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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Draft proceedings of the Commission on Human Settlements
at its sixteenth session

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Addendum

Chapter -. THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO SHELTER
AND RELATED SERVICES (Agenda item 8)

A. Introduction

1. Committee II considered item 8 at its 6th meeting, on 1 May. It had before it the report of the Executive Director on the rights of the child, particularly with respect to shelter and related services (HS/C/16/9). A number of children addressed the Committee, through poems, songs and testimonies, on their perception of habitat issues. They also handed a declaration on habitat issues to the Chairperson of the Committee.

2. In introducing the report, the representative of the Assistant Secretary-General noted that the Habitat Agenda referred to children's well-being as one of the most important indicators for healthy and sustainable human settlements. He went on to note that all of the activities cited in the report, undertaken in response to Commission resolution 15/14, were implemented in very close collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The close collaboration had resulted in an important initiative on "child-friendly cities" and an international workshop, "Africa's Urban Poor Child: Towards African Child-friendly Cities", held in Accra in March 1997.

B. Discussion

3. Many delegations commended the Centre on the report and requested the Assistant Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its seventeenth session on the issue. The delegations endorsed the strategy for promoting child-centred human settlements development and the main areas for action, as outlined in the report. They also noted the importance of the full participation of all actors, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, the public and private sectors etc., as partners in the initiative.

4. Several delegations stressed that, in trying to improve the living conditions of children, special attention had to be paid to the family and special programmes devised for its protection, especially in difficult circumstances. Several delegations noted that shelter and related services had strong impacts on health. A number of delegations noted that special attention should be given to street children, who had been on the increase in most developing countries, and to other children in especially difficult circumstances. Others outlined the importance of providing children with an opportunity to participate fully in the management of human settlements and related programmes. Some recalled a series of children's events held on World Water Day 1996, and the parallel event held on 29 April, during the session of the Commission, was noted.

5. A number of delegations noted that, although poor urban children might be worse off than poor rural children, the majority of children in developing countries still lived in rural areas. Thus in reference to child-centred human settlements development, rural children living in small towns and villages should be included.

6. One delegation noted that UNICEF had the lead mandate relating to children and expressed concern that no duplication of effort should occur. It was noted that all initiatives on child-centred human settlements development should be based on close cooperation between UNICEF and UNCHS (Habitat). Other delegations were pleased with the close collaboration between UNICEF and UNCHS (Habitat) and encouraged it, especially within the framework of the child-friendly cities initiative.
