessary, the capacity of educational, research and training institutions to provide continuous training to local elected officials, managers and professionals on urban-related issues, such as planning, land and resource management techniques, and municipal finance;

(d) Facilitate the exchange of technology, experience and management expertise vertically and horizontally between government and local authorities in the delivery of services, expenditure control, resource mobilization, partnership-building and local enterprise development, inter alia, through technical twinning and exchange of experience programmes;

(e) Enhance the performance of local authorities by undertaking data collection, disaggregated by gender, age and income, and comparative analyses of, and by disseminating information on innovative practices in, the delivery, operation and maintenance of public goods and services, in providing for the needs of their populations and in exploiting the fiscal and other potential of their cities;

(f) Encourage institutionalization of broad-based participation, including consultative mechanisms, in decision-making and management processes at the local level;

(g) Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to engage the local private and community sectors in goal-setting and in establishing local priorities and environmentally sound standards for infrastructure development and services delivery and local economic development;

(h) Promote policy dialogue among all levels of government and the private and community sectors and other representatives of civil society to improve planning and implementation;

(h bis) Within the framework of governance, establish public-private-citizens' partnerships for urban innovation, and analyse, evaluate and disseminate information on successful partnerships;

(i) Collect, analyse and disseminate, as appropriate, comparative data, disaggregated by gender, age and income, on the performance of local authorities in providing for the needs of their populations;

(j) Reinforce measures to eradicate corruption and ensure greater transparency, efficiency, accountability, responsiveness and community participation in the management of local resources;

(k) Enable local authorities and their associations/networks to take initiatives in national and international cooperation and, in particular, to share good practices and innovative approaches to sustainable human settlements management;

(k bis) Strengthen the capacities of both central and local governments through training courses on urban finance and management for elected government officials and managers;

3. Popular participation, civic engagement [and good governance]

132. Sustainable human settlements development requires the active engagement of civil society organizations, as well as the broad-based participation of all people. It equally requires [good governance at all levels, in particular] responsive, transparent and accountable government at the local level. Civic engagement and responsible government both necessitate the establishment and strengthening of participatory mechanisms, including access to justice and community-based action planning, which will ensure that all voices are heard in identifying problems and priorities, setting goals, exercising legal rights, determining service standards, mobilizing resources and implementing policies, programmes and projects.

Actions

133. To encourage and support participation, civic engagement and the fulfilment of governmental responsibilities, national governments, local authorities and/or civil society organizations should put into effect, at appropriate levels, institutional and legal frameworks that facilitate and enable the broad-based participation of all people and their community organizations in decision-making and in the implementation and monitoring of human settlements strategies, policies and programmes; these institutional and legal frameworks would be specifically aimed at, inter alia:

(a) Protecting the human right to hold and express opinions and to seek, receive and impart ideas and information without interference;

(a bis) Facilitating the legal recognition of organized communities and their consolidation;

(b) Permitting, facilitating and protecting the formation of independent non-governmental community, local, national and international organizations;

(c) Providing full, timely and comprehensible information, without undue financial burden to the applicant;

(d) Undertaking civic and human rights education and training programmes, using all forms of the media and education and information campaigns, to promote a civic spirit and an awareness of civil rights and responsibilities and the means of exercising them, of the changing roles of women and men and of issues relating to sustainable human settlements development and the quality of life;

(e) Establishing regular and broad-based consultative mechanisms for involving civil society in decision-making in order to reflect the diverse needs of the community;

(e bis) Removing legal barriers to participation in public life by socially marginalized groups and promoting non-discrimination legislation;

(f) Establishing agenda-setting participatory mechanisms enabling individuals, families, communities, indigenous people and civil society to play a proactive role in identifying local needs and priorities and formulating new policies, plans and projects;

(g) Fostering an understanding of contractual and other relationships with the private and non-governmental sectors to acquire the skills for negotiating effective partnerships for project implementation, development and management that will maximize benefits for all people;

(h) Promoting equality and equity, incorporating gender considerations and the full and equal participation of women, and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including people living in poverty and other low-income groups, through institutional measures to ensure that their interests are represented in policy- and decision-making processes and through such techniques as advocacy training and seminars, including those that develop mediating and consensus-building skills that will facilitate effective networking and alliance formation;

