

Cities and Homes for All: The Habitat Agenda

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Cities and Homes for All: The Habitat Agenda

United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II
Istanbul, Turkey, June 1996

"I urge all Member States and all people, including local authorities and grass-roots organizations, to deepen the partnerships they forged in Istanbul and work closely with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the rest of the United Nations system. Cities may be home to major problems, but they are also the places where solutions to some of the world's most complex and pressing questions are being worked out. I am confident that, together, we can do much to improve the quality of life in all the world's cities."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Habitat Day, October 1997



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Nairobi, Kenya

Foreword

At the turn of the new millennium, an urban revolution is set to take place. For the first time in human history, one half of the world's population will be urban. This urban revolution will escalate over the next three decades when urban populations will grow to twice the size of rural populations. The bulk of this new urban population will be African and Asian, joining the vast pool of urban citizens in Europe, North America and Latin America, where three-quarters of the population is already urbanized.

Not only are we living in an urbanizing world, we are also experiencing an unprecedented urbanization of poverty. In most cities of the developing world, up to one half of the urban population lives in "informal" slum and squatter settlements. These are neither legally recognized nor serviced by city authorities. At least 600 million urban residents in developing countries, and the numbers are growing, live in poor quality housing with inadequate provision of water, sanitation and drainage. As a result, their lives and health are under continuous threat. For them, urban living has become a nightmare, far removed from the dream of safety and prosperity held out by city visionaries.

Cities are, and will remain, the centres of global finance, industry and communications, home to a wealth of cultural diversity and political dynamism, immensely productive, creative and innovative. However, they have also become breeding grounds for pollution and congestion. Unsustainable patterns of consumption among dense city populations, concentration of industries, intense economic activities, increased use of motor vehicles and inefficient waste management all suggest that the major environmental problems of the future will be city problems. Poor urban governance and bad policies have further exacerbated environmental degradation and deteriorating living conditions in many cities.

It is apparent that many governments are under-prepared and under-resourced in anticipating, planning and preparing for an urbanizing world. However, 1996 marked a turning point in international efforts to promote socially and environmentally sustainable cities. The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996, recognized that more holistic, inclusive and participatory policies, strategies and actions are required to make the world's cities and communities safe, healthy and equitable. Habitat II, popularly known as the City Summit, was conceived as a conference of partnerships. It established a historic precedent by including in its deliberations representatives from local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia and other partner groups.

The Conference rejected the notion that cities are problems for which no solutions can be found. Instead, it searched for experiences and best practices that demonstrate practical ways of meeting the challenges of urbanization. The Habitat Agenda, adopted by 171 governments, offers a positive vision of cities, and provides a practical road map to an urbanizing world. An important message in this 241 paragraph document is that good urban governance is a pre-condition for sustainable urban development and the eradication of urban poverty.

Like any other document drafted by many authors, the Habitat Agenda is multi-layered and complex. To make it more accessible to everyone, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is pleased to introduce ***Cities and Homes for All*** – a shorter, reader-friendly version of the Habitat Agenda.

The aim of this version of the Habitat Agenda is to describe the document in a language that can be easily understood, without evaluating or attempting to improve on the original. As such, it is not an official text. In fact, many detailed points could not be included. It is intended as a tool which anyone can use, including local governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, schools and the media.

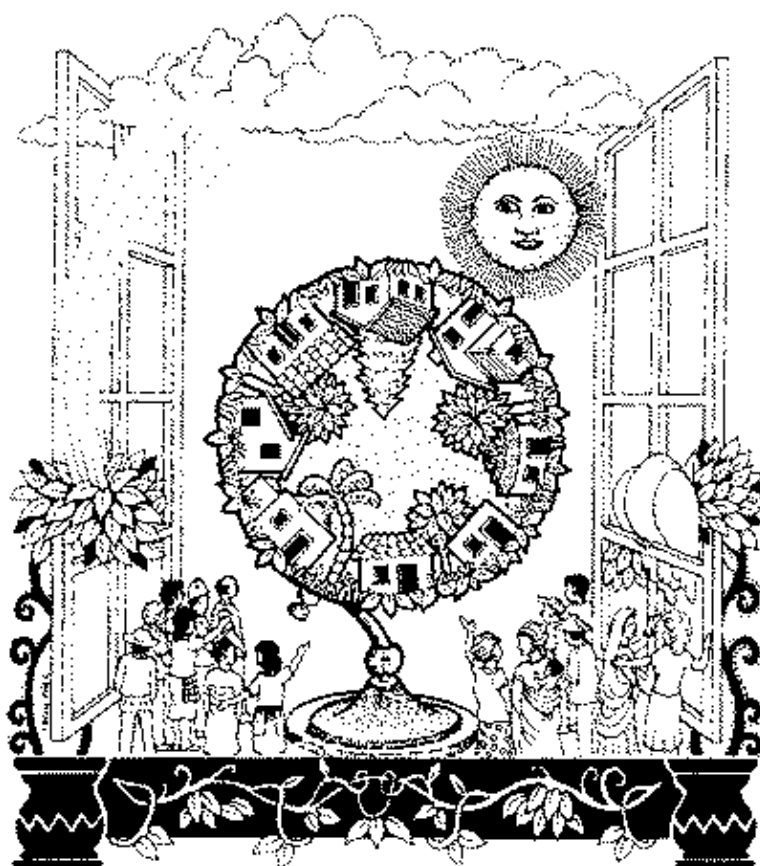
Cities and Homes for All, written and produced for UNCHS (Habitat) by Rooftops Canada/Abri International, begins with an overview of the Habitat II preparatory process. It then follows the structure and content of the Habitat Agenda, briefly introducing each section. In the final section, it offers readers suggestions on actions that can be taken to improve human settlements development. UNCHS (Habitat) is grateful to the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands for providing the funds which made this booklet possible.

Klaus Toepfer
Acting Executive Director
UNCHS (Habitat)

1. The Habitat II Conference

"The world's cities must become sustainable, productive, safe, healthy, humane, and affordable."

Boutros-Boutros Ghali,
former Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1996.



"Vancouver's main purpose... was to put the problems of urbanization and the world's exploding cities on the international agenda... Through the Habitat Forum, Vancouver also energized the fledgling NGOs in the human settlements field."

Jim MacNeil, Former Commissioner General, Habitat, 1976, *The Earth Times*, May 29, 1996, p. 11.

The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II or the “City Summit”, was held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996. More than 20,000 people from 171 countries attended. Habitat II brought together delegations from United Nations member countries and civil society to discuss an issue of global concern: shelter and human settlements in a rapidly urbanizing world.

Habitat II took place twenty years after the first Habitat conference in Vancouver, Canada. In 1976, the participating States took on the challenge of meeting the basic need for shelter, giving priority to the most disadvantaged people. Yet by 1996, more people than ever before, an estimated one billion, lacked adequate shelter. Another important commitment of the first Habitat Conference, to ensure that everyone in developing countries had access to clean water and sanitation by 1990, was also not achieved.

In the period between the two conferences, the world community went through many changes. Approaches to human settlements changed and development agencies started to rethink their limited involvement in urban concerns. They are putting more focus on both the vital link between urban and rural areas, and the needs in urban areas.

At the opening to Habitat II, Suleyman Demirel, President of Turkey and President of the Conference, noted that the Vancouver conference had adopted “a more sectoral and technical approach” to the problems of human settlements. Also in 1976, most participants assumed that governments could slow down rapid urbanization. In Istanbul, the emphasis was very different. The preparations for Habitat II revealed new directions in the management and development of human settlements. Governments at all levels were beginning to support initiatives that combined new techniques with community-based and private sector initiatives. They were also more aware of the needs of women and disadvantaged groups, allowing room for their concerns and experiences to be heard. And few development experts would now advocate what was more commonplace in the 1970s –that governments attempt to check the rate of urbanization.

What Was Habitat II About?

Habitat II considered two main themes. The first, ***adequate shelter for all***, recognized that more than one billion people around the world still do not have satisfactory housing. The second theme was ***sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world***. This focussed on the need to place the development of human settlements in the broader context of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Habitat II focussed on solutions to the challenges faced by cities, towns and villages. It also aimed to bring together the goals of all the global UN (United Nations) conferences held in the 1990s into a framework for action directed towards shelter and human settlements.

How Was Habitat II Organized?

“First, [world conferences] have played an important role in increasing awareness of the seriousness of some global problems... Secondly, they have served to stimulate debate, encourage data and information gathering and promote investigation of ways to ameliorate the situation... Thirdly, the world conferences have provided a forum for participation of a diverse range of actors and institutions representing a broad spectrum of interests, views and ideologies.”

Dharam Ghai, Director, UN Research Institute for Social Development, *The Earth Times*, June 6, 1996, p. 9.



Habitat II Conference, Opening Plenary Session.

MARY INVONE, THE EARTH TIMES

Three Preparatory Committees (PrepCom) meetings in Geneva, Nairobi and New York led up to the Conference. The PrepComs involved an unprecedented presence of “partners,” including local authorities, parliamentarians, people from community based (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions and the private sector. In recognition of their important role, the Habitat II conference allowed for unprecedented civil society participation.

There were three main bodies in Habitat II. The Conference Plenary received general statements from UN member states and other UN and civil society organizations. A special “high-level segment” of the Plenary received the statements and commitments of world leaders. The Plenary also considered and approved the reports from Committees I and II, which were the other main Conference bodies. Smaller working and drafting groups were set up under each of them as required. (See Diagram.) In its final session, the Plenary endorsed the report of the Conference which included the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration.



Delegates at work in Committee 1.

JETTA FRASER, THE EARTH TIMES

The mandate of Committee I was to finalize negotiations on the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration, which can be seen as a high-level executive summary of the Habitat Agenda. One of the innovations of Habitat II allowed local authorities, through their associations, to participate directly in all debates. NGOs took an active role in the working groups of Committee I. Government delegations took on and adopted many of their proposals for the Habitat Agenda.

Civil society organizations were able to nominate representatives to participate in the formal sessions of Committee II of the Conference. This Committee held hearings on the potential contributions of civil society and multilateral institutions to implementing the Habitat Agenda. The following groups made presentations to Committee II:

- the United Nations System
- Local Authorities, Parliamentarians

- the Forums of the World Business Community, Foundations, Parliamentarians, Academies of Science and Engineering, Professionals and Researchers, and Labour Unions
- Non–Governmental and Community–Based Organizations
- Habitat Dialogues for the 21st Century (results of discussions held on the future of cities and related issues)
- the Forums of Human Solidarity and Wisdom Keepers.

