



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## SUMMARY OF PREPCOM III FOR THE SECOND UN CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II) 5-16 FEBRUARY 1996

The third session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom III) for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) met at UN Headquarters in New York from 5-16 February 1996, to continue preparations for Habitat II, which will take place from 3-14 June 1996, in Istanbul, Turkey. Among the outstanding organizational issues addressed were NGO and local authority accreditation and financial resources. Negotiations on the draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action (GPA) commenced at PrepCom III.

The session was limited by both financial and time constraints. Lack of translation services precluded the possibility of informal night and weekend sessions. Delegates also spent a considerable amount of time debating issues unique to Habitat II's process, such as NGO participation in informal sessions. Substantive debates related to Habitat II included whether to identify a "right to housing" and the role of UNCHS in follow-up. Additional debates focused on issues discussed at previous UN conferences, such as "sustainable development," "equal" and "equity," and "gender." The volume and disparity of new proposals also resulted in lengthy discussions over the need for and availability of drafting groups. During the final days of negotiation, three Subgroups of Working Group II (the negotiating body for the text) and several informal negotiating bodies operated simultaneously. One section of the text, regarding capacity building, still has not been addressed in a first reading. The closing Plenary ran out of translation time before it could approve reports on all sections of the negotiated text. The combined effect of these factors resulted in the output of PrepCom III: a slightly improved but heavily bracketed text for Istanbul.

### 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 settlement 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,

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This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*© <enb@econet.apc.org> is written and edited by Chad Carpenter <ccarpenter@igc.apc.org>, Pamela Chasek <pchasek@pipeline.com>, Peter Doran <PF.Doran@ulst.ac.uk>, and Lynn Wagner <grund@usc.edu> with contributions from Richard Jordan and Kira Schmidt <cjs28@columbia.edu>. 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> and the Pew Charitable Trusts through the Pew Global Stewardship Initiative. General support for the Bulletin for 1996 is provided by the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) of the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Swiss Federal Office of the Environment, the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of the Environment of Iceland. The authors can be contacted at their electronic mail addresses or at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +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. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are automatically sent to e-mail distribution lists (ASCII and PDF format) and can be found on the gopher at <gopher.igc.apc.org> and in hypertext through the *Linkages* WWW-server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/> on the Internet.

national and international objectives, participation, the draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the draft Global Plan of Action.

Regarding national objectives, delegates agreed that 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 (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). 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.

Regarding international objectives, delegates agreed that 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 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.

Regarding participation, delegates agreed that governments of participating States should establish national committees with broad participation from all levels of government, civic leaders, the academic and scientific community, grassroots leaders, NGOs and CBOs, 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, organization of local and country consultations and forums, and preparation and presentation of audio-visual documentaries of examples of best practice in human settlement development.

Delegates agreed that the Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments 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 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 two decades.

Delegates agreed that the Draft 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 reports 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 Amb. H.L. de Silva (Sri Lanka), began work on the Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action. The draft GPA contained the following sections: a preamble, principles, goals and commitments, and strategies for implementation. The PrepCom made some progress on the first three parts of the document, but delegates acknowledged that a significant amount of work remained. To facilitate negotiations, delegates decided to continue drafting during the intersessional period in an informal manner through an open-ended drafting group.

### **INTERSESSIONAL DRAFTING GROUP**

The 17-member Informal Drafting Group (IDG), which was charged with preparing the documentation for PrepCom III, met twice. The first meeting was from 17-21 July 1995 in Nairobi. The IDG included 13 governmental members, one local government representative and two NGO representatives.

The main task of the IDG 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 UN Member States, international agencies, NGO networks and others, with a 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.

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 the Principle that deals with the family. On some points, the IDG did not submit a draft text to PrepCom III. These points include: dealing with international financial assistance; housing rights; and institutional follow-up.

### **REPORT OF PREPCOM III**

At the opening Plenary of PrepCom III, Chair Martti Lujanen (Finland), noted that the session would benefit from the experience of delegates from UN Missions in New York who have contributed to the negotiations of other major UN conferences. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali highlighted the PrepCom's ground-breaking rule change that could set a pattern for how the international community does business. This is rule 61, regarding participation of local authorities in Habitat II, which broadens the participation of Member States to include representatives from cities.

Wally N'Dow, Secretary-General of Habitat II, said that the preparatory process shows that the issues of Habitat II are no less than the major worldwide issues of our day: jobs, housing, security, services, the quality of the living environment and the right of ordinary people to participate in the decisions affecting their lives. Mr. Rafeuddin Ahmed, Associate Administrator of the UNDP,

suggested a thematic programme, incorporating the relevant dimensions of Agenda 21, the Social Summit and the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW). The Executive Director of the UN Population Fund, Dr. Nafis Sadik, underlined the linkages between population growth, development and urbanization. She called on delegations to strive for recognition of women's legal, property and inheritance rights.

The Chair then introduced the organization of work and alerted delegates to the schedule of work contained in A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.1. The Chair noted suggestions from PrepCom II and GA resolution 50/100 to establish two working groups at PrepCom III. Working Group I would consider Agenda Item 3 (Preparations for Conference). Working Group II would consider Agenda Item 4 (Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action). The Plenary would review and approve the work of the working groups and consider additional agenda items. Delegates adopted document A/CONF.165/PC.3/2, Add.1 and Add.2, containing a list of NGOs and local authorities proposed for accreditation to the preparatory process. Delegates then heard general statements from: Colombia, on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement; Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China; Italy, on behalf of the EU; Turkey; Chile, on behalf of the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region; Sweden; China; UNICEF; India; the WMO; Jordan; the ILO; Nepal; the UN Volunteers; the UN Centre for Human Rights; and Sudan.

### WORKING GROUP I

Working Group I, chaired by Pamela Mboya (Kenya), considered Agenda Item 3 (Preparations for Conference). At the first meeting, Secretary-General N'Dow introduced his Progress Report and an Executive Summary (A/CONF.165/PC.3/3 and Add.1). The US asked for clarification regarding sources of trust funding and monies received and pledged. Dr. N'Dow explained that the Habitat Foundation had resources that were borrowed to launch the preparatory process for Habitat II and stated that the funds would be replenished. The EU called for full transparency. An informal group was established to look at the financial question. At the Working Group's final meeting, following the work of the informal group, Dr. N'Dow told delegates that there was no intention to request further UN resources and that no effort would be spared in resolving the financial crisis. Norway expressed concern about the Habitat Trust Fund II.

