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(HABITAT II)**

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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 United Nations  
system that are presenting comments concerning the  
participation of their organizations in the strategy for  
implementing the Habitat Agenda

1. At its 8th and 9th meetings, on 7 June 1996, Committee II held hearings involving representatives of the United Nations system that are presenting comments concerning the participation of their organizations in the strategy for implementing the Habitat Agenda.
2. At the 8th meeting, on 7 June, presentations were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development; the Director for Programme Coordination, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); the Director, Monetary and Exchange Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund; the Chief, Urban Development Division, Transportation, Water and Urban Development Department, World Bank; and the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme.
3. A dialogue/discussion followed between the representatives of the United Nations system and the representatives of India, Rwanda, the Philippines, Japan, Senegal, Togo, Nigeria, Jordan, Brazil, Chile and Germany.

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4. The observer for Palestine also took part in the dialogue.

5. At the 9th meeting, on 7 June, presentations were made by the Senior Adviser to the Executive Director and Executive Coordinator, Human Health and Well-Being, United Nations Environment Programme; the Chief, World Climate Applications and Services Programme Division, World Meteorological Organization; the Executive Director and Director, Division of Environmental Health, World Health Organization; the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund; the Senior Technical Officer, Population Data, Policy and Research Branch, Technical and Evaluation Division, United Nations Population Fund; the Chief, Communications and External Relations, United Nations Development Fund for Women; the Special Adviser to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights; the Director, Development and Technical Cooperation Department, International Labour Organization; the Assistant Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and the Chief, ESCAP/UNCHS Joint Section on Human Settlements, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, on behalf of the regional commissions.

6. After the presentations, a dialogue/discussion took place between the representatives of the United Nations system and the representatives of the Philippines, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mauritania, Nigeria, India, Equatorial Guinea, South Africa, Italy, Brazil, Ghana, Cameroon, Barbados, the United States of America, Turkey, the Sudan and Liberia.

7. The observer for Palestine took part in the dialogue.

8. The representatives of local authorities and the International Alliance Association, a non-governmental organization, also took part in the dialogue.

9. The Chairman's summary of the hearings is set out below:

Contribution of the United Nations system  
to the Habitat II hearings

The meeting benefited from presentations by the representatives of the United Nations system, who discussed the intended contribution of their organizations in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development provided an overview of the United Nations system-wide efforts in support of the integrated follow-up to its global servicing of the Conference. He emphasized that the United Nations system carries out

those functions that national Governments ask it to perform and for which funds are provided. United Nations organizations do not act independently, but follow the specific mandates given to them by their governing bodies.

For effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the existing coordination within the United Nations system will be continued. To illustrate this, he cited the linkage between the Habitat Agenda and the Commission on Sustainable Development through implementation of the human settlements dimensions of Agenda 21, where the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is the task manager. He asserted that the United Nations system as a whole is conscious of the fact that there has to be a shift from consensus-building and policy development to implementation. In the years to come, the United Nations system will be judged not just in terms of its ability to stage major events but for its effectiveness in translating intentions into actions and promises into performance.

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

The representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) stated that the preparations for the Conference clearly demonstrated the opportunities for new and improved methods of cooperation for implementing the Habitat II national plans of action and the Habitat Agenda. He emphasized that Habitat's approach was premised on innovative and effective partnerships between all the key actors and stakeholders, on maximum use of national and local expertise, on the leveraging of public, private and community resources, and on learning and disseminating best practice experiences and expertise. The stress on partnerships with leaders of local authorities and civic society throughout the preparatory process linked the commitments of government with those of the major stakeholders in human settlements development and laid the groundwork for practical modalities relating to post-Conference cooperation. A key function of Habitat in the immediate future will be to work closely with Governments and local authorities to translate these modalities into concrete forms of sustained dialogue between stakeholders, to strengthen institutional capacity, investment programming and inter-agency cooperation and to encourage networking between human settlements interest groups. To be able to play its

catalytic role fully, Habitat intends to strengthen its funding base and make any necessary organizational adjustments before the end of 1997.