The Committee II Report to the Plenary noted that Partners were determined to work with governments and with one another to implement the Habitat Agenda. (See Resources and Contacts.)

Habitat Related Events								
1976	1978	1987	1988	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995
Habitat: UN Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, Canada.	UN Centre for Human Settlements, UNCHS (Habitat) is established in Nairobi, Kenya.	International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). 55 countries established new shelter policies or strategies.	Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 is adopted by UN General Assembly. It emphasizes the need for better production and delivery of shelter, new national housing policies and “enabling strategies”.		22 December. UN General Assembly calls for a second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Resolution 47/180).			11–22 May. PrepCom for Habitat II, Geneva, Switzerland. 25 April–17 May. PrepCom for Habitat II, Nairobi. 17–21 May. Informal Drafting Group meets in Nairobi to work on Habitat II Agenda. 9–14 October. IDG meets again, in France.

Habitat II Timeline

U.N. Conferences

World Summit for Children, New York	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 171 member nations commit to Agenda 21 the international action plan for	World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, Austria.	World Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt.	World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark.
World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand.			Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Barbados.	Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, People's Republic of China.

Local Authorities, NGO and Partner Forums



Youth participants and display at the NGO Forum.

BARRY PINSKY

Before the Habitat II Conference, local authority organizations and networks held the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities in Istanbul, Turkey. Over 500 local authorities came together for two days. They produced a declaration on the role of local authorities within Habitat II. Ten founding organizations formed the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC). Its founding mission is to project the united voice of local government at the global level, and to work in partnership with relevant UN Agencies.

An NGO Forum took place near the official conference. An International Facilitating Group representing more than 40 regions, caucuses and global networks organized the Forum. It featured workshops, activities, displays and information tables set up by NGOs, CBOs, religious, educational and other civil society groups from all over the world.

Trade unions, foundations, global parliamentarians, the private sector and other groups also held forums that contributed to the debates at Habitat II.

BEST PRACTICES

The Best Practices Exhibition was a highlight of Habitat II. It brought to the Conference solutions to the myriad problems of human settlements throughout the world. Out of more than 700 submissions, twelve initiatives received the Dubai International Award for Best Practices. An assessment of a project's use of partnerships, its impact and its sustainability were the basis for the awards. Gender equality, inclusion of disadvantaged people and community participation were also important selection criteria. Another 100 entries were described as Best Practices and 200 as Good Practices. 500 of the Best Practices have been documented for wide circulation (see Resources and Contacts).

UNCHS (HABITAT)

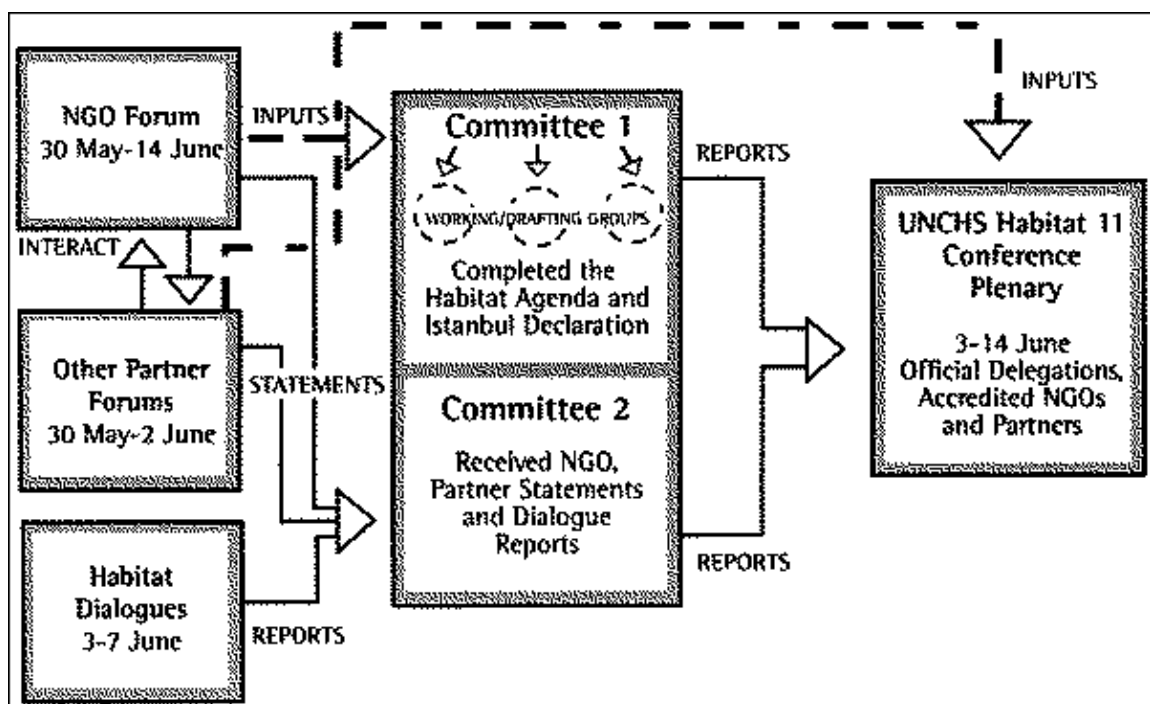
The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements or UNCHS (Habitat) was the secretariat for Habitat II. It was set up by the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, two years after the first Habitat Conference. UNCHS (Habitat) is based in Nairobi, Kenya. The mission of Habitat is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable urban settlements development and management through policy advocacy, capacity-building and the establishment of partnerships at international, regional, national and local levels. It is the focal point for monitoring the worldwide implementation of the Habitat Agenda. It works with national governments, local authorities, NGOs and the private sector, as well as with other UN agencies. The Commission on Human Settlements determines its policy and direction. The Commission, which meets every

second year, is made up of 58 UN member nations chosen on a regional basis.



Gender issues were front and centre at Habitat II.

JETTA FRASER, THE EARTH TIMES



How Habitat II was Organized

"There were workshops galore... what an amazing diversity of topics and organizers! There were hundreds of booths that ranged from sustainable eco-communes to projects that remove land mines from playgrounds. And there were the caucuses upon caucuses upon coalitions of caucuses! I carry in my spirit, as part of my community, the amazing youth and adult mentors I met from across the planet."

Marie Segger,
National Coordinator, Youth for Habitat II Canada.

2. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements



"The Habitat Agenda is a global call to action at all levels. It offers, within a framework of goals and principles and commitments, a positive vision of sustainable human settlements – where all have adequate shelter, a healthy and safe environment, basic services, and productive and freely chosen employment. The Habitat Agenda will guide all efforts to turn this vision into reality."

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 21.

States participating in Habitat II in Istanbul adopted the Habitat Agenda. The UN General Assembly then endorsed it. Together with the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, the Habitat Agenda is a commitment by the world's nations to improve the living conditions in the world's cities, towns and villages, making them safer, healthier and more sustainable.

In its treatment of Habitat II's two themes, **adequate shelter for all** and **sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world**, the Habitat Agenda includes discussions of many related issues such as health care, nutrition, water and sanitation. It links human settlement problems to the need to eradicate poverty and generate jobs, and to the particular concerns of women and the disadvantaged. The result is a comprehensive strategy that establishes new partnerships for action at the local, national and international levels among national governments and NGOs, local authorities, the private sector and others.

"The city is a place where a lot of problems are concentrated; but the city also has the resources to overcome these problems and be the place of development."

Prof. Valentino Castellini, Mayor, City of Turin, International Conference on the Follow-Up to Habitat II, "New Partnerships for Action", Turin, Italy, 1–5 December 1998.

The Habitat Agenda went through a long process of negotiation and rewriting. Some of its wording came from the documents of previous UN conferences, especially the 1992 Earth Summit, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Social Summit. But much of it grew within the PrepCom meetings and within the Conference itself.

The Habitat Agenda contains 241 paragraphs divided into four chapters:

• **CHAPTER I, PREAMBLE** (paragraphs 1–21), sets the context. It outlines global challenges for human settlements and declares the determination of national governments to meet these challenges.

• **CHAPTER II, GOALS AND PRINCIPLES** (paragraphs 22–36), defines the policy objectives for government action on shelter and sustainable human settlements and the strategies to achieve them. The strategies include partnerships, enablement and participation, sharing information and monitoring.

• **CHAPTER III, COMMITMENTS** (paragraphs 37–52), outlines the international community's agreements on achieving

- adequate shelter for all
- development of sustainable human settlements
- the enablement of the public, private and community sectors to play an effective role in development of human settlements
- gender equality
- financing shelter and human settlements; and
- international cooperation.

• **CHAPTER IV, GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION** (paragraphs 53–241), covers five main strategies for action: adequate shelter for all, sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world, capacity building and institutional development, international cooperation and coordination, and the implementation and monitoring of the Habitat Agenda. It is the largest chapter and sets out specific actions that governments and other Habitat partners may carry out to meet the objectives of the Conference.

“This conference in Istanbul marks a new era of cooperation, an era of a culture of solidarity. As we move into the twenty-first century, we offer a positive vision of sustainable human settlements, a sense of hope for our common future and an exhortation to join a truly worthwhile and engaging challenge, that of building together a world where everyone can live in a safe home with the promise of a decent life of dignity, good health, safety, happiness and hope.”

The Istanbul Declaration, paragraph 15.

The Habitat Agenda is truly a pivotal document. It continues the process of other UN conferences. It recognizes the central role of partnerships, especially those involving local authorities and non-governmental organizations. It has integrated or “mainstreamed” gender and human rights in relation to human settlements. It very carefully registers the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It recognizes the important contributions of youth and indigenous people to sustainable human settlements.