Delegates also heard about the Best Practices initiative and from partner organizations. Nicholas You, Coordinator of the Global Best Practices Institute, introduced a report from the Dubai International Conference on Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment (A/CONF.165/PC.3/INF.4). The best examples will form a multi-media data base including an Internet web site and CD-Rom. Drew Horgan, Local Authorities Steering Committee for Habitat II, described plans for a World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities and a declaration in Istanbul. Zekai Baloglu, Vice President, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey, said the Foundation Forum at the Conference will initiate global dialogue, accept a foundation declaration, and set up a task force. Seyhan Erdogdn, International Federation of Building and Woodworkers, described preparations for the Trade Union Forum.

Also in Working Group I, Australia introduced a proposal that participants, including States and intergovernmental agencies, announce at Habitat II commitments to action by 2000. This proposal was similar to an Australian initiative at the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW). The proposal was sent to Plenary, which, on the final day of PrepCom III, adopted the initiative with an additional call for regional groups of States to announce commitments and priorities at Habitat II.

### WORKING GROUP II

During the first meeting of Working Group II, Chair H.L. de Silva (Sri Lanka) presented the Bureau's proposal to split the group into two subgroups to consider the draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and the Global Plan of Action (A/CONF.165/PC.3/4). Delegates accepted an amended G-77 and China proposal that Subgroup A consider paragraphs 1-35 and 143-162 (preamble, goals and principles, commitments, international cooperation and coordination, and implementation and follow-up). Subgroup B was to consider the remaining sections in paragraphs 36-142 (introduction to Global Plan of Action, adequate shelter for all, sustainable human settlements, and capacity building). Delegates nominated Glynn Khonje (Zambia) as Chair of Subgroup A and Edmundo Hermosilla (Chile) as Chair of Subgroup B. On Thursday, 8 February, Subgroup C was created, chaired by John Zetter (UK), to help consider text that had been assigned to Subgroup B. On Friday, 9 February, Chair Hermosilla returned to Chile and Gaston Ibanez (Peru) was selected to chair Subgroup B during the second week. All of the groups worked on the basis of texts that included a compilation of government and UN agency amendments, and a parallel text that contained a compilation of NGO amendments.

In addition to debating the Preamble's content, Subgroup A also debated the participation of NGOs and local authorities. Some delegations welcomed NGO participation, but others insisted on clarification of the rules on their level of involvement and complained of the "privatization" of diplomacy. Some delegates also expressed dismay that NGO proposals for the Preamble had been distributed by the Secretariat despite UN budgetary constraints. Chair N'Dow reminded delegates of the essential role NGOs and local authorities will play in implementation, but continuing disagreement brought the meeting to a halt. The expanded Bureau decided that NGOs could express their views in oral and written form and work through national delegations, but they could not negotiate directly with governments while the compilation texts were under review.

After discussions began in Subgroup A, many delegates noted the degree of discrepancy between proposals and the difficulty of deliberating in their assigned conference room. Delegates spent a notable amount of time debating the need for drafting groups, as well as their number, size, composition, location and scope. They eventually convened a single drafting group, which produced much of the agreed text of this Subgroup. Additional specialized groups for paragraphs related to sustainable development and financial resources (chaired by Amb. Richard Butler (Australia)) and a right to housing (chaired by Marcela Nicodemus (Brazil)) were convened during the second week.

Negotiations in Subgroups B and C were conducted primarily by the whole negotiating body, although a small group of delegates informally negotiated text for Subgroup B during the final days. Some noted that, while Subgroup A was negotiating the political aspects of the Habitat Agenda, Subgroups B and C concentrated on the technical aspects of the Global Plan of Action relevant to implementation, over which there was less disagreement. Negotiations added substantially to the quantity, and according to some participants, the quality of the text. Time constraints towards the close of the PrepCom forced delegates in Subgroup C to place a number of brackets around text, including a new section on population and the environment introduced by Canada. A significant amount of Subgroup B's work was not adopted by Working Group II and the Plenary, due to time constraints, and therefore remains in brackets.

The Subgroups reported to Working Group II during the final days of PrepCom III. During Working Group II's considerations, a lengthy debate unfolded on the use of brackets. Delegates discussed whether brackets around previously agreed language from other UN conferences indicated a delegation's intent to re-open the

debate on that issue, or only questioned the inclusion of that language in the paragraph. When Guatemala bracketed "various forms of the family exist," several delegations noted that the group had agreed to refrain from bracketing previously agreed language. The Chair noted Guatemala's reservation, but did not bracket the text. Guatemala insisted it had the "sovereign right" to bracket text. The Holy See noted another paragraph in which previously agreed language had been bracketed, but other delegations said those brackets did not question the content of the language, but the placement. Some delegations said brackets cannot be applied selectively and noted that "reservations" should be used for the final output of the conference, not during the preparatory stage. Delegations continued to volley the issue, until the Chair stated that while the group had adopted a "rule of convenience," delegates with fundamental objections may place paragraphs in brackets. Working Group II did not complete consideration of all the Subgroups' work. The remainder was therefore sent to Istanbul in brackets.

## THE HABITAT AGENDA

The following is a summary of the Habitat Agenda and outstanding issues that will have to be resolved in Istanbul.

### I. PREAMBLE

The twelve paragraphs of the Preamble outline the purpose and rationale for Habitat II. It recognizes the need to improve the quality of human settlements that affects the daily lives and well-being of people. The Preamble reaffirms the results from recent world conferences, including those on women, social development, population, small island States, human rights, children and education. It also acknowledges the effects of urbanization, the challenges facing cities and towns, urban-rural linkages, the growth of poverty and the role of local authorities.

Delegates proposed several topics for inclusion or further elaboration, such as partnerships and enablement, and the vulnerability of women, children, the elderly and indigenous peoples. The EU proposed several references to human rights and language on gender from the FWCW. The US highlighted the principles of sustainability, enablement and partnerships. The G-77 and China requested language on the right to development, and the Philippines stressed the need to reference the needs of migrant workers. Some delegations commented that the volume of contributions threatened to make the document unwieldy and unfocused. Debate frequently centered on the level of detail needed to fully explain human settlement problems and on references to other UN conferences and agreements, such as Agenda 21.

The Plenary adopted the Preamble, which includes bracketed paragraphs regarding: democracy and transparent government as indispensable foundations for sustainable development; the rapidly increasing number of displaced persons; the needs of children and youth; shelter and urban management policies; the role of women; and the link between sustainable settlements and sustained economic growth.

