

Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 11 No. 4 Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Tuesday, 25 April 1995

HABITAT II PREPCOM II HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 24 APRIL 1995

The Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Habitat II Conference was officially inaugurated Monday morning by Kenya's Vice President Prof. George Saitoti. After opening statements, general debate continued through the day in Plenary while Working Group II began consideration of the Draft Statement of Principles and the Global Plan of Action.

PLENARY

Martti Lujanen, Chair of the PrepCom, stated that this session is of decisive importance because it will decide the approach, elements and outline of the main document for Istanbul. This session must also transform the inputs compiled from recent seminars, conferences and meetings into workable policy recommendations.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations: Wally N'Dow, on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, noted that almost 100 national committees had been established. Habitat II must be a Conference for commitments by: governments to improve capacity and performance in dealing with problems on shelter; the private sector to play a stronger role in addressing social, economic and environmental problems; and the community of NGOs to enhance the ability of the public to act as agents of social and economic development.

Wally N'Dow, Secretary-General of Habitat II, stated that resolving housing and shelter problems necessitates: fundamental shifts in public policy and land reform; concerted and urgent efforts to develop equitable and rational policies that guarantee security of tenure; new ways to combine financing strategies and the use of local materials; partnerships between the public and private sectors and the communities; and an enabling environment.

H.E. Prof. George Saitoti, Vice-President of Kenya, stated that the deterioration of human settlements results not only from economic hardship, overpopulation and growing urbanization but from an absence of sound policies and insufficient capital investment in shelter. He urged that UNCHS be maintained as a "distinct and separate entity" during UN restructuring and that its institutional capabilities be strengthened.

TURKEY: Yigit Guloksuz, President of the Housing Development Administration, summarized Turkey's preparations to host Habitat II in Istanbul. The Habitat II Conference should strengthen participation, consultation and enhancement of partnership, as well as integration of theoretical and methodological frameworks on human settlements for scientific analysis and policy making. **INDONESIA:** State Minister for Housing Akbar Tanjung pointed to the need to formulate urban

development policies that promote rural-urban linkages while improving the ability of rural and urban populations to promote their own development. He called for increased mutual technical cooperation, especially South-South, to strengthen national and collective self-reliance. **ZIMBABWE:** L.P. Tavaya stated that the Draft Statement of Principles and Global Plan of Action formed a good basis for work. The government has set up a coordinating committee comprising various sectors.

JAPAN: Takayuki Hara, Deputy Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination, stated that Japan is formulating a new Comprehensive Development Plan, improving the supply of public rental housing, and promoting international exchange in the human settlement sector. **NIGERIA:** Hon. Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, Minister of State for Works and Housing, said Nigeria's preparatory activities for Habitat II include a national steering committee, workshops to introduce Habitat II locally and a program to alleviate poverty and increase equity. **SOUTH AFRICA:** Hon. Sankie Mthembi-Nkondo, Minister of Housing, noted that in South Africa housing was once a means of repression which tore towns and communities to pieces, and now is the time to bring together what belongs together. She stated that Habitat II can raise the awareness of housing issues, but warned against putting quantity of housing over quality of life.

MEXICO: Amb. Arturo Gonzales noted that the document goes beyond the Conference's terms of reference given to the Committee in addressing issues such as education, human rights and democracy. The Global Plan of Action should focus on commitments and organize international support for housing and human settlements. **SRI LANKA:** Minister for Housing Herman Leonard de Silva described activities undertaken to address Habitat issues, particularly among the poorest of the poor. Special legislation will be developed to provide access to housing for each family. **EUROPEAN UNION:** France's Amb. Michel Rougagnou, on behalf of the European Union (EU), said the final output should be a single document integrating the Statement of Principles and Global Plan of Action with a preamble that indicates the Conference's political ambition. Sustainable urban development should address all issues related to development, including historic, economic and geographic factors.

POLAND: Amb. A. Kowalewski stated that Poland's preparations for Habitat II coincide with their efforts toward democratization and their transition to a market economy. He urged particular attention to the global aspects of urbanization. **INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ARCHITECTS:** Tony Rigg stated that the difference between an enabling and an alienating world lies in planning and design of human settlements. He stressed the need for a new vision of urbanization. **NORWAY:** Per Nygaard said the documents should focus on: global issues, all types of human settlements, sustainable human development, political commitments and implementation and a framework for sustainable action.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*© <enb@econet.apc.org> is written and edited by Chad Carpenter, Wagaki Mwangi <econews@sasa.unep.no> and Steve Wise <swise@econet.apc.org>. The Managing Editor is Langston James Goree VI (Kimo) <kimo@pipeline.com>. The sustaining donors of the *Bulletin* are the International Institute for Sustainable Development <iisd@web.apc.org>, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Pew Charitable Trusts. General support for the *Bulletin* during 1995 is provided by the United Kingdom, Switzerland, GTZ and the World Bank. Special assistance for the production of issues of the *ENB* at this meeting has been provided by the Habitat II Secretariat. The authors can be contacted at their electronic mail addresses and by phone and fax at +1-212-888-2737. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Ave. E, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada and by phone at +1-204-958-7700 and by fax at +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation only. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* can be found on the Internet at <gopher://gopher.econet.apc.org> and through the *Linkages* World Wide Web server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. This volume of the *Bulletin* is uploaded into the APC conferences <enb.library> and <un.habitat.general>.

FINLAND: L. Tarasti supported the EU and added that it is essential to reach consensus on the structure and contents of the Statement of Principles and Global Plan of Action, and that there are still basic problems in the document. **SWEDEN:** Amb. Lars-Göran Engfeldt stressed the need to address human settlement problems from the household and city-level perspective and to translate political commitments into workable and understandable concepts. **THE NETHERLANDS:** Amb. Ruud J. Treffers stated this session should concentrate on land-use management, sustainable urban development and the financial management of human settlements.