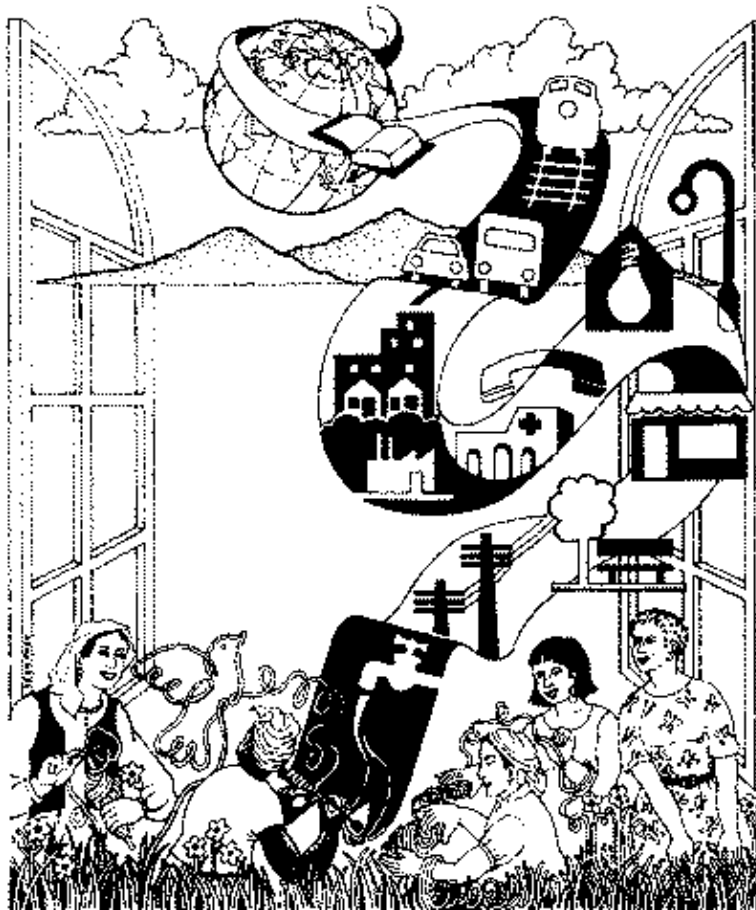
The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, prepared during Habitat II, highlights the most important elements of the Habitat Agenda. Its purpose is to galvanize people's emotions and thoughts. It is a call to action. The Declaration outlines the challenges facing human settlements and focusses on the central importance of people and their quality of life in the struggle for sustainable development.



The Habitat Agenda addresses the challenges of urbanization.

CIDA PHOTO: ELLEN TOLMIE

3. Setting the Stage: The Preamble



"Cities and towns have been engines of growth and incubators of civilization and have facilitated the evolution of knowledge, culture and tradition, as well as of industry and commerce... properly planned and managed, [they] hold the promise for human development and the protection of the world's natural resources through their ability to support large numbers of people while limiting their impact on the natural environment."

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 7

By the year 2000, more than half of the world's people will live in cities, towns and villages. This is a remarkable change from 1900 when 90% of the world's people lived in rural areas. This shift shows that economic activity is changing. Fewer and fewer people make their living from the land. It also signals a need

to rethink the way urban settlements are managed. Better opportunities and services for urban people are important, but urban settlements should not continue to damage the environment as they grow.

AGENDA [1–21]

A concerted global effort could help achieve the Habitat II goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. But first the challenge facing cities and towns must be recognized. More than three billion people will live and work in urban areas by the year 2000.

The most serious problems facing cities, towns and their people are:

- inadequate financial resources
- lack of jobs, spreading homelessness and expanding squatter settlements
- increased poverty and a widening gap between rich and poor
- growing insecurity and rising crime
- inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure
- lack of health and educational services
- poor use of land, uncoordinated development and insecure land tenure
- rising traffic congestion and more pollution
- lack of green spaces and inadequate water supply and sanitation
- increasing vulnerability to disaster.

“...human settlements are not simply housing, or for that matter, merely the physical structure of a city, town or village but an integrated combination of all human activity processes – residence, work, education, health, culture, leisure etc. – and the physical structure that supports them.”

Global Report on Human Settlements, 1986.



By the Year 2000, half of humanity, more than three billion people will live and work in urban areas.

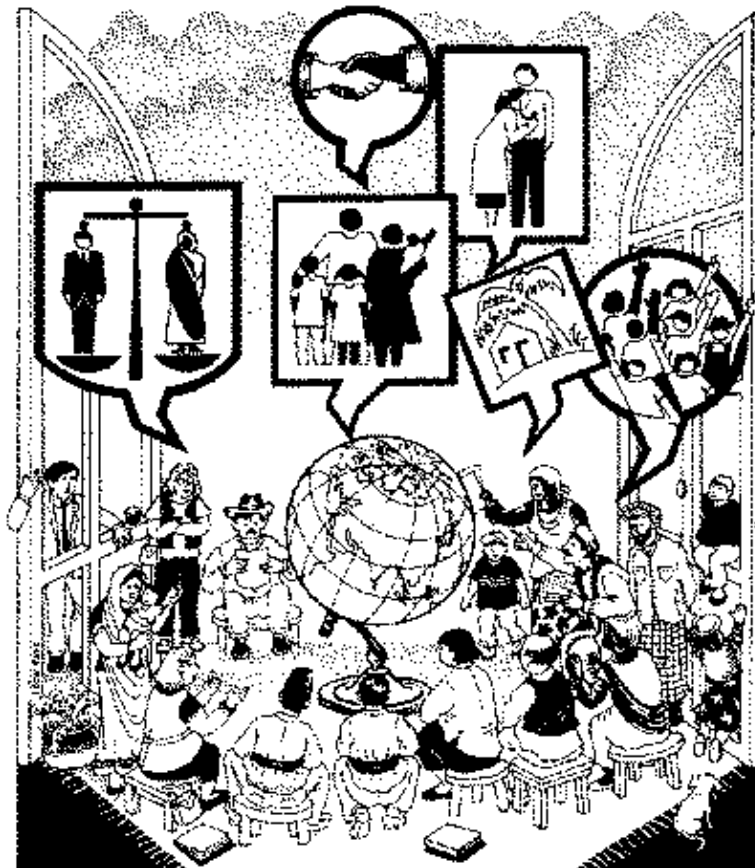
Rapid rates of rural-to-city and country-to-country migration and population growth make these problems particularly acute. Poor planning and management and a lack of investment and technology make the problems worse. Links between urban and rural areas are crucial to sustain human settlements.

Rural settlements also face many problems. They include poor economic opportunities, support systems and services. Water, sanitation, health, education, communication, transport and energy are the most affected.

More people than ever are living in absolute poverty and without adequate shelter. Homelessness is growing in many countries. The number of displaced persons, including refugees, is growing rapidly. This makes the shelter crisis worse.

States must take into account the needs of children, especially the most vulnerable, youth, older people, women, indigenous people and those with disabilities. Policies must respect the identity and culture of indigenous people.

4. Our Vision of Human Settlements: The Goals, Principles and Commitments



"We, the States participating in... Habitat II, are committed to a political, economic, environmental, ethical, and spiritual vision of human settlements based on the principles of equality, solidarity, partnership, human dignity, respect and cooperation."

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 25.

The two chapters of the Habitat Agenda outlining Goals, Principles and Commitments speak with the voice of the States which prepared the Habitat Agenda. The governments of the world speak in the first person and so commit themselves to carrying out a common vision, whether acting alone or in regional and global groupings, with the full involvement of all their citizens.

AGENDA [22–36]

Goals and principles

All States have the duty to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. States will promote international peace and security at the international level. They will support efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means. States will strengthen peace by promoting tolerance, nonviolence and respect for diversity at the national level. Crime prevention through social development is essential for safety and security at the local level.

The principles of the Charter of the United Nations guide the States. The States reaffirm their commitment to ensuring the full realization of the human rights set out in international charters. They reaffirm their special commitment to the right to adequate housing as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The right to adequate housing will be realized progressively.

The following ten principles guide the States in their actions:

1. Equitable human settlements. These are settlements in which all people have equal access to housing, support systems, health services, food and water, education and open spaces. There must be no discrimination in access to them on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status of any kind. They also have equal opportunity for a productive livelihood of their choice and participation in making decisions. They have equal access to economic resources, inheritance and ownership of land or other property. The empowerment and full participation of women are fundamental to developing sustainable human settlements.

2. Eradication of poverty is essential for making human settlements sustainable. It is linked to meeting the basic needs of all people. The poor, the disadvantaged and the vulnerable are in greatest need, especially in developing countries. It also aims to enable all women and men to find secure and sustainable livelihoods through productive employment of their choice.



Savings are a step to economic empowerment and secure housing in Mumbai.

BARRY PINSKY

3. Sustainable development gives full consideration to the need to achieve economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Particular attention should be given to the situation of developing countries and of countries with economies in transition. Development of sustainable human settlements includes:

- the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- the principles of the precautionary approach
- prevention of pollution

- respect for the carrying capacity of ecosystems
- preservation of opportunities for future generations.

4. The quality of life of all people depends in part on the physical and spatial characteristics of villages, towns and cities. People need community and want more livable neighbourhoods. Their needs and hopes must guide the process of design, management and maintenance of human settlements.

5. The family is the basic unit of society and society should strengthen it. Various forms of the family exist in different cultural, political and social systems. Consent to enter marriage must be free. Husband and wife must be equal partners. The design, development and management of human settlements should enhance the role of the family.

6. All people have rights. They must also accept their responsibility to respect and protect the rights of others, including future generations. They must contribute actively to the common good. Sustainable human settlements encourage civic engagement by all people. Governments at all levels, including local authorities, should make sure that people have access to education, and that their health, safety and general welfare are protected.

7. Partnerships among all countries and actors from all sectors within countries are essential to develop sustainable human settlements and provide adequate shelter for all. This principle encourages organizations to form alliances, pool resources, share knowledge, offer their skills and benefit from acting together.

8. Solidarity with those who belong to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including the poor, is a foundation of social cohesion. The international community, national governments and other relevant actors should strengthen solidarity, cooperation and assistance to meet the challenges of human settlements.

9. Safeguarding the interests of present and future generations is a goal of the international community. Each country is primarily responsible for the development of human settlements at the national and local levels. New and additional financial resources from various sources are necessary to achieve adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development.

10. Human health and quality of life are at the centre of the effort to develop sustainable human settlements. They depend on equal access to food and nutrition, housing, safe drinking water, sanitation, primary health care and eradication of major diseases, quality education, safe places to work and live, and a protected environment.

Commitments

[37–52]

“It is a conference of commitments towards improving settlements, especially for the poor. If the Agenda is implemented, we have a chance to enter the 21st century in a more humane way. If not, there will be disaster.”

Minar Pimple, Director, YUVA, *The Earth Times*, June 5, 1996, p. 6.

The Habitat Agenda outlines seven major commitments made by States at Habitat II. Four of these commitments reappear as major sections in Chapter IV of the Habitat Agenda, the Global Plan of Action. They are: adequate shelter for all, sustainable human settlements, international cooperation and assessing progress (which appears as Implementation and Follow-up). These four are outlined in Sections 5 to 9 of this booklet. The other three are recurring themes throughout the Habitat Agenda: enablement and participation, gender equality and financing shelter and human settlements. This section describes them.

Enablement and Participation

“We commit ourselves to the strategy of enabling all key actors in the public, private, and community sectors to play an effective role – at the national, state/provincial, metropolitan

and local levels – in human settlements and shelter development.”

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 44



The Habitat Agenda encourages local and international partnerships.

