



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## HABITAT II HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 6 JUNE 1996

Delegates to Habitat II continued to hear general statements during Plenary. The Working Groups of Committee I, which are charged with negotiating the Habitat Agenda, continued their negotiations, as did the Drafting Groups considering the Istanbul Declaration and text related to a "right to housing." Committee II held hearings involving representatives of the Parliamentarians Forum and of the Academies of Science and Engineering Forum and the Professionals and Researchers Forum.

### WORKING GROUP I

CHAIR Kakakhel announced a new Vice-Chair, Miloslava Paskova (Slovak Republic). He invited drafting groups to convene for parallel consultations and stated that language agreed at PrepCom III will not be re-negotiated.

### CHAPTER IV. GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

**B. Adequate Shelter for all:** MOROCCO proposed a new subparagraph **54(g)bis**: "Address the problems related to spontaneous settlements through the implementation of preventive integrated housing programmes." The EU bracketed the subparagraph.

Paragraph **55** (land tenure and access) was amended to read "while recognizing that different national laws (G-77/CHINA) and systems (US) of land tenure exist." NGOs (Peace Caucus) recommended language regarding the removal of land mines. In **56(d)** (land use taxation), the EU replaced "easily accessible and progressive taxation" with "fiscal" incentive mechanisms. The US added "accessible" use of land but deleted "equitable," which was opposed by the EU, the G-77/CHINA and JORDAN.

In **57** (chapeau) (land use and markets), "equitable" (referring to land use) was deleted. In **57(c)** (intervention of [stakeholders]), brackets on the entire subparagraph were removed but those around stakeholders remained. The HOLY SEE, supported by ROMANIA, added a reference to the public and private sectors.

In **58** (chapeau) (barriers to access to land), SYRIA and AUSTRALIA proposed deletion of the brackets around "equal and equitable" access, and the EU and US wanted to delete "equitable." The brackets were removed and "equitable" remained. In **58(f)** (women's access to economic resources), IRAN, supported by the SUDAN and SYRIA, deleted "equal" from the right to inheritance.

In **60** (housing finance institutions), the US inserted "those belonging" to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In **63**

(facilitate access to housing), the G-77/CHINA supported the CHAIR's suggestion that brackets be removed from equity. In **66** (infrastructure and delivery systems), the EU, supported by the G-77/CHINA, proposed removing from brackets a reference to "equitable" provision. The US preferred "equal."

In **68** (availability of skills and financing), delegates removed a reference to "external" impacts of the construction industry from brackets. In **69(o)** (support NGOs and others), a reference to "equal" participation of women was removed from brackets. In **71(a)** (non-renewable resources), the G-77/CHINA deleted "particularly fossil fuels" with the US' concession. The section on vulnerable groups (72-75) is being examined by a drafting group.

**C. Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world:** The G-77/CHINA asked the EU to accept introductory references to the most significant transformations of human settlements in **76** (rapid urbanization). In **77** (sustainability of global environment and human life), the EU suggested simplifying a bracketed reference to causes of environmental degradation and resource depletion. The US recognized that the paragraph raises sensitive issues and suggested a reference to failure to account for the social environmental and economic effects of development decisions. The G-77/CHINA proposed removing the brackets. GUATEMALA said some kind of restraint on wasteful consumption and production should be written into the document. The US could not accept an EU formulation.

Bracketed language regarding UNCED was deleted in **77bis** (local authorities). The HOLY SEE removed the brackets around **77ter** (participation). CANADA added "prevention" to mitigation of adverse environmental impacts in **79** (urban expansion). The G-77/CHINA, supported by NORWAY, replaced "trade" with "transboundary movement of" hazardous waste and deleted "by parties to those agreements." The US conceded on the former proposal but not on the latter. Brackets were removed from the entire subparagraph of **80bis** (partnerships). The EU proposed removing brackets around the precautionary approach text in **82** (balanced urban development) but the G-77/CHINA wanted to delete the bracketed text. The CHAIR proposed text from Rio stating that the precautionary approach shall be widely applied according to states' capabilities. The US and NORWAY agreed but wanted to retain the reference to environmental and social impact assessment. In **82bis** (water resource protection), NORWAY added "and other" to "land-based sources of pollution" and CANADA added "oceans and coastal areas."

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## WORKING GROUP II

The Chair opened the morning session by reiterating that previously agreed provisions would not be re-opened. He asked delegations to communicate through their regional groupings.

**E. International cooperation and coordination:** In **145bis** (new forms of partnerships), delegates agreed to a redraft by the G-77/CHINA, in consultation with the LOCAL AUTHORITIES, recognizing complementary forms of decentralized cooperation between and among local authorities and their participation in international cooperation within the legal frameworks of each country. In **146**, AUSTRALIA reported that the drafting group is considering text that recognizes productivity in the housing sector. It also states that achievement of Habitat II's goals would be facilitated by, *inter alia*, action on questions regarding the financing of development, external debt, international trade and transfer of technology to developing countries.

