



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## SECOND UN CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: YEAR-END UPDATE

As preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) continue, the UN General Assembly concluded the year by adopting a resolution that endorses the decisions of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, including convening the third session of the Preparatory Committee from 5-16 February 1996 at UN Headquarters in New York. This special issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* will review relevant activities that have taken place since the second session of the Preparatory Committee, summarize the results of the General Assembly's consideration of Habitat II, and highlight upcoming events.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is published as part of a series of year-end issues intended to summarize the current state of play in the various sustainable development conferences and negotiations reported on by the *Bulletin* in 1995.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF HABITAT II

The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 June 1996 — the 20th anniversary of the first Habitat Conference in Vancouver. The Secretary-General of the Conference is Dr. Wally N'Dow.

The objectives for Habitat II are: (1) in the long term, to arrest the deterioration of global human settlements conditions and ultimately create the conditions for achieving improvements in the living environment of all people on a sustainable basis, with special attention to the needs and contributions of women and vulnerable social groups whose quality of life and participation in development have been hampered by exclusion and inequality, affecting the poor in general; and (2) to adopt a general statement of principles and commitments and formulate a related global plan of action capable of guiding national and international efforts through the first two decades of the next century.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

The organizational session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for Habitat II was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 3-5 March 1993. Delegates elected the Bureau and took several basic decisions regarding the organization and timing of the process. Martti Lujanen (Finland) was elected PrepCom Chair.

## PREPCOM I

The first substantive session of the PrepCom was held in Geneva from 11-22 April 1994. Delegates agreed that the overriding objective of the Conference should be to increase world awareness of the problems and potentials of human settlements as important inputs to social progress and economic growth and to commit the world's leaders to making cities, towns and villages healthy, safe, just and sustainable. The PrepCom also took decisions on the organization of the Conference and financing, in addition to the following:

- **National Objectives:** Each participating country should design, adopt and implement a national plan of action, which will address the issue of human settlements in both urban and rural areas, taking into consideration environmental issues, and which will involve the full participation and support of the public and private sectors, and non-governmental and community-based organizations. Countries should also strengthen the capacity of institutions at all levels to monitor shelter conditions and urbanization processes using a minimum set of substantially uniform and consistent indicators.
- **International Objectives:** The preparatory process should: present a "State of Human Settlements" report; produce a Statement of Principles and Commitments based on a new international consensus on policies and goals for shelter; produce a Global Plan of Action to mobilize international

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resources and create institutional arrangements to assist countries to implement and monitor the goals of sustainable human settlements and shelter for all and to protect the environment against unwarranted and undesirable impacts of urbanization; and make available the broadest range of information concerning shelter strategies, technologies, resources, experience, expertise and sources of support.

- **Participation:** Governments of each participating State should establish national committees with broad participation from all levels of government, civic leaders, the academic and scientific community, grassroots leaders, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and the private sector. These committees should formulate, adopt and implement a work programme that includes the production of a national report, discussion on priority issues, organize local and country consultations and forums, and prepare and present audio-visual documentaries of examples of best practice in human settlement development.
- **Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments:** The Statement should reaffirm and be framed within the general goals of the UN, contain a reference to the Principles adopted by Habitat I as well as reference to the Rio Declaration; and introduce the rationale for the new principles and commitments that will guide national and international action on human settlements for the next 20 years.
- **Draft Global Plan of Action:** The Global Plan of Action should be structured around the two main themes of the Conference: adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. The following multi-sectoral issues should be considered: settlements management; poverty reduction; environmental management; and disaster mitigation, relief and reconstruction. Cross-sectoral issues that should be considered include: women, the urban economy and employment; social and economic dimensions of urbanization and shelter development; education and capacity building; and equity and vulnerable social groups.

## **PREPCOM II**

The second session of the PrepCom met in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24 April - 5 May 1995. The Committee considered organizational matters for PrepCom III and the Conference itself; prepared the first part of the draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action; and prepared draft decisions for consideration by the 50th General Assembly.

Working Group I, chaired by Pamela Mboya (Kenya), considered preparations for the Conference and the status of human settlements report and major reviews. Delegates agreed that a two-day pre-Conference consultation will be held in Istanbul to deal with organizational matters. During the Conference, one Plenary and two Main Committees are planned. The Plenary will have a general debate on the main themes of the Conference and a high-level segment. Committee I will prepare the Statement of Principles and the Global Plan of Action and Committee II will conduct hearings between Member States and participants from other sectors, and possibly receive recommendations on thematic issues from roundtables. During the Working Group's discussion of the rules of procedure, the issue of the participation of local authorities came under scrutiny.