CANADIAN COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

There have been major changes in the way governments deal with human settlements since the first Habitat Conference in 1976. The emphasis on governments providing all the money and leadership has gradually changed. In 1988, the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (GSS) outlined a new focus on public–private–community partnership. The Habitat Agenda expands this theme and calls for all interested parties to work together. The Habitat Agenda puts less of the direct responsibility for implementation on national governments and calls for more from “civil society.” It affirms that the organizations in civil society must have a place in planning and decision–making if they are to be pro–active. The Habitat Agenda asks governments to develop an “enabling approach” and to concentrate on supporting community efforts to develop housing and to improve human settlements.

“Habitat II seeks unprecedented commitment, first and foremost, calling not only on governments but, perhaps more than any other previous conference, on every sector of society to work together toward the Conference goals.”

Paula DiPerna, Chief Editorial Writer, *The Earth Times*, June 3, 1996, p. 14.

The concept of “enablement” supports people’s efforts to develop their own housing and communities. The enabling approach was first developed in the human settlements sector in the GSS. It became stronger in Agenda 21, the international action plan for sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It then became part of the Habitat Agenda.

[44–45]

The States commit themselves to:

- decentralize authority and resources
- work with youth to prepare them for decision–making roles and sustainable livelihoods
- promote frameworks sensitive to gender
- encourage CBOs and other forms of non–governmental groups.
- use participatory approaches based on dialogue among all actors, especially women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, while including the interests of children and youth.

Gender Equality

"We commit ourselves to the goal of gender equality in human settlements development."

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 46.

The Habitat Agenda represents a major step forward for women in relation to housing and human settlements. It directs people working at every level of the development of human settlements to consider the special needs and concerns of women. Women, many of whom had attended the Beijing Women's Conference, were active participants in the Habitat II process. They held to the standard on women's issues set at Beijing, and helped to ensure that women's concerns were dealt with throughout the Habitat Agenda.

"The home becomes a place that has a soul and a heartbeat. Women should be involved at every single level in the development of housing." – **Bella Abzug**, WEDO, in *Earth Times* June 13, 1998.



Women are active members of housing cooperatives in Zimbabwe.

CANADIAN COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

Women and men's equal right to own and inherit land and property, and equal rights to credit, health care, shelter and security of tenure are all underlined in the Habitat Agenda. It commits governments to encourage economic policies "that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both the formal and informal sectors" (paragraph 119f) and that adopt specific measures to address women's long-term unemployment. It also recognizes that women have greater difficulty finding affordable housing than men and that women subjected to violence have a particular need for shelter.

"The human settlements agenda adopted by the 1996 Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements fully integrates civil society in the quest for "Shelter for All" and sustainable human settlements."

Klaus Toepfer, Acting Executive Director, UNCHS (Habitat), Go Between 71, NGLS 1998.

The Habitat Agenda states clearly that women should be involved at all levels of planning, development and decision-making in relation to human settlements issues. In several places it asserts the need for research to provide separate data for women and men, so that women's situations and needs are more visible.

[46]

The States participating in Habitat II pledge to:

- integrate gender perspectives in legislation, policies, programmes, project implementation and evaluation that relate to human settlements
- collect, analyse and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information, including statistics that recognize women's unpaid work
- strengthen policies and practices to promote women's full and equal participation in human settlements planning and decision-making.

Financing Shelter and Human Settlements

Habitat II renewed and expanded the GSS focus on mobilizing financial resources for public infrastructure, housing and targeted subsidies. The Habitat Agenda points out the need for healthy national and international macroeconomic frameworks to achieve its goals. It highlights the financial needs of local government as well as the potential for combining resources from both formal and community-based institutions.

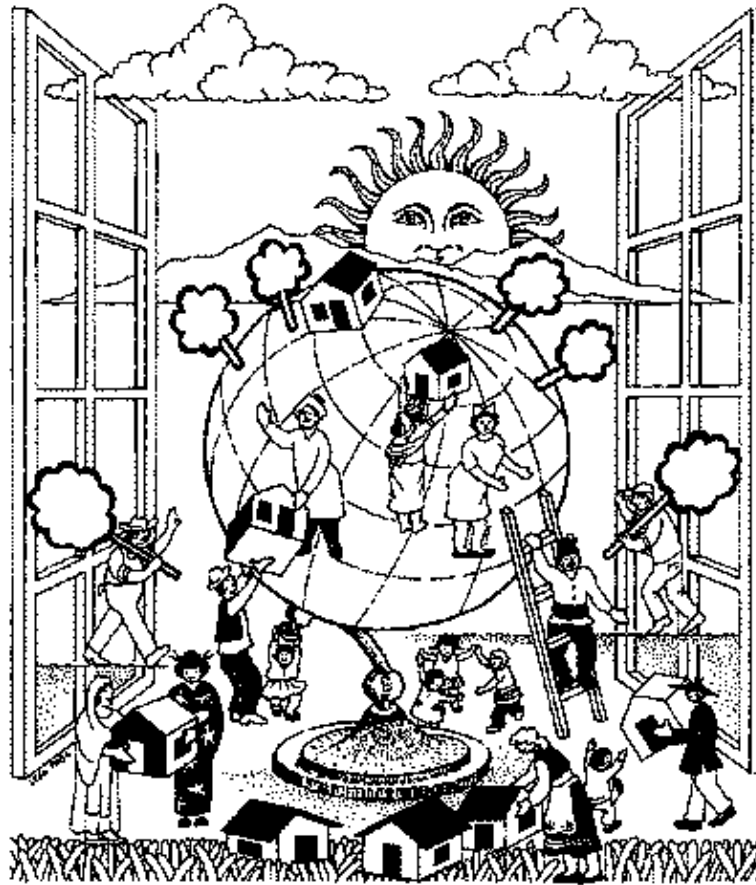
[47–48]

States commit themselves to strengthening existing financial mechanisms and mobilizing new resources from public, private, multilateral and bilateral sources at the international, regional, national and local levels. They recognize that local institutions involved in micro-credit may hold the most potential for housing the poor.

States also pledge to:

- stimulate national and local economies by promoting sustainable development that will attract domestic, international and private investment and generate jobs
- strengthen fiscal and financial management capacity
- use fiscal measures to expand public revenue to assist sustainable human settlements development
- strengthen legal frameworks to enable markets to work and promote socially and environmentally responsible corporate investment in, and in partnership with, local communities
- promote equal access to credit for all people
- improve mechanisms for allocation of resources
- make the market accessible for those excluded from participation by providing subsidies and promoting credit and other mechanisms.

5. Adequate Shelter for All



“Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one’s head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and reliability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water–supply, sanitation and waste–management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health–related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities: all of which should be available at an affordable cost.”

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 60.

“Adequate shelter for all” is the first of the two main themes of the Habitat Agenda. One of the major challenges for the millennium is to provide adequate shelter for the estimated one billion people worldwide who do not have it. The issue of whether or not “the right to housing” is a universally recognized human right was a contentious one during the Habitat II process. Governments are not held responsible for providing housing to everyone, but the Habitat Agenda calls on governments “to protect and ensure the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing” (paragraph 61). Governments are obliged to work towards the achievement of the right to adequate housing and the Habitat Agenda clarifies their responsibility by outlining specific policies they should implement.

AGENDA [60–64]

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 recognized access to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living. The definition of adequacy varies among countries because it depends on specific cultural, social, environmental and economic factors. The people concerned should have a say in deciding what is adequate. All people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, should have adequate housing.

Like the other aspects of human settlements, providing adequate housing is not just the responsibility of governments. It requires action by all sectors of society, including the private sector, non–governmental organizations, communities, local authorities, partner organizations and the international community.

Using the “enabling approach,” governments should enact laws that protect people against any form of discrimination in housing. They should also provide all people with security of tenure and access to land and protect them from forced evictions.

“If people are aware of their rights, it gives them confidence and enables them to advocate for practical solutions to improve their living conditions. It is very important to widely distribute the Habitat Agenda which has a strong statement of the right to housing.”

Miloon Kothari, HIC Housing Rights Committee, 1998.

Governments should develop policies to make housing affordable and accessible. This includes:

- making regulations and offering incentives to the market
- providing subsidies and other types of housing assistance
- supporting community-based, cooperative and non-profit housing programmes
- promoting support services for the homeless and other vulnerable groups
- mobilizing new types of financial and other resources for housing and community development, and consulting with the affected people to come up with new policies and strategies.

Governments must also monitor and evaluate housing conditions so that they know the extent of homelessness and poor shelter conditions. They should develop strategies and make changes with the full participation of the people affected.



The Habitat Agenda promotes a wide range of shelter strategies.

CIDA PHOTO: **ELLEN TOLMIE**

Shelter Policies

[65–70]

“Enabling” shelter policies are the cornerstone for ensuring adequate shelter for all. Shelter policies should be decentralized to regional and local levels. The process of policy development should involve representatives from all levels of the public, private, non-governmental, cooperative and community sectors, including people living in poverty. Governments should establish regulatory systems and provide institutional support to encourage participation and partnership arrangements. They should promote the use and maintenance of existing housing stock and the development of affordable rental housing.

BEST PRACTICES

Namibia

The Build Together programme shows how partnerships among many stakeholders can significantly change the urban environment. Namibia developed a National Shelter Strategy with assistance from UNDP and UNCHS. It led to government becoming a facilitator of housing. Small loans, technical advice and grants are provided to beneficiaries who build and upgrade their own homes. Over 1300 households participate every year. People build according to their own needs and priorities. Many of the beneficiaries are women. As a result, women's access to shelter has improved. The private sector provides low-cost materials and local authorities assist by making affordable land available.

Shelter policy must be integrated with overall economic, environmental and social development policies. This involves coordinating the contributions of both civil society and private business in the shelter sector and monitoring the impact of economic policies on shelter delivery. It means taking job creation, environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage and the needs of the homeless into account.



Shelter policies should be linked to economic, environmental and social development.

BARRY PINSKY

A cross-sectoral approach should be adopted, integrating policies on shelter and human settlements with other related policies. Examples are: population, human resource development, environment, urban-rural planning, and both public and private employment initiatives. The cross-sectoral approach should take account of the needs of people with disabilities and encourage environmentally sound and affordable construction methods. It should strengthen local industry and use local resources. Promotion of construction and maintenance that is labour intensive can generate urban employment.

Shelter Delivery Systems

[71–92]

Governments must create the necessary frameworks for a well-functioning housing market and address the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups not served by the private sector. They should encourage markets and community-based housing production, ensure access to land, mobilize sources of finance, ensure access to basic infrastructure and services and improve planning, design construction, maintenance and rehabilitation.