### II. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

This section outlines the goals and principles that will guide the course of Habitat II. It defines equitable human settlements as those in which all people, without discrimination of any kind, have access to housing, infrastructure, health services, adequate food and water, education and open spaces. It also lists different types of discrimination, such as race, color or sex. The principle of poverty eradication includes the objective of meeting the basic needs of all people, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and enabling all women and men to attain secure livelihoods. The section states that the family is the basic unit of society and should be strengthened, and that all people have basic rights and must accept their responsibility to respect the rights of others.

Delegates debated a proposal by the G-77 and China referring to sustained economic growth and equitable development, which was objected to by some developed countries. On the sections regarding the eradication of poverty, delegates discussed a reference to the special needs of women. Some delegations said the Conference should focus on habitat issues and not simply mirror the Beijing agenda, while others insisted the issues could not be compartmentalized. The EU proposed, in reference to solidarity, language on nondiscrimination and the "household and families in all its forms." Several developing countries objected that "household" was undefined.

Bracketed proposals in this section include references to: practices affecting settlements that governments must renounce; the right to adequate housing and right to adequate housing "realized progressively;" sustained economic growth; various forms of the family; and the need for an increased flow of financial resources to developing countries. Delegates also bracketed a G-77 and China proposal on bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

### III. COMMITMENTS

Although delegates made progress on this section, negotiations were not completed in time for Plenary review and the entire section will go to Istanbul in brackets. The section contains commitments on adequate shelter for all, sustainable human settlements, enablement, financing shelter and human settlements, international cooperation and assessing progress. Each of these commitments is followed by specific objectives.

The section on adequate shelter reaffirms the commitment to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. Delegates debated the references to tenure options. The US promoted "legal" tenure options and the G-77 and China proposed "a diverse range of tenure options." The EU submitted a proposal specifying types of discrimination, when the G-77 and China objected to "sexual orientation." In reference to groups needing shelter, the Philippines supported measures regarding access to social services by migrants. The US also submitted a paragraph on equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, access for all to primary health care.

This section also reaffirms the goal of sustainable human settlements and lists objectives including: promoting socially integrated human settlements; promoting changes in production and consumption patterns; preserving productive land; reducing the impact of natural and human-made disasters; and enabling competitive and sustainable economic development. The Subgroup agreed on most proposals regarding the goal of sustainable human settlements.

The commitment on enablement contains objectives on, *inter alia*, exercising public authority with accountability, decentralizing authority, promoting institutional and legal frameworks, and promoting equal access to reliable information, utilizing modern technology and networks. On this commitment, the EU proposed language on local leadership, and the US proposed "gender-sensitive" institutional frameworks. Canada proposed a paragraph on gender equality that notes the objective of integrating gender perspectives in human settlement policies, and developing methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives in shelter planning.

Some of the amendments for the commitment on strengthening existing financial mechanisms and developing new mechanisms for financing implementation of the Habitat Agenda were completed by an informal group. The objectives include stimulating national and local economies, strengthening fiscal and financial management capacity, strengthening frameworks to enable markets, and promoting increased equitable access to credit.

On the commitment regarding international cooperation, proposals call for enhancing partnerships that will assist in the implementation of the national and global plans of action.

Delegates disagreed over several proposals, particularly the references to ODA targets. The Subgroup bracketed this section.

The commitment to assessing progress calls upon governments to monitor and evaluate efforts to implement national plans of action and enhance the role and institutional capacity of UNCHS as an agency of coordination and cooperation. The EU proposed referring only to the UN framework, but the G-77 and China objected.

#### **IV. GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION: STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This section notes that changes have taken place since Habitat I in Vancouver. World population has increased and economics are increasingly globalized. It also notes that there are many things national governments can do to enable local communities to solve problems, recognizes that recent UN conferences identified strategies, and states that the Global Plan of Action (GPA) is based on enablement and participation.

The paragraph regarding the globalization of the economy generated the greatest debate, and remains in brackets. A G-77 and China redraft added, among other things, a reference to the creation of "conditions for destabilizing shocks to be transmitted from one country to another, particularly to developing countries." An informal group redraft split the paragraph into two, the first focusing on globalization of the economy and the second on new communications technology, but the G-77 and China requested that the original text remain in brackets.

A reference to "sustainable development, including sustained growth" also remains bracketed. This is one of a number of similar references in which the US preferred a reference to "sustainable development," citing WSSD text in which the reference encompassed economic growth, environmental protection and social development, and the G-77 and China desired a specific reference to economic growth.

##### **B. ADEQUATE SHELTER FOR ALL**

**1. Introduction:** This section defines what adequate shelter means, identifies a [right to housing] and notes actions needed to enable adequate shelter for all. The paragraph on a "right to housing" was assigned to an informal group. The Republic of Korea had proposed text noting the basic human need for adequate shelter and governments' responsibility to attain the goal of adequate shelter for all. Japan suggested that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights be followed. The US also objected to text noting that there is a "right to housing." In the informal group's report, delegates added a list of actions to ensure adequate shelter, but the portion related to the "right to housing" remained bracketed.

A paragraph on national shelter policy was discussed by the Subgroup, along with an additional paragraph regarding decentralized shelter policies, but the Plenary did not adopt them and they remain bracketed. An additional paragraph on policies that would ensure progress toward realizing an adequate standard of living, proposed by the US, was not discussed and remains bracketed.

**2. Shelter Policies:** This section identifies actions to: integrate shelter policies with macroeconomic, social and other policies; promote the enablement approach to the development and rehabilitation of shelter; and improve shelter delivery systems. The Subgroup reached agreement on all of the text except for a reference to "sustainable development" (EU) and "sustained economic growth" (G-77 and China). Two subparagraphs, one on sustainable development in housing policies (which contains the bracketed references) and one on access for persons with disabilities, were not considered by the Plenary and remain bracketed.

**3. Shelter delivery systems:** This section identifies actions to: enable markets to work; ensure access to land; mobilize sources of finance; ensure access to basic infrastructure and services; and improve construction, maintenance and rehabilitation. Bracketed text includes references to "equal" and "equitable" access to and use of land, and to the application of taxation and incentive mechanisms to stimulate the efficient, environmentally sound and equitable use of land (bracketed at the request of the US). Benin bracketed references to "stakeholders" throughout the document. Iran bracketed a subparagraph regarding substitutes for non-renewable resources, stating it was inconsistent with the UNFCCC. The Subgroup considered a paragraph regarding access to land and legal security of tenure, and agreed to all but a recognition of different national regimes of land tenure (proposed by Mexico). The Plenary, however, did not consider the paragraph and it remains in brackets.