US: Hon. Michael Stegman, stated that the negotiations should complete substantive work on national preparations linked to a clear international framework, assure that Habitat II has both philosophical and practical content, and capture public attention. **ITALY:** Amb. Roberto Di Leo stated that the rights of individuals and security of land tenure are essential components of equity and justice. Italy has pledged \$86,000 for the participation of developing countries. **GERMANY:** Dr. Michael Krautzberger, Deputy State Secretary, noted that the Germany is preparing an international workshop on "Urban Governance" in Berlin in late October that will add to the Habitat II process.

NAMIBIA: Libertina Amathila, Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing, noted that Namibia's "Build Together" national housing program was selected as a "best practice." The program targets the lowest income groups and allows them to initiate action, take decisions and implement the program. **UK:** Mr. John Zetter said the UK has commissioned a study of the country's planning experience as its National Report and established the UK National Council for Habitat II. **UGANDA:** Minister for Housing, Hon. Eric Adriko, reported on the outputs of the Eastern and Southern African Ministerial meeting held in Kampala in February 1995. The sub-regional declarations of Kampala, Brazzaville and Dakar meetings will be consolidated into an African Common Position during an upcoming meeting of African ministers responsible for housing and shelter.

PROCEDURE OF WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE: Amb. H.L. de Silva (Sri Lanka) and Amb. Eldar Kouliev (Azerbaijan) were elected as the Vice-Chairs representing the Asian region and Eastern European States, respectively.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: In presenting Agenda Item 1 contained in document A/CONF.165/PC.2/1, the Chair drew attention to paragraph 2, preparations for the conference, to which four sub-items were added for consideration: (a) provisional agenda of the Conference; (b) provisional rules of procedure of the Conference; (c) structure of the Conference including the establishment of committees and organization of work; and (d) the relationship between the NGO forum, round-tables and other special events and the outcome of the Conference. The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: The Committee then considered the proposals for the organization of work as contained in Annex I and Annex II of document A/CONF.165/PC.2/1/Add.1, Annotations to the provisional agenda. The chair proposed a new timetable contained in document A/CONF.165/PC.2/1/ADD.1/CORR.1 to facilitate early consideration of Agenda Item 3, the Draft Statement of Principles and Global Plan of Action, by Working Group II. Consideration would start Monday afternoon with an additional session Friday morning. The Working Group I meeting scheduled for Monday afternoon was canceled. Working Group I will start its work on Thursday morning with Agenda item 2. It will not meet on Friday morning but in the afternoon, and will continue discussion of Agenda Item 2 on Monday morning of the second week. The Group will take up Agenda Item 4 on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning. The document was adopted.

Lujanen then proposed the following Chairs for the Working Groups, which was adopted without objections: Working Group

I, Pamela Mboya (Kenya); Working Group II, H.L. de Silva (Sri Lanka); and Eldar Kouliev (Azerbaijan) to assist the Chair in running the session.

WORKING GROUP II

Chair Amb. de Silva (Sri Lanka) stated that the mandate of the Group is to consider, approve and report on the Draft Statement of Principles and Global Plan of Action (A/CONF.165/PC.2/3). Dr. N'Dow explained that this Plan of Action is important not only for Habitat II, but as a way to transform the promises of other major initiatives (Rio, Cairo and Copenhagen) to the local level. The four basic philosophies used in developing the document were: 1) civic engagement; 2) sustainability; 3) equity; 4) enablement. The Secretariat is looking for consensus on the framework for this document and views on this draft.

France, on behalf of the European Union (EU), said Conference documents must be more action-oriented to support government actions. The provisions should specifically define sustainable urban development. He circulated an EU memorandum stating that the current draft does not sufficiently focus on the Conference themes, lacks a substantive base and should be revised according to an EU outline. Turkey said a statement on urban ethics should be added to the document. She proposed adding a principle of "liveable settlements," based on performance criteria. She also recommended adding a definition of settlement rights. Italy said the plan of action should include more emphasis on security of land tenure.

Pakistan, supported by Egypt and Sudan, said the document does not reflect the overriding responsibility of the international community. The problem has been left to national governments, local authorities and the private sector, but they will not have the fiscal, technical or financial resources to meet the commitments. Egypt said the document should emphasize the notion of finance and include innovative financial options. Denmark suggested that an important part of the solution is in the rented housing sector. The World Bank said that the use of existing domestic resources is important.

Kenya said the Plan needed more emphasis on land use practices, building materials and the construction industry. Tanzania said declarations from regional meetings should be incorporated and that more "good practices" should be in the document.

An NGO, Women and Shelter, said the role of women in urban settlements has been overlooked and the document contains no details on the negative effects of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). UNICEF emphasized poverty eradication and said that references in the document to women should include both children and youth. The concept of enablement is overstretched, giving a low role to governments. Sudan said that five areas need more emphasis in the document: rural settlements; international support; city ethics; consumption; and reconstruction of war-torn areas.

Habitat International Coalition said the present document is unsuitable and needs to be restructured fundamentally. The new principles and commitments are insufficient, the basic principles are more romantic than precise, and the right to housing is mentioned only in passing.

The Chair said discussions would continue in an open-ended, informal working group led by Dr. G.A.C. Khonje (Zambia) with a view to preparing a more detailed and comprehensive document for Friday's formal session.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: General debate will continue in the afternoon.

WORKING GROUP II: The open-ended, informal working group chaired by Dr. Khonje will meet at 2:30 p.m.

UNCHS: The UNCHS opens its 15th session in the morning with statements from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Executive Director of UNEP, Secretary-General of Habitat II and will consider organizational matters.