“Collectively, the efforts of poor people to build and improve their housing is a significant contribution to the economy and to the improvement of local neighbourhoods.”

Enrique Ortiz, Habitat International Coalition, 1998.

Markets

[71–72]

In many countries, the market is the primary method for delivering housing. To ensure market efficiency, governments should assess the housing supply situation and collect gender-disaggregated data about housing markets. They should also review legal, financial and regulatory frameworks, and avoid interventions that reduce supply or distort demand. Governments should clearly define property rights, allowing the exchange of land and housing. Property transactions should be transparent and not open to corruption. Governments should ensure women's right to inherit and own land and other property. They should also ensure that women have full and equal access to credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies. Governments should apply suitable fiscal measures, including taxes, to boost housing and land supply.

Community-Based Housing Production

[73–74]

Owner-occupiers in many developing countries have built more than half the existing housing stock. This situation is unlikely to change for some time. Governments should support people's individual and collective efforts by integrating self-built housing into land use policies. They should regulate self-built housing and support attempts to improve it through better access to resources like land, financing and building materials. Governments should encourage CBOs and NGOs to assist in the production of self-built housing. They should also set up programmes and policies so they are prepared for spontaneous settlements when they occur.



Local building materials production in Uganda.

CANADIAN COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

Access to Land

[75–79]

Access to land and security of tenure are prerequisites of adequate shelter for all. They also provide the opportunity for people to break out of poverty. There are different laws in different countries around land ownership and tenure. Nevertheless, all governments, including local authorities, should remove obstacles to equitable access to land, ensuring the equal rights of women and men related to land and property.

"In the long run, our cities will only thrive through private, for-profit initiatives based on economic value and true competitive advantage, and not through permanent subsidies or government mandates."

Henry G. Cisneros, Secretary, US Department of Housing and Urban Development and Head of US Delegation at Habitat II.

To ensure a supply of usable land, appropriate levels of government must recognize and legitimize the many different ways people get access to land. They should decentralize land management, and stimulate efficient

land markets and sustainable land use. They should set up land information systems and practices for managing land, including land value assessment, and make the information readily available. They should make full use of infrastructure that is already in place and streamline land registration procedures. Governments should prepare legal definitions of land and promote rural development, including small and medium-sized cities in rural areas.

Governments and all interested parties must remove legal and social barriers that block access to land for women, people with disabilities and those in vulnerable groups. Actions include encouraging education and ensuring that women's rights are clearly specified in law and enforced. They should also ensure that women participate in decision-making, especially female heads of households and women who are sole providers for their families. They should protect women who risk losing their homes and properties when their husbands die.

"The success of any housing programme is directly related to the extent to which women are involved." – **President Nelson Mandela** of South Africa, African Ministerial Meeting on Preparations for Habitat II, Johannesburg, October 1995.

In order to facilitate access to land and security of tenure for all socio-economic groups, governments should encourage the participation of CBOs and NGOs by:

- adjusting legal frameworks to stimulate the diverse ways people organize the production and management of land, housing and services
- introducing financial procedures adapted to the needs of housing production by the people themselves
- supporting capacity-building of NGOs and CBOs to make them efficient partners
- encouraging lending institutions to recognize that CBOs may act as guarantors for those who lack other sources of equity such as minorities, the poor and women.

BEST PRACTICES



CEARAH PERIFERIA

Fortaleza, Brazil

Since 1988, Fortaleza's Mutirao 50 project has become a broad community, development programme. It includes housing development, micro enterprise, commercial development and a small nursery. Three partners are involved: CONPOR – a people's council, the municipality of Fortaleza and GRET, an NGO that provides technical assistance. A Community Fund for Housing allows over 600 families per year to get home improvement loans. A micro enterprise project sells low cost soil-cement bricks and other building, materials. Young people are being trained in construction skills. Programme, successes are being shared with other municipalities.

Mobilizing Sources of Finance

[80–83]

Most housing finance institutions do not serve the needs of large segments of the population, particularly those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the poor and low-income people. Governments should:

- adopt policies to extend more housing finance credit to poor people and eradicate discrimination against borrowers
- encourage the private sector to provide resources for rental housing, maintenance and rehabilitation
- support non-traditional finance
- encourage all financial institutions to be more efficient
- make community mortgage programmes accessible to poor people, especially women
- encourage cooperatives to play a greater role in mobilizing finance through savings and credit cooperatives, credit unions, cooperative banks, and trade union or community based financial and housing cooperatives
- provide subsidies to allow people with out access to credit and land to enter the housing market.

Access to Basic Infrastructure and Services

[84–87]



Working together, governments, the community and the private sector can provide basic infrastructure.

CIDA PHOTO: **PAT MORROW**

Basic support systems and services include water, sanitation, waste management, social welfare, transport and communications facilities, energy, health and emergency services, schools, public safety and the management of open spaces. Central governments should support local, state and provincial authorities in managing, operating and maintaining infrastructure and basic services. The private sector, communities and NGOs can participate in providing services and management under the coordination of governments. Governments should also work to enable people living in poverty and the disadvantaged to have access to basic infrastructure and services. They should involve local communities in setting priorities and standards

and in operating and maintaining community facilities. Governments should promote partnerships with the private sector and with non-profit organizations to manage and deliver services.

Improve Planning, Design, Construction, Maintenance and Rehabilitation

[88–92]

Housing quality must improve and the costs of housing construction must drop while the potential for job creation is harnessed. The actual needs of individuals, families and their communities must be met. Governments should support research to develop local planning and design techniques; exchange regional and international experience of best practices; strengthen training; provide incentives for engineers, planners, architects and contractors to use energy-efficient structures and facilities; and strengthen government regulatory and inspection systems. They should contract with CBOs and the informal sector to plan, design, build, repair and maintain housing and local services. Governments should also promote locally produced, environmentally sound, affordable, safe and durable building materials.

Vulnerable Groups and People With Special Needs

[93–98]



Housing should be adapted to everyone's needs.

While the definition of vulnerable and disadvantaged people appears in this section, the Habitat Agenda contains many references to their needs and concerns.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are those who are on the margins of society or excluded from the socio-economic mainstream and decision-making processes. They do not have equal access to resources and opportunities. Not all members of these groups are always vulnerable and disadvantaged. Their circumstances of life rather than any inherent characteristics make them vulnerable and disadvantaged.

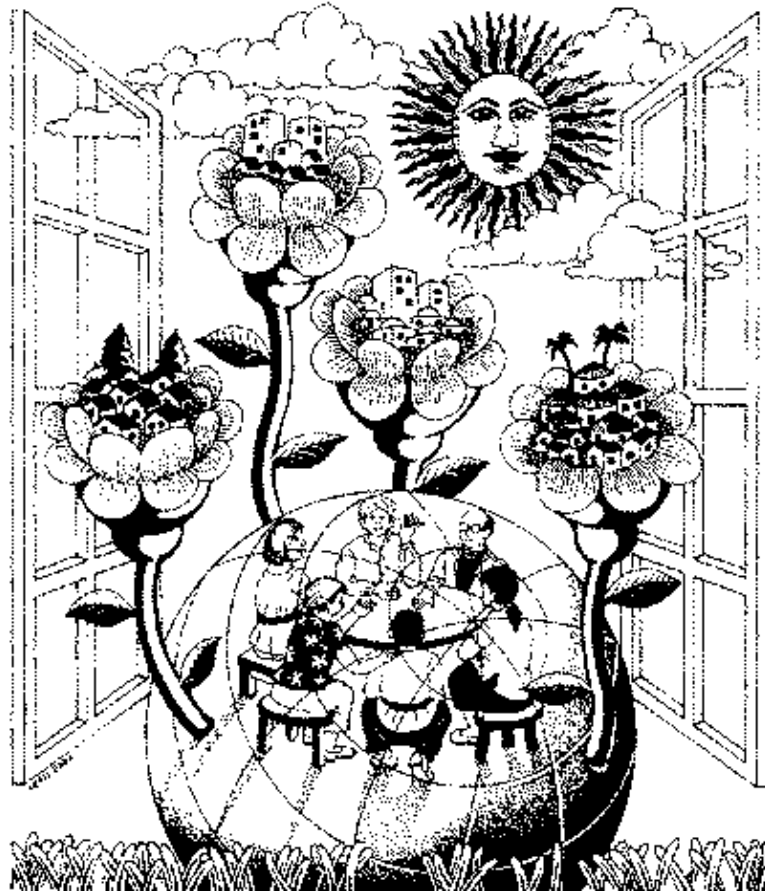
People in vulnerable or disadvantaged groups are especially at risk when they lack shelter, security of tenure and basic services. Children living in difficult circumstances, such as street children and child workers, should get special consideration. Governments must also strengthen their support for refugees.

Governments should help end discrimination in the provision of shelter by

- revising and enforcing laws to prevent discrimination
- supporting organizations of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups so they can promote their interests
- promoting affordable and accessible public transit
- providing groups with access to information and the opportunity to participate in local decision-making; and
- providing increased coverage of water supply and sanitation services.

Governments should also provide subsidies, social services and safety nets through income support to the most vulnerable groups. They should cooperate with private and nonprofit groups that work with the vulnerable and disadvantaged, including people with disabilities and older people, to improve housing and access to services. They should also protect people from forced evictions and improve access to legal information and assistance for vulnerable groups.

6. Sustainable Human Settlements in an Urbanizing World



"The sustainability of the global environment and human life will not be achieved unless... human settlements in both urban and rural areas are made economically buoyant, socially vibrant and environmentally sound, with full respect for cultural, religious and natural heritage and diversity."

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 101.

The second major theme of Habitat II is sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world. It puts the focus on the challenges of building sustainable human settlements within the context of accelerating urbanization. It includes many of the issues discussed in Agenda 21 and the GSS with a focus on the roles of local authorities

AGENDA [99–108]

Urban settlements hold a promise for human development and for protection of the world's natural resources. This is because they are able to support large numbers of people while limiting their impact on the natural environment. However, many cities have developed harmful patterns of growth and land use, of production and consumption. Cities are often associated with soil, air and water pollution, the waste of resources and the destruction of natural resources. Sustainable development in an urbanized world will depend on the ability of cities to manage production and consumption patterns, and to develop the transport and waste disposal systems needed to preserve the environment.

The development of sustainable human settlements depends on an interplay of economic development, social development and environmental protection. Governments at all levels should create partnerships with all interested parties to encourage the sustainable development and management of cities, towns and villages.

