



**General Assembly**  
**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/38/233 + Corr. 1  
E/1983/74  
26 May 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
thirty-eighth session  
item 78(b) of the preliminary list\*  
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
Second regular session of 1983  
Item 15 of the provisional  
agenda\*\*  
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION  
IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN  
SETTLEMENTS

Implementation of the Programme for the International  
Year of Shelter for the Homeless

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1 - 2	2
I. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS .....	3 - 16	2
I. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS .....	17 - 20	5

\* A/38/50/Rev.1.

\*\* E/1983/100.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. As a basis for discussion at its thirty-seventh session, the General Assembly had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless" (A/37/527), which contained a summary of the problems to be addressed before and during the International Year, a review of the constraints and opportunities for action, the International Year's objectives and goals, guidelines for national and international action and proposals concerning the role of the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The addendum to that report (A/37/527/Add.1) dealt with the operational programme, substantive secretariat and programme support, and overall financial requirements for the International Year.

2. After examining the report of the Secretary-General and the addendum thereto, the General Assembly adopted resolution 37/221 of 20 December 1982 in which it officially proclaimed 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and designated the Commission on Human Settlements as the intergovernmental body responsible for organizing the International Year. It also confirmed the proposals of the Secretary-General on objectives and major organizational matters, and recommended that the Commission should review annually the objectives, strategies and criteria for the International Year. In that resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its thirty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the approved programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Year.

## II. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

3. The Commission on Human Settlements, in its capacity as the intergovernmental body responsible for organizing the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, considered the proposed programme in detail during its sixth session, held at Helsinki from 25 April to 6 May 1983. <sup>1/</sup> The Commission had before it the report of the Executive Director (HS/C/6/4 and Add.1), and the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/527/Add.1) (HS/C/6/CRP.3).

4. The report of the Executive Director dealt with the following five major subjects concerning the International Year: action taken since the fifth session of the Commission; overall objectives and plans; launching the programme during 1983-1984; guidelines for demonstration projects; and budget and funding requirements.

5. The Commission discussed the report of the Executive Director at its 6th to 9th plenary meetings on 28 April and 2 May 1983.

6. Strong support was expressed for the International Year by the many delegates who spoke during the Commission debate, several of whom reported on the activities already undertaken in their own countries in anticipation of the formal launching of the International Year. Typical of these was a statement by the Prime Minister

of Sri Lanka, the Honourable R. Premadasa, in which, indicating one of the major goals of the International Year, he noted, with respect to his own country, that

"We have found too that with the International Year there is a heightened awareness among policy-makers, state treasuries and the people at large with regard to housing which has lifted housing, almost imperceptively, to high priority rank. Our objective in calling for the declaration of an International Year would have been amply served if, during this decade, the need for housing, which I regard as a fundamental basic right of mankind, receives high priority attention by all national Governments." 2/

Several other delegations reported that they had also launched appropriate activities.

The Commission agreed that in order to achieve the stated goals, a distinctive and innovative approach was required, beginning with a commitment by member States to obtain practical results in improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of at least some of the poor before the International Year. Further, since most of the action and resources will be required at the national and local levels, it was agreed that a major part of the limited funds for the International Year should be used to support and stimulate national and local action through demonstration projects. Moreover, the information programme should concentrate not on publicizing problems, but rather on supporting the search for solutions and making successful results more widely known.

With the modest budget of \$US 4.9 million proposed for the five-year period from 1983 to 1987, the Commission agreed that the International Year, if it were to be effective, would have to use a strategic and economical approach. Every expenditure would need to be judged on the basis of whether or not it contributed to a real and immediate improvement in the shelter and neighbourhoods of some of the poor and of how much of additional resources it would generate. Consequently, some previous approaches would be abandoned and new ones tried. For example:

(a) The funds will not be used for a major global conference;

(b) The funds will not be used for an extensive global information campaign to publicize the problems; instead, the information programme will concentrate on solutions and on training and direct project support;

(c) The emphasis before, during and after the International Year will be on shelter and neighbourhoods rather than on conventional houses, on affordable improvements for many rather than on major improvements for a few;

(d) Technical advisory services will be made available at an early stage to assist countries in designing, implementing and evaluating appropriate projects and programmes;

(e) Relevant projects by organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations and aid agencies which are already under way or planned should be reviewed for possible adoption or adaptation as demonstration projects;

(f) As financial resources are limited, the only other major resources available are the time and the effort of the people themselves and a priority need and concern will therefore be to find and demonstrate new ways and means, through demonstration projects around the world, of helping the poor directly in their efforts to improve their shelter and neighbourhoods;

(g) Priority attention will also be given to new kinds of practical information and training projects directly related to self-help construction and improvements, and to making extensive and effective use of local skills, methods and building materials;

(h) Another major concern and priority will be new or strengthened policies, strategies and programmes by national and local authorities to encourage and support the self-help efforts of the poor, including the provision of essential public services and infrastructure, such as clean water and waste-disposal systems

(i) Maximum effort will be made to support and complement other priority issues and existing programmes, such as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, and to address the special problems among the poor of children, the elderly and the disabled;

(j) Activities of the International Year should also be related directly to the main goals of the national economic and social development plans in each country and should demonstrate practical ways in which they can be met.