(i) Providing access to effective judicial and administrative channels for affected individuals and groups so that they can challenge or seek redress from decisions and actions that are socially and environmentally harmful or violate human rights, including legal mechanisms to ensure that all State bodies both national and local, and other civil organizations remain accountable for their actions, in accordance with their social, environmental and human rights obligations [as defined in national legislation];

(i bis) Broadening the procedural right of individuals and civil society organizations to take legal action on behalf of affected communities or groups that do not have the resources or skills to take such action themselves;

(i ter) Promoting the representation of intergenerational interests, including those of children and future generations in decision-making processes, while strengthening families;

(i quater) Promoting the full potential of youth as key partners for the achievement of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements through various forms of education, quality training and skill-building, taking into account the diverse abilities, realities and experiences of youth;

(j) Facilitating access to decision-making and planning structures and legal services by people living in poverty and other low-income groups through the provision of such facilities as legal aid and free legal advice centres;

(k) Strengthening the capacity of local authorities and civil society to review social, economic and environmental policies affecting their communities and to set local priorities and contribute to the setting of local standards for services in such areas as basic education, child care, public health, public safety, drug-abuse awareness and environmental management;

(l) Promoting the use of new information technologies and the media, including the local media, to facilitate dialogue, to exchange relevant information, experiences and practices concerning human settlements and to form constructive partnerships among the civil society and decision makers.

3 bis. Human settlements management

134. Local authorities and others involved human settlements management need to draw on the skills and resources of a diversity of people and institutions at many levels. The scarcity of suitably qualified personnel and the weakness of institutional systems and technical capacity are among the main obstacles to the improvement of human settlements in many countries, particularly in developing countries. Capacity-building and institutional development strategies must form an integral part of human settlements development policies at the national and local levels. In addition, the use of new skills, know-how and technology in all aspects of human settlements planning and management will be necessary. In countries where changes in human settlements patterns are rapid, resulting in socio-economic and environmental challenges, there is a need for Governments and the international community to ensure effective and efficient development and transfer of leadership skills, planning and management expertise, know-how and technology.

Actions

135. To facilitate capacity-building and institutional development for the improvement of human settlements planning and management, governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities and their associations, should:

(a) Support training programmes for administrators and civic officials at all levels, and for all other key actors, as appropriate, to enhance leadership qualities and promote the inclusion of women and young people in staff structures and decision-making;

(b) Consider establishing private-public, community sector, business and economic forums to exchange management know-how and experience;

(c) Promote comprehensive training, education and human resources development policies and programmes that are gender-sensitive and involve local authorities and their associations/networks, as well as academic, research, training and educational institutions, community-based organizations and the private sector, focusing on:

- (i) The development of a multisectoral approach to human settlements development that includes the unique contributions and institutions of indigenous and immigrant people;
 - (ii) The training of trainers to develop a core capacity for institution-strengthening and capacity-building that includes gender awareness and the needs of children and youth and the elderly as integral components;
 - (iii) The development of local capacity to define needs and undertake or commission applied research particularly in age and gender-sensitive analysis, in social and environmental impact assessments, shelter strategy formulation, local economic growth and job creation and to incorporate the findings in management systems;
- (d) Develop information systems for the exchange, networking, accessing of resources in a timely manner, transfer and sharing of experience, expertise, know-how and technology in human settlements development.
- (e) When appropriate, encourage, within the context of transparency and accountability, as appropriate, the involvement of private-sector authorities, including non-governmental organizations, in improving public-sector management and administration and the formation of entities that are public in their function, private in their management and public-privately funded.
- (f) Consider developing mediation programmes to resolve conflicts, including those between competing actors over access to and distribution and use of resources in human settlements and train civil society in their use;
- (g) Be encouraged to increase their knowledge about the eco-cycles involving their cities so as to prevent environmental damage;
- (h) Integrate gender-sensitive policies and standards in each of the categories above if not already specifically indicated.