Working Group II, chaired by H.L. de Silva (Sri Lanka), began work on the Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action (GPA). The draft GPA contained the following sections: a preamble, principles, goals and commitments and strategies for implementation. While the PrepCom was able to make some progress with regard to the first three parts of the document, delegates generally acknowledged that there was a significant amount of work ahead. To facilitate negotiations, delegates decided to continue drafting during the intersessional

period in an informal manner through an open-ended drafting group.

## **FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERSESSIONAL DRAFTING GROUP**

The 17-member Informal Drafting Group (IDG), which was charged with preparing the documentation for PrepCom III, met from 17-21 July 1995 in Nairobi. The IDG was composed of 13 governmental members, one local government representative and two NGO representatives. The main task of the Informal Drafting Group at its first session was to make a draft of the fourth part of the GPA, which deals with strategies for implementation. As a result of the work of the IDG, Part IV now consists of the following chapters: 1. Adequate Shelter for All; 2. Sustainable Human Settlements in an Urbanizing World; 3. Capacity Building and Institutional Development; 4. International Cooperation and Coordination; and 5. Tracking Progress and Impact Evaluation.

Following this meeting, the draft GPA was circulated to all Member States of the UN, to international agencies, NGO networks and others with the request to submit comments and proposals for amendments to the Secretariat. The Secretariat received about 70 reactions, containing hundreds of amendments. The Secretariat circulated these to all governments and used them to draft a new version of the GPA.

## **SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERSESSIONAL DRAFTING GROUP**

The second meeting of the IDG took place in Paris from 9-14 October 1995. Delegates reviewed the revised draft text submitted by the Secretariat. While delegates made a great deal of progress on the text, a number of matters were deferred to PrepCom III, including one of the Principles that deals with the family. On some points the IDG did not submit a draft text to PrepCom III. These include: the section dealing with international financial assistance; housing rights; and the institutional follow-up.

## **INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

Numerous meetings, workshops, roundtables and colloquia have taken place since PrepCom II concluded in May. The following are summaries of several of these meetings. For information on other intersessional meetings, the Habitat II Secretariat has put together a calendar of events. Contact them at the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), PO Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: +254-2-62-3133; fax: +254-2-62-4060; e-mail: habitat2@unep.no.

**CONFERENCE ON WORLD CITIES AND THE URBAN FUTURE:** The United Nations University (UNU), in cooperation with the Japan Habitat Society and the National Institute for Research Advancement, organized the Conference on World Cities and the Urban Future in Tokyo from 23-25 August 1995. The meeting attracted speakers from 14 countries and over 250 participants. The first objective of the Conference was to focus on a special class of cities — world cities — and to explore how world cities have been transformed through new waves of technological and structural changes in the world economy. The second objective of the conference was to examine how globalization trends are changing the economic foundation and the socio-cultural fabric of mega-cities and the major metropolitan centers, particularly in the developing world. The output of the Conference will be published in a book as well as a series of policy recommendations. As part of its programme on mega-cities and urban development, UNU is also publishing a series of books on mega-cities and urban development trends in Pacific Asia, Latin America and Africa.

For more information, contact: Dr. Fu-chen Lo or Jacob Park, UNU, fax: +81-3-5467 2324; e-mail: park@HQ.UNU.EDU.

**ANDEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR ON "THE NEW CITY WE WANT":** Sixty representatives of governments, institutions, civil society, academia and community organizations met in Quito,

Ecuador, from 4-6 September 1995 at the Andean Regional Seminar on "The New City We Want." The seminar was hosted by the Government of Ecuador, in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat). The purpose of the seminar was to define the feasibility of regionalizing Habitat's Community Development Programme for the six countries of the Andean Region (Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela).

Participants discussed the physical, social and economic situation of the Andean cities and the role that civil society plays in their development and governance. The discussion was basically centered on issues such as how people's rights to participate in decisions that affect their lives has been eroded and the lack of access to basic needs, such as shelter, education, health and ecosystem protection. Delegates adopted the Declaration of Quito, which contains commitments on: equity and social justice; development alternatives; collective construction of a new kind of city; solidarity for self-management; creation of requisite conditions for self-management; and collective Andean action. For more information, contact: Mr. G. Lüdeking, UNCHS (Habitat), tel: +254-2-62-3110; fax: +254-2-62-4265.