**4. Vulnerable groups:** Recommended actions in this section include legal, fiscal, and regulatory measures on discrimination, services, and participation. Most of the chapeau, including the list of disadvantaged groups, is bracketed. The EU and Australia supported amended references to the vulnerability of those excluded from the socio-economic mainstream and decision-making. The US bracketed "documented" migrants. "Protection from illegal and forced evictions" is also bracketed.

#### **C. SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT IN AN URBANIZING WORLD**

**1. Introduction:** Introductory references to urbanization and the rapid growth of mega-cities are bracketed. The following paragraphs outline the conditions for viable, equitable and sustainable settlements. Other bracketed language includes Local Agenda 21's emphasis on cooperation, participation of stakeholders, ecosystem carrying capacity, trade in hazardous waste and substances, and partnerships. The US and G-77 and China disagreed over the introduction of language on safe drinking water. Canada and the G-77 and China reformulated the language linking health and sustainable human settlements.

**2. Sustainable land use:** The chapeau describes competing demands for land use, access, and harmonizing urban areas with the natural environment. Bracketed references include: water management; discouraging hazardous industry in residential areas; prevention or minimization of industrial pollution; enforcement of land management; and an environmentally sound legal framework for the land market.

**3. Eradication of poverty:** The section links strategies for poverty eradication to the promotion of stable human settlements through macroeconomic policy, education and health. Bracketed action references include: integrated settlement policies ensuring equal access to basic services; schooling to promote cooperation among cultural groups; women's participation in community development; awareness of issues facing the homeless, especially physical and sexual abuse; CEDAW; youth; disability-sensitive planning and provisions; guarantee of basic education for all; and crime prevention through social development.

**3 bis. Population and sustainable development:** This paragraph, on population factors and sustainable human settlements, was introduced by Canada, and remains bracketed.

**4. Environmentally sustainable [livable] and healthy human settlements:** This section links sustainable human settlements to conditions for human health, including disparities and environmental conditions. Bracketed language includes: the chapeau, regarding education for all, and an alternative version; the disproportionate effect of environmental degradation on some groups; pollution risks in urban/low-income areas; unsustainable and wasteful production and consumption; the built environment; health indicators; planning and design; services with respect to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); appropriate technologies; environmental impact assessments; integrated approach to

environmental services; actions to support a healthy environment in partnership with stakeholders; the precautionary principle; and the globalizing economy and transboundary pollution. The US asked the EU to define its preferred version of the "precautionary principle" and expressed a preference for the "precautionary approach." The G-77 and China described transboundary pollution hazards as a serious threat to the viability and health of human settlements and delegates negotiated language introduced by Mexico, based on a text from UNCED.

**5. Sustainable energy use:** This section notes that current dependence on fossil-fuel-based energy sources in most urban centres leads to climate change, air pollution, and consequential environmental and human health problems. Actions to promote sustainable energy use are recommended, including energy-pricing policies, energy-efficient systems, public education campaigns, and use of solar heating. This section was not considered by the Plenary, and it remains bracketed. The Subgroup, however, had agreed to everything except a reference to the fact that dependence on fossil-fuel-based energy sources [may] represent a serious threat to sustainable development. The EU preferred "can," but the G-77 and China supported "may."

**6. Sustainable transport and communication systems:** This section states that transport and communication systems are the key to the movement of goods, people, information and ideas, and that the transportation sector is a major consumer of non-renewable energy. Actions to achieve sustainable transport are identified, including an integrated transport policy approach, promoting disincentive measures to discourage private motorized traffic, and providing a public transport and communication system. This section was entirely agreed by the Subgroup, but was not considered by the Plenary and remains in brackets.

**7. Conservation and rehabilitation of historical and cultural heritage:** This section notes that historical places, objects and manifestations of cultural and scientific, symbolic, spiritual and religious values are important expressions of the culture, identity and religious beliefs of societies. Governments are invited to promote historical and cultural continuity by, among others, identifying and documenting the areas of significance, promoting financial and legal support for the protection of cultural heritage, and encouraging a role for older persons as custodians of cultural heritage. This section was also entirely agreed to by the Subgroup, but was not considered by the Plenary so it is bracketed.

**8. Improving urban economies:** This section notes that urban economies are integral to the process of economic transformation and development. Specific actions need to be taken to develop and maintain efficient and affordable transport, information and communications systems and linkages with other urban centres and with rural areas. Actions are called for to establish an effective financial base for urban development, provide opportunities for productive employment and private investment, provide opportunities for small businesses, strengthen urban economies, and alleviate the adverse impacts of measures for structural and economic transition. The Subgroup reached agreement on the text, but it was not considered in Plenary, so it remains bracketed.

**9. Balanced development of settlements in rural regions:** This section notes that policies and programmes for the sustainable development of rural areas that integrate these areas into the national economy require strong local and national institutions for the planning and management of human settlements. Actions are called for to promote the sustainable development of rural settlements and reduce rural-to-urban migration, promote new and improved technologies and appropriate traditional practices, establish policies for sustainable regional development and management, strengthen employment opportunities in impoverished rural areas, and achieve an integrated approach to balanced and mutually supportive urban-rural development. The Subgroup agreed on all but three references to "sustainable

development" in this section. The Plenary did not consider the text, which remains in brackets.

**10. Disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and post-disaster rehabilitation capabilities:** This section notes that the impact on people and human settlements of natural and human-made disasters is increasing and that the reduction of vulnerability and an increase in the capacity to respond to disasters is related to the degree of decentralized access to information, communication and decision-making and the control of resources. Actions are noted to: improve natural and human-made disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response; prevent technological and industrial disasters; and prepare for and implement post-disaster relief. The Subgroup agreed on everything except a paragraph noting the need for resettlement of displaced populations as a result of the development and testing of nuclear weapons. The Plenary did not discuss this section, and it was entirely bracketed.

#### **D. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

This part of the text was not considered by the PrepCom due to lack of time and will be sent to Istanbul in the same form it was presented by the Intersessional Drafting Group in brackets. The text contains the following six sections: Introduction; Decentralization and strengthening of local authorities and their associations/networks; Participation, civic engagement and Government responsibility; Metropolitan planning and management; Domestic financial resources and economic instruments; and Information and communications.