Sustainable Land Use

[109–114]

Land is essential for providing food, water and energy. Yet getting access to land is more and more difficult, especially for poor people and members of other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Land use relates closely to water resource management because of the need to protect fresh water resources from the harmful effects of human settlements. Land use patterns should minimize transport demands, save energy, protect open and green spaces, and discourage the placing of hazardous facilities in housing areas. Provision of green spaces and common land should be part of the planning of urban areas. Governments must support better land management by developing comprehensive and environmentally sound land use strategies at the local level. They should encourage partnerships and participation among all interested parties.



Sustainable land use should be promoted in and around urban areas.

CIDA PHOTO: **ROGER LEMOYNE**

“Youth are the generation of the future and of today and we offer our energy and idealism to issues facing the human race, to achieve a world that is welcoming to all its inhabitants, to building a global home.”

Dr. Wally N'Dow, Secretary–General Habitat II, Habitat Watch, June 3, 1998, p. 2.

BEST PRACTICES	
Hamilton–Wentworth, Canada	
Hamilton–Wentworth regional municipality has an innovative sustainable development programme that engages government, industry and community organizations. It is based on Vision 2020, a strategic plan for the region. Thousands of citizens are involved in sustainable development projects in transportation, pollution prevention, youth programming, energy conservation and other sectors. Annual reports are based on a lengthy list of indicators. These help the community measure progress in relation to regional planning goals.	



HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

Social Development

[115–124]

The goal of equitable and stable human settlements cannot be separated from the goal of eradicating poverty. The principle of eradicating poverty is based on the framework adopted in 1995 by the World Summit for Social Development. The international community acknowledges the feminization of poverty and other signs of poverty, including homelessness and inadequate housing.

Eradicating poverty requires sound macroeconomic policies aimed at creating jobs and universal access to economic opportunities, education and training and basic social services, including health facilities. Poor people must be able to participate in all aspects of political, economic and social life.

Governments at appropriate levels should promote social integration by prohibiting practices that discriminate or exclude people from shelter or employment. They should stimulate job opportunities that allow everyone to have an adequate standard of living in both urban and rural areas. They should promote access to credit and banking alternatives for the poor, and responsible corporate investment in local communities, CBOs, private voluntary organizations and NGOs that work against poverty.

“The best indicator for the healthy society is the well-being of its children.”

Ximena de la Barra, UNICEF Senior Urban Advisor, *The Earth Times*, June 12, 1996, p. 13.

Governments should promote planning and management of human settlements that is sensitive to gender issues and that recognizes the particular needs of people with disabilities and indigenous peoples. They should adopt appropriate standards, policies and practices that reflect the needs of women and men, girls and boys and promote their full participation in economic and community development. They should do this with full respect for the cultures, languages, traditions, education, social organizations and settlement patterns of indigenous communities.

Governments, working with all interested parties, should act to develop the full potential of young people and help them prepare to take part in developing human settlements. The sexual and economic exploitation of young women and children should be eliminated.

Governments and other interested parties, should promote social development to prevent, reduce and eliminate violence and crime. They should address underlying factors such as poverty, inequality, family stress, unemployment, lack of opportunities and health care. They should enhance women's safety. Communities should be more involved in police services, crime prevention and accessible, impartial, humane local systems of justice.

Population

[125–127]

Quality of life in human settlements is closely related to population change and demographic patterns. Population movements, both within countries and between countries, must be considered to ensure the sustainability of human settlements. To address population issues, governments and other interested parties

should collect and analyse population data, disaggregated by gender and age, and increase their knowledge and understanding of the impacts of population change to ensure better planning of cities, towns and villages.

Environmentally Sustainable, Healthy and Liveable Human Settlements

[128–144]

People's health is greatly affected by poor environmental conditions. Lack of access to safe water and sanitation, poor waste management, poor drainage, air pollution and exposure to excessive noise all exact a heavy toll. They not only affect people's health and quality of life, but also their ability to contribute to society. Children are particularly vulnerable and must be protected from harmful urban environments. In fact, measures to prevent ill health and disease are just as important as medical treatment and care.



Promoting sustainable settlements in Indonesia.

CIDA PHOTO: VIRGINIA BOYD

Lower-income settlements often have higher concentrations of pollution. They come from industry, traffic, cooking fumes, overcrowding and lack of adequate sanitation. Women, older people, children and people with disabilities are particularly affected by environmental health and safety risks inside the home.

Wasteful production and consumption patterns are increasing waste management problems. The production and discharge of waste should be reduced to a minimum. Recycling and reuse should be intensified.

"Rich cities have a bigger impact on the environment than poor cities. Cities in the industrialized world consume more energy per person... than cities in the developing world. New York generates 1.8 kilos of refuse [per person] per day. Calcutta generates 0.51 kilos."

Patralekha Chatterjee, Habitat Watch, June 4, 1996, p. 3.

Governments should work to improve people's health and well-being by developing an integrated approach to water resources management. This is an approach that recognizes the links between water, sanitation and health. They should set up programmes that provide women with universal access to health care services including reproductive health care, family planning and sexual health. They should help combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, onchocerciasis (river blindness) and diarrhoeal diseases, particularly cholera. They should promote safe and healthy workplace conditions for men and women.

Governments should establish environmental laws and standards and make use of the strategies in Agenda 21 in order to improve environmental conditions. They should promote the sustainable use of forests, local habitats, animals and the marine environment. Governments should also cooperate internationally to prevent pollution across national boundaries.

Energy Use

[145–146]

The use of energy is essential in urban centres for transportation, industrial production, household and office activities. Yet the current dependence on non-renewable energy sources can lead to climate change, air pollution and environmental and health problems. So governments should promote the use of renewable and safe sources of energy and improve the efficiency of energy use in human settlements. They should encourage research, development and the use of non-motorized or low-energy transport systems and renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and biomass energy. Fiscal and other incentives can motivate industry and communities to adopt energy-efficient and environmentally sound technologies.

Transport and Communications

[147–151]



Infrastructure and communications are key to successful urban areas.

CIDA PHOTO: **ELLEN TOLMIE**

Environmentally sustainable, accessible and affordable transport and communications are essential to the success of urban and rural settlements. This includes the movements of people, goods and ideas both within and between cities, and in rural and remote areas.

Governments and other interested parties should integrate transport and land-use policy and planning to reduce the ill effects of transport systems such as pollution, congestion and accidents. Accessible, affordable, safe and efficient public transport systems would particularly help poor people, women, children, youth, older people and those with disabilities. Governments should use pricing, land use policies and regulations to encourage a combination of types of transport. These include walking, cycling and private and public means of transportation. They should discourage the growing use of private vehicles in the same way.

New communications technologies can significantly change patterns of human economic activities and settlements. Governments should encourage and promote public access to electronic information services so that all communities benefit.

Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historical and Cultural Heritage

[152–154]

Historical places and objects are important expressions of a society's culture, identity and religious beliefs. Governments should promote awareness of the importance of cultural heritage in human settlements. They should provide support to local heritage and cultural institutions and find ways to integrate development with the goals of conservation and rehabilitation.

Improving Urban Economies

[155–162]

Urban economies are key to the process of economic transformation and development. Already, cities generate more than half of national economic activities worldwide. Links among urban centres and with rural

areas should seek balanced patterns of development, both in geographic and economic terms. Investments in urban revitalization, infrastructure and construction can improve economic development and service delivery. These activities, combined with environmental protection policies, can make cities more efficient engines of economic growth and development, in themselves and for national economies.

Governments should stimulate a broad range of urban employment opportunities, encourage new public–private partnerships and facilitate access to all levels of education and training. They should assist small business and the informal, micro–enterprise and cooperative sectors by making access to credit, financial opportunities and training easier. They should encourage fair treatment of the informal sector.

Urban economies need to become stronger to be competitive in a globalizing economy. Yet governments must address the social, economic and environmental consequences of structural reforms or adjustments. This means putting basic social programmes into place, especially for poor people, those with disabilities and other vulnerable people. It also means assessing the impact of economic adjustment policies on women and other groups and designing policies that ensure them better access to income and resources.

BEST PRACTICES

Kataayi, Uganda

Members of Kataayi Multipurpose Cooperative are developing sustainable rural settlements. Their activities include construction, basic sanitation, water supply, fish ponds, agro–forestry and food production. Co–op income is invested in infrastructure and small business loans to members. Special attention is paid to orphans and widows, elderly people and youth. A skills training centre, and primary and secondary/vocational schools built by the community also service surrounding villages in two districts. The co–op hosts many study visits. As a result, the Kataayi experience is extending throughout Uganda.



CCA: GEZA RADU

Balanced Development of Settlements in Rural Regions

[163–169]

Urban and rural regions depend on each other economically, socially and environmentally. A substantial proportion of the world's population, especially in developing countries, continues to live in rural areas. Rural populations, including many indigenous people, play an important role in food production. Rural settlements need to be valued and supported. The lack of job opportunities in rural areas increases rural–to–urban migration, resulting in a loss of expertise in rural communities. Sustainable development policies and programmes should integrate rural regions into the national economy, treating villages and cities as two ends of a human settlement continuum.

Governments should improve the living and working conditions in regional urban centres, small towns and rural service centres. They can do this by providing infrastructure, services and incentives for investment. They should promote education and training and strengthen employment opportunities. As well, they should encourage the use of new and improved technologies and appropriate traditional practices in the development of rural settlements. This would involve improving access to information on agricultural production and

promoting research in traditional, new and improved technologies.

Disaster Prevention

[170–176]



Planning human settlements in Nepal.

CIDA PHOTO: **PAT MORROW**

Natural and human-made disasters are affecting more and more people and human settlements. Causes of these disasters are usually uncontrolled or poorly planned human settlements, lack of basic support systems and occupation of disaster-prone areas. Armed conflicts also affect human settlements. Both disasters and armed conflicts call for efficient responses, which are inadequate in many countries.

Volunteer contributions and local authority actions at the neighbourhood level usually offer the most efficient and effective systems of preparation for disaster. National and international cooperation networks can facilitate rapid access to expertise, help build capacities for reducing disasters and provide early warning of impending disasters. Women and children are the most affected in disaster situations. They and other vulnerable groups should be actively involved in all stages of disaster planning and management.

Governments working with other interested parties should improve their response to disasters by ensuring that appropriate land-use, building and planning standards are in place. They should establish response systems that clearly define the roles of the various actors in emergency management, relief and rehabilitation. They should encourage all parts of society to participate in planning preparation for disaster in areas such as water and food storage, fuel and first-aid. They should also strengthen early-warning systems to alert populations to impending disasters. Governments that promote safe technology, and control the location of new developments that involve dangerous industrial activities can prevent technological and industrial disasters. In addition, they should develop approaches to cope with urgent shelter requirements of returnees and internally displaced people. These include the construction of temporary housing with basic facilities, taking gender-specific needs into account.