**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON CHALLENGES OF THE INFORMAL TOWN:** Over 250 practitioners, researchers, experts and decision-makers from Latin America, Europe, South Africa and several development aid organizations took part in this seminar, which was held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, from 11-15 September 1995. Four roundtable sessions and five workshops were held in an attempt to draw on the collective knowledge and experience of the participants to make meaningful, action-oriented proposals and recommendations on the challenges of the informal town. Among the general conclusions and recommendations of the seminar are the following:

- In the current situation of quick growth of cities and cutbacks in social programmes, the deterioration of the poor's living conditions are one of the clearest trends in Latin American cities. Women and children are hit especially hard by this trend.
- The plight of the urban poor is made more difficult by the lack of true national urban policies.
- A well-defined urban policy must be based on the central role of municipalities and the need to provide access to land and basic services.
- Firm action must be taken to integrate the informal city and promote urban land reform.
- Every action aimed at the improvement of the urban habitat must respond to the expressed demand of local people.
- The role of women must be recognized and promoted.
- NGOs ensure continuity and motivated professional input to urban integration interventions.

For more information, contact Mr. I. Imparato, UNCHS (Habitat), tel: +254-2-62-3703; fax: +254-2-62-4265.

**CENTRAL AMERICAN SEMINAR ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** This seminar, on the issue of "Building the Cities of the 21st Century," was hosted by the Government of Costa Rica, in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat) from 12-13 September 1995 in San Jose, Costa Rica. More than 50 representatives of governments, civic society, academic institutions, NGOs and community-based organizations from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama participated in the seminar. The purpose of the seminar was to share and discuss experiences of strengthening the civil society's involvement in the development and management of Central American cities.

In its concluding document, the seminar reviewed the new priorities in a transitional period from internal conflicts to the construction of democracy and development. Citizen participation and community management should be the fundamentals of the new economic, social and political processes that are being

developed and practiced in the region. The role of governments must be redirected towards facilitating equitable participation and developing policy frameworks that will enable democratic, just, sustainable and safe cities.

For more information, contact: Mr. G. Lüdeking, UNCHS (Habitat), tel: +254-2-62-3110; fax: +254-2-62-4265.

#### **ROUNDTABLE ON HUMAN RESOURCE**

**DEVELOPMENT FOR BETTER CITIES:** The Roundtable on Human Resource Development for Better Cities was organized jointly by the Rotterdam-based Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) and UNCHS (Habitat), and was supported financially by the Government of the Netherlands. It was held from 4-6 October 1995 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

The roundtable discussed the challenge of building the human capacity necessary to make a significant impact on the scale and complexity of urban development issues. The roundtable also reviewed the current draft of the Global Plan of Action, particularly its chapter on Capacity Building and Institutional Development. The meeting discussed experiences and adopted a number of recommendations that were transmitted to the second session of the Informal Drafting Group. The roundtable also agreed to take its fully-documented results to the Partners Forum on Capacity-Building at Habitat II, as a basis and agenda for the debate on human resource development in Istanbul.

The roundtable discussions focused on what was needed to bridge the major gap between capacities of actors involved in urban development and the needs of rapidly growing and poorly functioning cities. Changes in approach, such as the focus on participative development processes, where a wide variety of actors have to develop a shared vision and practical modalities, places new demands on those involved in building their capacity. The scale of the capacity needed to manage urban development was seen as such that innovative thinking and organization is necessary to be able to respond to the challenge. Examples of this include targeting trainers and other key professionals where a maximum multiplier effect can be obtained. The resources and energies of the private and non-governmental sectors must be stimulated and tapped. Opportunities in new media and electronic communication should also be exploited.

Issues addressed by the participants included: human resource development policies; institutional implications; capacity needs assessment; target groups; subject areas; training capacity; role of education; delivery systems; impact and effectiveness; and sustainability.

For more information, contact: Mr. T. Sudra, UNCHS (Habitat), tel: +254-2-62-3034; fax: +254-2-62-4265.

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON WOMEN'S ACCESS, CONTROL AND TENURE OF LAND, PROPERTY AND SETTLEMENT:** This workshop was held in Gävle, Sweden, from 9-11 October 1995. It was co-organized by the National Land Survey of Sweden, the Swedish Preparatory Group for Habitat II, Boplatz 96 and UNCHS (Habitat). Twenty-six experts from around the world participated. The objective of the meeting was to provide a forum for independent international experts to: analyze present legal rights to land and settlement of women; identify the obstacles and mechanisms behind the fact that women have less access, control and tenure of land property and settlements than men; work out a legal framework for women's equal access to land and security of tenure; and make specific recommendations and proposals for legal and customary guidelines to ensure that women are granted equal access to land and property.

The experts emphasized the following guiding principles: men and women shall have full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and ownership of land and property (Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 63(b)); security of tenure as a condition of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world, affecting

both urban and rural areas; the substance and spirit of citizenship should be accorded to all people, particularly the poor and women; and the responsibility of governments at all levels to ensure that all rights of men and women are protected under law. The experts also outlined commitments to be made by the international community, national and local governments, NGOs and community organizations, and research and training institutions.