The representative of Habitat referred to the partnerships that had brought about the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities as an example of the benefits of partnerships. He congratulated the local authorities for having agreed on a single spokesperson and a focused agenda, noting that this is the kind of cooperation that will characterize the Centre's post-Habitat II activities.

The work of Habitat as the secretariat of the Conference was appreciated by the delegates, several of whom called for the decentralization of the Centre's operations to regional offices so as to provide an immediate response to local realities. Delegates also welcomed the idea that the Commission on Human Settlements might be expanded to include local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector in the work of the Commission so as to help define the Centre's work programme in response to common priorities in the areas of shelter and sustainable urban development. This would support Habitat's effort to strengthen and further develop its partnerships with local authorities, the private sector and NGOs established during the preparation of Habitat II.

Habitat headquarters coordinates the global programming and backstopping of its operational activities from Nairobi. A new Habitat regional office, soon to open in Rio de Janeiro with the sponsorship of that city and the Government of Brazil, will focus on the programming and backstopping of the Centre's operational activities in the Latin America and Caribbean region. A similar regional presence in Asia is under active consideration.

Habitat's Housing and Urban Indicators Programme and the Best Practices Initiative have emerged as two important tools to support the implementation and monitoring of both the Habitat Agenda and the national plans of action. In addition, Member States are considering continuing their broad-based Habitat National Committees, set up during the Habitat II preparatory process, to support and monitor implementation.

United Nations Development Programme

The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated that Habitat II constitutes a turning-point. He argued

that the role of local authorities has been of particular importance. Many of them gave meaning to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by taking Agenda 21 to heart, emerging as essential partners in the global dialogue and key players in addressing some of the biggest challenges of the twenty-first century.

He underscored UNDP assistance to developing countries in the preparations for the Conference and its promotion of dialogues at the regional and global levels. He reiterated the UNDP mandate of promoting people-centred development through support to the thematic, multisectoral programmes of national Governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other partners. He further stated that Habitat II gives UNDP a unique opportunity to listen to the voices of its partners. This is critically important, because UNDP will not have enough resources to do everything that is required. The representative assured the Committee that UNDP will continue to promote technical cooperation among developing countries at the human settlements level, disseminate best practices through its network of country offices and be instrumental in assisting mutual technical and financial commitments between developed and developing countries and other partners.

During the discussion the representative of UNDP explained that the Urban Management Programme (UMP), which he had given as an example of inter-agency cooperation, was also bilaterally funded and that its third phase was being launched at Habitat II by the World Bank, UNDP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and various bilateral donors.

#### International Monetary Fund

The representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) informed the meeting that, as a follow-up to United Nations global conferences, the Fund addresses the issues by incorporating the major recommendations emanating from the global conferences into policy dialogues with each member country. The Fund collaborates and coordinates, where appropriate, its activities with the United Nations system in general and, more specifically, with the specialized agencies, in pursuit of common global economic, social and related issues for sustainable development. As regards the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the representative pointed out that the Fund could be involved

through technical assistance and policy advice, if requested by the authorities, and by reaching out to local authorities, informing them of the Fund's general dialogue with the central Government and receiving inputs from them.

Delegates raised questions on the operations of the Fund, particularly as they relate to social issues. Of particular importance is the collaborative interaction between the Fund, local authorities and the private sector to help direct more private sector funding into urban housing and infrastructure.

#### World Bank

The World Bank representative informed the meeting that, for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the World Bank proposes launching a compact with developing countries to support the provision of basic urban services, to clean up the urban environment and to strengthen urban finance. The Bank will allocate some \$15 billion over the next five years and has to be matched by developing countries in a commitment to the formulation of the strategic frameworks necessary to reduce poverty in urban areas.

During the discussions, delegates expressed concern about the way the Fund and the World Bank conduct business. They cautioned against cooperation that may not put the interests of the beneficiaries before those of the institution, as has been the case. An ongoing dialogue between the Bank and local authorities was urged.

