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HABITAT II HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE 1996

Delegates to Habitat II heard presentations on the state of human settlements and improvement strategies, a core theme of the Conference, during Plenary. Working Groups I and II continued negotiations on the draft Habitat Agenda, and drafting groups on the Istanbul Declaration and the "right to housing" met for the first time. Committee II heard presentations from representatives of the World Business Forum and the Foundations Forum.

WORKING GROUP I

CHAPTER I. PREAMBLE

In **9quinquiens** (women and sustainable development), the US and CANADA strongly recommended retention of "gender discrimination." The G-77/CHINA conceded. CANADA and the US proposed a new **9ses** regarding older and disabled persons.

In **10** (enabling and partnerships), CANADA replaced "and" with "in particular" for people living in poverty. The CHAIR proposed to replace "members of" with "those belonging to" vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The G-77/CHINA, supported by the ARAB COUNTRIES GROUP, proposed removing the brackets around **10bis** (economic growth and sustainable development). The EU, supported by the US, proposed deleting language regarding the roots of human settlements problems and deleting "sustained economic growth." The US added "national" to international frameworks. NORWAY added "inequitable distribution of power." NGOs (Women's Caucus) proposed "inequitable distribution of power and resources." Groups proposing additions convened later to merge their proposals.

Delegates sent Paragraph **11** (international institutional arrangements) to Working Group II.

CHAPTER II. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

Paragraph **13** (guided by the UN Charter) was deferred pending discussion by the Drafting Group on a "right to housing." In **14** (equitable human settlements), delegates removed the reference to "the right to inheritance" from brackets after the CHAIR indicated that it came from the Beijing Platform For Action.

In **16** (sustainable development), the US and CANADA drew attention to relevant language from Principle 6 of the Rio Declaration. Delegates agreed to a reformulation by the CHAIR indicating that sustainable development gives full consideration to the needs and necessities of achieving economic growth, social development and environmental protection and calling for

special consideration to be "given to the specific situation and needs of developing countries and, as appropriate, of the countries with economies in transition." MEXICO replaced "protection and sustainable use" with "maintenance" of biodiversity in the final sentence, to which the US added "conservation" and CANADA added a reference to forests. The CHAIR deferred this sentence for further consultation.

In **17** (design and management of settlements), bracketed language regarding preservation of historical structures was reformulated with contributions by NORWAY, CANADA, the US, the EU and the G-77/CHINA to read "preservation of natural heritage and historical human settlements, including sites, monuments and buildings, particularly those protected under the World Heritage Convention, should be assisted, including through international cooperation."

In **18** (family), the G-77/CHINA wanted to delete the bracketed reference to "various forms of the family exist." The EU, supported by NORWAY and BRAZIL, said the reference is the agreed language of the WSSD and other UN conferences. The CHAIR requested informal consultations and said a vote is likely given the strong feelings. MALTA said reopening this issue could derail the entire conference. BRAZIL said there is no common G-77/CHINA position.

The first sentence of **21** (solidarity) was reformulated to read: "solidarity with those belonging to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including people living in poverty." Paragraphs **22** and **22bis** (international cooperation) were deferred to Working Group II. The US, supported by CANADA, proposed a principle to address education and health care. NGOs recommended inclusion of a principle that emphasizes environmental health. The Group postponed negotiation of Chapter III (Commitments) and commenced consideration of Chapter IV (GPA).

CHAPTER IV. GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

A. Introduction: The G-77/CHINA suggested that discussion on **38** (globalization) be re-opened. GUATEMALA added language on the disintegration of the family. The EU added reference to human rights violations. An informal group was formed. Delegates expressed concern regarding the proliferation of small working groups.

In **39** (local participation), the G-77/CHINA noted that "stakeholders" did not translate well into Spanish and French and sought a substitute, but the US and CANADA opposed changing the term.

In **42** (enablement), the G-77/CHINA substituted bracketed text ("sustainable development, including sustained growth") with "sustained economic growth and sustainable development." NORWAY, supported by the US, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND, proposed: "sustainable economic growth in the

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context of sustainable development.” The EU proposed “sustainable development.”

B. Adequate shelter for all: In **51(b)** (sustained economic growth and sustainable development principles), the EU, supported by the G-77/CHINA, proposed deleting the brackets from the entire paragraph but the US opposed.

In **54(e)** (women’s access to resources), the G-77/CHINA added a reference to undertaking legislative reform. Delegates agreed to use related text on administrative and legislative reform from the Beijing Platform for Action. In **54(e)bis** (community-based production of housing), TURKEY wanted a reference to encouraging self-built housing in “authorized ways.” The US said existing language did not condone illegal settlements. MOROCCO proposed a new subparagraph **54(g)** on the control of spontaneous human settlements involving unsanitary, unregulated housing through integrated habitat programs that are preventive.

