



UNITED
NATIONS

HS



**Commission on
Human Settlements**

Distr.
GENERAL

HS/C/5/5
17 February 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifth session
Nairobi, 26 April - 7 May 1982
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

Report of the Executive Director

SUMMARY

Despite international and national efforts made since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in 1976, the standards and availability of shelter, infrastructure and services for the majority of people, especially those living below the poverty line, have largely worsened in both relative and absolute terms. This report begins with a brief account of the events leading to General Assembly resolution 36/71 in which the General Assembly decided, in principle, to designate 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Chapter I of the report lists problems, constraints and opportunities for action and describes the interrelationship between shelter and economic development. Chapter II outlines the proposed objectives, strategy and criteria for the International Year. This is followed in chapter III by specific guidelines for national and international action. Chapter IV deals with the role of the Commission on Human Settlements and that of UNCHS (Habitat), and chapter V contains a time-frame for the activities connected with the Year. The annex presents a summary of the administrative implications of and cost estimates for the International Year. This report, together with the observations and recommendations of the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, will form the basis for the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

INTRODUCTION

1. On 29 September 1980, H.E. Prime Minister Premadasa of Sri Lanka made the following statement to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly:

"Mr. President, a large part of my life and my own political endeavours have been in the fields of local government and housing. The need, therefore, for involving the people in the decision-making process, both locally as well as internationally, is clear to me.

I see the provision of adequate housing as a basic aspect in the global assault on poverty. We must eliminate the problems of overcrowding, insanitation and insecurity. Housing is important in creating the environment in which our people have to live.

In the rush for development, urbanization has run out of control, spawning ugly slums and ghettos, depopulating rural areas and overcrowding conurbations. Urban poverty, congestion and squalor are problems common to many of our developing countries.

It is said that as much as 20 per cent of our people are seriously under-nourished in the developing countries; 50 per cent do not have safe water; 60 per cent do not have proper health care; 20 per cent of the babies die before they reach the age of 5.

There are equally depressing figures for unemployment, education and other basic needs. Each of us, in our own way, are attempting to tackle these formidable problems. It is my belief that housing provides a key to the solution of several of these disabilities.

The problem of housing is not confined to Sri Lanka. It is not a problem confined to Asia. It is a global problem."

2. The Prime Minister then proposed the declaration of a special international year dedicated to the problems of the millions of people who were homeless or lived in shanties and substandard houses - the poorest of the poor throughout the world.

3. The General Assembly, in its resolution 35/76 of 5 December 1980:

(a) Expressed the view that an international year devoted to the problems of homeless people in urban and rural areas in the developing countries could be an appropriate occasion to focus the attention of the international community on those problems;

(b) Requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), after appropriate consultations with Governments, to report to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Human Settlements, on the implications of declaring an international year.

4. The subsequent report of the Executive Director (HS/C/4/2/Add.2) was endorsed by the Commission on Human Settlements in its resolution 4/2. The Commission requested the Executive Director to transmit his report, with the Commission's comments, to the Economic and Social Council for preliminary review at its second regular session of 1981.

5. The Commission also recommended to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, the adoption at its thirty-sixth session of a draft resolution which proposed, inter alia:

(a) The proclamation of 1986 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

(b) The designation of the Commission on Human Settlements to act as the United Nations intergovernmental body responsible for organizing the International Year;

(c) The entrusting of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) with the responsibility of guiding the work of the Secretariat for the International Year and reporting to the Secretary-General.

6. That draft resolution also:

(a) Invited all States, all specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to make every possible effort to contribute to the preparation and holding of the International Year;

(b) Stressed the importance of fully mobilizing the resources and skills of the homeless themselves;

(c) Requested reports for the fifth session of the Commission and the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the objectives, programme and financial implications for the International Year;

(d) Invited States not members of the Commission on Human Settlements, the specialized agencies and the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to participate as observers in the work of the Commission related to the International Year;

(e) Called for widespread publicity for the activities of the United Nations system related to the homeless;

(f) Appealed for generous voluntary contributions in support of the programme of the International Year.

7. At its second regular session of 1981, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1981/69 B in which it, inter alia:

(a) Took note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (HS/C/4/2/Add.2) and of the note of the Secretary-General on the proposal to declare an international year devoted to the problems of the homeless (E/1981/83);

(b) Recommended to the General Assembly the year 1987 as an appropriate year for the holding of the International Year, provided that the arrangements necessary for its financing had been made, which should in principle be based on voluntary contributions;

(c) Recommended the preparation by the Secretary-General of a report on the financial and organizational implications of holding the International Year in 1987 to be submitted through the Commission on Human Settlements at its fifth session to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1982.

8. Taking into account the reports and recommendations cited above, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/71 on 4 December 1981 in which it:

(a) Decided, in principle, to designate 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, on the understanding that the criteria for financing and organizing international years set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 would be complied with;

(b) Requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to prepare a proposal containing a specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and to report to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Human Settlements;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to prepare, on the basis of the above-mentioned proposal, a report on the organizational matters regarding the holding of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987, including the availability of voluntary funds, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session through the Economic and Social Council during 1982;

(d) Appealed to all States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the public at large to indicate appropriate support for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

I. THE ISSUES

9 Adequate housing is universally recognized as one of the principal factors contributing to human health and well-being, and a number of recommendations of the 1976 Habitat Conference referred to the need for national action in this sector. For example: 1/

(a) "The informal sector should be supported in its efforts to provide shelter, infrastructure and services, especially for the least advantaged" (recommendation C.8);

(b) "National housing policies must aim at providing adequate shelter and services to the lower income groups, distributing available resources on the basis of greatest needs" (recommendation C.9);

(c) "A major part of housing policy efforts should consist of programmes and instruments which actively assist people in continuing to provide better quality housing for themselves, individually or co-operatively" (recommendation C.10);

(d) "Governments should concentrate on the provision of services and on the physical and spatial reorganization of spontaneous settlements in ways that encourage community initiative and link 'marginal' groups to the national development process" (recommendation C.17).