#### **E. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION**

Due to lack of time, Working Group II could not review the results of the informal groups and Section E is entirely bracketed. The introductory section notes that international cooperation takes on added importance in light of recent trends in the globalization of the world economy and that the overall decline in ODA is a serious cause for concern. It also notes that considerable increases in private sector involvement indicate a shift from aid to trade, and highlight the need to involve the private sector in shaping international cooperation. During discussion on this section, debate centered on reaching a balance between the role of the public and private sectors. The G-77 and China made proposals that specifically noted the problems of developing countries, but the US objected that they overemphasized the role of the private sector and did not address the power of local communities. When the G-77 and China proposed a reference to the downward trend in official aid, the US proposed noting that implementation was the responsibility of each country. The EU proposed a new paragraph on decentralized cooperation that recognizes the capacity of local authorities to develop international relations and cooperation, but the G-77 and China objected. China offered a paragraph on the impacts of increased international migration.

The subsections cover enabling international context, financial resources and economic instruments and institutional cooperation. The Working Group convened a drafting group, chaired by Richard Butler (Australia), to synthesize proposals. Negotiations resulted in agreement on most of the section. Paragraphs on enabling international context discuss the link between urbanization and economic development and specific efforts to be undertaken by the international community, such as promoting coordination of macroeconomic policies and enterprise development. Brackets remain around references to "developing economies and economies in transition," the negative impact of migration, and support for refugees. Paragraphs on financial resources and economic instruments cover a wide range of topics, including official financial resources, partnerships on all levels, improved effectiveness of financial resources, private financial sources, existing and innovative economic instruments, and special

financing needs and issues. Delegates bracketed a section that addresses the means for translating the commitments into financial implications.

Delegates also discussed, and bracketed, a paragraph on the use and transfer of environmentally sound technologies that have a profound impact on consumption patterns, a reference to enhancing the identification and dissemination of new technologies, and a reference to the role of UNCHS as a catalyst in technical cooperation. In the paragraph setting out specific steps for the international community, delegates bracketed references to placing steps "within existing resources," and bracketed a paragraph on activities of UNCHS. Under the subsection "institutional cooperation," delegates agreed to a paragraph noting the need for cooperation, but bracketed subsequent paragraphs that note that the Habitat text adds new elements to the agenda for international cooperation, and that implementation of Habitat II requires a coordinated framework and increased cooperation between UNCHS and other entities.

#### **F. IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

This section discusses implementation at the national and international levels, tracking progress on the GPA, the use of indicators and best practices. The future role of the Commission on Human Settlements and its secretariat, UNCHS, was the focus of debate on questions of implementation and follow-up. The entire section remains in brackets. The G-77 and China made extensive proposals detailing ways to strengthen and expand UNCHS, while EU proposals called upon the Commission to "monitor" implementation. The G-77 and China said the reticence of other governments regarding UNCHS may stem from either an inadequate understanding of the organization or because it largely benefits developing countries. They said the EU proposals would undermine and practically abolish the Commission and UNCHS. When the EU proposed a drafting group on the issue, the G-77 and China stated that the "full house" should know the level of disagreement.

The US, the EU and the G-77 and China made numerous proposals for this section, and delegates debated at length the order and content of paragraphs. Negotiations revealed several fundamental differences, and the resulting text is largely a compilation of the EU and the G-77 and China proposals. This section includes a proposed paragraph on implementation at the national level. It notes that governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the GPA. The paragraph on implementation at the international level notes the main actors as the Commission and UNCHS, which the EU bracketed. The G-77 and China, in turn, bracketed all of Section F. Delegates also debated sub-paragraphs on the roles of UN organizations and bodies, such as the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The G-77 and China objected to an EU proposal that called upon the Secretary-General to ensure effective functioning of the UNCHS because the language implied that the Centre has not been functioning properly. The G-77 and China also proposed detailed roles for UNDP, ILO, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNEP and others.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

PrepCom Chair Martti Lujanen (Finland) opened the final Plenary on Friday morning, 16 February, and asked delegates to consider Agenda Item 3 (Status of Preparations for Habitat II). Pamela Mboya (Kenya), Chair of Working Group I, introduced the Report of Working Group I (A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.4), which contained three draft decisions, all of which were adopted. Draft decision I took note of the Progress Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference (A/CONF.165/PC.3/3) and an Executive Summary by the Secretariat (A/CONF.165/PC.3/3/Add.1). South Africa and Morocco stressed the importance of making the Best Practices information available on the Internet in French. Draft decision II contained a proposal from Australia to invite States and

other organizations to make statements of priorities and commitments during Habitat II. Chile suggested that regional groups of States also be invited to identify priorities and commitments. Draft decision III authorized the Bureau to meet during the intersessional period to resolve outstanding organizational matters.

Delegates then considered Agenda Item 4, Outcome of the Conference: Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and Global Plan of Action. Italy presented the report of Working Group II on paragraphs 36-42 (introduction; A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Add.3, and corrections), which was adopted as corrected. A number of delegates commented on the poor quality of the French translation. Libya requested a definition of the non-profit sector.

Italy presented the report of Working Group II on paragraphs 43-65 (A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Add.4), and a number of changes (A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Add.4/Corr.1). Iran reminded delegates of his request in Working Group II to delete the bracketed "equal" in reference to inheritance in 58(f). Libya proposed calling for "technical" environmentally sound waste management in 65. The US objected. Delegates adopted the two texts as amended except for paragraphs 48, 48*bis*, 48*ter*, 51(b), 51(b)*bis*, 55, 58(f) and 65(b). Working Group II, Subgroup C Chair John Zetter reported on corrections to Section B, Adequate shelter for all (66-75) (A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Add.5 and Corr.1). The document was adopted as corrected and amended.

During the afternoon, the Plenary considered Agenda Item 6 (Other Matters). Indonesia announced a contribution of US\$50,000. Glynn Khonje, Chair of Working Group II Subgroup A, reported on changes to the Preamble (1-12) described in A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3 and A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Corr.1, as amended by Working Group II. The Plenary adopted the documents as corrected and amended.

Marcela Nicodemus, Chair of the informal drafting group on a "right to housing," reviewed the group's work on paragraphs 13, 24 and 44 (as contained in Informal Paper 4) and noted a number of corrections. India requested brackets around the reference to remedies against discrimination on the basis of "property, birth and other status" in 44. Informal Paper 4 was adopted as amended.

Working Group II submitted paragraphs 13-22 (A/CONF.165/PC.3/4/L.3 and Add.1) from Section II (goals and principles) with the following corrections: In 13 (right to housing), the US noted that Working Group II had agreed to include alternative language in brackets in an annex. Canada said a new 22*ter* (health) had been introduced, in brackets.

