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ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
(HABITAT): PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Report of the Sixth Joint Meeting of the Executive Director
of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
and the Bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements with
the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment
Programme and the Bureau of its Governing Council

Report of the Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 32/162, of 19 December 1977, concerning institutional arrangements for international co-operation in the field of human settlements, the General Assembly urged that the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements should meet biannually with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the bureau of its Governing Council "to review together their respective priorities and programmes for improving human settlements and to strengthen and extend co-operation between the two organizations". In resolution 35/77, of 5 November 1980, the General Assembly decided that the joint bureau meeting should be held once a year, rather than on a biannual basis. In compliance with those resolutions, the two bureaux, together with the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held their sixth joint meeting at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre at Nairobi, Kenya, on 13 and 14 December 1983.
2. The present report contains a summary of the main points arising from the discussion at the sixth joint bureau meeting.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

A. Attendance

3. The members of the bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements who attended the joint bureau meeting were:

Mr. Arno Hannus (Finland), Chairman
Mr. Juan Carlos Arlia (Argentina), Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Mavis L. Muyunda (Zambia), Vice-Chairman
Mr. Stefan Staynov (Bulgaria), Vice-Chairman
Mr. Amir Ali Mondal (Bangladesh), Rapporteur

4. The members of the bureau of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme who attended the joint bureau meeting were:

Mr. M.W. Holdgate (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland),
President
Mr. Juan Carlos Arlia (Argentina), Vice-President
Mr. E. Szenes (Hungary), Vice-President

Apologies were received from Mr. T. Khoshoo (India), Vice-President, and Mr. F. Matholoane (Lesotho), Rapporteur.

5. The joint bureau meeting was also attended by Dr. Arcot Ramachandran, Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), and Dr. Mostafa Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP.

6. In accordance with the practice followed at previous joint bureau meetings, Mr. Holdgate (President of the Governing Council) chaired the first session of the meeting and Mr. Hannus (Chairman of the Commission on Human Settlements) chaired the second session.

B. Agenda and opening remarks

7. At the first session, the following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Review of the joint UNEP/UNCHS discussion paper (see annex)
3. Proposed dates in 1985 for the eighth session of the Commission on Human Settlements and the thirteenth session of the Governing Council of UNEP
4. Other business
5. Adoption of the report.

8. In his opening remarks the Chairman welcomed the members of the two bureaux present and, as agreed, invited the Executive Director of UNEP to introduce the discussion paper.

9. In his introduction to the discussion paper, the Executive Director of UNEP said that, as in the past, the discussion paper on co-operation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) had been prepared jointly by the two secretariats. The structure of the paper followed the recommendations made by the joint bureaux at their third meeting and revised at their fifth meeting. After the main decisions of the Commission on Human Settlements and the Governing Council of UNEP were outlined, the action taken by the Economic and Social Council was noted. The Executive Director drew attention to the various resolutions that were before the General Assembly in connection with the agenda items relating to UNEP. He indicated that the General Assembly was expected to take a decision on those resolutions in the course of the next few days. Then followed a detailed account of the collaborative activities of UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP arranged under the nine subject areas established by the third joint bureau meeting. As regards the issue of future joint bureau meetings, the Governing Council (decision 11/1) had expressed the view that annual meetings of the joint bureaux were no longer necessary after 1984. That view was based on the expected close proximity of both organizations in Gigiri by the middle of 1984. Arrangements had been made to bring that view, through the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), to the attention of the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session. The Executive Director concluded by inviting the comment and guidance of the bureau members.

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10. The Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) informed the joint bureaux about the draft resolutions on human settlements that were currently before the General Assembly and were expected to be noted on in the course of the next few days. He noted that those draft resolutions had already been approved by the respective committees of the General Assembly.

II. REVIEW OF THE JOINT UNCHS/UNEP DISCUSSION PAPER

11. The Chairman suggested that the material in the discussion paper could be considered under five headings:

- (a) Organizational matters relating to UNCHS/UNEP co-operation;
- (b) Decisions of the Commission and the Council;
- (c) Resolutions before the General Assembly on the latest sessions of the Commission and the Council;
- (d) Discussions under the nine subject areas identified for co-operation between UNCHS/UNEP;
- (e) Other areas of actual and potential co-operation.