Recommendations were made on reviewing, modifying and clarifying existing legislation; implementing and enforcing the law; promoting communication, education and monitoring; and follow-up actions.

For more information, contact: Lars Karlberg, Executive Secretary of the Swedish Preparatory Group for Habitat II, e-mail: [Lars\\_G.P.\\_Karlberg@ETT.se](mailto:Lars_G.P._Karlberg@ETT.se) or Barbro Carlestam, tel: +46-26-15-30-00; fax: +46-26-68-75-94.

**AFRICAN NGO HABITAT II WORKSHOP:** Forty representatives of African NGOs met in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 14-15 October 1995. They discussed African urban development and human settlements issues; African NGO practices and positions related to those issues; the overall framework of and possible strategic responses to the Global Plan of Action and the Habitat II process; and prospective roles and challenges for NGOs in the human settlements field.

In addition to preparing a report on their deliberations, the NGOs drafted a declaration for presentation to the African Ministers Meeting on preparations for Habitat II that began on 16 October. The NGOs requested that local authorities and national governments: decentralize the management of cities; establish mechanisms for the production and dissemination of information concerning social, political, environmental and cultural change in urban areas; implement participatory management systems through collaborative planning; institute appropriate economic policies that support the work of women; actualize the concept of the right to housing as a fundamental right; and implement lasting solutions for refugees and other displaced persons.

The NGOs who signed the declaration undertake to: build their expertise and capacities so that they can better support local development initiatives; support and strengthen the organizational, negotiating and development capacities of grassroots communities; strengthen inter-NGO links; increase opportunities for consultation and dialogue within local communities; work in partnership with governments, local organizations and the private sector to implement the Global Plan of Action; and support the strengthening and enhancement of the UNCHS. For more information, contact: Mr. Malick Gaye, Enda-RUP, e-mail: [rup@endadak.gn.apc.org](mailto:rup@endadak.gn.apc.org); fax: (221) 23 51 57.

**REGIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR AFRICA ON PREPARATIONS FOR HABITAT II:** Ministers and representatives from 50 African countries, five non-African countries, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs participated in the Regional Ministerial Meeting for Africa, which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 16-18 October 1995. The ministers adopted the Johannesburg Declaration on the African Common Position for Habitat II. The Declaration addresses such issues as the need for an enabling policy environment; the need for a rural-urban development balance; planning of sustainable human settlements; the role of cities and towns as engines of economic development and growth; the need to strengthen urban governance, including more effective decentralization of power and responsibilities to local authorities; the need for community participation and partnerships; the role of NGOs; the place and role of the private sector; the value of the informal sector; the need for land-tenure reform; finance and access to credit; poverty; disaster mitigation; crime and violence; capacity-building; the role of women; the needs and contributions of youth, the elderly and people with physical disabilities; the needs of children; development of local building materials; and the role of the donor

community and international institutions to provide new and additional financial and technical assistance resources.

For more information, contact: Mr. S. Sesay, UNCHS (Habitat), tel: +254-2-62-3033; fax: +254-2-62-3080; e-mail: [habitat2@unep.no](mailto:habitat2@unep.no).

**VANCOUVER HABITAT II COLLOQUIUM:** The Vancouver Colloquium, which was held from 26-27 October 1995, addressed the theme "Sustaining Cities: Urban Solutions to Global Problems." The meeting was organized by the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and the International Centre for Sustainable Cities. Participants sought to emphasize the contributions that solutions to urban problems can make to environmental sustainability, social balance and governability in the world. Leading practitioners and analysts shared their experiences and ideas and suggested proposals on the contributions that city-regions can make. For example, cities can help limit the negative impact of carbon dioxide gases and preserve green space, clean air and water in the local and global environment. Cities can also contribute policy solutions to the significant social dislocations caused by urban poverty, homelessness, crime or limited employment, and on the sense of community and citizenship implied by adequate and accepted governing forms. A book on the proceedings will be published in time for Habitat II PrepCom III in New York.

For more information, contact: Mr. Peter Oberlander, tel: +1-604-224-3967; fax: +1-604-224-7347.

**MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES:** Ministers, vice-ministers and high ranking authorities in charge of housing and urban development from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean met in Santiago, Chile, from 13-17 November 1995, and approved a Regional Plan of Action for Human Settlements. The Plan is intended both as an aid to regional governments in bringing their housing and urban development policies up to date and as the region's contribution to the World Plan of Action to be agreed to at Habitat II. Its main objective is to achieve authentic development strategies that can ensure social equity, economic growth, environmental sustainability and the realization of human potential within a democratic framework. The Regional Plan of Action consists of five thematic areas: achieving social equity and alleviating urban poverty; the productivity of human settlements for improving the quality of life; improving the environment in human settlements; governability and participation; and policy and management efficiency.