10 Subsequent international conferences and forums and the conclusions and programmes of action emerging from them, notably the United Nations Water Conference, the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology, the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, the International Year of the Child, the New Delhi Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrialization of Developing Countries and International Co-operation for their Industrial Development, the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, the International Year of Disabled Persons and the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, have all identified shelter and human settlements as a major area of action in the field of national development and international co-operation, mostly with particular emphasis on the needs of the poor.

11. Despite continued international and national efforts related to the provision of shelter and basic infrastructure, present rates of shelter construction are grossly inadequate and in many cases fall below the replacement rate. As a result, the majority of the world's present population, and especially those living below the poverty line, will in the years to come have to either share already crowded older housing, thereby hastening its deterioration to a state

1/ Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May - 11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chap. II.

beyond repair, or build makeshift shelter in areas lacking most if not all sanitary facilities and services.

12. A major factor contributing to this situation is the continuing rapid growth of the world's urban and rural population, particularly in the developing countries. Between 1950 and 1975, the world's total population grew from about 2,500 million to about 4,000 million, an increase of 60 per cent. Most of the 1,500 million increase - about 1,200 million - occurred in the less developed regions, where the total population surged by more than 70 per cent, from about 1,650 million in 1950 to about 2,830 million in 1975. The growth of the urban population, pushed up by the enormous migration from rural to urban areas, has been even more dramatic. The world's urban population more than doubled between 1950 and 1975, from 727 million to 1,574 million, and in the less developed regions urban population almost trebled - from about 283 million to 827 million.

13. Given these rapid rates of population growth, it has been extremely difficult for most of the developing countries, with their modest rates of growth in income, to produce adequate quantities of even the most basic types of housing or to provide drinking water, sanitary waste disposal systems and other community facilities. During the first half of the 1970s, in the 30 (approximately) developing countries for which data are available, the number of conventional housing units built was equivalent to only one third of the number of new households formed. The other two thirds of new households had to double up in already overcrowded slums or build their own makeshift shelter in the numerous, rapidly-growing squatter settlements which have sprung up in and around virtually every city in the developing world. Even the "conventional" units occupied by the more fortunate one third of the new households are on the whole quite modest. A "conventional dwelling", as defined by the United Nations, is just a room or rooms for household use in "a structure which may be expected to maintain its stability for 10 years or more". 2/ A large share of existing conventional dwellings, as well as most non-conventional dwellings, lack running water, sewage disposal facilities and electricity.

A. Summary of problems and issues to be addressed

14. Activities before and during the International Year would focus on the basic shelter and related-infrastructure needs of the poorest of the poor in urban and rural areas, because at present:

(a) Some of the poor lack shelter altogether and are truly homeless, while the rest suffer from congestion and squalor which seriously threaten their physical and mental health;

(b) Due to the combined effects of inadequate shelter and lack of access to safe water and basic sewage-disposal and sanitation facilities, they will continue to suffer from high infant mortality rates, a low life expectancy and a high incidence of disease;

2/ World Housing Survey 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.IV.8), annex I

(c) Most lack security of tenure and their shelters are often constructed on marginal lands which are often vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods and landslides and to other environmental and fire hazards;

(d) They do not have access to public transportation, either because it does not extend to their neighbourhood or because the cost is too high, and consequently they have little or no access to health facilities, education and welfare services;

(e) Those in slum and squatter settlements lack access to cheap building materials, and many also lack the technical and organizational skills necessary for achieving anything but marginal improvements in their shelter and settlements.

15. While these are the specific issues and problems to be addressed before and during the International Year, they are also manifestations of larger problems which constrain present efforts to improve the shelter and settlements of the rural and urban poor. Unless these constraints are also addressed, future efforts to improve the situation are unlikely to succeed for the majority of those below the poverty line.

B. Constraints and opportunities for action

16. The poor, particularly in rural, peri-urban and shanty-town areas, are not only underprivileged in relation to education, health care, job opportunities and other basic needs but are also deprived of the opportunity to participate in development and to realize their potential as fully fledged members of society. Perhaps the most far-reaching social effect is their sense of diminished human dignity and their perception that they lack any reason to identify with society. Social dysfunction and disruption are clearly the most dangerous possible outcomes, should their plight be neglected.

17. However, experience in both developed and developing countries has clearly indicated that the poor need not be considered as victims of development, nor should they necessarily be treated as a special object of welfare. The poor should and can be mobilized as an integral part of public participation in the development process. Their inherent ingenuity and capacity for survival can be tapped as a resource, and programmes geared towards helping the poor to help themselves should become part and parcel of the philosophy, the policy and the programme of societal development and nation building. Within such a framework, practical and useful programmes and projects can be developed so as to ensure the participation of the poor in the fulfilment of their basic needs and the achievement of their fundamental right to decent and affordable shelter.