12. During the discussion on matters covered under headings (a), (b) and (c), as outlined by the Chairman, views were exchanged on the issue of the necessity for future joint bureau meetings. Should the Commission concur with the recommendation of the UNEP Governing Council, approval of the General Assembly would be sought at its thirty-ninth session and the seventh meeting of the joint bureaux, in 1984, would then be the last such meeting. In that connection, the joint bureau meeting noted the enhanced opportunity for day-to-day co-operation between UNEP and UNCHS which would result from the location of the two organizations within the new United Nations complex at Gigiri.

13. The joint bureau meeting also reviewed progress in the implementation of resolution 6/14 adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements at its sixth session, in which the Commission called for collaboration between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP in rendering assistance to interested countries in elaborating policies of local planning for human settlements by means of a variety of specified steps. The Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) informed the meeting of the activities already undertaken by the Centre in a number of developing countries which were responsive to the views expressed by the Commission in resolution 6/14. The Executive Director further informed the meeting that the Centre, with support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) was already acting to strengthen local planning capabilities in developing countries. Requests had been received from the Governments of Bolivia, Botswana, United Republic of Cameroon, Honduras, Sri Lanka and Zambia for assistance, and an informal indication of interest had been received from the Government of Zimbabwe.

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A. SUBJECT AREAS

14. The meeting then took up consideration of each of the nine subject areas of joint UNCHS/UNEP activities. A review follows of the highlights of the discussion.

Subject area 1: Human settlements planning in relation to population and environmental policies

15. Regarding the project being carried out under this heading, "Assistance to the Capital Development Authority of Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania", the question was raised as to whether the results of the project would be generally applicable in view of the special nature of new capitals. In response, the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) said that the study was concerned with the development of the region in which Dodoma was located as well as the capital, and would, therefore, have broader relevance for developing countries. The results of the project, which would serve as a case study would be published for wider distribution.

Subject area 2: Support and promotion of research and training in settlements planning

16. With reference to the training course carried out in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic in August 1983, the meeting was informed that the cost included not only travel and per diem expenses of the 23 participants but also items such as the preparation of technical papers and training kits provided to the participants to take back to their countries for use in national training activities. The cost also included the participation of staff members from UNEP, UNCHS and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in the training course. It was noted that the project was expected to produce training materials which would be distributed in English and French.

17. The meeting also noted that UNCHS had a number of other training courses in which that material might be used, involving English- and Spanish-speaking participants.

18. The Executive Director of UNEP said that a new approach was being tried in so far as UNEP-FUNDED training courses in the Soviet Union were concerned. Starting in 1984, an attempt would be made to assist the trainees to put into effect the knowledge attained during those training courses. That could be done by providing additional equipment or technical advice by Soviet or other experts.

Subject area 3: Systems approach to rural settlements planning

19. The meeting noted the co-operative activities between UNEP and UNCHS in the area. The meeting was informed that UNCHS intended to apply the relevant methodology for impact assessment currently being developed, to some of its rural settlements projects. The Executive Director UNCHS (Habitat) reported that

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UNCHS project supported by the Norwegian agency for Development (NORAD) would develop systems analysis and networking in settlements planning. The meeting recognized the importance of rural settlements planning and appreciated the cautious approach being followed by the two secretariats in respect of the possible application of systems analysis to it.

Subject area 4: Global review of human settlements

20. The Executive Directors pointed out the lack of adequate response from Governments, especially those of developing countries, to questionnaires. It was recalled that very few developing countries had submitted responses in connection with the preparation of the Global report issues in 1976. It was suggested that the provision of modest honoraria to local staff gathering information might increase the number of responses.

21. Another problem that was noted was the lack of appropriate indicators for human settlements and the environment. Further research was needed to develop suitable indicators.

22. The meeting agreed that the global review was an important subject area deserving close co-operation between UNEP and UNCHS. The preparation by UNCHS of a theme paper on information for the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session would provide an opportunity for further exchange of views between the two secretariats. Likewise, the work currently underway in UNEP on environmental data would be available in a draft report which would be provided to UNCHS in early 1984 for its consideration and for further consultations on the subject. The meeting drew attention to the desirability of synchronizing the global reports on human settlements and the environment, so as to economize on the data-collection process and reinforce the complementarity of the analyses presented in the reports.

Subject area 5: Energy requirements of rural settlements and the urban poor, and energy conservation in buildings

23. The meeting took note of the work undertaken in the area and urged further collaboration in the development of manuals on appropriate technologies.