For more information, contact: Mr. P. Jensen, ECLAC, tel: +56-2-210-2308; fax: +56-2-208-0252.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT:**

More than 700 participants attended the International Conference on Best Practices in Improving Living Environments, held from 19-22 November 1995, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Participants reviewed new and innovative ways to solve such urban problems as the lack of adequate low-income housing, waste disposal, and air and water pollution. Organized by UNCHS (Habitat), in collaboration with the Municipality of Dubai, the conference's main objective was to share expertise on a global basis with government ministers, mayors, academics and community leaders by analyzing 25 "best urban practices" from around the world. Some examples of best practices highlighted at the Conference included: Curitiba, Brazil; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and the Ile de France region of France, which consists of Paris and its suburbs. For more information, contact: Ms. Rasna Warah, Information Officer, UNCHS, Fax: +254-2-62-3080; e-mail: [habitat2@unep.no](mailto:habitat2@unep.no).

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

### HABITAT II BRIEFING

On Monday, 13 November 1995, Dr. Wally N'Dow, Secretary-General of Habitat II, briefed General Assembly delegates about the upcoming Conference. He framed the context of Habitat II by portraying the future of the world as one that is becoming ever more urbanized. The city is, and will increasingly be, the locus of human activity. It is from here, therefore, that changes to improve the world must spring. It is crucial that human settlements be environments that are conducive to sustainable livelihoods by providing for basic needs such as shelter, health, education, and employment.

Dr. N'Dow reviewed the relevance of other post-UNCED conferences to Habitat II. In Cairo, at the International Conference on Population and Development, the focus was on the ability to balance the impact of growing numbers of humans and the carrying capacity of the environment. At the Social Summit in Copenhagen, at issue was a social agenda to ensure the cohesiveness of society — how to encourage human solidarity in communities and cities. In Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the message became ever clearer — human societies will never rise above the level beyond that at which women have been kept. The issues discussed at all of these global conferences have implications and relevance for Habitat II, which is about how and where people live, and how to forge a new landscape for the future.

Two brief videos on preparatory activities by the host country for Habitat II were followed by a briefing from Mr. Gürel Tüzün, the Habitat II Coordinator for the Host Country. He outlined the organizational structure of the preparations, for which the Turkish Housing Development Administration was chosen to be the central coordinating agency. The Conference, as well as its associated events, will take place in "Conference Valley," which has several diverse facilities: a congress center, a convention hall, a cultural center, an open-air amphitheater, as well as the Istanbul Technical University, where the NGO Forum will be held. All of these facilities are in close proximity to one another, and the area is centrally located in Istanbul. In the vicinity, there are 3-5-star hotels with bed capacity for 17,000, as well as convenient shuttle services.

An International Trade Fair is also being planned in conjunction with the Conference. The Fair will be held at the World Trade Center and its theme will be innovative, low-cost, environmental services, products, and technologies in housing, construction, and human settlements. Numerous exhibitions will also be featured, notably an Exhibition on Best Practices organized by the Habitat II Secretariat. Other activities that will take place in conjunction with the Conference include film festivals on cities, art exhibitions, and the celebration of World Environment Day and World Youth Day.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE

The Second Committee of the UN General Assembly addressed Habitat II (Agenda Item 95(c)) on Wednesday, 15 November 1995. The Committee had before it a number of documents including the report of the second session of the Habitat II PrepCom (A/50/37) and a note by the Secretary-General (A/50/41) reviewing the activities of the various regional commissions in preparation for Habitat II. Among matters requiring action by the Committee were those relating to the third session of the Preparatory Committee, which will finalize negotiations on the draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action to be submitted to the Conference for adoption. The following is a summary of the debate on Habitat II.

In his introduction, **Habitat II Secretary-General Dr. Wally N'Dow** reported on the preparatory process for Habitat II. Approximately 134 countries are engaged in national preparatory activities and initiatives with broad-based participation. More than

100 countries have submitted reports on programmes and projects launched in more than 280 cities, towns, and neighborhoods as part of the "Best Practices" Initiative for the Living Environment.

Thirty-five countries have organized national competitions and exhibitions on "Best Practices" in sustainable human settlements development and management. These endeavors demonstrate the unprecedented global effort to identify workable solutions. The dissemination of the experiences gained from these initiatives, through a Global Data Bank or Observatory of "Best Practices," would be an excellent means of advancing efforts to improve human settlements worldwide. Dr. N'Dow expressed his hope that the General Assembly will support the recommendation made by the PrepCom to encourage the participation of local authorities at Habitat II. He made a plea for additional financial support for the preparatory activities of the Secretariat.

