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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sub-Commission on Prevention of  
Discrimination and Protection  
of Minorities  
Fortieth session  
Agenda item 4

REVIEW OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN FIELDS WITH WHICH  
THE SUB-COMMISSION HAS BEEN CONCERNED

Written statement submitted by Habitat International Coalition, a  
non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication which is  
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council  
resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[4 August 1988]

1. Habitat International Coalition (HIC) is an alliance of more than 200 non-governmental organizations and scientific and educational institutions concerned with one or more aspects of human settlements. HIC was founded following the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements of 1976 in Vancouver. Its central objective is to obtain recognition and implementation of the right of everyone to secure a place in which to live in conditions of peace and dignity.
2. With reference to the resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights 1988/22 on the Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and 1988/24 on the Realization of the Right to Adequate Housing, Habitat International Coalition would like to request the Sub-Commission to give special attention in the study it plans to make on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights to the need to elaborate the Right to Housing into implementable legal provisions and specific obligations of Governments.
3. The urgency of this request is demonstrated by the data on shelter needs which have become available on the occasion of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. These indicate that more than 1 billion people live in inadequate houses or have no shelter at all, and that this number is likely to increase during the next decades unless drastic action is taken.
4. The right to housing is a complex one. It needs to be analysed and disaggregated into a range of different elements such as the right to land; security of tenure; access to infrastructure and services; building codes; credit facilities; the right to form associations and to participate in the planning, construction and maintenance of houses and neighbourhoods; etc. This will require the adaptation of existing and the drafting of new legal instruments, both at the national and international level.
5. In this connection, Habitat International Coalition is of the opinion that the drafting of international rules of conduct concerning evictions is a subject of special urgency. It feels impelled to make this observation because of the cases of forced mass evictions which continue to occur in several countries.
6. HIC is aware of the fact that the Sub-Commission is already dealing with evictions in the context of its activities for the prevention of discrimination and when evictions take place in occupied territories and HIC hopes that the Sub-Commission will continue and intensify its action against evictions in all its manifestations.
7. Habitat International Coalition would like to inform the Sub-Commission that it has decided to launch an international campaign against forced evictions. It has also started to draft an international Charter of Housing Rights, which will be the subject of a workshop it intends to hold in Mexico on 14, 15 and 16 January 1989. In these and other activities Habitat International Coalition would be glad to co-operate closely with the Sub-Commission.