Subject area 6: Assessment of environmental conditions in human settlements

24. The joint bureaux appreciated the progress made in the implementation of the project in the Valley of Mexico. It was suggested that it was one of the most important projects being undertaken by UNEP and UNCHS. The meeting agreed with the proposals made by the Executive Directors that the date for the finalization of the joint publication entitled "Methodology for Environmental Impact Assessment of Urban Development" be moved from December 1983 to June 1984, in order to allow the secretariats to take account of the comments and suggestions of the panel of experts which had met at Mexico City from 19-22 October 1983.
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25. The bureaux also noted that the publication would have general applicability and might lead to further co-operation between UNCHS and UNEP in that area. The various technical reports prepared by the study team and associated experts could prove valuable starting points for future work.

Subject area 7: Environmental aspects of the planning and development of human settlements

26. The meeting considered and accepted postponement of the date for the presentation of the three volumes of guidelines to May 1984. The meeting also accepted the proposal to test the guidelines in some specific countries before publishing them jointly in final form and to circulate a preliminary version of them to Governments for their views.

Subject area 8: Environmentally sound and appropriate human settlements technologies

27. Regarding the demonstration project on "Environmental improvement of refugee settlements in Somalia", the Executive Director of UNEP reported that, although the project dealt with very urgent and pressing problems—namely, the improvement of shelter conditions for the refugees—financial difficulties had delayed implementation by nearly two years. UNEP was continuing discussions with AGFUND for partial funding of the proposal and a revised proposal would be submitted to AGFUND for consideration in May 1984.

28. The meeting expressed concern over the delays. Members hoped that the response from AGFUND would be positive; if not, funds from other sources should be sought. The project provided yet another illustration of the inadequacy of resources for activities in the human settlements field in developing countries.

29. The meeting noted with approval the plans to implement a demonstration project in Democratic Yemen, which would also have wider applications.

Subject area 9: Research, training and dissemination of information on environmental aspects of human settlements

30. The meeting felt that UNEP and UNCHS should maintain close co-operation. The meeting noted with approval the intention of the two secretariats to consider the preparation of various joint training courses and hoped that resources would be available for that purpose.

31. It was suggested that the Executive Director of UNCHS might wish to include further information on the subject in his statement to the next session of the Governing Council of UNEP.

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B. Additional areas of co-operation

32. In reviewing the section of the discussion paper on additional areas of co-operation, the joint bureaux welcomed the development of the new initiatives related to the development of guidelines on urban solid-waste disposal; environmental aspects of human settlements planning, especially in nomadic zones; information exchange; and the application of appropriate technology for water supply and sanitation.

33. The Executive Director of UNCHS drew attention to activities being undertaken by UNCHS in the context of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). The programme of activities being undertaken in connection with the IYSH would require co-operation between UNCHS and UNEP and other organizations of the United Nations system. One of the constraints to implementing specific projects at the country level was the lack of resources. The bureaux therefore hoped that bilateral and multilateral aid agencies would be forthcoming in their support to such projects.

C. Resources

34. The joint bureau noted with much concern that both UNEP and UNCHS faced a serious lack of resources to implement a number of key projects which provided opportunities for co-operation and collaboration between the two organizations. The meeting hoped that broader support and additional resources would be made available to UNEP and UNCHS to enable them to carry out such programmes and activities. It was noted that a mechanism had been established for channeling additional resources through UNEP as a "clearing house" to deal with serious environmental problems in developing countries. The bureaux felt that serious human settlements problems in developing countries should be considered for support through that mechanism. It was also suggested that the Executive Director of UNCHS might wish to consider establishing a similar procedure for channelling bilateral funds to deal with urgent human settlements problems in developing countries.

III. PROPOSED DATES IN 1985 FOR THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND THE THIRTEENTH
SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

35. The meeting agreed to recommend to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session and to the Governing Council at its twelfth session the following dates for their eighth and thirteenth sessions, respectively:

Commission on Human Settlements—eighth session:
Monday, 29 April to Friday, 10 May 1985.

Governing Council, UNEP thirteenth session:
Wednesday, 15 May to February, 24 May 1985.

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IV. OTHER BUSINESS

36. No additional points were raised.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

37. The joint bureau meeting adopted the present report on 14 December 1983 and requested the two Executive Directors to report on it to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session and to the Governing Council of UNEP at its twelfth session.
