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HABITAT II HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 7 JUNE 1996

Delegates to Habitat II continued to hear general statements in Plenary. The Working Groups negotiating the Habitat Agenda met, as did the two Drafting Groups. The Drafting Group on the "right to housing" completed its work. Committee II held hearings involving representatives of the Labour Unions Forum and the UN system.

WORKING GROUP I

IV. GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

C. Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world: Consultations on the "vulnerable groups" section (72-75) made progress on the text, and further consultation is being taken up by the drafting group that considered the "right to housing."

Paragraph 88(d) (school curricula) was amended as "development of school curricula and education programmes aimed at developing understanding and cooperation among members of diverse cultures." The HOLY SEE, supported by GUATEMALA and AUSTRALIA, added "parents" to stakeholders. MOROCCO added "community-based centers" to education programmes, but GUATEMALA opposed.

In 89(a)bis (workers' rights), the G-77/CHINA proposed deleting "basic" rights but the US objected. The US added "prohibition of forced and child labor, the freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, and the principle of non-discrimination." In 89(d) (access to credit), the US added "flexible guarantees and collateral requirements." The US introduced three new subparagraphs regarding community-based cooperative banking and corporate reinvestment, flexible manufacturing networks, and support for community-based enterprises.

In 90(b) (gender-sensitive planning), CANADA replaced bracketed language with: "representative structures while ensuring women's equal access and full and equal participation." In 90(c)bis (women as primary family caregivers), GUATEMALA, supported by the HOLY SEE, suggested adding "mothers" as experts in their homes and communities. The EU and NEW ZEALAND said the proposal is restrictive. The G-77/CHINA proposed a replacement paragraph on promoting changes in attitudes, structures, policies, laws and practices to eliminate discrimination and promote full participation. CANADA inserted: women "shoulder the majority of unremunerated work" and language on their role in decision-making.

In 90(e)bis (poverty among rural women), the G-77/CHINA preferred a reference to absolute poverty. In 90(f) (gender disaggregated data), "gender" was removed from brackets. In 90(f)bis (awareness of issues facing homeless and refugee women), CANADA added references to migrants and other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. The G-77/CHINA added "women living in poverty." The subparagraph remains bracketed. In 90bis (youth), the G-77/CHINA removed all brackets. CANADA added a new 90bis(c)bis regarding promotion of employment programmes and vocational skills for youth.

In 90(c)ter (sexual exploitation), the G-77/CHINA removed a reference to "inside and outside national borders" in a CANADA-proposed subparagraph on the elimination of sexual and economic exploitation of young women and children. In 90(d) (encourage youth appreciation), the HOLY SEE suggested adding a reference to historical, natural, religious and cultural heritage. INDIA added "spiritual." Delegates also agreed to new language on increasing environmental awareness and ethical choices.

CANADA inserted a new 90ter(a)bis regarding access to public facilities, housing and services for persons with disabilities. INDIA introduced a 90ter(b)bis on eliminating communication barriers faced by people with disabilities. In 90ter(d)bis (data), SYRIA suggested replacing "generate" with "prepare and disseminate disaggregated data." In 90ter(e) (input into housing), the US suggested a reformulation on recognizing the expertise of people with disabilities and their role in decision making.

In 90ter(f) (awareness of disabled persons' health-care issues), the G-77/CHINA deleted "physical and sexual abuse and substance abuse." CANADA added a new 90ter(f)bis: "Provide persons with disabilities affordable and quality health care." In 90ter(i) (planning process), the G-77/CHINA deleted "are often involved in the informal sector." INDIA introduced a new 90ter(j): "promote sports, recreational and cultural activities for persons with disabilities."

CANADA proposed a new 90quart regarding indigenous peoples' concerns and participation. The G-77/CHINA requested consultations. INDIA added "eliminate" to "prevent and reduce" violence and crime in 91(chapeau). The US added reference to action by governments at all appropriate levels. The US amended 91(a)bis (basic education) with "provide human rights education in an effort to mitigate the effects of crime and violence and strengthen civil society." INDIA suggested "provide awareness and education." The text was deferred.

ROMANIA replaced "assist" with "promote" crime prevention in 91(a)ter (factors undermining community safety).

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The US added “addressing poverty, inequality, the absence of educational and vocational opportunities and lack of health care services” to the key components of the social development approach. GUATEMALA added reference to family instability. The SUDAN added “absence of religious education.” The brackets were retained at the EU’s request. The Working Group continued negotiations during an evening meeting.

WORKING GROUP II

E. International cooperation and coordination: The Chair presented a compilation text for **150(f)** (structural adjustments). The G-77/CHINA proposed that investment programmes take account of “human settlement,” rather than “local urban” development priorities. LOCAL AUTHORITIES, supported by the US and the EU, suggested inserting “local human settlement” development priorities. Delegates agreed to “local, urban and rural” priorities.