**PHILIPPINES:** Cecilia Baltazar Rebong, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said that the foreign affairs ministers of all the member States of the G-77 and China have expressed their full support for Habitat II and its preparatory process. They have recognized that the two themes of the Conference are crucial for the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. The ministers have expressed hope that the deliberations and decisions of Habitat II will lead to greater attention to the problems of human settlements as well as increased international cooperation.

**SPAIN:** On behalf of the European Union, Ana María Menéndez emphasized that because the issue of "the right to housing" is very complex, it is important that an expert meeting be organized on the subject. The success of the Habitat II Conference depends on the active involvement of civil society, NGOs, and local authorities. The outcome of Habitat II should be considered in the framework of a coordinated and integrated implementation of the results of all recent major conferences.

**TURKEY:** Hüseyin E. Çelem reported that a broad-based National Preparatory Committee has been working in Turkey, with 140 representatives from the government, local authorities, the academic and scientific communities, the private sector, trade unions and NGOs. A successful regional preparatory meeting was recently held in Ankara on 26-28 October 1995, covering preparation of National Reports and Plans of Action. The International Facilitating Group (IFG), which was set up by international NGOs at PrepCom II, is working in conjunction with a professional NGO Secretariat and a Host Committee of 20 Turkish NGOs to organize the NGO Forum of Habitat II. A joint workshop, sponsored by the Host Committee and the IFG, was held in Istanbul at the end of September 1995 to discuss details of the NGO Forum.

**CHINA:** Amb. Wang Xuexian said that to achieve the goals aimed at improving human settlements, which will be re-established at Habitat II, actions must be undertaken on a number of fronts. Efforts to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable economic development, as well as to check excessive population growth, are crucial components in the advancement of the Habitat II agenda. In addition, developed countries should provide new and additional resources, both financial and technological, to assist developing countries in addressing their human settlements problems. China has set up its National Preparatory Committee and is drafting its National Report and Programme of Action. Public information campaigns have been launched through the media, and many seminars have been organized to solicit wide participation in the preparatory process.

**EGYPT:** Abdel-Gaffar Eldeeb said the issues to be tackled by Habitat II are linked to those of other recent international conferences that focused on the human being as the center of development. The outcomes of recent major conferences are interlinked by a framework for sustainable development and environmental protection. The achievement of these objectives cannot be realized unless there are conducive conditions for

economic development, including social justice. This is an important question to be tackled by Habitat II. Healthy housing, safe drinking water and sanitation, and safe transportation systems are needed. Egypt hopes sufficient attention will be given to the people of poor developing countries, particularly those in Africa, and that agreement will be translated into action.

**MARSHALL ISLANDS:** Espen Rønneberg expressed concern that PrepCom II did not have the widest possible participation, and therefore the results of the meeting are not as representative of the interests of all parties as they should be. Because the Marshall Islands is a small delegation and has no mission in Nairobi, it was not able to participate. He stated that Habitat II should address the effects of nuclear testing on the Pacific Island countries, as this is a major human settlements issue in these countries. In relation to this issue, he hoped that Habitat II would address the following: the need for improved information and monitoring of radiation that is present in the environment; the need for further research to better understand the effects of radiation exposure on human health; and the need to restore irradiated lands to internationally acceptable standards for human habitation.

**INDIA:** Hashim Abdul Halim said that the overall strategy to improve human settlements must be multi-faceted and must include: promotion of sustainable land-use planning and management; integrated provision of environmental infrastructure (water supply and sanitation, and sustainable energy and mass transport); human resources development and capacity-building; and improvement in the management of human settlements. He reported that the Government of India has contributed US\$100,000 to support the preparatory process. India's National Report is currently being finalized and 16 "Best Practices Case Studies" have been submitted to the Habitat II Secretariat. India is firming up its plans to host a meeting on "Access to Land and Security of Tenure" in New Delhi from 17-19 January 1996.

**ECUADOR:** Marjorie Ulloa, on behalf of the members of the Rio Group, stressed the need to strengthen international cooperation to achieve the primary goals of Habitat II: "Adequate Shelter for All" and "Sustainable Human Settlements Development in an Urbanized World." Increased cooperation should include provision of financial and technological resources to developing countries to assist them in implementing their National Plans of Action. At the regional level, the Rio Group has been active in the process of preparation for Habitat II, by participating in Ministerial Meetings on Housing for Latin America and the Caribbean.

**JAPAN:** Kinji Shinoda said that the issue of human settlements is closely related to issues dealt with by other UN development-related conferences. Habitat II should avoid repeating the discussions that have already taken place on those subjects. Habitat II should be a launching pad for the international community's journey into the next century, and not the end of its efforts. Its decisions must be followed up with concrete action.

