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Agenda item 10

ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THE PRIVATE SECTOR,
PARLIAMENTARIANS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER
PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA

Report of Committee II

Addendum

Hearings involving representatives of the Academies of Science and
Engineering Forum and the Professionals and Researchers Forum

1. At its 7th meeting, on 6 June 1996, Committee II held hearings involving representatives of the Academies of Science and Engineering Forum and the Professionals and Researchers Forum.
2. Presentations were made by the following on behalf of the Academies of Science and Engineering Forum: Mr. F. Sherwood Rowland, Co-Chairman, InterAcademy Panel on International Issues, Foreign Secretary, National Academy of Sciences, United States of America; Mr. P.N. Tandon, Co-Chairman, InterAcademy Panel on International Issues, Indian National Science Academy, India; and Mr. Hans G. Forsberg, President, Council of Academies of Engineering and Technological Sciences, Sweden.
3. After the presentations, a dialogue/discussion took place between the partners and the representatives of the Philippines, Chile, the Sudan, Jordan, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania, Nigeria, India, Canada, Uganda, Brazil, Sweden, Italy, Morocco, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Swaziland, Cameroon, Yemen and Kazakstan.

4. The observer for Palestine also took part in the dialogue.
5. Presentations were made by Mr. Serge Domicelj, President, and Mr. S.K. Das, Vice-President, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), on behalf of the Professionals and Researchers Forum, which also included Mr. Haluk Alatan, President Elect, ISOCARP; Ms. Judith Ryser, ISOCARP; Mr. Peter Jonquière, Secretary-General, ISOCARP; and Ms. Zeynep Merey Enlil, Professor, Yildiz Technical University.
6. After the presentations, a dialogue/discussion took place between the partners and the representatives of France, the Philippines, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, China, Sudan, Brazil, Belgium and Trinidad and Tobago.
7. The Chairman's summary of the hearings is set out below:

Academies of Science and Engineering Forum

The presenters for the Academies of Science and Engineering Forum included the Co-Chairpersons for the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues, who discussed the organization and operations of the Panel. They also expressed their appreciation for having been invited to convene the Forum for Habitat II.

The statement by the World's Scientific Academies dealt with the challenges of an urban world. The presenters noted that cities are at a crossroads at which science and technology will have a crucial role, including responsibility for providing solutions and ensuring the long-term sustainability of cities and the ecosystems on which they depend. They conceded that a critical factor in the ability of science to contribute to solutions will be the education, training and capacity-building of local scientific and technical expertise.

The presenters also discussed the potential of science and technology for urban development and sustainability, highlighting the following new discoveries in science and engineering as potentially applicable to the amelioration of urban problems: computational capability, waste disposal and recycling, global positioning systems (GPS) and geographical information systems (GIS), biotechnology and ecological engineering and disease surveillance and control. They also elaborated on the need to develop an urban research agenda as well as on the local and national capacity-building aspects needed for sustainable cities.

As to the engineering field, the presenters explained that engineering enhances urban living in the areas of transport, food technology, communication, energy, public infrastructure, water, manufacturing and mining, and information technology.

In the discussion that ensued, delegates expressed their appreciation to the presenters as well as their appreciation of the work of science and technology in urban and human settlements development. Some delegates, however, expressed concern about the fact that the presentations concentrated on the city and did not recognize the rural population that is the majority in most developing countries. They wondered if science and technology had a solution to the endemic problem of rural to urban migration. Delegates also called on scientists and researchers to consider areas that require special attention, such as small island States and human settlements development in rural areas and seismic locations.

Many delegates recorded their concern that research in science and technology has remained very academic and removed from the mainstream socio-economic realities. The presenters pointed out that international cooperation within the scientific community was becoming more regionally based, which supports the consideration of solutions to problems of regional relevance and urgency. The question of the use of science and technology for destructive purposes was also raised. The presenters responded that the problem was in deciding how to use technology and that responsibility lay with those who make the decisions.

The sharing of research findings and information on science and technology was highlighted as crucial in the modern era. Multidisciplinary research centres or multinational centres should be established in appropriate locations to ensure effective dissemination of science and technology information.

There was considerable interest in continued research and development as well as in the dissemination of information, on the use of appropriate building technologies. Some expressed interest in the use of culturally traditional materials for building. Others cautioned that one should not concentrate on building materials to the exclusion of management issues or environmental awareness. The question of involving

women in science and technology was also raised. It was noted, however, that the situation has changed and more women are now involved in science and technology than was the case a few years ago.

The Academies of Science and Engineering Forum presented a consensus statement on the Habitat Agenda.

Professionals and Researchers Forum

A panel of planning professionals presented the Forum's message, which had been agreed upon at a meeting of the Forum on 30 and 31 May 1996. The Forum was attended by representatives of the International Society of City and Regional Planners and the Global Urban Research Initiative, among many other planning and research institutions from around the world.

Representatives of the Forum outlined the current state of planning and research and pointed out that development was currently marked by complex issues, uncertainty, rapid change and a decline in planning and research. They stated that globalization was already leading to growing polarization, fragmentation, social exclusion and conflict in cities. They informed the meeting that the "real-life" development of civic society in developing cities was emphasizing urban governance and that new alliances and roles would have to be forged to address the current crisis situation in the development of cities.

The presentation concluded with a proposal for new professional roles for planners and researchers and a statement of commitment towards a "social city", a city that does not undermine, sidetrack or indefinitely postpone social and environmental goals in favour of rapid development.

In a lively debate, delegates sought clarification on several points and raised questions concerning the relevance of planning in human settlements development. Exchange of research and planning information was highlighted as an area of concern by several delegates. Some felt that there was a need to research the positive aspects of developing countries and some of the negative aspects of developed countries to promote a more equitable exchange and justice.

The need to reorient the planning process was raised, with delegates supporting a concerted effort to relate theory to practice and local reality. The need to revamp the planning of school curricula to

make them relevant and responsive to changing situations was also highlighted. Delegates expressed a wish to see planning approaches that recognize traditional values and systems in human settlements development.

The presentations and the discussion underscored the crucial role that science and technology plays in human settlements development and the impact it has on the way humanity lives. The meeting also noted the transformation of the planning profession to make it more relevant to local realities. The academies of science and engineering and the professional planners and researchers will therefore make an important contribution in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