In **147(b)** (macroeconomic policies), the CHAIR proposed calling for policies conducive to "economic development, social development and environmental protection, as components of sustainable development." The G-77/CHINA reserved the right to return to the text once similar references are resolved.

In **148(d)** (local authorities and financial markets), the G-77/CHINA proposed to delete NGOs from a reference to increasing the ability to link directly with global capital markets. The US supported retaining the reference. LOCAL AUTHORITIES said that developing country local authorities suffer from a double standard because they cannot access financial capital markets. The G-77/CHINA, the EU and the US will consult further. In **148(e)** (investments in shelter and infrastructure), the WOMEN'S CAUCUS proposed language from the Beijing Declaration on ensuring compliance with national laws by the private sector, including transnational corporations. The US proposed including "human rights," but the G-77/CHINA objected.

In **148(f)** (impact of international migration), MEXICO deleted the reference to "negative" impacts. CANADA added "documented" migrants, but the PHILIPPINES objected. The G-77/CHINA proposed a redraft calling for international cooperation to promote respect for the rights of migrants, particularly by ensuring decent social conditions, equitable wages and adequate working conditions. In **148(g)** (support to refugees), the US suggested that settlements "should preferably" be in the land of origin. The G-77/CHINA proposed that repatriation be "in safety and dignity." The EU requested time to consult.

In **149** (enhancing financial resources), the G-77/CHINA noted that the human settlements sector is eligible for financing like other sectors and included a specific reference to multilateral financial institutions. The US said substantial financing already exists. The US, supported by the G-77/CHINA, later proposed accepting the original text without changes. The EU requested the right to revisit the text once all related text is resolved.

In **150** (mobilization of financial resources), the US proposed that additional financial resources be "from various sources." The US and EU proposed retaining **150(d)** (striving to fulfill the 0.7% GNP ODA target) and deleting **150(e)** (achieving the agreed target). The G-77/CHINA proposed the reverse. AUSTRALIA deleted the reference to 0.15% GNP to least developed countries (LDCs) in 150(d). BANGLADESH suggested raising the target to 1.4% GNP. The US, supported by the EU and JAPAN, stated it is not likely that positions on the target will change at Habitat II. The US proposed a small group to examine Rio language. NORWAY insisted on the LDC target.

The G-77/CHINA agreed to use 150(d), but added reference to the "agreed" target and language on human settlements. The US stated that is has not accepted targets. The CHAIR proposed adopting "mental" brackets on 150(d) with the G-77/CHINA's changes while consultations take place. BENIN proposed adopting the text with reservations. The US requested brackets and consultations. NORWAY said the issue should be dealt with by the full group. The CHAIR noted mental brackets, which will be reviewed Friday based on Thursday evening consultations.

In **150(h)** (partnerships), delegates accepted an EU proposal encouraging multilateral and bilateral donors to support countries, particularly developing countries, in pursuing enabling strategies. In **150(j)** (South-South cooperation), the G-77/CHINA and the US preferred the original text. The EU proposed deleting references to triangular cooperation and partnerships between developed and developing countries. Both references were retained.

## IN THE DRAFTING GROUPS

The Drafting Group on the Istanbul Declaration discussed which of the three draft texts (G-77/CHINA, TURKEY, and the EU) would serve as the basis for discussion. The purpose, structure and tenor of the Declaration and its target audience were also discussed. The document from Turkey was described as a precise summary of the Conference agenda. The G-77/CHINA draft, which contains references to new and additional resources and the future role of the UNCHS, has been debated by the Group. Delegates invited the CHAIR to provide a synthesis draft. Delegates also discussed the question of participation of NGOs and Local Authorities in the Drafting Group.

Participants reported progress in the Drafting Group on the "right to housing" and said delegates cooperated and agreed on text in **44**, **44bis** (chapeau) and the majority of **13**. Consultations are continuing on **9** and the group tackled **2bis** and **44bis(a)** and **(b)** in an evening session. The newly agreed language is essentially that approved at PrepCom III with minor amendments. References to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and obligations versus responsibilities of governments were among the controversial issues discussed.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will meet in the Plenary Hall in morning and afternoon sessions to continue hearing statements regarding the state of human settlements.

**WORKING GROUP I:** Working Group I (considering the Habitat Agenda except international cooperation and follow-up) is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 1.

**WORKING GROUP II:** The Working Group considering Sections E and F of the Habitat Agenda is expected to meet during the morning, afternoon and evening in Conference Room 3.

**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 a "right to housing" is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon 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 Labour Unions Forum and the UN system.