



UNITED NATIONS



Habitat:

United Nations Conference on Human Settlements  
Vancouver, Canada, 31 May-11 June 1976

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/CONF.70/PC/20  
28 October 1975

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE  
Second session  
New York, January 1976

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS OF THE  
AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUPS  
Geneva, 22-26 September 1975

Prepared by the Habitat Conference Secretariat\*\*

An intergovernmental meeting of experts was convened at the invitation of the Secretary-General of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and held from 22 to 26 September 1975 at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The meeting was attended by representatives from the following Member States of the United Nations: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, Yemen Arab Republic, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations from the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination and from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In addition the following United Nations bodies were represented: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Office of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO).

The following specialized agencies were represented: International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),

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\*\* Since the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Groups were not required officially to adopt their own report, this summary of the main points raised during the meetings and the conclusions has been prepared by the Habitat Conference secretariat.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank (IBRD).

Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations were present: Commission of European Communities, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Council of Europe, Organization of American States (OAS) and African Development Bank (ADB). Observers from the following non-governmental organizations also attended: Non-governmental Committee for Habitat, International Planned Parenthood Federation and Commonwealth Human Ecology Council.

The documents placed before the meeting are listed in the annex.

### Opening of the Session

1. The meeting was opened by the Secretary-General of the Conference, who invited George K. Muhoho (Kenya), Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, to act as Chairman. In his introductory remarks the Secretary-General reminded the meeting that this was an ad hoc intergovernmental meeting of experts convened to advise him on the draft declaration of principles and international co-operation. He further reminded the representatives that the meeting was informal, that no records would be kept and that it would not be necessary for those present to approve any report of the proceedings.

#### I. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

2. In his opening remarks the Secretary-General drew the attention of the meeting to a document entitled "Notes for a draft declaration of principles" (A/CONF.70/WG/12) and requested the delegates to make suggestions regarding both form and content as to what might be included in the paper to be prepared by the Habitat secretariat when it presented proposals for a draft Declaration of Principles to the Preparatory Committee at its second session in January 1976.

3. Discussion of the draft declaration of principles occupied the representatives for the first two days of the meeting. Three major aspects were the focus of their attention, namely character and presentation, structure, and content.

#### A. Character and Presentation

4. There was consensus that the declaration of principles should resemble a manifesto rather than an enumeration of problems. A few representatives suggested considering it as a charter, comprising the principles.

5. The majority of representatives stressed the need for brevity. There was a general feeling that the language should be both clear and precise and should avoid technical terms. Most representatives agreed that the document should be addressed principally to decision-makers and Governments. However, it should be easily understandable by a wider public so as to elicit participation.

6. Many representatives subscribed to the view that the declaration should express a basic philosophy of human settlements and not simply utopian ideals. This philosophy should be geared to reality and practice and be attuned to what is feasible within the context of the present pressing need for global changes.

7. Most representatives agreed that the declaration, while not ignoring the magnitude of contemporary problems, should stress the challenges and opportunities confronting us rather than emphasizing the crisis. There was consensus that the spirit of the document should be dynamic and forward-looking and should serve as a call to action rather than a description of trends.

#### B. Structure

8. There was consensus on the need for a clear structure in which the description of the situation should be distinct from the formulation of values and policies. There should be a relatively small number of basic or essential principles giving rise to others. Principles should be presented in some hierarchical or systematic order.

9. There was unanimous agreement that the declaration should be composed of three parts. Two major suggestions as to the composition of the parts and their contents emerged:

- (a) One suggestion, which was considered favourably by many representatives proposed that the declaration be an interrelated package of results emerging from the Conference. This package would consist of a preamble in the form of a statement of what are believed to be the basic rights of all human beings. This could be entitled "Postulates", a "Bill of Rights". The second part would give recognition to the inherent differences in societies and countries. The third part would be a call to action and could be referred to as "Principles". This suggestion went further to state that the third part might start with the words "We proclaim" or "We declare". For clarity of understanding and ease of retention, the section on principles could have a different format from the rest of the document;
- (b) The other proposal which received the support of many representatives consisted of the preamble, a formulation of principles and a set of guidelines for action. One representative suggested dispensing with the preamble.