Gus Speth (UNDP) called delegates' attention to the fact that the UN system has reached agreement on an integrated approach to follow-up and facilitating provision of development assistance to realize international agreements. The approach would involve coordination with a commitment to bottom-up implementation.

On Agenda Item 2 (accreditation of NGOs and Local Authorities), in documents A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Corr.1 and Corr.2 (recommendation for accreditation of an NGO, the Federation of Westtrace Turks in Europe), and Add.4, Norway reported that consultations had failed to resolve the question of the NGO's accreditation as recommended in Corr.2. In an earlier Corrigendum (Corr.1), the Secretariat had withdrawn a recommendation for accreditation and removed the Federation of Westtrace Turks from the list of accredited NGOs (A/CONF.165/PC.3/Add.3). Turkey noted that a technical error by the Secretariat had been corrected by the issuing of A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Add.3/Corr.2. Chair Lujanen suggested postponing discussion until the pre-Conference negotiations in Istanbul. Greece said the Secretariat had never admitted an error in issuing Corrigendum 1, deleting the NGO from the list of accredited organizations. Turkey repeated that there was no issue to postpone subsequent to the issuing of Corr.2. Greece repeated its call for postponement and the Chair agreed. Turkey accepted the proposal to postpone.

With regard to the other NGOs listed in Annex II of A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Add.4, Taiwan International Alliance, Canada Tibet Committee, and Tibetan Rights Campaign (USA), the Chair noted an informal group's agreement that the Plenary recommended to the General Assembly that it refer to ECOSOC, for decision in May 1996, the list as presented in Annex II and Corrigendum I. On the US proposal to reopen a decision on the International Energy Foundation (Libya), no delegation spoke against and no vote was required to reopen discussion (A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Add.1). The US restated the procedural and substantive basis of its motion, noting the NGO's links to the Libyan Government and participation in activities in violation of the UN sanctions regime. India welcomed the re-opening of the issue. He said the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) had sought NGO accreditation but his Government was opposed. He said the organization was involved in gun running and had acquired weapons from clandestine sources to support terrorism and thus could not be considered a relevant NGO. The Plenary agreed to exclude both the IEF and AMURT.

With interpretation ending at 6:30 pm, the Plenary debated whether to continue the meeting. The Secretariat stressed that full engagement of all delegations was essential, and continuing without interpretation would compromise the quality of the remaining work. The Plenary continued with consideration of Agenda Item 4. A bracketed US-proposed *22ter* (Draft for Principle on Health and Education) was adopted as decided by Working Group II.

The report of WGII on paragraphs 76-99 (A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.3/Add.6) was presented. Due to the late hour, the Chair suggested that this document be adopted as revised by Working Group II. The Plenary proceeded to consider adoption of *29bis* (approved in Working Group II). Benin, supported by Egypt, proposed that "gender equality" be footnoted with an explanatory note, as he said was done in Beijing. The US requested that this footnote proposal be postponed until Istanbul and that the Secretariat prepare information regarding the Beijing decision, as there was confusion regarding this proposal.

The Plenary discussed whether to assign special interim status to 100-128 of Add.7, 48, 51b and bis, 55 or to retain the brackets around them, as these paragraphs, although negotiated in informal groups, were not adopted by Working Group II due to time constraints. Delegates agreed that they would remain in brackets with a footnote stating that they had been negotiated informally.

At the close of Plenary, Secretary-General N'Dow said the PrepCom had opened the window to the involvement of civil society, with representatives of NGOs, the private sector and local authorities. On behalf of the Secretariat he thanked the delegates and the UN family of agencies, including the World Bank.

Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, noted that not all delegations were satisfied with some organizational matters during the PrepCom. Specifically, she said the Bureau was not the appropriate body for decisions that belonged to the Plenary. She also insisted that only two working groups and two drafting groups be formed at the Conference, with full interpretation services. Finally, she asked for prompt delivery of the translated draft Declaration of Principles and the GPA document to facilitate preparations for the Conference.

Chair Lujanen said a "development paradigm" for towns raised questions about sustainable development, our value system, consumption patterns and lifestyles. These were political issues in the deep sense of the word. The main issue at Habitat II would be the identification of current negative trends to be changed and positive trends that need to be strengthened. The report of the meeting will be referred to Istanbul by the Rapporteur, Marjorie Ulloa (Ecuador). Lujanen thanked all participants in the PrepCom and closed the meeting at 8:00 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF PREPCOM III

With his opening observation that Habitat II—the culminating global conference of the century—would motivate the world to make sustainable human settlements the rule and not the exception in the 21st century, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali signaled a rhetorical tone that was to inform many of the interventions from the podium at PrepCom III. Habitat II Secretary-General Dr. Wally N'Dow followed up with a warning that the rapidly urbanizing world stands at the crossroads between unequaled promise and unparalleled disaster. The tone perhaps best served to heighten awareness of the gaps that opened up between the rhetoric and reality in the days that followed, notably the gap between organizational capacity and the aspirations of the organizers. One observer suggested that the PrepCom had been struck by a condition recently described as P.M.T. (Pre-Millennial Tension).

Delegations confronted two sets of challenges at the PrepCom: 1) to begin the delayed review of the draft statement of Principles and Global Plan of Action, an agenda intended to chart a course to the creation of conditions for achieving improvements in the living environment of all people on a sustainable basis; and 2) to deal with organizational/political issues, including the modalities of realizing the Secretariat's commitment to enhanced participation by NGOs and local authorities, questions of financial transparency, and weaknesses in PrepCom management, which resulted in lost negotiating time and a subsequent failure to review the entire draft. The latter challenges seemed destined to taint delegates' consideration of institutional follow-up and implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including the question of the future of the UN Centre for Human Settlements and the Commission on Human Settlements. While most questions regarding a US\$1.4 million loan from the Habitat Foundation and other funding for Habitat II were dealt with at PrepCom, there are continuing demands for an audit to clarify the standing of the Conference budget. Over 90% of the Habitat budget has come from "non-traditional sources," and US\$347,000 is still needed to cover the projected costs of supporting the participation of developing countries.

In the end, while delegations, notably the G-77/China at close of Plenary, were forced to appeal for improved organization and accountability by the Bureau in Istanbul, there was an emerging consensus that significant improvements to the draft text had been introduced. "We may not win a Nobel prize for literature, but on reading the translated texts it is clear we have succeeded in improving the original drafts," said one delegate. Once the pace of negotiations picked up, delegates found the atmosphere with their colleagues "productive and constructive." Some, however, said they were a "little confused" about both content and quality. One delegate reported progress in a number of sections of the draft, including the environment and the role of local authorities. This provided an essential link between the Habitat Agenda and the on-going processes toward sustainable development. There was no shortage of views and explanations among delegates regarding the issue of organization.