WORKING GROUP II

E. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

1. Introduction: In **144** (current international economic situation), MEXICO proposed that the formulation of strategies at the national and local levels be “within the legal framework of each country.” The EU replaced the reference to an “overall decline” in official development assistance (ODA) with the “recent downward trend,” but the G-77/CHINA objected. Delegates added text noting that “in some countries” this decline in ODA has been accompanied by increased private sector flows. Delegates added references to “bilateral assistance agencies” (EU) and “private sector” (AUSTRALIA) roles in providing additional resources.

In **144bis** (globalization of the world economy and developing country deterioration), the G-77/CHINA said the existing paragraph, which notes problems with poverty, urbanization and economic stagnation, reflects the developing countries’ analysis of their current situation. ZAMBIA, SUDAN, NIGERIA, TANZANIA, ZIMBABWE and SENEGAL supported retaining the paragraph as is. The EU proposed language from the Agenda for Development that notes the opportunities and challenges that globalization presents, because the paragraph concentrates only on negative aspects. The US said agreement on the Agenda for Development is not final and opposed borrowing its language. He agreed to the EU proposal with the understanding that the language reflects the resolution on the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 90’s (NADAF).

In **145** (innovative approaches), delegates added references to cooperation between and among countries (G-77/CHINA), bilateral assistance agencies (EU) and through triangular exchanges (JAPAN). In **145bis** (new forms of cooperation), the G-77/CHINA circulated a re-draft that deleted the references to: cooperation between multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies and civil society organizations and local authorities; and the right for local authorities to devote their own resources to develop international relations. The G-77/CHINA and Local Authorities were to consult on the text.

In **145ter** (international migration), the US added International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) text noting factors affecting international migration, including international economic imbalances, poverty, environmental degradation, the absence of security, and human rights violations. Canada added ICPD text noting positive aspects of migration. The G-77/CHINA stressed the need for a balanced text.

2. An Enabling International Context: On **146** (enabling international context), the G-77/CHINA proposed removing brackets from language that recognized the housing sectors and

stated that goals of sustainable human settlements development depend on fair and durable solutions to issues of finance, debt, trade and transfer of technology. AUSTRALIA said the goals do not “depend” on these solutions, and the group later accepted “are facilitated by.” The US said the problems cited were very broad and opposed stating that the goals depend on their resolution. The US, AUSTRALIA, the EU and the G-77/CHINA convened a drafting group.

In **147(b)** (coordination of macroeconomic policies), the US offered a number of alternatives to the reference to “sustained economic growth and sustainable development.” The text was bracketed pending consideration of all related references.

Subparagraph **147(e)** notes enterprise development in the context of an open, transparent international trading system. A reference to technologies for all people, especially those living in poverty and the least developed countries, was modified to note “access” to “appropriate” technologies and “know-how.”

IN THE DRAFTING GROUPS

The Drafting Group on the Istanbul Declaration, chaired by Balkan Kazildeli (Turkey), met on Wednesday and agreed to begin considering the format of the Declaration. Talks will continue Thursday.

Marcela Nicodemus (Brazil) chaired the Drafting Group on the “right to housing” in the afternoon, to consider relevant text in paragraphs **2bis**, **9**, **13**, **24** and **44**. The group spent most of the session on procedural matters, then began negotiations on **13**. The Group determined that the text in **13** dealing with the right to adequate housing is the key language to contend with first.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates in both Working Groups decided on Wednesday to consider text related to “sustainable development” at the same time. Some observers note that references to “sustainable development” were first used in Rio and stood alone. The Rio package included funding, however. Delegates and observers say positions changed when the funding promises did not materialize. One NGO delegate has suggested that an important factor influencing positions on this issue is anticipation of the 1997 Special Session of the UN General Assembly to review implementation of Agenda 21. In this view, the statements and decisions of Habitat II may set early markers for the future debate.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will meet during the morning in the Plenary Hall to hear statements regarding the state of human settlements.

WORKING GROUP I: The Working Group is expected to meet during morning, afternoon and evening sessions in Conference Room 1.

WORKING GROUP II: The Working Group is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 3. The Group is expected to begin with consideration of paragraph **148** (actions the international community should take).

DRAFTING GROUPS: The Drafting Group on the Istanbul Declaration is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room A. The Drafting Group considering text related to the “right to housing” is expected to meet from 10:30 am - 3:00 pm in Conference Room D.

COMMITTEE II: The Committee is expected to meet in Conference Room 2 during the morning and afternoon to hold hearings involving representatives of the Parliamentarians Forum and representatives of the Academies of Science and Engineering Forum.