#### United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) representative began by reminding the delegates that the mandate of UNEP has always been focused on the human environment and that the mandate was modified and sharpened by Agenda 21, which set tasks for the organization in promoting progress towards a more suitable future. The representative cited a number of programmes in which UNEP has cooperated with other United Nations organizations. He paid particular attention to the Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP), executed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), whose implementation has established a promising coordination mechanism in UNEP, Habitat and all the partners. SCP will be the chief mechanism in enabling UNEP to contribute to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Delegates sought to know the link

between SCP and the implementation of Local Agenda 21 initiatives. In response, the presenters explained that both are addressing environmental programmes at the local level. SCP concentrates on the urban level, however, and is getting good results and support from mayors.

United Nations Children's Fund

The presenter began by discussing the two major urban settlement activities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the past: Urban Basic Services, which was launched 20 years ago, and the Mayors' Defenders of Children Initiative, which was initiated in Dakar, Senegal in 1992. UNICEF has learned very valuable lessons from these urban interventions and intends to build on them in contributing to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. One lesson that has been learned is the need for disaggregated statistics.

During the discussion, the participants pointed out some practical strategies and mechanisms that would involve all sectors of society in creating supportive and safe communities. Delegates called for the integration of the national plans of action for the World Summit for Children, the Earth Summit (Agenda 21) and Habitat II into a single plan for human development at the local level in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In collaboration with national Governments, UNICEF will work with local authorities and NGOs to develop the collection of local-level data on the condition of children in cities. Several speakers stressed that Governments, local authorities and NGOs must actively promote and strengthen actions for the rights and well-being of children, the ultimate indicators of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance.

Joint programmes should be implemented by Governments and local authorities in conjunction with international organizations, the business community, trade unions, and NGOs and civil society to give priority at the local level in all human settlements policies to the needs of children, with special attention to children in very difficult circumstances. Particular attention should be given to street children, exploited and sexually abused children, children caught in wars, very young mothers, handicapped children, and working children and to their

need for safe and liveable homes, essential infrastructures and services and protective legislation on child labour, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### United Nations Population Fund

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) attaches great importance to Habitat II because population issues and human settlement issues are closely interlinked. Successful population programmes will vitally affect the course of economic as well as social development. The growth of urban population reflects the fact that world population is currently increasing at a rate of 1 billion people every 11 years. Such growth is not inevitable. The International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 agreed on the need to stabilize world population through education on reproductive health and family planning. It is in this context that UNFPA, along with other organizations in the population field, can, and will, contribute to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. UNFPA will also contribute in the follow-up by supporting policy research in the areas of internal migration, urbanization, migration from other countries and natural population increase and by facilitating the work of local authorities and NGOs. Delegates raised the issue of street children and recommended that the United Nations system take steps to develop a coordinated effort to address the problem.

#### World Health Organization

World Health Organization (WHO) support to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action is guided by the central concern of human settlements to sustain and improve human health and well-being. The principal programme thrusts of WHO apply directly to the Habitat Agenda. They are: integrating health and human development policies for human settlements, promoting and protecting health, preventing and controlling specific health problems, and ensuring equitable access to health services. They are implemented in partnership with United Nations organizations, Member States and, increasingly, local authorities and NGOs in such programmes as the Healthy Cities Programme, which currently includes 1,000 cities globally, and the Global Strategy for Health and Environment. Delegates expressed the wish to see the Healthy Cities Programme linked with SCP and Local Agenda 21 activities. One delegate pointed out the absence of attention to sports for health and that modern



technology does not allow people to exercise enough. Another delegate asked that WHO combine forces to help attract more private support for water and sewage treatment facilities, stating that, with fees to amortize bonds, these could be self-supporting.

#### United Nations Centre for Human Rights

All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. They include the right to adequate housing, which was given impetus by the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration has been integrated into ongoing human rights activities, including the work of human rights treaty bodies, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission on Human Rights.

Delegates called for the integration of the strategies of the Habitat Agenda with ongoing and future human rights activities, including the work of human rights treaty bodies. They also called for cooperation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the Centre for Human Rights to be further strengthened on the basis of recommendations in the Habitat Agenda and suggested that advisory services and technical assistance be established. The question of the rights of refugees and facilitation of their safe return was raised.