7. Capacity-building and Institutional Development



"An enabling strategy, capacity-building and institutional development should aim at empowering all interested parties... to play an effective role in shelter and human settlements planning and management."

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 178.

Capacity-building and institutional development is the complex process of building up national and local capabilities so that the necessary policies, institutions and people are in place to improve human settlements. The Habitat Agenda describes the necessary steps on the road to capacity-building.

The Habitat Agenda also considers the complex issue of decentralization. In many parts of the world, local authorities are gaining more responsibilities in relation to central governments. A more decentralized government structure should give local people greater access to planning and decision-making. It should also make governments more participatory and accountable. The Habitat Agenda reflects concerns that many local authorities, especially in developing countries and countries in transition, are not yet efficient or transparent.

AGENDA [177–179]

"We are all capacity builders."

Forbes Davidson, University College London, *The Earth Times*, June 7, 1998, p. 5.

Governments must have the ability or capacity to act on community priorities, to stimulate local development and to encourage beneficial partnerships between governments, the private sector and the non-governmental and community sectors. This can be achieved both by effectively decentralizing responsibilities and resources to local authorities and by supporting participatory urban management processes. Capacity-building and institutional development should be aimed at governments and all involved parties including local authorities, parliamentarians, NGOs, CBOs, trade unions, the cooperative sector and the private sector. This allows community members to plan and manage their own settlements.

Governments should be accountable and transparent in order to prevent corruption and ensure that resources are used to benefit all people.

Decentralization

[180]

Governments should use other countries' experience in decentralization and their expertise in designing policies and legislation in order to encourage citizens' participation. They should:

- provide education in citizenship to emphasize the role individuals can play in their communities
- work to eradicate corruption and ensure transparency and openness in the management of local resources
- facilitate the exchange of technology, experience and management expertise between governments and local authorities
- strengthen central and local government capacities and associations and networks of local authorities.

"We must recognize that the provision of shelter is a process that can both create and maintain the democratic process."

President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, African Ministerial Meeting on Preparations for Habitat II, Johannesburg, October 1995.

Governments should also gather data about their communities, ensuring that it is disaggregated by gender, age and income. These should clearly indicate the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, and be used to enhance the performance of local authorities.

Popular Participation and Civic Engagement

[181–182]

The development of sustainable human settlements calls for the active engagement of civil society organizations, as well as broad-based people's participation. Governments should:

- facilitate and protect people's participation and civic engagement through independent CBOs and NGOs that can be local, national and international in scope
- promote civic and human rights education and training programmes to make people aware of their civil rights and the changing roles of women and men
- remove the barriers that block participation of socially marginalized groups and promote non-discrimination and the full and equal participation of women, youth and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

BEST PRACTICES
Naga City, Philippines
The Kaantabay sa Kauswagan program in Naga City targets two main problems in urban poor communities: security of land tenure, and basic infrastructure and facilities. Before the program started, there were frequent clashes between the City government, the urban poor and private landowners. The City coordinated a land acquisition programme that allocated 33 hectares of private and government land to landless families. Urban upgrading programs improved pathways, drainage canals, public taps and street lighting in 27 communities. The programme also supports associations that represent the urban poor at various city levels. Lessons are shared with local governments throughout the Philippines.

Human Settlements Management

[183–184]

The main obstacles to improved human settlements in many countries are shortages of qualified personnel

and poor institutional structures. Governments should support training programmes for administrators and civic officials and other key actors to strengthen their leadership abilities. They should involve women and young people in staff structures and decision-making.

Governments should promote gender-sensitive training and human resources development, and focus on developing a multi-sectoral approach that includes the contribution of indigenous and immigrant people, gender awareness and the needs of children, youth and the elderly.

Metropolitan Planning and Management

[185–186]

There is a great difference between developed and developing countries in terms of access to information technology. As one NGO representative said in 1996, “The information ‘highway’ in many African countries is like a dirt road in the rainy season.” – NGO Forum Workshop, Istanbul 1996.

While all city managers face enormous problems, those responsible for metropolitan areas and mega-cities confront unique problems. These include increased global competitiveness; ethnically and culturally diverse populations; urban poverty; extensive infrastructure and transport and communications systems; the city’s particular social, economic or political role; and the environmental impact of the mega-city. Governments should promote metropolitan-wide development and management strategies and strengthen the capacities of metro authorities. Metro authorities should exchange experience, expertise and technology. Governments should look for solutions inside the city’s ethnically and culturally diverse population, and not only rely on new technologies.



Training can facilitate community involvement in urban management.

CANADIAN URBAN INSTITUTE

Domestic Financial Resources

[187–189]

Financing urban development and making cities economically viable is a huge challenge. Funds primarily come from domestic sources. Strengthening national and local economies, and providing good financial management will have the greatest impact. Governments should promote partnerships between the public and private sectors. They should assist local authorities to attract private investment and strengthen the collection of national and local tax and revenue. Local community efforts and investment in maintaining green spaces, infrastructure and services should be encouraged.

Information and Communications

[190–193]



Countries in transition, such as Lithuania, are developing new participatory urban planning practices.

BARRY PINSKY

Improved information and communications technology is changing how cities function in terms of decision-making and allocating resources. Governments should develop, upgrade and maintain information infrastructure and technologies and encourage public institutions and civil society to use them effectively. This should be done in a way that respects cultural values and improves awareness of issues affecting the quality of life. Governments should set up structures to select and distribute information about best practices in human settlements. They should also strengthen the information base. They can do this by promoting research on the economic, social and environmental aspects of urbanization, adopting efficient systems for compiling, analysing and updating data, and disseminating research indicators and other information widely. This will ensure a two-way flow of information between producers and users of information.

8. International Cooperation



Globalization of the world economy presents opportunities and challenges for the development process as well as risks and uncertainties. In this context, international cooperation assumes added significance and importance...

The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 196.

One of the biggest challenges of the Habitat II negotiations, as in the UN Conference on Environment and Development, was to balance economic development, social development and environmental protection. At the heart of this debate is concern over the process of globalization and its impact on human settlements.

Urban centres around the world have been affected not only by increased populations, but by globalization, which has encouraged national governments to adopt structural reforms or adjustments. These often involve cuts in public spending, especially to those sectors not considered productive. Many governments are spending less money on new housing or on maintaining existing buildings, services and infrastructure. This is despite the strong view in the Habitat Agenda that efficient urban services are essential to becoming economically competitive, and that investment in shelter promotes local economic development.

The anticipated economic growth and investment following these reforms have not yet been felt in most developing countries. Cuts in education and health budgets have reinforced urban poverty in both South and North.

AGENDA [194–199]

New forms of international cooperation are necessary. Globalization, increased interdependence of national economies and deterioration of conditions in developing countries call for them. It is up to countries' own national and local governments to ensure adequate shelter for all and make communities more productive, healthy, safe and equitable. But the decline in international funding for development and the shift from aid to trade is a serious cause for concern. The international community, including governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and the private sector have an important role to play in helping individual countries achieve their objectives for human settlements. Governments must seek innovative approaches and frameworks. Some examples are the exchange of best practices between South–South, North–South and South–North, and new policy, planning and management tools. These new approaches should include new types of partnership and cooperation with civil society, the private sector and local authorities.

An Enabling International Context

[200–202]



International cooperation is necessary to implement the Habitat Agenda.

"It should be recognized that in social and economic terms housing is a productive sector." –
The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 200.

The international community must strengthen technical and financial assistance to developing countries and support all governments in their attempts to cope with the impact of the global economy on human settlements. It should promote an equitable and cooperative international economic environment and macroeconomic policies that favour sustainable development. The international community should support an environment worldwide that attracts foreign investment, strengthens the private sector and promotes access to international financial resources. Such an environment builds the capacity of developing countries and of economies in transition. Governments should ensure that private sector development complies with environmental laws and contributes to improved quality of life for all.

The international community must address both the positive and negative impacts of international migration. On the one hand, there is a transfer of knowledge and skills that migrants bring to their new home, and on the other, there is a drain of human resources from their countries of origin. It must support displaced persons, including refugees, by providing technical assistance, management know-how and the exchange of information. While recognizing the principle of voluntary repatriation, it is generally preferable to establish sustainable human settlements for migrants in their land of origin.

BEST PRACTICES

Tirana, Albania

This programme is in Breglumasi, a peripheral neighbourhood of Tirana, the capital of Albania. With assistance from international development agencies, local authorities and NGOs worked together to improve public roads and drainage. Credit to establish basic services and shops led to a new bakery, food shop and brick/wood production workshop. More than 200 people were employed in infrastructure improvement and the creation of a social centre. Partnerships among the Breglumasi neighbourhood, local authorities, NGOs and international organizations were key to the programme's success.



CO-PLAN

Financial Resources

[203–204]

"Our development challenge is, to a large degree, a challenge for the city."

Edmundo Hermosilla, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Chile.

New financial resources from various sources at the national and international levels are necessary to reach the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. In order to support shelter and human settlements activities, particularly in the developing countries, developed countries should fulfil the earlier agreed target to commit 0.7 percent of their GNP to development assistance. Countries should give high priority to the critical situation of human settlements in Africa and the least developed countries. They should also ensure that structural adjustment programmes take account of human settlements priorities and protect basic social programmes and expenditures, especially those benefiting poor people, women and vulnerable groups. They should recognize the negative effect of excessive military expenditures and trade in arms and find innovative ways to reduce debt transfers. Improved coordination among donors, reducing overhead costs, and increased use of national or regional experts will make international assistance more effective.

Promotion of decentralized forms of assistance is important. This includes supporting local authorities and their associations, and strengthening community-based development programmes. Private-public partnerships and foreign investment in sustainable settlements should be made easier.

Technology Transfer and Information Exchange

[205–206]

New and appropriate technologies offer opportunities for better use of human, financial and material resources. Countries should exchange information and ideas about environmentally sound technologies, technical cooperation and best practices in the area of shelter and human settlements. International organizations should facilitate access to information on technologies that are available for transfer. They should ensure that environmentally unsound technologies are not dumped on countries and that the transfer of technologies and know-how is on favourable terms, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights.

Technical Cooperation

[207–208]



International cooperation includes technology transfer, information exchange and technical cooperation.

CANADIAN COOPERATION ASSOCIATION

The UNCHS (Habitat) should act as a catalyst in mobilizing technical cooperation in the areas of shelter and human settlements. Governments should provide up to date information on their implementation of the Habitat Agenda and best practices to UNCHS (Habitat) for dissemination. A cost-effective and accessible information network for global human settlements should be established and linked to existing networks.