18. Although conditions vary greatly from country to country, some major constraints and opportunities relating to the improvement of the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor can be identified and are discussed below.

(a) Land and tenure

19. Many of those in slum and squatter areas and as many as one third of the rural population do not have title to the land they occupy and have little hope of acquiring it. The problem often concerns not a shortage of available land but questions of price and such institutional factors as concentration of ownership,

confusing titles, cumbersome legal systems and unrealistic size and occupancy stipulations. Without access to land at prices they can afford or without at least some security of tenure on the land they do occupy, low-income groups have little incentive to invest their time and limited resources in improving their shelter and neighbourhoods. There is a need and opportunity before and during the International Year to examine some of the already successful methods, and new ways and means of providing tenure or at least security of tenure for the rural and urban poor with a view to meeting their needs for basic shelter, related physical infrastructure and services.

(b) Institutional factors

20. A major constraint is that local authorities and state governments often lack trained personnel and the funding base even to maintain local infrastructure and services, let alone fund and implement major housing or upgrading programmes. Many authorities lack even official maps of their settlements, which are essential for effective land and housing policies. There is a need and opportunity before and during the International Year for national Governments and the international agencies which fund development activities to strengthen existing efforts and demonstrate new ways and means of strengthening the ability of local and state authorities to meet the need for improved shelter and public services, especially for those below the poverty line.

(c) Legal and administrative framework

21. In many countries, the existing bye-laws and standards for planning and construction constitute an obstacle to the satisfaction of the needs of the poor and the improvement of shelter and related infrastructure, and to some extent such bye-laws and standards make slums and squatter settlements inevitable. Inappropriate standards lead to increased unit costs and prices, not only placing conventional housing out of the reach of the majority of the population but also creating a demand on the part of middle-income groups for "low-cost" housing; the middle-income groups thus displace the lowest-income groups which were the real intended beneficiaries. The private and the semi-public and public construction sectors alike stand to benefit from a suitable revision of building codes and regulations. Consequently, there is a need and opportunity before and during the International Year to consolidate and apply recent experience and to re-examine and adapt present standards in order to meet the needs of the poor by striking a better balance between what is desirable in terms of health and safety and what is affordable by the majority of households and by the nation as a whole.

(d) Financial factors

22. The conventional mortgage schemes used in financing low-cost housing are in the majority of cases beyond the means of the lowest income groups. This is due mainly to unrealistic eligibility requirements and loan conditions and is especially true in the informal housing sector, squatter settlements and traditional rural housing. Here the lack of conventional collaterals, insecurity of tenure and the low level and irregularity of income, combined with cultural and informational barriers, prevent the utilization of conventional financing. There is thus a need and opportunity before and during the

International Year to examine ways and means of improving existing credit schemes, developing non-conventional credit facilities and enhancing the access of the poor to financial arrangements and facilities.

(e) Low-cost building materials and techniques

23. Recent applied research and development programmes now make it unnecessary and undesirable to continue using capital-intensive and expensive techniques in the field of housing construction and settlement servicing. The importation of building materials and dependence on inappropriate technologies not only place considerable stress on limited national resources but rarely benefit the poorest segments of the population. Furthermore, such technologies frequently represent a source of environmental pollution and a high degree of energy waste. Both developed and developing countries stand to gain by exploring locally available resources and applying adapted traditional technologies and basic ingenuity to housing and settlement problems. In the particular case of those below the poverty line, access to low-cost, locally produced building materials could achieve dramatic results in enabling local builders and user groups to provide their own housing and effect great cost savings in the provision of public services. However, the lack of consolidated information on the operational aspects of technological innovations makes it difficult for any authority or end-user to make realistic assessments of what constitutes an appropriate choice or a viable alternative to existing approaches. Consequently, there is a need and an opportunity before and during the International Year to disseminate such information on a wider basis.

24. One of the major lessons learned at and since the 1976 Habitat Conference is that most Governments find it difficult or impossible to build conventional dwellings for their growing populations and to improve or replace their existing low-quality housing stock. While the very nature of housing problems ensures that no single approach can offer an optimal framework for future policies, certain methods of utilizing scarce resources have evolved over the past decade into pragmatic solutions.

25. One of these approaches involves the sites-and-services and upgrading programmes which generally provide those in low-income groups with a site or security of tenure, basic services, some technical assistance and access to credit for building and improving their own shelter. Although sites-and-services and upgrading programmes require that households assume part of the cost of and responsibility for construction and improvement and are rarely accessible to those who live below the poverty line, both methods, to varying degrees, enable more housing to be provided or improved in a way that is substantially cheaper than the conventional process, thereby pointing the way to new programmes and policies aimed at meeting the needs of the poor for improved shelter, infrastructure and services. There is thus a need and an opportunity to develop and expand such approaches, and activities before and during the International Year should be aimed at accelerating such a process for at least some of the poor by 1987 and at demonstrating new ways and means of reaching all of them by the year 2000.