10. All delegates agreed that, whichever structure was selected, there was a need to emphasize the differences in value, aspirations and cultural patterns in different countries.

#### C. Content

11. It was suggested by some representatives that the preamble should state the present situation in human settlements and explain the reasons for concern. In doing so, the preamble should attempt to integrate human settlement issues into the overall development process, particularly its socio-economic relationships at both national and international levels.

12. Some representatives stated that the preamble should also contain a statement of basic values, such as the enhancement of the quality of life, equality of opportunity and the recognition of human dignity. Others felt that these would be more appropriately placed in the second part.

13. Several suggestions as to what should be included in the section concerned with the principles were made. These included equality and dignity of the individual, priority to be given to the most deprived sections of the community, comprehensive national planning, adaptation of technology to local requirements, rational and equitable use and distribution of resources, recognition of national and regional diversities, increased emphasis on public participation, rural settlements as potentials for development, settlement policies as a national priority, and the preservation of legal and social rights of individuals and groups. All representatives agreed that these and other principles should be arranged in a logical order or classification.

14. Several delegates suggested that the part concerned with guidelines should indicate the kinds of action required to implement the principles. It would include such measures as adequate public policy instruments in the economic and social fields, social control of land through appropriate policies, international co-operation in the establishment of training facilities, mechanisms for active public participation, specific policies to redress economic imbalance, the design of instruments to divert resources from other sectors for constructive use in human settlements, and the development of appropriate standards both with regard to the availability of resources and to the satisfaction of human needs.

15. Throughout the meeting, representatives stressed the importance of the declaration of principles as a continuation and development of previous declarations and charters such as those of Athens, Stockholm, Bucharest, Cocoyoc, Mexico etc.

16. Many representatives drew attention to the need for a clear separation between the declaration of principles and the other two documents, namely recommendations for national action and proposals for international co-operation and stressed that these should be complimentary to each other without overlapping.

17. A working paper, A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/2, was prepared and submitted by representatives from Argentina, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. The paper consisted of an introduction followed by sixteen suggestions regarding principles that could be considered by the Habitat Conference secretariat. The representative from Brazil did not participate in the above deliberations. He expressed disagreement on points of a substantive nature and requested that this be duly noted.

18. An informal working paper (A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/5) was prepared and submitted by the representatives from the African countries.

19. At the request of the working group, the Habitat Conference secretariat prepared a paper highlighting the main points of the discussion on the declaration of principles (A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/3).

## II. PROPOSALS FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

20. In his introduction of this agenda item, the Secretary-General of the Conference referred to documents A/CONF.70/WG/2 and A/CONF.70/WG/3 and requested the representatives to consider firstly functions and programmes, secondly criteria and thirdly possible institutional arrangements which would satisfy the first two.

### A. Functions and Programmes

21. Most of the discussion centered around technical assistance, financial transfers and experiential exchange. During deliberations on these matters, the following points were raised:

- (a) Some representatives pointed to the fact that, at present, technical assistance flowed largely from developed to developing countries and that there was a need to develop co-operation between developing countries themselves.
- (b) Many representatives raised the issue of training and educating skilled professional manpower. Other representatives suggested that mid-level technicians be trained to deal with the increasing complexities of human settlement problems particularly in the field of management.
- (c) The majority of the representatives agreed that there was a need for the development of programmes in applied research which could be more effectively achieved through regional and national institutes.
- (d) Many representatives felt that there was need for an increase in financial transfers and that the means used to channel these funds should aim at their speedy and more effective transfer and utilization.
- (e) Some representatives suggested that the transfer of financial resources should be in accordance with the principles embodied in resolution 3362 (S-VII) on "Development and international co-operation", unanimously adopted by the General Assembly at its seventh special session.
- (f) Attention was drawn by most of the representatives to the need for the collection and analysis of problems and solutions. There was consensus that the effective dissemination of this information to countries was essential.
- (g) Many representatives pointed out the importance of evaluating programmes and projects so as to assist Governments in developing new and better approaches to solutions.

