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HABITAT II PREPCOM III HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 1996

Delegates began the final details stage of PrepCom III. Two Subgroups of Working Group II met to conclude consideration of text under discussion. Working Group II met in the afternoon to begin hearing reports from the Subgroups. Working Group I and the Plenary met to discuss organizational matters.

WORKING GROUP I

Working Group I reconvened for its third session. Chair Pamela Mboya referred the Australian proposal (Conference of Commitments) to Plenary for discussion and adoption. Italy reported that delegations had been supplied with certain information on finances for the Conference. Secretary-General N'Dow said the timing to build up momentum and a constituency was far from adequate. He therefore had resorted to special measures. Resources were needed for important efforts including: support for NGOs from developing countries and helping developing countries produce their national plans of action. There was no intention to request further UN resources. The US said questions remained concerning pledges and commitments not yet received, and repayment of advance funding to the Habitat Foundation. The US asked if further borrowing would be contemplated. Dr. N'Dow said some donors had signalled readiness to commit significant resources. Habitat Foundation resources would be replenished. No effort would be spared in resolving that crisis. There had been no reference to illegality in correspondence with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Business Questions (ACABQ) which directed that the borrowed resources be repaid promptly to the Habitat Foundation. Norway expressed concern about the Habitat Trust Fund II.

WORKING GROUP II SUBGROUP A

SECTION F. (Implementation and follow-up): On 158ter, the G-77/China proposed inserting the title "implementation at the international level" and the statement: the main actors at the global level for the implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda will continue to be Member States of the UN, the UNGA, ECOSOC, the UN Secretary-General, the UN Commission on Human Settlements (the Commission) and its Secretariat, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), and all other specialized

agencies of programmes in the UN system engaged in activities pertaining to provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements. The EU stated that there was no agreement to include the Commission and UNCHS in the list of actors. The G-77/China replied that without the reference, the group should "close shop and go home." The EU bracketed the reference. The G-77/China bracketed all of Section F.

The G-77/China also proposed a paragraph stating that Member States shall exert concerted efforts to achieve implementation of the Habitat Agenda through bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international mechanisms for cooperation, as well as through the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions. The EU proposed changing "shall" to "should." Delegates then debated sub-paragraphs on the roles of UN organizations and bodies. Delegates noted previous agreement regarding ECOSOC to combine, and later refine, the EU and G-77/China proposals.

Regarding the Commission, the G-77/China noted a "fundamental" disagreement with the EU, which proposed only "monitoring." He proposed combining the EU proposal with the entirety of the G-77/China proposal. For other subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC, Australia proposed a reference to the Commission for Social Development and UN regional commissions. The EU proposal on the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) calls upon the organization to ensure full participation of its entities in the implementation of the GPA. The G-77/China suggested the ACC establish a task force on the goals of Habitat. The US proposed that UNCHS should be a member of the task force. The EU questioned the need for a special task force because the ACC has already established cross-sectoral task forces.

An EU proposal invites the Secretary-General to ensure effective functioning of the UNCHS. The G-77/China said the language implies that the Center is not functioning properly and needs special attention. The G-77/China proposed "invited to continue to ensure." Delegates also discussed proposals on the effectiveness of other UN organizations, policy evaluations and best practices.

WORKING GROUP II SUBGROUP B

The Subgroup considered text drafted by an informal group Wednesday evening (112-128) as well as outstanding text during morning and afternoon sessions. On 38 (globalization of the economy) and 38bis (new communications technology), the

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G-77/China stated that they were unable to accept the redrafted proposals of the EU and the US and requested that the original text for **38** be bracketed. In **124** (natural and human-made disasters), Cuba objected to the reference stating that reconstruction processes following armed conflicts "may necessitate international involvement." Croatia and Burundi, among others, supported the reference. Delegates added "at the request of the government of the concerned country."

In **125** (disaster response systems), Norway noted that women and children are the most affected in disaster and need to be involved in all stages of disaster management. The EU noted that the text called for coordination with all community groups and objected to starting a list. Delegates accepted a Holy See proposal: "women and children are the most affected in situations of disaster and their needs should be considered in all stages of disaster management and women's active involvement in disaster planning and management should be encouraged."

On **48** (enabling shelter policies), which had been deferred pending the results of the group on the "right to housing," delegates agreed to text drafted by the informal group for **48** and **48bis** (decentralize shelter policies). The US asked to bracket its proposed **48ter** (policies Governments should adopt to ensure progress toward realizing adequate standard of living) to ensure consideration in Istanbul. Proposed text for **13** (reaffirm UN Charter and additional Covenants), **24** (improve living and working conditions), and **44** (right to adequate housing) was presented during the morning, but delegates were informed that informal consultations were continuing on the bracketed text ("right to adequate housing").