The LOCAL AUTHORITIES proposed a new subparagraph to follow **150(k)** calling for the strengthening of their decentralized development assistance programmes.

In **150(l)** (effectiveness of ODA), the G-77/CHINA deleted the reference to “existing” ODA, and added text noting that ODA is a small proportion of a country’s resources for human development but can play an important complementary and catalytic role in promoting adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements. The US stated that text from the Agenda for Development should not be used.

In **150(m)** (effectiveness of public and private resources), delegates called for increased access to housing and services for “all people, particularly those” living in poverty. In **150(n)** (military expenditures), NORWAY, supported by the G-77/CHINA, proposed NGO language on land mines and reduced spending and trafficking. The US, supported by SWITZERLAND, suggested language on pursuing an international agreement to ban use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. The G-77/CHINA objected to an international agreement on land mines due to “lack of technical know-how.” NORWAY requested time for consideration.

In **150(o)** (utilizing national experts), the G-77/CHINA and the US proposed accepting the existing text, which calls for preference for national or regional experts, as well as for developing country experts. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed including a reference to countries with economies in transition. The US said the language, from the WSSD, refers to using local experts when available. The G-77/CHINA said the paragraph should not be further diluted. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested time for consultation.

In **150(q)** (measures for reducing disaster vulnerability), the EU noted that the measures should be for projects “including those” financed by the international community. The US proposed calling for construction of buildings that are accessible to persons with disabilities. In **150(r)** (economic policies to promote savings), the EU added “implement” to “develop” policies, but the G-77/CHINA objected. In **150(s)** (strengthen assistance for community-based development), the US called for “promoting responsible reinvestments in local communities.” The G-77/CHINA proposed “socially responsible.” In **150(w)** (facilitating foreign private sector investment), INDONESIA added a reference to private-public joint ventures and partnerships. The G-77/CHINA deleted the example of “build, operate, transfer (BOT).”

In **150(x)** (equitable pricing mechanisms), the EU said the paragraph should focus on implementation and proposed deleting a reference to assisting developing countries. The G-77/CHINA said the proposal shifts the purpose of the paragraph. Delegates accepted a US proposal that calls for implementing pricing mechanisms for adequate shelter infrastructure and services and

assisting countries, in particular developing countries, for that purpose. The G-77/CHINA accepted the change, but noted its concession.

In **150(aa)** and **(bb)** (special financing needs and issues / vulnerable groups), several delegations noted the overlap between these paragraphs and others in the Habitat Agenda. The US proposed awaiting Working Group I’s work on these issues.

The G-77/CHINA added a subparagraph that assigns high priority to the needs of African countries and least developed countries in implementing the objectives of Habitat II. The US proposed alternative WSSD text for **150(dd)** (implementation in Small Island Developing States). Subparagraph **150(ee)** (provide assistance to land-locked countries) was agreed with a US amendment calling for “support” to neighbor transit developing countries. Subparagraph **150(ff)** (20/20 compact) was agreed and **150(gg)** (soft loans and grants) was deleted.

In **151** (transfer of technology), text regarding UNCHS and international property rights was left pending resolution of similar text. The Working Group continued negotiations during an evening meeting.

IN THE DRAFTING GROUPS

The Drafting Group on the Istanbul Declaration received a composite draft that contained a number of alternative paragraphs from the drafts of the EU, the G-77/CHINA and TURKEY. Among the issues addressed in the alternative sections were: a right to housing; rural settlements; production and consumption patterns; local government; and resources and institutional arrangements necessary for implementation. Chair Kazildeli (Turkey) was asked to prepare a new, shorter and more focused draft, to be discussed Monday.

The Drafting Group on the “right to housing” completed its work yesterday morning. Consensus was reached on all relevant paragraphs (**2bis**, **9**, **13**, **24**, **44** and **44bis**) with the exception of language regarding illegal forced evictions in **44bis(b)**. The “full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing” is reaffirmed. Text regarding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the responsibilities and obligations of Governments is also agreed.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Reactions to the results of the “right to housing” Drafting Group ranged from satisfied to jubilant, particularly in light of past deadlocks. NGOs characterized the final language as a “major victory,” while government representatives that had supported a housing right were pleased that the stronger position from PrepCom III, at least in part, prevailed here. Both groups expressed hope that the breakthrough on this issue will spur progress on related issues and the cooperative spirit of the negotiations will add much needed momentum to the Conference. The Drafting Group, based on their resolution of this issue, has been already assigned other difficult provisions.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

Contingency plans are reported to allow the Working Groups to meet during the High-Level segment next week to allow completion of the negotiations. Delays have been exacerbated by, among other factors, internal differences within major groups.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

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

WORKING GROUP II: The Working Group considering text regarding international cooperation and follow-up is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 3.