**KENYA:** Jonathan Ng'Eno stated that Habitat II should include an assessment of the destruction of human settlements caused by natural and man-made disasters and civil strife, as well as programmes to assist in the reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration of afflicted communities into peaceful living conditions. In preparation for Habitat II, Kenya has established a broad-based National Steering Committee and has organized workshops for various groups of stakeholders to elicit their contribution to the process. The Committee has also selected and submitted "Best Practices" to the Habitat Secretariat, and organized an exhibition of these Best Practices.

**BANGLADESH:** Mahbub Kabir described the steps that Bangladesh has taken in its work to improve human settlements. In cooperation with a network of NGOs, a housing-related credit delivery system is being tested and demonstrated. Methods are being explored to improve the supply, delivery and durability of building materials appropriate for the rural poor in flood- and

cyclone-prone areas. The financing and construction of 13,500 houses has already been supported by this programme.

**PAKISTAN:** Amin Dada expressed concern about the reluctance of some countries to cooperate at the international level to address the issue of human settlements. International cooperation on debt relief, technology transfer, removal of trade barriers, and information exchange on water supply, mass transportation and sanitation systems would better enable national governments to adequately address human settlements problems. Pakistan has taken numerous steps to attain the objectives set out in the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, including studies to quantify the housing problem; the launching of a National Action Programme; the formulation of national and provincial urbanization policies; and the establishment of a revolving Housing Fund to initiate low-cost housing projects.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION:** Oleg Rudenskiy said that the work of the Preparatory Committee so far has not reflected the problems of the countries with economies in transition. He expressed hope that the situation would be corrected in the forthcoming session. Goodwill from Member States is required during this session, particularly in discussing financing, international cooperation and the Global Plan of Action.

**POLAND:** Anna Raduchowska-Brochwickz noted that economies in transition face particularly complex problems in the realm of housing and, for this reason, they deserve special assistance with capacity building in the areas of policy formulation and implementation. In the ongoing preparatory process, more emphasis should be placed on building social infrastructure in urban and rural settlements. More attention should also be given to rehabilitation of areas recently affected by armed conflict, particularly to housing and settlement reconstruction, and to the provision of shelter for refugees and displaced persons.

**CZECH REPUBLIC:** Karel Zebrákovský stated that Habitat II should set modest yet realistic goals, as opposed to far-reaching objectives, if its effectiveness is to be maximized and its implementation feasible. For countries in transition, housing and urban problems are particularly difficult issues. The Czech Republic has been active at the regional level in the Committee on Human Settlements of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. It also recently pledged its first voluntary contribution to support Habitat II activities.

**SRI LANKA:** H.L. de Silva said that in Sri Lanka action to improve the quality of housing and alleviate homelessness has been underway for nearly two decades. A separate government ministry and departments with the sole mandate of improving human settlements have implemented numerous programmes that have had considerable success in providing shelter for the poorest segments of the population. The participation of NGOs and the private sector has enabled the government to foster individual and community participation through self-help programmes that draw upon indigenous solutions and that minimize dependence on the government for provision of resources.

**UNITED STATES:** Ralph Bresler emphasized the importance of decision-making at the local level in the realm of human settlements. The Government should play a facilitating and enabling role, by promoting policies that provide market incentives for low-income people to gain access to urban services and shelter. The current draft of the document should put greater emphasis on the central role of individuals, especially women, community groups, neighborhood associations, NGOs and local authorities, and the task of government in empowering these individuals to make decisions, as opposed to making decisions for them. He noted that the Habitat II agenda does not focus enough on the crucial links between urban and rural areas. The US Department of State recently gave a supplementary contribution to support the Secretariat, and USAID is helping developing countries in preparing National Plans of Action.

**KAZAKSTAN:** Amb. Akmara Kh. Arystanbekova stressed the importance of development activities carried out at the regional level, which has been confirmed by the Habitat II regional preparatory meetings. A national preparatory committee has been established in Kazakhstan and the Government has approved a two-year plan of action that calls for social safety nets and improvements in housing. She appealed for resources for her country and others with economies in transition to enable them to fully implement their preparatory plans for Habitat II.

**BENIN:** Rogatien Biaou said that the number of homeless has grown considerably in both developed and developing countries. Countries should not be daunted by the complexities of what needs to be achieved at Habitat II; creative measures should be taken. The Conference should not place emphasis on problems of human settlements in urban areas alone. He called for private sector involvement in the preparatory process of the Conference.

**INDONESIA:** Wyoso Prodjowarsito announced that in preparation for Habitat II, Indonesia has established a broad-based National Committee and has launched the process of formulating its National Report. The government has encouraged all sectors of society to become involved in its preparatory process. He emphasized the need for full participation by all Member States in both PrepCom III and Habitat II, so that the outcomes will be representative of the interests and needs of all parties.