26. The experience gained in many of the innovative sites-and-services and upgrading projects carried out over the last decade has already shown that the poor are responsive to opportunity and demonstrate a high degree of motivation, resourcefulness and entrepreneurial originality when given the chance. Experience also reveals that when the poor, especially those below the poverty line, have no access to official housing programmes, they often evolve positive, imaginative and coherent forms of shelter and settlements, the further improvement of which is inhibited only by the lack of communal services and facilities, and develop certain institutional and legal arrangements geared more specifically to their needs and capabilities.
27. In order to effect the change of priorities that can lead to the widespread adoption of alternative policies and programmes, activities before and during the International Year must include not only training and demonstration projects, which directly help some of those below the poverty line to improve their shelters and neighbourhoods, but also efforts to review and revise existing legislation and standards, as well as the institutional arrangements for implementing them.
28. Since 1976, a major problem has been that no lasting overall improvement in the shelter and settlements of the poor can be achieved without measures to increase employment possibilities and real incomes. Consequently, housing and settlement programmes have to be linked and integrated with national and regional economic and social development plans rather than being somewhat isolated sectoral efforts implemented largely by autonomous agencies. The increasing number of slums and squatter settlements bears ample witness to the present shortcomings which characterize efforts to adapt policies to economic and social realities and which only serve to increase disparities. Experience already indicates that sites-and-services and upgrading programmes should go beyond the improvement of the physical infrastructure and must encompass all basic needs, particularly in terms of employment, for example through the implementation of multidisciplinary demonstration projects. Herein lies one of the most promising opportunities for national and global action before and during the International Year. Section C below addresses this subject in more detail.

C. Shelter and economic development

29. As noted above, earlier measures such as attempts to provide low-cost government-built or contractor-built units often proved expensive and ineffective and failed to lead to any significant improvements in the shelter and neighbourhoods of the majority of low-income groups, especially those living below the poverty line. Moreover, the increase in the population living in slum and squatter settlements in urban and rural areas is negatively affecting progress and development. The lack of adequate shelter, infrastructure and services has inevitable repercussions on education, health and public well-being, as well as on employment, overall productivity and economic development.

30. Furthermore, human settlements, within which most sectoral advances in the field of agriculture, industry, trade, health, education and employment occur, must be able to respond positively, rapidly and flexibly to development demands. Unless decent, affordable shelter can be provided concomitantly with job opportunities, health care and education, the very basis of such development efforts might well be undermined by the prevailing and often worsening living conditions that are found in most slums and squatter areas and in rural settlements.

31. Not only must housing and settlements policies be linked and integrated with overall economic and social goals in order for both to succeed, but housing and settlements activities can also contribute to attaining those goals.

32. Implicit in the attainment of any economic development goal is the development of physical infrastructure (utility systems, roads, bridges, ports, airports), other civil-engineering works (dams, hydroelectric plants, irrigation projects) and buildings (industrial and commercial structures, schools and hospitals, as well as housing). These are all outputs of the construction sector, and an increasing number of development plans now recognize the crucial importance of the construction industry in national development. It is in fact now generally appreciated that the outputs of the construction industry are vital to the achievement of national economic and social development goals, including human settlements goals.

33. What is not always realized, however, is that construction activity in itself can play a large part in the achievement of the desired development goals. Direct investment in construction immediately creates income and employment and thus brings immediate benefits to those who are employed, as well as to those who will be the users of the final product. In addition, investment in construction activity has substantial multiplier effects, increasing output, income and employment throughout the rest of the economy through the use of inputs from other sectors. Construction investment thus has the potential to generate major increases in production, employment, income, savings and investment in the economy as a whole.

34. The total multiplier effect of construction investment will clearly be greater if the construction techniques that are chosen favour the use of local resources. Indigenous building materials, designs and technologies, particularly those using relatively little energy, have an economic and social value, and this should be explicitly recognized. 3/

35. The International Year is scheduled to occur in the latter half of the Third United Nations Development Decade, for which the International Development Strategy provides an overall framework of development objectives, targets and strategies for economic and social development aimed at the early eradication of poverty and dependence and the promotion of human dignity and the well-being of the entire population. The International Development Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/56 of 5 December 1980, clearly states, inter alia:

"The provision of basic shelter and infrastructure for all people, in rural as well as urban areas, is a long-term goal. A balanced network of cities, towns and villages is needed for harmonious development, for the emergence of mutually supportive linkages between industrial and agricultural activities, and for the adequate provision of infrastructure and services. Well-balanced programmes for the development of human settlements are necessary so as to provide greater benefits to low-income groups."

"The quality of life and the environment should be improved through, inter alia, the formulation and implementation of appropriate planning and development policies designed to ensure a better interregional balance between rural and urban development, as well as through the strengthening, in the context of human settlements planning, of measures to improve housing conditions for the most disadvantaged regions and communities - access to services, land and employment - and, in particular, through housing rehabilitation programmes."

Developing countries will formulate policies for the provision of basic shelter and infrastructure. To this end, and so as to benefit from the multiplying effect of investment in the field of human settlements, countries will develop their construction industry, particularly for low-cost housing, support relevant financing institutions, stimulate research and disseminate findings on efficient methods of construction, low-cost design and technology for infrastructure, indigenous building materials and environmental protection." 4/

36. Activities before and during the International Year would contribute to the attainment not only of national economic and social goals but also of the goals of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. They would in addition provide a basis and practical alternatives for improving the shelter and communities of all of those below the poverty line.

37. A special effort would therefore be made before and during the International Year to examine in detail the links and contributions of housing and settlements programmes to economic and social development, to assess their policy implications

4/ General Assembly resolution 35/56, annex, paras. 49, 159 and 160.

and to provide a better basis than exists at present for developing new policies and institutional arrangements which strengthen both housing and settlements programmes on the one hand and economic development policies and plans on the other, with both types of programmes and plans concentrated as a matter of priority on the needs of those living below the poverty line.