**ORGANIZATION:** When delegates were asked to comment on the Habitat Secretariat's organization and management of the PrepCom they inevitably requested to speak "off the record." Many familiar with other UN conferences noted certain weaknesses in the Habitat process. One described the situation as a "great mess," another a "great disappointment." Translating their views into "diplo-speak," the same delegates pronounced that there had been a lack of resources—partly related to the lack of financial resources. Additional explanations included the fact that the Secretariat had come from outside New York, needed time to settle in, and demonstrated a lack of the technical competence required to run a PrepCom. Providing examples of these shortcomings, several delegates described how proper records of decisions had not been kept at negotiating sessions. Some felt that the Secretariat had also

resisted advice proffered by experienced personnel in national delegations. Echoing the problems with accurate note taking, an NGO representative pointed out that technology for instantaneous word processing and overhead projection of text agreed upon during meetings was available at UN headquarters and could have saved days of work for both the Secretariat and Working Groups.

An adviser to Dr. N'Dow explained that some of the problems at PrepCom III dated back to earlier stages in the preparatory process. Time had been wasted early in the process and delegates did not get into the "negotiating mode" as early as they should have, due to uncertainty about leadership. A decision was made at the outset to have both the UNCHS and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) come under the leadership of one Secretary-General. That decision was reversed a year later, resulting in the late appointment of Dr. N'Dow, who had to put the Conference together in only two years. The delay meant that even after preparatory meetings in Geneva and Nairobi, only a "Secretariat owned" text emerged, instead of one forged by the PrepCom.

**THE PARTNERSHIP AND PARALLEL ACTIVITIES:** In his statements to the PrepCom, Dr. N'Dow repeatedly underlined his commitment to the partnership principle, and the considerable challenge faced by Habitat in mobilizing a constituency for Habitat II. This challenge was compounded by the maturity and development of the Habitat Agenda since the Vancouver Conference in 1976. In the initial preparations stage for Habitat II, the Secretariat targeted a limited range of NGOs who reflected the narrower agenda. Environment and development NGOs were drawn into the process at a later stage. Nevertheless, a number of key players from a range of effective NGOs turned up at PrepCom III, while the vast majority were attending their first UN meeting. As one seasoned NGO lobbyist commented, "there was a lot of floating around in the corridors," something that often happens at PrepComs but a phenomenon that was heightened by the circumstances leading up to PrepCom III.

NGOs have organized themselves through the International Facilitating Group (IFG), a process that received mixed reviews. Through the IFG, NGOs used "floor managers" to centralize interventions on the floor. Some suggested that better coordination and lobbying efforts to ensure that a State delegation would support an NGO position would have increased NGO impact on the text.

The Habitat commitment to the partnership with civil society was realized in the Secretariat's decision to facilitate the compilation of NGO and local authority amendments in a document distributed to the Working Groups. Through this text, NGO floor interventions and traditional lobbying, NGO proposals were presented to delegates. NGOs reported some success in having their ideas included in the draft document. Language on gender issues, for example, was introduced in sections throughout the text, including an early paragraph in the Preamble. References to the "polluter pays principle" and financial instruments to regulate the use of the automobile originated in amendments drafted by the United Nations Environment and Development Committee of the UK. The Women's Caucus and others introduced language on the "health principle" which was taken up by the US delegation. This was particularly significant because NGOs had been warned that no new principles would be allowed into the text. On the downside, the Women's Caucus reported their failure to introduce language from the FWCW on the need for a system of accountability to check the activities of transnational corporations. Previous debates on the "feminization of poverty," "desegregated" data, and "equal" and "equity" were reopened.

The stress on the partnership, in particular with local authorities, was one of the themes advanced at a conference organized by the World Institute for Development Economics Research as part of the Habitat preparatory process. Any inherent or potential weakness in the Habitat process derived from the need to create a new constituency for the Agenda (in contrast to the ready-made

constituencies for recent conferences in Rio, Copenhagen and Beijing) is likely to be overcome by the integration of Habitat outcomes into Local Agenda 21 programmes and their implementation by local authorities, with local partners including the NGOs, CBOs and the private sector. "A ready constituency exists here among NGOs and local authorities; they will be the key to extending the local agendas to incorporate the outcomes and objectives of Habitat II," said one participant.

There were persistent questions at the PrepCom about the "parallel activities" being planned to enhance partnership input to the Conference at Istanbul. One delegate noted a lack of clarity about the modalities for facilitating input into the official Conference from the series of forums and dialogues planned for Istanbul. The key innovation for facilitating the input from the forums (e.g. on Cities and Local Authorities) and the dialogues on themes for the 21st Century will be Committee No. 2, which will receive reports and hold hearings before transferring summaries from the parallel meetings to the Plenary in Istanbul.

**DEFINING ISSUES AND DEBATES:** A number of issues, notably "the right to housing" debate, will define the Conference and provide indicators of real political will and momentum behind the Habitat Agenda.

**1. Right to Housing:** The EU welcomed "important progress" in this debate in which they were seeking to underline recognition of housing rights within the existing international instruments. They felt that such recognition was essential given the special mandate of the Habitat II Conference. The US approach to negotiations on this question was within the framework of expanding human empowerment in the context of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and their application to the housing sector. This approach reflected a desire to ensure that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights set the standards and provided the basis for a consensus. Some have said that remaining questions for delegates at Istanbul will be linguistic rather than substantive.

**2. Sustainable Development in the Urban Context:** A special drafting group was formed to deal with language on sustainable development, which is viewed as an important framework concept for the work of Habitat II. One delegate echoed a common complaint when she expressed disappointment at the lack of progress in the early debates that sounded too familiar. The group made progress in "grounding the concept" and linking the overall process to the UNCED Agenda. There was agreement on areas including the "action oriented" approach and references to clear targets and schedules, local authorities and Local Agenda 21s. In Istanbul there will be further discussion on incorporating the "precautionary principle," the ecosystem approach, carrying capacity and ecological footprints into national sustainable development plans.