#### World Meteorological Organization

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is committed to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and in translating Conference recommendations into meaningful actions in the areas of urban planning and operations within the framework of WMO contributions to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. WMO also has unique competence and long experience in observing, measuring, collecting and analysing geophysical data and information. Delegates emphasized the need for accurate and up-to-date information, a need that is often overlooked, especially in the urban areas of the developing countries.

#### International Labour Organization

The statement of the International Labour Organization (ILO) highlighted the problem of the trend towards higher unemployment and underemployment among city dwellers in both developed and developing countries and argued that joblessness is an outcome of the urbanization of poverty. ILO will work towards the creation of more than 1 million

jobs by the year 2025. It is important that these be productive, freely chosen, remunerated employment opportunities that add to the social and economic fabric of the city. ILO will contribute to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through assisting Governments in designing economic policies to create employment opportunities and address poverty. ILO will also pay particular attention to women and child labour. The ILO representative pointed out that the local level has long been neglected while ILO has focused on the national level and the private sector. To correct this, ILO is planning to launch an urban employment programme to give specific attention to urban unemployment, which is on the increase world wide. Delegates wondered if the ILO was paying attention to the plight of middle-career workers in the developed countries who are being laid off due to advances in technology and suggested that actions should be taken, particularly in the areas of employment security programmes in the short-run and improved education programmes for long-run improvement to address the situation.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The contribution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda will centre on disseminating information and deepening the knowledge of all actors in human settlements. UNESCO will continue its support of research on social development issues, such as urban violence, social change and the resolution of conflicts. The presenter argued that the solutions to these problems lie in effective participation at the local level, working closely with local authorities. Education of women is critically important.

During the discussions, it was emphasized that attention should be given to cultural values in human settlements development and that UNESCO should continue supporting applied social research as part of its contribution to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The preventive work of UNESCO in addressing violence in schools was commended. Delegates also called on UNESCO to establish offices in more countries to bring their activities closer to the people.

United Nations Development Fund for Women

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) will continue with the promotion of women's access to opportunities and

improved living conditions in a violence-free society. The presenter informed the meeting that the problem is not that there are no laws providing for women's rights, but rather that the laws are not put into practice. There is also a problem of women not knowing and therefore not demanding their rights. These rights include equal access to land and employment and equal access to the accumulated assets of the family. To combat the feminization of poverty and to assure a stronger presence of women in positions of leadership, women must be encouraged and trained to run for elected office, especially at the local government level, since women are close to the local environment and are particularly sensitive to local needs.

Delegates were very pleased with the UNIFEM community level programmes of educating women concerning their rights, using simplified legal language. They called for this activity to be stepped up in the UNIFEM contribution to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. A woman mayor described the importance of women serving in elective office at the local level and encouraged UNIFEM to work collaboratively with local authorities in the implementation of programmes, following the collection of data and experiences to substantiate "best practices" in the area of empowerment and the preparation of women for positions of leadership.

#### United Nations regional commissions

The regional commissions attach great importance to the Habitat Agenda and regard it as a blueprint for national, regional and international action that will carry us into the next century. The regional commissions will work with Governments and regional and international associations of local authorities, NGOs, the private sector, academic institutions and others to develop regional human settlements plans of action addressing priority issues specific to the regional context. Such plans could be integrated into future reassessments of the Habitat Agenda, and their findings reported to the Commission on Human Settlements at an appropriate time during the United Nations system-wide programming cycle.

#### General comments

Delegates expressed their appreciation for the way in which the organizations of the United Nations system have worked together to

prepare for Habitat II. They hoped that this coordinated effort would be carried into the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. One delegation pointed out the conspicuous absence of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in view of the importance of land use and food production.

In response to a request from delegates, the Chairman of Committee II informed the meeting that copies of the statements presented by the representatives of the United Nations system would be made available to delegates, as would the Chairman's summary of the main points of the proceedings.

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