38. In summary, the nature and implications of the issues discussed above have been the subject of increasing attention during the past 10 years, and some recognition has been accorded to them by various international organizations and bodies. The combined impact of seminal studies, pilot demonstration projects and innovative strategies and programmes points towards a change of attitude that would enable Governments and the international community to appreciate the rationality and positive implications of developing more effective frameworks for the improvement of shelter and related infrastructure and services. However, present activities remain small in scale and inchoate in comparison with the magnitude of the problems facing the poor and can have only a limited impact on the plight of the millions of families who have not been the direct beneficiaries of ongoing projects.

39. In other words, it is timely for Governments, public authorities and institutions, end-user groups and all intermediate actors in both the formal and informal sectors to make use of the accumulated knowledge and experience of recent years.

40. In the preparation of the objectives, strategies, criteria and guidelines for national and international action, due recognition has been given to the fact that policies and programmes for the provision and improvement of shelter and related infrastructure and services for the poor should be viewed as an integral part of national development strategies, while specifying concrete measures and appropriate action at the national and international levels.

II. OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND CRITERIA

41. The objective of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless will be to improve the shelter and neighbourhoods of some of the poor by 1987 and to demonstrate ways of improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of all of the poor by the year 2000. This will require political commitment and action aimed at reversing the deteriorating shelter conditions of the poor.

42. Consequently, there is a need to focus on the following major goals:

(a) Ensuring renewed political priority for and commitment to the improvement of the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor, especially those living below the poverty line;

(b) Consolidating the new knowledge and practical experience which has been gained by Governments and international organizations since the 1976 Habitat Conference so that policy-makers and project managers have a full range of operational alternatives for improving the shelter and settlements of the poor;

(c) Developing and demonstrating new approaches and methods as a basis for new national policies and programmes for improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of those living below the poverty line by the year 2000.

43. In order to achieve these goals, Governments should:

(a) Review and assess the needs and aspirations of the poor with respect to housing which provides security and protection from the elements and from disease;

(b) Adopt and implement new and innovative policies and programmes;

(c) Develop and implement demonstration projects and specific training programmes;

(d) Develop or strengthen appropriate legislation, institutional arrangements and management capacities;

(e) Enhance and strengthen the capacity of the poor to participate in the shaping of their own living environment, inter alia by improving their access to administration and basic services;

(f) Develop and disseminate action-supportive information;

(g) Generate the necessary resources, in particular within the context of technical co-operation with and among developing countries.

44. The specific programme of measures and activities of the International Year should lead firstly to the implementation of a large number of shelter demonstration projects around the world, secondly to the development of

realistic national shelter strategies based on existing and new approaches and methods tested through shelter demonstration projects, and thirdly to the development of a world shelter strategy in support of national shelter strategies.

45. The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless has a distinctive character in that a large part of the output is intended to be concrete and measurable and to have an immediate beneficial impact on the target group. It is expected that, by 1987, every Member State would have implemented at least one significant shelter demonstration project which addresses the basic needs of those below the poverty line by directly improving their shelter or neighbourhood. These projects must be affordable to those below the poverty line and replicable within the economic and institutional frameworks of developing countries.

46. Demonstration projects may involve existing projects, significant extensions to existing projects or new projects and they may address such issues as providing shelter units for homeless groups, generating informal-sector employment, facilitating access to land, water and sanitary, health and educational services, developing legislative, organizational and financial measures to benefit the homeless, promoting indigenous building materials and construction techniques, fostering public participation in settlements planning, development and management, and developing training measures to upgrade entrepreneurial and co-operative action by the target group. All designated demonstration projects must be completed by 31 December 1986 and evaluated by 15 February 1987 so that the results can be disseminated during the International Year. Relevant organizations in the United Nations system and bilateral and multilateral assistance agencies will be asked to support demonstration projects, and some limited funds may be available from the International Year if sufficient voluntary contributions are made.

47. The shelter demonstration projects will provide a basis for reviewing present policies and for developing a world shelter strategy up to the year 2000. The world shelter strategy will provide a framework for national shelter strategies intended to continue the work of the International Year beyond 1987. Such strategies should be drawn up and adopted by the end of the International Year.

III. GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTION

A. Guidelines for action at the national level

48. The ultimate and primary focus for action prior to, during and after the International Year must be at the national level, as an integral part of overall national policy and development efforts.

49. Each Government should make an assessment of the situation and the shelter needs of the poor and, on the basis of that assessment, actively undertake to improve the situation by:

- (a) Reviewing and adjusting existing policies and programmes;
- (b) Developing and strengthening relevant legislation, administration and management capacities;
- (c) Developing and implementing shelter demonstration projects;
- (d) Encouraging and enhancing (applied) research;
- (e) Developing and disseminating information;
- (f) Generating the necessary human, material and financial resources;
- (g) Ensuring maximum public participation.

50. When national policies, programmes and legislation are being reviewed, priority attention should be paid to the need for a fair and equitable distribution of land, as well as to the need for improving or adjusting building codes, regulations and other appropriate mechanisms with a view to increasing the number of affordable low-cost dwellings and facilitating their construction.

51. Shelter demonstration projects should be implemented by adjusting or expanding existing programmes and projects or by developing new ones. Such programmes should focus on enhancing the capacity of the poor to participate in the construction and improvement of their own shelter and neighbourhoods. Shelter demonstration projects should be concerned primarily with people below the poverty line and should lead to some direct measurable results by 1987.