**THE GAMBIA:** Amb. Momodou Kebba Jallow said that the programme adopted by the first Habitat Conference must be improved upon at Habitat II. Reviewing human settlements problems in Africa, he said technical assistance must be addressed in order to solve issues such as poverty. The Gambian National Committee was established in 1992. While UNCHS has assisted The Gambia, it needs greater financial assistance to complete the preparatory process.

**UKRAINE:** Sergiy Yampolsky welcomed the fact that the PrepCom was starting to pay more attention to countries in transition. Some cities in Ukraine are highly industrialized; however, they lack sufficiently developed infrastructure, including transportation and sanitation. There are also difficulties created by the Chernobyl disaster. Assistance should be provided for the development of human settlements indicators, which could serve as a common basis for a comparative analysis on housing problems.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Dr. K. Z. Mbatha, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), reported that the Southern African region has been actively involved in the preparatory process for Habitat II. The Ministerial Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Settlements was held in Johannesburg from 16-18 October 1995. Among other efforts to address human settlements issues in the Southern African region, housing finance mechanisms are being developed and supported in efforts to eradicate housing backlogs. He emphasized the particular importance of women and youth involvement in the process of improving human settlements. He also stressed the overriding importance of integrating water resources management concerns into the human settlements debate.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

A draft resolution on the "United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)" (A/C.2/50/L.27) was first introduced in the Second Committee by the Philippines, on behalf of the G-77 and China, and Turkey on 22 November 1995. During informal consultations, one of the issues that arose was the dates of PrepCom III. In the draft resolution, the G-77 proposed changing the dates of the PrepCom to 26 February - 8 March 1996, in deference to requests by Islamic countries who did not want the PrepCom to meet during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. However, a statement on the financial implications of this resolution (A/C.2/50/L.44) noted that neither facilities nor services are available at UN Headquarters at this time. Under these

circumstances, delegates agreed to maintain the original proposed dates for PrepCom III — 5-16 February 1996.

The final resolution (A/C.2/50/L.57), which was adopted by the Second Committee on 5 December 1995, endorses the report of the PrepCom on its second session. In addition to deciding that the third session of the PrepCom will be held in New York from 5-16 February 1996, the resolution requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary provisions, within existing resources, so that the PrepCom may, if it so decides, establish two working groups to meet in addition to plenary meetings for the duration of the third session. The resolution also: reaffirms that the Conference should be held at the highest possible level of participation; expresses sincere appreciation to those States and organizations that have made or pledged financial or other contributions in support of the preparatory activities for the Conference; requests the Secretary-General of the Conference to continue to make every effort to raise extrabudgetary resources for Conference activities and preparations; renews its appeal to all Governments to make contributions to the voluntary fund; and encourages all relevant NGOs to participate in and contribute to the Conference and its preparatory process.

The resolution is expected to be adopted by the General Assembly Plenary before Christmas.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE PREPCOM III

**WORKSHOP ON URBAN ENVIRONMENT RENEWAL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES:** This meeting, which is being organized by the University of Venice, will take place in Venice, Italy, from 11-13 January 1996. For more information, contact: Marcello Balbo, University of Venice; tel: +39-11-257-2305; fax: +39-11-524-0807.

**GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON ACCESS TO LAND AND SECURITY OF TENURE:** This Conference, which is organized by the Government of India and UNCHS (Habitat), will take place in New Delhi, India, from 17-19 January 1996. For more information, contact Ms. S. Lacroux, UNCHS (Habitat), tel: +254-2-62-3108; fax: +254-2-62-4264.

**ECOPOLIS: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT:** This international conference, which is organized by the French Committee for Habitat II, will take place in Nantes, France, from 24-25 January 1995. For more information, contact Mr. Georges Cavallier, tel: +33-1-4321-6822; fax: +33-1-4321-6837.

**SEMINAR ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS:** This seminar is organized by UNICEF, City University of New York, Children and Environment Program, Berkeley and UNCHS (Habitat). It will take place from 1-2 February 1996 in New York. For more information, contact Ximena de la Barra, UNICEF, tel: +1-212-702-7246; fax: +1-212-702-7148.

**PREPCOM III:** The third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II will be held in New York from 5-16 February 1996. PrepCom Chair Martti Lujanen expects to get down to business without a general debate and spend the entire two weeks negotiating the Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action, and preparing for the Conference.

**ENB ON-LINE:** The International Institute for Sustainable Development maintains a World Wide Web site, *Linkages*, with information on the Habitat II preparatory process that includes issues of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, photos, audio interviews, and links to official documents. During PrepCom III and the Conference, *Linkages* will provide "real time" information updated daily on the negotiations. *Linkages* can be found at <<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>>.