4. Metropolitan planning and management

136. Although the managers of human settlements face many common challenges, those responsible for the management and development of metropolitan areas and mega-cities face unique problems caused by the size and complexity of their

tasks and responsibilities. Among the characteristics of metropolitan areas that require special skills are increasing global competitiveness; their ethnically and culturally diverse populations; large concentrations of urban poverty; extensive infrastructure networks and transport and communications systems; their strategic role in national, regional and international production and consumption patterns; economic development, trade and finance; and their potential for severe environmental degradation. Large metropolitan areas and mega-cities also represent the largest potential risks of human, material and production-capacity loss in the case of natural and human-made disasters. In some countries, the lack of a metropolitan-wide authority or effective metropolitan-wide cooperation creates difficulties in urban management.

Actions

137. To address the special needs of metropolitan areas and the needs of all people living therein, Governments at the appropriate level, including local authorities, should:

(a) Promote metropolitan-wide and/or regional planning, development and management strategies that address all aspects of urban activities in an integrated manner and that are based on agreed outcomes for the metropolitan area;

(a bis) Incorporate a gender perspective in policy, planning and management strategies;

(a ter) Adopt and apply metropolitan management guidelines in the areas of land, environment and infrastructural management, as well as finance and administration;

(b) Monitor and analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of metropolitan structures and administrative systems and incorporate the results into policies for dealing with macroeconomic, social and environmental issues;

(c) Create a legislative framework and adopt organizational structures that ensure coordinated and efficient equitable service delivery, resource mobilization and sustainable development throughout metropolitan areas;

(d) Strengthen, as appropriate, the capacity and mandates of metropolitan authorities to deal effectively with, or respond to, issues of regional and national importance, such as land and property rights of women, land management, energy and water resources management, environmental management, transport and communications, trade and finance, adequate social services and infrastructure and access to them, and social integration;

(e) Develop or, where necessary, create a core of professional staff, which includes women, trained in the areas of urban planning, environmental management, engineering, transportation, communication and social services, development of primary infrastructure, and emergency planning, and who have skills to work together to address the major planning issues in an integrated way;

(f) Facilitate and promote policy dialogue, both nationally and internationally, and the exchange of experience, expertise, know-how and technology among metropolitan authorities in such areas as transport and communications, water management and waste-water treatment, waste management, energy conservation, environmental management, and social welfare that recognizes women and marginalized groups;

(g) Look for value-driven solutions to urban problems that extend out of ethnically and culturally diverse populations rather than rely on new technologies alone.

5. Domestic financial resources and economic instruments

138. Funds to finance shelter and settlements development mainly come from domestic sources. Significant additional finance is also available from international sources, increasingly from investment funding. The largest impact on the financial base will derive, therefore, from improvements in economic development, sound financial practice and the capacity to mobilize domestic resources, control expenditures and manage budgets efficiently.

139. Financing the future of urban development and sustaining the economic viability of cities represents a particular challenge, which will require innovative systems of finance at the national and local levels. Effective partnerships between the public and private sectors should be promoted, combining local taxes on production and consumption with fiscal incentives for investment by industry, commerce, trade and other private sector services. New forms of municipal finance are needed to meet the future needs of urban economic development and the costs of supporting infrastructure and services.

140. To strengthen national and local economies and their financial and economic base with a view to addressing the needs of sustainable human settlements, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should seek to provide an enabling framework which aims to:

- (a) Strengthen, as appropriate, the capacity of local authorities to attract investments;
- (b) Adopt macroeconomic policies and frameworks that encourage increased domestic savings and facilitate their use in housing, basic infrastructure and other aspects of the social and economic development of human settlements;
- (c) Develop efficient, fair, equitable and buoyant sources of national and local revenue, including taxation, user charges, tariffs and betterment levies, to promote national and local capacity for capital investment in housing, infrastructure and basic services, and devise, as appropriate, new fiscal instruments that penalize environmental damage from both production and consumption activities;
- (d) Enhance national and local tax collection capabilities and expenditure control to contain costs and enhance revenues;
- (e) Strive for full-cost recovery for urban services, with the exception of public safety services, through user charges, while at the same time addressing the needs of the poor, inter alia, through pricing policies and, where appropriate, transparent subsidies;
- (f) Support local efforts to encourage voluntary private and community sector partnerships and participation in the building, operating and maintaining of open green spaces and basic infrastructure and of services that, inter alia, are gender-sensitive, empower women and address the needs of marginalized groups;
- (g) Facilitate and rationalize, where appropriate, local authorities' access to national, regional and international capital markets and specialized lending institutions, including, inter alia, through measures to establish independent municipal credit rating and credit systems, bearing in mind the borrowers' capacity to repay the debt in accordance with relevant domestic laws and regulations;
- (h) Facilitate the role of local authorities in forming partnerships with the private, voluntary, community and cooperative sectors and institutions for local enterprise development;