52. Governments should undertake to promote activities in the field of human settlements information in order to increase public awareness and stimulate action. Information activities should focus on facilitating the participation of the poor in efforts to improve their shelter and obtain the necessary basic services. Information should be disseminated in a suitable form (written, audio-visual, etc.) using all appropriate available channels of communication (special mailing lists, press, radio, television, etc.).

53. National activities should in principle be financed through the allocation and generation of resources at the national level. For the development and implementation of demonstration projects in developing countries, use should be made of bilateral, multi-bilateral and multilateral development co-operation.

The same channels could be utilized by developing countries to obtain expert advice on planning, management, institution building and other relevant areas of national action.

54. Maximum public participation is a basic prerequisite for the success and impact of action prior to, during and after the International Year. Accordingly, Governments should, in addition to or as part of the aforementioned activities, specifically undertake to:

(a) Develop and strengthen mechanisms for the participation of the population in the planning and decision-making processes relating to their shelter and neighbourhoods;

(b) Remove obstacles and explore other ways and means (such as the use of non-conventional credit facilities) of enabling the poor to obtain suitable shelter;

(c) Increase the supply and lower the cost of basic housing components, flexible loans for housing construction and improvement and basic services such as drinking water supply and waste disposal;

(d) Widely disseminate the results of research in the field of low-cost building materials, designs and appropriate technology;

(e) Enhance and facilitate two way-communication between the poor and the administration in the improvement of shelter and basic services.

55. Governments should at all levels ensure appropriate institutional arrangements for promoting the International Year, furthering its objectives and co-ordinating corresponding activities through the establishment of national committees or the designation of focal points for the Year.

56. In furthering the objectives and related action of the International Year at the national level, full co-operation should be sought with universities, research centres, non-governmental organizations and other voluntary groups in order to make full use of their knowledge and experience.

57. In the context of the Year, Governments should encourage the organization of specific subject-oriented seminars, workshops, symposia and other meetings, as well as issuing special publications, stamps, coins, etc..

B. Guidelines for action at the regional level

58. Action at the regional level should focus primarily on facilitating and supporting national activities of countries in the region in areas of common interest and concern to the region or sub-region.

59. Co-operation should be sought with regional intergovernmental organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well as with relevant non-governmental organizations, in order to obtain their full and active participation in the preparation and observance of the International Year.

60. The regional commissions, in co-operation with UNCHS (Habitat) and other organizations of the United Nations system, should:

(a) Keep under review the overall situation and needs of the poor in the countries of the region;

/...

- (b) Revise or expand ongoing regional policies, programmes and projects;
- (c) Promote and encourage research and the dissemination of information;
- (d) Encourage and/or organize relevant regional meetings, workshops, symposia, etc.;
- (e) Assist in pooling and providing expert advice to developing countries in the region, upon request, concerning the preparation, implementation and financing of selected national activities, especially where assistance cannot be provided otherwise.

61. In order to carry out the functions and tasks associated with the International Year, the regional commissions might consider making special administrative arrangements, for example designating or establishing regional focal points for the Year.

C. Guidelines for action at the international level

62. Activities at the international level should focus primarily on stimulating, facilitating and supporting national action, in particular in the developing countries.

63. Co-operation should be sought with intergovernmental organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well as with the non-governmental organizations concerned, in order to involve them to the maximum extent possible in the preparations for and observance of the International Year.

64. Organizations and units of the United Nations system should, individually and collectively, co-operate with UNCHS (Habitat) with the view to:

- (a) Keeping under review the overall shelter situation and the related needs of the poor;
- (b) Revising or expanding their policies, programmes and projects;
- (c) Participating in joint programming exercises and, within that context, preparing and implementing demonstration projects and specific training courses;
- (d) Promoting and encouraging research and the dissemination of information;
- (e) Pooling and providing expert advice to developing countries, upon request, with respect to the preparation, implementation and financing of selected national activities, especially where such assistance cannot be provided otherwise;
- (f) Promoting technical co-operation with and among developing countries in other relevant areas at the bilateral, multi-bilateral and multilateral levels.

65. In order to facilitate and enhance the overall co-ordination of efforts within the United Nations system, the International Year should be discussed periodically in interagency meetings.

IV. ROLE OF THE COMMISSION AND UNCHS (HABITAT)

66. With respect to the International Year, the Commission on Human Settlements will, within the context of its present mandate as laid down in General Assembly resolution 32/162, serve as the intergovernmental body responsible for the co-ordination of the implementation of the specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the Year.

67. The Commission on Human Settlements will deal with the International Year under a special and separate item on its agenda. On the basis of progress reports submitted by the Executive Director, it will discuss questions relating to the Year, in particular the progress made in the implementation of the specific programme of measures and activities, and submit its yearly report, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly. In order to enable the Commission to discharge this task, the annual sessions of the Commission during the period 1983-1987 will devote two working days specifically to the agenda item concerning the Year.