Institutional Cooperation

[209–211]

Both public and private institutions that operate in the area of human settlements development should pool their resources, information and capacities. UN organizations and others should integrate commitments and actions from the Habitat Agenda into their policies and programmes. They should also set up or strengthen their partnerships with international associations of local authorities, NGOs and CBOs. Encouraging public–private partnerships will promote responsible community investment and reinvestment in shelter and settlements.

9. What Next? Implementation and Follow-up



“Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Habitat Agenda.”
The Habitat Agenda, paragraph 213.

This section summarizes the final part of the Habitat Agenda. It includes suggestions for using this booklet and following up the Habitat Agenda.

AGENDA [212–241]

The impact of the commitments made by governments and other partners at Habitat II depends on the extent to which they put into practice the actions agreed upon at the local, national, regional and international levels. National plans of action and other relevant programmes need to be developed and strengthened. Governments, in cooperation with their national level partners, should monitor and evaluate their implementation.

National Level

[213]

“For cities to work the way we want them to requires imagination, drive and commitment. People can begin with what’s around them – meeting with neighbours, forming associations where common problems can be solved and most important, making partnerships with those

who have a stake in the neighbourhood and the city.”

Editorial, Habitat Watch, June 3, 1996, p. 8.

National and local governments have the primary responsibility for putting the Habitat Agenda into practice. They should create and strengthen effective partnerships with women, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, indigenous people and communities, local authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Governments should use appropriate participatory mechanisms, including Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

International Level

[214–236]

All United Nations bodies and organizations, including the international financial institutions, have a role to play in implementing the Habitat Agenda. The UN General Assembly will periodically review the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. This will include a special session in 2001 to review overall progress in implementing the outcomes of Habitat II. The Economic and Social Council will coordinate overall UN implementation.

The role of the Commission on Human Settlements is to promote, monitor and assess the progress made in reaching the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in all countries. The Commission's mandate is to be reviewed and strengthened. UNCHS (Habitat), the secretariat of the Commission, is responsible for monitoring and implementing human settlements development programmes, improving coordination on shelter and human settlements issues in the United Nations system, and being a focal point for implementing the Habitat Agenda.

Global Urban Observatory

The (GUO) has been set up by UNCHS (Habitat) to analyse and evaluate information on human settlements conditions worldwide. This is to help governments and local authorities form and adopt suitable policies. The GUO brings together the activities of the Urban Indicators, and the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programmes.

The Urban Indicators Programme (UIP) is a global coalition that responds to the critical need for better information on urban conditions, policies and trends. Urban indicators are tools for monitoring urban policies, evaluating and assessing conditions and trends among cities and countries, and setting national and local targets to implement the Habitat Agenda. Various tools are being developed. The Programme is working with partners to build regional, national and local urban observatories. UNCHS has also developed 46 key urban indicators in eight subject areas. A data analysis and management tool called Urban Data Link will be available. The Programme will publish a biennial State of the World's Cities report starting in 1999.

The Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme continues a process that started during Habitat II. Every two years, partners are encouraged to submit local solutions to urban and human settlements problems. The submissions are considered by a Technical Advisory Committee and an international jury. Ten submissions are selected to receive the prestigious Dubai International Award for Best Practice in Improving the Living Environment. 100 Global Best Practices and an unlimited number of Good Practices are also selected. The first awards were presented at Habitat II. A second round was presented at the global World Habitat Day celebrations hosted by Dubai Municipality in October 1998. Working with the Together Foundation, UNCHS has compiled a Best Practices data base that allows users to search for information by region, country, partners involved and categories such as urban governance, infrastructure and environmental protection.

All states should work to implement the Habitat Agenda through bilateral (State–State), sub-regional, regional and international cooperation, as well as through the United Nations system.

Involvement of Local Authorities and Civil Society, Including the Private Sector

[237–238]



Government, civil society and the private sector must work together to implement the Habitat Agenda.

CIDA PHOTO: **ROGER LEMOYNE**

Local authorities, CBOs and NGOs must become stronger in the spheres of education, health, eradication of poverty, human rights and other related areas so they can participate constructively in policy-making and implementation. Resources should be available for capacity building, community initiatives, networking and exchanges. Business enterprises and trade unions should be encouraged to generate jobs and provide basic infrastructure and services. Academic, research and educational institutions and the media should play a role in monitoring and publicizing the Habitat Agenda.

Performance Evaluation, Indicators and Best Practices

[239–241]



Active communities are a building block for sustainable settlements.

CIDA PHOTO: **STEPHANIE COLVEY**

The impact of policies, strategies and actions to achieve adequate shelter and develop sustainable human settlements needs evaluation. UNCHS (Habitat) and other relevant agencies should establish a process to analyse and monitor trends in urbanization and the impact of urban policies. Age and gender-disaggregated information on the impact of urbanization on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including children, should be collected.

“Women in Tanzania are using the Habitat Agenda as a tool to lobby governments to change laws which discriminate against women owning and inheriting land. We are also using the Habitat Agenda to build awareness of this important issue.”

Tabitha Siwale, Member of Parliament, Tanzania, 1998.

All partners of the Habitat Agenda should monitor and evaluate their own performances, using shelter indicators and documented best practices. UNCHS (Habitat) will help establish guidelines for national and local monitoring and evaluation through the use of housing and human settlements indicator programmes.

“Best Practices and the experience they embody provide a strong building block for new policies, strategies, and even paradigms for the effective governance and efficient management of human settlements in the 21st century.”

Dr. Arcot Ramachandran, 1998 BP Jury Chair.

Governments at all levels, including local authorities, should continue to identify and disseminate best practices, and develop and apply shelter and human settlements development indicators. The indicators should cover key areas of the Habitat Agenda, such as shelter, health, transport, energy, water supply, sanitation and employment. This information, which should be available and accessible to all, will be submitted to the United Nations.

National Plans of Action
<p>In Istanbul, governments committed themselves to implementing the Habitat Agenda through local, national, sub-regional and regional plans of action. A total of 129 countries prepared five-year National Plans of Action (NPAs). Many governments set up national committees involving local authorities, the private sector, NGOs and other partners to review human settlements conditions and prepare the NPAs. These committees should be retained and strengthened if necessary, or created where they do not exist. They can review and monitor NPAs and advise governments on ways to integrate the goals of Habitat II into national policies and programmes. If NPAs do not yet exist, these Committees can help to develop them.</p>
<p>Local governments and partner groups can also develop their own plans of action. These can be in the form of local Habitat Agendas which can work hand in hand with Local Agenda 21 initiatives. These groups should review how they are implementing the Habitat Agenda every year. They should fit this annual review into their planning and budgeting cycles.</p>
Ideas for Action
<p>1. Make people aware of the Habitat Agenda. Get them involved in making it work. Use this booklet! Copy and distribute all or parts of this booklet. Have it translated into your local language if needed. This will introduce community members, colleagues, officials and politicians to the Habitat Agenda. This booklet and the full Habitat Agenda can be used to review commitments that are agreed to by governments and their partners. Organizations or communities can develop and monitor these ideas. They can become part of existing programmes and activities. Workshops, exhibitions of local Best Practices, and celebrations of World Habitat Day (1st Monday of October) are other ways to get more people involved.</p>
<p>2. Build partnerships by working with other organizations. The list of Habitat Partners in the Resources and Contacts Section will help you to contact groups that share Habitat II interests. For example, groups can share in the effort by the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination to develop a world wide Charter of Local Self Government. Encouraging local governments to implement a Local Habitat Agenda and local Habitat plans of action will bring interest groups together. This can be linked to Local Agenda 21 programs.</p>
<p>3. National Plans of Action: Another way to implement the Habitat Agenda is to work to maintain, set up or participate in national committees to develop and implement National Plans of Action. Whatever you do should include others! The Habitat Agenda is about involving everyone!</p>
<p>4. Share experiences by taking part in the Global Urban Observatory’s Urban Indicators and Best Practices Programmes. See the Resources and Contacts Section.</p>
<p>5. Stay informed! Subscribe to Habitat Debate. It is available from UNCHS (Habitat). See the Resources and Contacts Section for information on this and other publications, audio-visual and electronic resources.</p>

10. Resources and Contacts

DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS:

UNCHS (Habitat), **An Urbanizing World; Global Report on Human Settlements**, Oxford University Press, 1996

Bringing Habitat Home: A Commitment Report of the Women, Homes and Community Super Coalition. New York, The Huairou Commission on Women and Habitat, 1997.

Directory of NGOs in the field of Human Settlements (second edition), UNCHS (Habitat), HS/454/97E, ISBN 92-1-131333-3, 1997

Guide for Local Authorities and their Associations, UNCHS (Habitat), 1998. *This is one of several Guides to implementing the Habitat Agenda. Others are for partners, national governments and national committees, parliamentarians, civil society, and the private sector. Available from UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi.*

The Habitat Agenda: Goals and Principles, Commitments and Global Plan of Action, available at UNCHS (Habitat) URL (Web-Site), listed below.

Habitat Agenda and Istanbul Declaration, UN Department of Public Information, DPI/1859/HAB/CON, 1997.

Habitat Debate, quarterly journal, Publications Section, UNCHS (Habitat) Nairobi.

The Istanbul Declaration and The Habitat Agenda (with subject index), UNCHS (Habitat), HS/441/97E, ISBN 92-1-131322-8, 1997.

Many UNCHS (Habitat) publications are available through their web site. Also, contact Habitat Information Offices or the Information and Audio-Visual Division, UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi.

VIDEOS:

UNCHS (Habitat) has many videos on Habitat II issues. These include:

Road to Istanbul (5 minutes)

Walk the Talk: Women Walking –Beyond Habitat II (13.5 minutes)

Homo Urbanus: Habitat II & Beyond (29 minutes)

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ACRONYMS:

CBOs: Community-based organizations
GSS: Global Shelter Strategy to the Year 2000
GUO: Global Urban Observatory
NGOs: Non-governmental organizations
NPAs: National Plans of Action
PrepCom: Preparatory Committee
UN: United Nations
UNCHS (Habitat): United Nations Centre on Human Settlements
WACLAC: World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination

Back Cover

Cities and Homes for All: The Habitat Agenda

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Habitat II, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul in June 1996. It addressed two critical global issues: adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.

The Habitat Agenda records the commitments made at the Conference by the 171 States that were represented. This booklet is a shorter, reader-friendly version of the Habitat Agenda. It allows readers to share the experience and the results of Habitat II. It is a tool everyone interested in human settlements, including people in local and central governments, non-governmental and community organizations, the private sector, trade unions and the media.



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