9. The Commission agreed that the activities associated with the International Year will take place in three distinct phases, as briefly described in the following paragraphs.

(a) January 1983 to 31 December 1986

10. This period is the initial and crucial phase on which the other two depend. From 1983 to 1986, all new and existing knowledge and experience will be evaluated, and new and innovative ways of improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of at least some of the poor will be devised and tested through a series of demonstration projects around the world. Those projects must either be completed by late 1986 or be at a stage at which results can be evaluated.

(b) 1987

11. The results of the review of all relevant knowledge, experience, programmes and projects will be evaluated and made widely available to policy-makers and programme managers in all countries, so that during 1987 they can adopt or adapt relevant strategies and methods as a basis for new national policies and programmes to meet the needs of the majority of their poor and disadvantaged.

(c) 1988 to 2000

12. The third phase will require constant refinement and implementation, at the national and local levels, of the new methods, policies and programmes as an

egral part of and priority within national economic and social development plans. The third phase must also include at an early stage the development and implementation of effective international programmes in support of national and local efforts.

. In sum, the Commission agreed that the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, 1987, would be an end in itself, but also a crucial transition phase between an intensive search for solutions and the extensive application of them. The year 1987 must be a time of consolidation and renewal within and among countries: a consolidation of all previous knowledge and experience and a renewal of the political and professional commitment to use that knowledge and experience to improve the grim shelter conditions of the majority of the poor.

. A summary of the discussion of the Commission on the International Year at its sixth session, can be found in the report of the Commission. 3/

. In its resolution 6/1 the Commission approved the proposed programme and priorities. It also endorsed the budgetary and organizational arrangements proposed by the Executive Director as a frugal and cost-effective way to organize and co-ordinate activities prior to and during the International Year, within the limits of the provisions of paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 37/221.

. As the success of the International Year depended on national efforts, the Commission endorsed the national action needed before April 1984 (resolution 6/1, annex), including suggestions on the form and functions of national focal points; a series of major questions to be addressed in assessing the existing situation and needs in each country; and guidelines for national programmes and criteria for the selection of demonstration projects. In order that all countries be informed on the existing situation, priority concerns and activities and plans in other countries, the Commission agreed that, prior to its seventh session in April 1984, the national focal points for the International Year should submit to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), a concise overview of their progress and plans and a summary of their national demonstration projects.

### III. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

. In its resolution 37/221, the General Assembly, having noted the financial implications of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless set out in the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/527/Add.1), urged all Governments to extend generous financial and other support to the programme. Consequently, in January 1983 the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) sent a special written appeal to all Governments, asking them to consider pledging a significant financial contribution in support of the International Year at the sixth session of the Commission.

18. Prior to the sixth session, three Governments had formally announced the following pledges:

United States dollars

Cyprus	2 000
Sri Lanka	1 000 000
Tunisia	7 000

19. At the sixth session, the following voluntary contributions were announced:

United States dollars

Burundi	6 000
Canada	246 000
Chile	5 000
Finland	100 000
India	100 000
Nigeria	100 000
Pakistan	40 000
Saudi Arabia	100 000

At the same session, the representatives of Haiti, Kenya, Morocco and Uganda formally announced the intention of their Governments to make a pledge for the International Year at a later date. In addition, the Government of the Netherlands also pledged \$US 790 000 for a special national demonstration project in a developing country.

20. Thus, as of 6 May 1983, a total of \$1.7 million had been pledged by nine developing countries and two developed countries as voluntary contributions to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. It will be recalled that the estimated cost for all extrabudgetary activities in support of the International Year is \$4.9 million up to the end of 1987. This means that 35 per cent of the total budget had been subscribed within six months after the General Assembly proclaimed the year 1987 the International Year. In other words, pledges in hand are already sufficient to carry the programme to the end of 1984. Initial support for the Year has been strong and it is expected that support will grow rapidly now that the Commission on Human Settlements has defined a programme of immediate action to be taken by participating Governments at the national level.

Notes

1/ For the report of the Commission see Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/38/8).

2/ Statement made at the 1st meeting on 25 April 1983.

3/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/38/8).