68. The Commission on Human Settlements will be serviced by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) which will serve as the secretariat focal point for the International Year within the United Nations system. Some of the functions and tasks to be undertaken by UNCHS (Habitat) are listed below:

(a) Servicing of the Commission on Human Settlements. This will include the preparation of pre-session, in-session and post-session documentation;

(b) Initiation and co-ordination of the implementation of the specific programme of measures and activities within the United Nations system. This will include periodic consultations with the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned, as well as co-operation and co-ordination with the regional commissions;

(c) Liaison with intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system;

(d) Liaison with non-governmental organizations concerned. This will include involving non-governmental organizations in the preparation and implementation of information activities;

(e) Initiation and co-ordination of technical assistance and advisory services to developing countries. This will include the identification of areas in which national action is most needed and the pooling of expertise in these areas with a view to supporting national action in developing countries and assisting developing countries, upon request, in the preparation of training programmes and demonstration projects;

(f) Providing developing countries, upon request, with expert advice concerning the financing of national activities. This will include exploring ways and means of mobilizing voluntary contributions for the International Year;

/...

- (g) Preparation and dissemination of information. This will include:
 - (i) Issuing a special periodic newsletter;
 - (ii) Issuing an information kit containing fact sheets with information that can be used in national programmes and demonstration projects;
 - (iii) Encouraging the organization of press briefing seminars and press encounters;
 - (iv) Issuing a popular booklet on the results of and the desirable follow-up to the International Year. The booklet would be easily readable and appealing to a wide range of people;

(h) Monitoring and assessing the state of implementation of the specific programme of measures and activities on the basis of reports from Governments, specialized agencies, other units and organizations in the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations concerned. This will include:

- (i) The issuing of a summary survey of the situation and needs of the poor with respect to shelter, infrastructure and services;
- (ii) The periodic issuing of an executive summary of activities during the International Year;
- (iii) In addition to the normal yearly progress reports, the preparation of a final report on the International Year containing proposals for future action leading to the development of a world shelter strategy up till the year 2000.

V. TIMETABLE AND FOLLOW-UP

- April-May 1982: The Commission on Human Settlements, at its fifth session, adopts a specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.
- December 1982:
- (a) Governments establish national committees and/or focal points for the International Year;
 - (b) They communicate to UNCHS (Habitat) the areas in which action is most needed;
 - (c) On this basis, UNCHS (Habitat) starts co-ordinating the pooling of expertise;
 - (d) The General Assembly, at its thirty-seventh session, formally declares the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and adopts a programme budget for the Year.
- January 1983: Governments identify, prepare and initiate national activities, in particular shelter demonstration projects.
- April 1983:
- (a) UNCHS (Habitat) starts to provide expert assistance to developing countries for approved projects;
 - (b) UNCHS (Habitat) starts assisting developing countries in seeking ways and means of obtaining funds for national action, in addition to funds derived from national sources;
 - (c) Consultations are held with specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations and units in the United Nations system on co-operation and the co-ordination of activities;
 - (d) Consultations with intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations on collaboration with respect to the implementation of activities related to the International Year.
- April-May 1983: The Commission on Human Settlements, at its sixth session, discusses the first progress report of the Executive Director. National and international efforts continue to ensure funding for activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Year, in particular for the implementation of demonstration projects in developing countries. These efforts will include mobilizing voluntary contributions for the International Year, to be used in particular for assisting developing countries. Previously initiated activities continue, including the consolidation and expansion of pooled expertise with a view to establishing a permanent stand-by expert advisory service for developing countries in selected areas.

- December 1983: The General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth session, discusses the progress report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, submitted through the Economic and Social Council.
- 1984-1985-1986:
- (a) Implementation proceeds of demonstration projects to be completed by the end of 1986;
 - (b) National activities in developing countries continue, selectively supported through the provision of stand-by expert advice;
 - (c) Consultations and co-operation continue with specialized agencies, regional commissions, other parts of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations with a view to completing specific subject-oriented or regional reports, studies and other undertakings by the end of 1986;
 - (d) Efforts continue to obtain and utilize voluntary contributions for the International Year;
 - (e) A special newsletter is issued periodically containing information on the situation of the poor and on efforts to improve that situation in the context of the International Year. An information kit is developed and other information activities to be undertaken during the International Year are prepared;
 - (f) Progress reports are submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh, eighth and ninth sessions and to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth, fortieth and forty-first sessions, through the Economic and Social Council.
- 1987:
- (a) At the national level, the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless should highlight the accomplishments of the preceding years through all available channels of communication (mailing lists, press, radio, television, etc.), the organization of special events, the issuing of special stamps, etc.;
 - (b) At the regional and international levels, the International Year should be marked by the publication of articles, studies, reports of meetings, seminars, etc. and by the proclamations of a World Shelter Day;

- (c) In addition, and in support of these activities, UNCHS (Habitat) will issue a periodic executive summary of activities, publicize early in 1987 a summary survey of the situation of the poor with respect to shelter, infrastructure and services, disseminate an information kit and prepare an analytical summary report, as well as a popular booklet on the results of the Year, with special emphasis on demonstration projects;
- (d) Other activities will include:
 - (i) Specific subject-oriented regional/global meetings, seminars, symposia, workshops, etc.;
 - (ii) Press briefing seminars and other events;
- (e) On the basis of the experience gained, Governments should undertake to prepare and adopt a course for future action at the national level;
- (f) The Commission on Human Settlements, at its tenth session, will discuss the final report of the Executive Director, which will contain an evaluation of the International Year and recommendations for future action. The report should provide a substantial input for the preparation of the 1990-1995 medium-term plan and could form the basis of further consultations leading to the development and adoption by the General Assembly of a world shelter strategy aimed at the provision of shelter, infrastructure and services for all by the year 2000.