**3. "The Enabling Paradigm":** A key concept at Habitat II will be "the enabling paradigm" first adopted by the UN Shelter Strategy in 1988. Currently unique in its application to the shelter sector, some believe it may need broader application. It stresses that governments deploy their resources to remove constraints in the supply of resources and take full responsibility for the indirect actions required to facilitate the efforts of other actors, namely the private sector and the social sector. Habitat II has therefore encouraged governments to involve all relevant actors, including NGOs, CBOs and local authorities. At the WIDER conference in Helsinki, problems were identified when the enabling paradigm was linked to the normative concept of adequate housing where it can imply a redistribution of resources. It was observed that there may be strong vested interests working against measures aimed at improving the land delivery system and making it more equitable. Enabling actions and empowerment will lack credibility without strong political commitment. Members of the Women's Caucus voiced suspicion about the concept, observing that while there was a positive dimension to the recognition of CBO and NGO

participation, it was also apparent that a transfer of resources was not accompanying the transfer of responsibilities to the base. There was also a lack of clarity regarding the nature of local authorities, i.e., does this mean elected or non-elected levels of local administration. "There is a gap between the assignation of roles, responsibilities, and the transfer of resources," according to one NGO delegate.

#### **INNOVATIONS — BEST PRACTICES AND**

**COMMITMENTS:** An NGO representative at PrepCom III offered the observation that the United Nations is essentially in the communications business and does not know it. One initiative undertaken by Habitat II seems to confirm this view. The Best Practices initiative will produce an electronic data base of assessed best practices from around the world in time for the Conference. There will be an accompanying tour of major cities with an exhibition based on the accumulated information. The Best Practices initiative is in stark contrast to the document-centered dimension that inevitably loses intellectual focus by the nature of a process that must accommodate actors coming from very different circumstances and different ends of the flows and exchanges between the cities of the world.

The Australian initiative, that participating States and intergovernmental organizations commit to action on the Habitat Agenda, will also expose interested parties to attempts to concretize the objectives of the Conference. This initiative is similar to an Australian initiative at the Fourth World Conference on Women. Australia hopes that all conferences will begin to set immediate, realizable goals and show constituents and each other an immediate outcome. The EU may invite the OECD to take up consideration of the "commitments" proposal at its meeting this year in Berlin.

#### **FINANCE QUESTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL**

**FOLLOW-UP:** Regarded by some as one of the most important themes of the PrepCom, institutional follow-up generated views ranging from the proprietorial perspective of those close to the Secretariat who conceded an "institutional interest" to those who viewed the PrepCom as evidence that the question should be put on hold. Some delegations felt that the question of coordinating the outcome of Habitat II as it affects the future of UNHCS and the Commission on Human Settlements should be dealt with by ECOSOC and the General Assembly because of the "essentially system-wide nature" of the Habitat Agenda. NGOs supported an innovative governance approach focusing on the Administrative Committee on Coordination, which has overseen other inter-agency agendas at the UN. The NGOs also suggested a "quadpartite" system of governance for the Commission on Human Settlements, which would involve the participation of local authorities, NGOs, and the private sector and mirror a system currently used to draw trade unions and business into the running of the International Labor Organization. Some expect that there will be no definitive decision at Habitat II, and ultimately, the significant negotiations and decisions will take place elsewhere.

On the financial provisions for follow-up, some concessions were made (albeit in brackets) to allow new and additional resources in certain contexts and from various sources. The emphasis, however, has been on the mobilizing of local resources through micro-credit initiatives, financial intermediation, and savings mobilization. International cooperation can be an element, however, less than 5% of ODA currently goes to the sector in all forms of assistance. Micro-credit facilitation is viewed as a powerful generator with multiplier effects in income enhancement, the production of building products and the use of local materials.

**CONCLUSIONS AND GAPS:** The gap between rhetoric and experience at PrepCom III was only one in a series of gaps that define and inform the Habitat Agenda and process leading to the "City Summit." At the heart of the process is a paradox: in the processes of globalization, some cities are emerging as powerful competitors for economic and political power in their own right, and represent yet another challenge to the ability of nation-states to frame questions and solutions in terms that take national sovereignty for granted. States no longer monopolize or fully control many of the relationships of exchange and production within and across borders. Assumptions may no longer be sustainable that there is a "center stage" (whether the United Nations or a Nation State) or pinnacle of power from which most if not all relationships can be defined and governed by those who continue to view the world through the lens of state sovereignty. A brief, but telling, example of this unstated background to the Habitat Agenda appeared in the anxious intervention of a delegate who raised concerns about the "privatization of diplomacy" when an NGO representative transgressed the boundaries of the UN stage.

## **THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE HABITAT II**

**SECOND ASIA-PACIFIC URBAN FORUM:** Organized by UNCHS, ESCAP and UNDP, 11-15 March in Bangkok, Thailand. Contact Jens Overgaard, ESCAP, UN Building, Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand. Tel: +66-2288-1234, Fax: +66-2288-1000.

**RECIFE INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON URBAN POVERTY:** Organized by UNCHS, 17-21 March in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. Contact Mr. D. Biau, UNCHS, PO Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: +254-2-62 3210, Fax: +254-2-62 4264, E-Mail: Daniel.Biau@unep.no.

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF ARAB CITIES:** Organized by Greater Amman Municipality, The Jordan National Preparatory Committee for Habitat II with UN support, 18-21 March, in Amman, Jordan. Contact: Mr. Ali Shabou, UNCHS Regional Information Office for Arab States, P.O. Box 35286, Amman, Jordan. Tel: +962-6-668171-76, Fax: +962-6-676582.

**MANAGING WATER RESOURCES IN LARGE CITIES:** Organized by UNCHS/UNEP, 18-22 March, in Beijing, China. Contact Mr. K. Ray, UNCHS R and D Division, PO Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: +254-2-621234/623039, Fax: +254-2-624265.

**WORLD WATER DAY:** Organized by UNCHS, 22 March, in Beijing, China. Contact Mr. K. Ray, UNCHS R and D Division, PO Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: +254-2-62 3039, Fax: +254-2-62 4265.

**THE NEXT MILLENNIUM - CITIES FOR PEOPLE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD:** Organized by UNDP/UNCHS/Government of Turkey, 19-24 April, in Marmara, Turkey. Contact UNCHS, Nairobi.

**"METROPOLIS FOR THE PEOPLE" - SEEKING SOLIDARITY AMONG WORLD CITIZENS:** Organized by Metropolis, World Association of the Major Metropolises/Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 23-26 April, in Tokyo, Japan. Contact Mr. M. Torikai, Director General, Metropolis '96 Organizing Committee Secretariat, c/o General Affairs Division - Bureau of City Planning, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 8-1, Nishishinjuku 2-chome-Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-01, Japan. Tel: +81-3-5388-3218, Fax: +81-3-5388-1358.