### B. Criteria

22. There was consensus that any proposal for institutional arrangements should reflect the following general criteria:

- (a) Human settlement policies, strategies and programmes must be given the highest priority at national, regional and global level.
- (b) A rearrangement of the present system of international co-operation in the field of human settlements is necessary to achieve a more effective approach to the solution of the problems, especially in the developing countries.
- (c) Any such rearrangement must recognize the role and activities of the existing units within the United Nations system, in particular the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning, the International Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and the United Nations Environment Programme.
- (d) Proposals for rearrangement must be placed within the framework of the more general considerations of the restructuring of the United Nations system and take into account the timetable of such a process.
- (e) Greater emphasis must be placed on those regional instruments of co-operation which have proved to be the most effective means of ensuring the ultimate objective of international co-operation, in particular the satisfaction of national objectives.
- (f) Proposals concerning international co-operation should also take into account the existing intergovernmental multilateral and bilateral mechanisms outside the United Nations system proper, as well as other appropriate non-governmental organizations.

### C. Institutional Arrangements

23. During the discussion on possible institutional arrangements there was a general feeling that further and more detailed studies would have to be carried out before any firm proposals could be made.

24. The meeting agreed that the Habitat Conference secretariat should undertake to prepare three documents for consideration by the Preparatory Committee at its second session in January 1976. The content of these papers would be:

- (a) An analysis in depth of current and proposed programmes of the main international agencies with respect to their activities in the field of human settlements.
- (b) A paper which would attempt to set out and elaborate future programmes that would be necessary for a more effective use of international co-operation in the human settlements field.
- (c) A note by the Secretary-General of the Conference presenting, in greater detail, a limited number of alternative institutional arrangements, based upon the criteria suggested by the working group.

25. In his closing address, the Secretary-General of the Conference expressed his thanks to the intergovernmental group of experts for their helpful comments

and valuable suggestions. He stated that the Habitat Conference secretariat would produce the papers requested, but underlined the fact that only the note setting out alternatives would be available, in the required languages, in advance of the second session of the Preparatory Committee. The other two papers would be available at the meeting itself.

26. At the request of the working group, the Habitat Secretariat prepared a paper (A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/6) highlighting the main points of the discussion on international co-operation which was subsequently circulated.

Annex

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Languages</u>
A/CONF.70/WG/1	Notes on the agenda for the <u>Ad Hoc</u> Intergovernmental Working Group on International Co-operation	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/2	A framework for international co-operation. Note by the Secretary-General	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/3	International multilateral co-operation in the human settlements field	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/4	Comments on the paper of international multilateral co-operation	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/11	Notes on the agenda for the <u>Ad Hoc</u> Intergovernmental Working Group on the Declaration of Principles	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/12	Notes for a draft declaration of principles. Note by the secretariat	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/13	A review of conceptual formulation and development for Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/14	Report of the meeting of experts held at Dubrovnik from 20 to 23 May 1975	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/15	Preamble to the proposed structure and agenda for the Habitat Conference at Vancouver	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/1	Item 10 of proposed agenda for Vancouver Conference as amended by resumed first session of Preparatory Committee	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/2	Informal working paper by the Latin-American experts	E, F, S
A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/3	Note by the Secretary-General. Highlights of the discussion regarding the preparation of the declaration of principles	E, F, R, S
A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/4	List of participants	E/F/S
A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/5	Informal working paper by the African experts	E
A/CONF.70/WG/CRP/6	Note by the Secretary-General. Highlights of the discussion regarding international co-operation	E