(i) Institutionalize budget mechanisms, where appropriate, and accounting, to enable local authorities to engage in medium-and long-term investment programmes;

(j) Establish transparent systems and procedures to ensure financial accountability;

(k) Institutionalize, where appropriate, transparent, intergovernmental transfer mechanisms that are timely, predictable and performance - and need-based;

(l) Attract private and community investment to urban development.

6. Information and communications

141. Recent developments in information and communications technology, in conjunction with the liberalization of trade and the free flow of capital on a global scale, will change the roles and functions of cities and their decision-making and resource allocation processes. Societies that make the necessary investments in information technology and infrastructure and enable and empower their citizens to make effective use of such technology can expect to foster significant productivity gains in industry, trade and commerce. This improved information technology should be appropriately and optimally utilized to preserve and share cultural and moral values and enhance and improve education, training and public awareness of the social, economic and environmental issues affecting the quality of life, and to facilitate access by all interested parties and communities to an exchange of habitat practices, including those that uphold the rights of children, women and disadvantaged groups in the context of growing urbanization.

142. To improve the capacity to exploit these innovations to enhance their public good, Governments at all levels, including local authorities, should, as appropriate:

(a) Develop, upgrade and maintain information infrastructure and technology and encourage their use by all levels of government, public institutions and civil society organizations and community-based organizations, and consider communications as an integral part of human settlement policy;

(b) Promote the training of all key actors in the use, ways and means of information technology;

(c) Develop methods of sharing experience of local initiatives through electronic means, such as the Internet, networks and libraries and of disseminating information on best practices, including those that utilize gendered governance policies;

(d) Implement programmes that encourage the use, especially by children, youth and educational institutions, of public libraries and communication networks;

(e) Facilitate the learning process through the dissemination of both successful and unsuccessful experiences in human settlements taken from the governmental, public, private and community sectors;

(f) Encourage policies that make information technology and services available and more accessible to the general public, in particular through the wide use of the media;

(f bis) Give special attention to providing access to these new technologies for persons with disabilities;

(f ter) Encourage the development of programming for local and national media that acknowledges the diversity of race and culture in larger cities and promotes an understanding of differing points of view;

(g) Promote the free flow of, and access to, information in areas of public policy, decision-making, resource allocation and social development, in particular that have an impact on women and children;

(g bis) Assure market competition and broad public access in the provision of communication and information technology through a public role in maintaining access to communication and information technology.

142 (bis). The dissemination of experiences that contribute to facilitating access to adequate housing for all and the development of sustainable human settlements is helpful in the formulation of public policies on human settlements development. National Governments, in partnership with social actors, should:

(a) Promote the selection of urban management practices that stand out because of their positive impact on improving the habitat, their use of participatory modes of organization and operation, their sustainable and lasting character and their tendency to become universal;

(b) Set up structures for the selection of best practices, with the participation of non-governmental organizations active in the urban development field;

(c) Promote dissemination of the practices, selected locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, in an integrated manner. 142 (ter). To increase the knowledge and strengthen the information base, Governments and local authorities, together with research institutions, statistical offices and other interested parties, should:

(a) Promote research on economic, social and environmental aspects related to urbanization, human settlements and shelter development, focusing on research priorities identified on the basis of national requirements and the need for systematic monitoring and assessment of development, including environmental and social impacts of human settlement policies, programmes and projects, and paying attention to gender specificities;

(b) Strengthen existing human settlements related information systems by adopting efficient and sustainable methodologies and institutional arrangements, by systematically incorporating research results and by complying, analysing and updating data for human settlements and shelter statistics and policy-sensitive indicators;

(c) Disseminate research indicators and other information widely, mainstream their results in policy-making at all levels and ensure a two-way flow of information between producers and users of information.
