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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

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Rapporteur: Mr. Pavel Suian (Romania)

Addendum

Chapter -. GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR SHELTER TO THE YEAR 2000
(Agenda item 5)

A. Introduction

1. The Commission considered agenda item 5 at its 2nd and 5th plenary meetings, on 28 and 30 April, in the context of the general debate on items 4, 5 and 6. Committee II considered the item at its 2nd meeting on 29 April. Before the Commission were the report of the Executive Director on implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (HS/C/16/3) and the fifth report of the Commission on Human Settlements to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (HS/C/16/3/Add.1).

* Reissued for technical reasons.

2. The item was introduced in the plenary by the Assistant Secretary-General. He informed delegations that the two documents provided a brief overview of progress being made in the implementation of the Global Strategy, with action by Member States under each of the 14 policy indicators considered by the Commission at its twelfth session.

3. The fifth report of the Commission to the General Assembly was based largely on information provided by Member States, either directly to the Centre or in the respective national plans of action prepared for Habitat II. The Assistant Secretary-General pointed out that the plan of action for 1998-1999 (chapt. III of the report) was brief, unlike the plans of action in previous reports submitted by the Commission, because the Habitat Agenda already contained an extensive set of relevant actions to which Governments had committed themselves. The Assistant Secretary-General stressed that the report needed to be finalized by the Commission at the current session and invited delegations to review it and provide the secretariat with any changes they might wish to introduce.

4. The Assistant Secretary-General then went on to underscore the uniqueness of the Global Strategy as a programme of international cooperation in the area of adequate shelter for all. While it was still too early to assess the full measure of the Strategy's success, the strategy had already set in motion two processes which had the potential of achieving the ultimate objective of adequate shelter for all - namely, the inclusion of civil society, through the institutionalization of enabling principles in the planning and management and development of human settlements, and movement towards the realization of the human right to adequate housing. Those qualitative achievements and advances were informing national policy in the shelter sector in many countries and had strongly influenced the drafting of the Habitat Agenda, and all the principles that formed the basis of the Global Strategy were firmly incorporated into the Agenda. However, the real impact of national policies on people, and especially on the poor and disadvantaged, could only be measured through the application of housing and

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urban indicators. The Assistant Secretary-General drew the attention of the Commission to the conclusions of the documents being considered under the item, which indicated that in most developing countries, although much effort was underway, there was a need for more concerted action in the areas of security of tenure, land supply, and access to housing finance by all income groups. For further information on those matters, the Assistant Secretary-General brought to the attention of the Commission the second global report on human settlements, An Urbanizing World, which provided an assessment of the current state of the world's human settlements.

B. Discussion

1. Plenary

5. Several delegates elaborated on the achievements of their governments in the provision of shelter during the past decade. One delegation identified lack of an efficient housing market, housing finance, finance for infrastructure, appropriate technology and of community participation as the main constraints to effective housing delivery. The delegation stressed that, if sustainable delivery of human settlements were to be fully realized, an enabling environment would need to be created. Other delegations briefed the meeting on new national housing policies being formulated and implemented in consultation with representatives of all stakeholders, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations. One delegation reported on the steadily increasing migration of rural people to urban areas and called for the provision of non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas. One delegation noted that the Global Strategy for Shelter could be dealt with as part of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, since the goals of the Strategy were identical to the shelter-related goals of the Agenda.

6. Several delegations commended the secretariat on the reports prepared under the agenda item, which were very informative. It was also stressed however, that more elaboration on the implementation of the Global Strategy

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and on the outcome of the Habitat II Conference would give a more complete picture of what was happening in the field of shelter. Since international cooperation had been identified in the reports before the Committee as a continuing weakness in the implementation of the Global Strategy, and since the Habitat Agenda was expected to place stronger focus on that particular and important aspect, a number of delegations supported the need to promote international cooperation in the field of shelter in the context of both the Global Strategy and the Habitat Agenda.

7. One delegation pointed out that there were some discrepancies between the information presented on the status of the implementation of the Global Strategy in countries in general, and the conclusions reached in the reports. The delegation cited the examples of access to land and affordability of housing as areas where it would be difficult and not very meaningful to make generalizations. The delegation also stressed the need for establishing a clear monitoring process, or improving existing processes, so as to achieve greater clarity, integrating the implementation of the Global Strategy with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and incorporating the roles and contributions of main actors in the shelter field, such as local authorities, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations.

2. Committee II

8. One delegation expressed the view that it would be very useful if the information contained in the reports could be continuously updated and further elaborated on, so that the most recent information on countries could be made available.

9. With reference to the issue of housing rights, one delegation pointed out the need to use the agreed language and terminology of the Habitat Agenda and said that the phrase in paragraph 6 of document HS/C/16/3 which read "...

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towards the implementation of the basic human right to adequate housing" should be amended to read "... towards the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing".

10. Another delegation, stressing the importance and priority of housing in the development process, stated that quality of housing should be used as an important indicator to measure the well-being of communities and humanity in general.

11. Referring to the importance of housing finance, one delegation described developments in its country in promoting housing affordability and pointed out that low-income groups were benefiting from the low interest rates on housing loans provided through the national social security fund, which was also financing shelter development, among other sectors.

12. One delegation stressed the importance of the local level in the implementation of both the Global Strategy and the Habitat Agenda and requested the secretariat to focus more on the role of local communities in shelter development.

13. The representative of a non-governmental organization expressed the view that provision of shelter to low-income groups at affordable cost was the main objective of the Global Strategy. He mentioned that in a majority of developing countries, people were constructing houses with their own means, without any assistance, and that those initiatives should be supported by public sector actions. He stressed that support for people's processes for housing provision was at the core of the Global Strategy's approach and expressed disappointment that progress in that regard in most countries was not up to the expectations of many millions of people in need of decent shelter. The representative further explained that in the implementation of

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the Global Strategy, more emphasis and support should be given to the implementation of people's processes for shelter provision; a review and improvement in relevant organizational and institutional structures; and capacity-building at the community level and the promotion of community actions.

C. Action taken by the Commission

14. At its ... plenary meeting on 7 May 1997, the Commission adopted the following resolutions, which are reproduced in annex ... of the present report.