Annex I

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

Tentative cost estimates

1. In its resolution 36/71, the General Assembly requests the Executive Director to prepare and submit to the Commission a proposal containing a specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Year. The Executive Director believes, however, that it may also be useful for the Commission, during its consideration of the programme of activities, to have an approximate idea of the cost estimates involved in such a programme. The following broad estimates are at this stage intended only to give an indication of the scale of the commitments necessary for the successful execution of the planned activities. If the specific programme of measures set out in this document is adopted, the rough magnitude of costs would be as indicated below.

Meetings of the Commission on Human Settlements

2. As mentioned in chapter IV, the Commission on Human Settlements will be the intergovernmental body responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the specific programme of measures and activities. In that connection, during the period 1983-1987, the Commission will devote two working days of each annual session specifically to the agenda item concerning the International Year. The additional cost on this account will be \$US 150,000.

Secretariat support

3. As indicated in chapter IV, UNCHS (Habitat) will serve as the focal point for the International Year within the United Nations system. The programme is set up in such a way that a number of the activities to be carried out by the Centre will be undertaken in connection with the Centre's ongoing work. However, the very limited staff and resources of UNCHS (Habitat) do not allow it to cover the full range of activities proposed for the International Year during the period 1983-1987.

4. Accordingly, it is envisaged that a senior officer, reporting directly to the Executive Director, will be appointed in 1983 to be responsible for the substantive work directly connected with the International Year. This officer will require the support of two substantive officers and two general-service staff members during the period 1984-1987. The cost of this core staff is estimated to be \$US 100,000 in 1983 and \$US 1,200,000 for the period 1984-1987.

5. The promotion of the International Year in terms of fund-raising activities and contacts with Governments, specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other departments and units of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations is essential for the proper and successful functioning of the Centre as promoter and focal point for the Year, and it is estimated that an amount of \$US 500,000 will be required for this purpose for the period 1984-1987.

/...

Regional meetings and related activities

6. As indicated in chapter III, it is envisaged that regional meetings will be held to discuss common regional issues and problems and to designate or establish regional focal points for the Year. The cost of servicing the regional meetings and related activities is estimated at \$US 500,000 for the period 1984-1987.

Interagency meetings

7. As indicated in chapter III, the International Year will require interagency consultations to ensure effective co-operation and collaboration with the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other organizations and units of the United Nations system. It is estimated that two such meetings will cost \$US 100,000.

Non-governmental organizations forum

8. It is expected that the non-governmental organizations will organize at least one major international event exclusively devoted to the International Year. While the major cost of this would be met by the non-governmental organizations themselves, a modest subsidy will be required to start up their initial work. This subsidy is expected to amount to \$US 200,000.

Activities of the International Year

9. In its resolution 36/71, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the availability of voluntary funds for the activities of the International Year. The specific programme of measures and activities contains various options for and ways and means of mobilizing and channelling resources, including voluntary contributions to the International Year. In this connection, the Commission may wish to consider the following guidelines:

(a) National activities should, in principle, be financed by allocating and generating resources at the national level. For the development and implementation of additional demonstration projects in developing countries, use could also be made of bilateral, multi-bilateral and multilateral development co-operation. The same sources could be utilized by developing countries for obtaining expert advice with respect to planning, management, institution building, and other relevant areas of national action (chapter III). The role of the Commission and UNCHS (Habitat) in this connection will be to facilitate this process;

(b) The organizations and units of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, should assist in pooling and providing to developing countries, upon request, expert advice concerning the preparation, implementation and financing of selected national activities, especially where the assistance cannot be provided otherwise (chapter III).

/...

10. The functions and tasks of UNCHS (Habitat) as the focal point for the International Year should include:

(a) The co-ordination of technical assistance and advisory services provided to developing countries. This will include the identification of areas in which national action is most needed and the pooling of expertise in these areas with a view to supporting national action in developing countries and assisting them, upon request, in the preparation of demonstration projects and related activities (chapter IV);

(b) The provision of expert advice to developing countries, upon request, concerning the financing of national activities. This will include exploring ways and means of obtaining voluntary contributions for activities undertaken in connection with the International Year (chapter IV);

(c) The provision of support for the execution of demonstration projects, including assistance in designing projects, making legal, institutional, financial and administrative arrangements for implementation, monitoring and evaluating activities and outputs and disseminating results.

The cost of this will be approximately \$US 2,500,000.

11. In addition to the above-mentioned activities, the following activities considered important for the success of the International Year will be undertaken as contributions specifically pledged for the International Year become available: (a) press briefing seminars and a world press encounter (chapter IV); (b) preparation and dissemination of an information kit and posters (chapter IV); (c) preparation of a popular booklet on the results of the International Year (chapter IV). The cost of these activities is estimated at \$US 500,000.

12. It is clear, therefore, that the success of the International Year will depend ultimately upon the readiness and willingness of Governments to generate and allocate resources at the national level and upon the extent to which bilateral, multi-bilateral and multilateral development agencies give priority to supporting activities in the developing countries aimed at improving the living conditions of the poor as a part of overall national development within the context of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. Since the need for determined and concerted action to relieve the squalid and deteriorating shelter conditions of the poor cannot be denied, so too must the necessity be recognized for adequate financial support through voluntary contributions to the International Year, which has as its objective the mobilization of the commitment and the resources without which such concerted action is impossible.