Delegates reviewed **55** (access to land and legal security), **51(b)** (sustainable development in housing policies), and **51(b)bis** (access for persons with disabilities). In **55**, delegates added a bracketed reference recognizing different forms of land tenure (Mexico). In **51(b)**, delegates bracketed proposals for "sustainable development" (EU) and "sustained economic growth" (G-77/China). Text similar to **51(b)bis** had been agreed in another paragraph and was agreed.

The Subgroup agreed to text for **114** (improve opportunities for small businesses), which added: a call for promotion of the ILO convention on the right to organize and bargain collectively; a call for programmes to support enterprises, "particularly those developed and utilized by women" (US); and a subparagraph calling for training.

WORKING GROUP II

Chair Amb. H.L. de Silva (Sri Lanka) invited Working Group II to consider the reports of the informal groups contained in documents A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Add.3 (**36-42**); Add.4 (**43-65**); and, Add.5 (**66-75**). Consultations on **1-12** (preamble) and **13, 24, 25, 44** (right to housing) were still underway. Delegates reviewed and accepted **36-42**, as amended. On **43-65**, delegates accepted most paragraphs. The US bracketed **56(d)** (taxation to stimulate equitable use of land) and "equitable" in the chapeau of **57**. References to "people living in poverty" replaced "the poor." In **66-75**, the US bracketed "equitable" in the chapeau to **66** and Benin bracketed references to "stakeholders" throughout the document. Iran bracketed **71(a)** (substitutes for non-renewable resources) as inconsistent with UNFCCC. Delegates debated **72** (vulnerable groups), particularly "[documented] migrants," and bracketed language on local conditions, equal access, and specific vulnerable groups. Pakistan called for insertion of "refugees," but Lebanon objected.

PLENARY

The Plenary, chaired by Martti Lujanen (Finland), convened in the afternoon to resume consideration of Agenda Item 2 on accreditation of NGOs and Local Authorities (A/CONF.165/PC.3/2, Add.1, Add.2, Add.3, Add.4, and Add.3/Corr.1). The Chair said further consultations would be needed on two NGOs listed in Corr. 1 (the Federation of Westtrace Turks in Europe and the Tibetan Rights Campaign).

The US expressed concern that the US-based Tibetan Rights Campaign was to be moved to the list not approved for accreditation (Add.4). He had been informed that the Campaign had not been accredited for FWCW but this should in no way imply their rejection for Habitat II. The NGO was a member of the US Network for Habitat. China said he was firmly against the accreditation of NGOs whose objective was to question the sovereignty of a member of the United Nations. The US said China had not presented evidence. The US asked for consultation. Canada said she was not in full agreement with specific judgements with regard to NGO accreditation. Chair Lujanen said a new Corrigendum was to be prepared for Friday and deferred decision.

The US proposed reopening discussion of NGO accreditation decisions taken by the Committee on February 5, in line with Rule 81, to raise the question of accreditation of the NGO International Energy Foundation (Libya) (A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Add.1)(Add.2). He said delegations had not received documentation in time, and his delegation was concerned that the IEF was not operating consistently with the UN sanctions regime imposed on Libya. The IEF had acted as a cover for the Libyan Government and had facilitated the consulting/instructional service of experts to assist in the Government of Libya's missile proliferation programme, calling into question its NGO status. India supported the US request and said it also had difficulty with some NGOs not qualified to participate. The Chair outlined rules of procedure for reopening a decision, deferring a decision until Friday to allow delegations to receive instructions from their capitals. Chair Lujanen invited the Committee to consider Item 5, the Provisional Agenda (A/CONF.165/PC.3/5). Australia, supported by Canada, Denmark and Norway, asked the Secretariat to make arrangements to ensure that a place is found on the Habitat Agenda to call attention to the UN Decade of Indigenous People. The Provisional Agenda was adopted.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Although the informal group on a "right to housing" sent draft text to the Working Groups on Wednesday, informal consultations continued on Thursday and the Working Groups suspended consideration of the text pending any change. Many hoped to reach consensus at PrepCom III and send the "most important issue" of the Conference to Habitat II unbracketed. Delegations were reported to have moved on the issue, and some thought that agreement was close, but in the end the Wednesday draft still stands.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP II: The Working Group is expected to continue reviewing the work of the Subgroups.

PLENARY: The Plenary is expected to resume consideration of NGO accreditation, hear reports from Working Groups I and II and consider other matters pending.