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SUMMARY OF PREPCOM II FOR THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION FOR ISTANBUL+5: 19-23 FEBRUARY 2001

The second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom II) for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda took place from 19-23 February 2001, at the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) in Nairobi, Kenya. Over 500 government delegates from 98 countries, 200 NGO representatives, 30 representatives of local authorities, 26 representatives from the UN and intergovernmental organizations, and 10 parliamentarians attended.

During the PrepCom, delegates met in Plenary sessions for general debate on the draft report on the overall review and appraisal of implementation and the draft declaration on the cities and other human settlements in the new millennium and on further actions and initiatives for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The draft declaration was then forwarded to the Drafting Committee for negotiations. The Committee of the Whole (COW) dealt with issues of procedure and organizational matters relating to the June 2001 special session.

At the end of the week, delegates adopted the PrepCom's report, one resolution and six decisions covering various issues relating to the special session, including a proposal on how to structure discussion among the various Habitat Agenda partners, organizational arrangements for the special session, which include the rules of procedure, and a 62-paragraph declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISTANBUL+5

HABITAT II: The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 June 1996, on the 20th anniversary of the first Habitat Conference, which was held in Vancouver, Canada. Preparations for this Conference included three PrepCom sessions held in Geneva from 11-22 April 1994, in Nairobi from 24 April - 5 May 1995, and in New York from 5-16 February 1996.

The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, adopted during the Conference, outlined commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements,

emphasizing themes of partnership and local action. Habitat II, as the culmination of a cycle of UN conferences, witnessed the groundbreaking participation of local authorities, the private sector, parliamentarians, NGOs and other partners in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. This Conference also reaffirmed the commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

The General Assembly, during its 53rd session in December 1998, adopted resolution 53/180, which calls for a special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (Istanbul +5). The resolution stresses the need for the effective participation of Habitat Agenda partners and other relevant actors of civil society in preparing for the special session, and to take into account the practice and experience gained at Habitat II. It also decides that the Commission on Human Settlements (CHS), during its 17th and 18th sessions, would focus on monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, assess its impact, and serve as the Preparatory Committee for the special session.

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION: The organizational session of the PrepCom for Istanbul+5 took place in Nairobi on 13 May 1999. At this session, the CHS, acting as the Preparatory Committee, considered the election of officers, procedures for the approval of credentials, the

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rules of procedure of the PrepCom, the organization of work, provisional agenda and other arrangements for the first substantive session of the PrepCom.

The session elected the Bureau members of the 17th session of the CHS from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe to also serve as the Bureau for the PrepCom and the UNGASS. The Bureau members included: Germán García-Durán (Colombia) as Chair; Amath Dansokho (Senegal), Andrzej Olszowka (Poland) and Manfred Konukiewicz (Germany) as Vice-Chairs; and Mehdi Mirafzal (Iran) as Rapporteur.

Delegates decided to hold the first substantive meeting of the PrepCom for five days in May 2000, and also decided that when meeting as a Preparatory Committee, the Commission would be opened to allow full participation of all States and ensure effective participation of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners.

PREPCOM I: The first substantive session of the preparatory committee for Istanbul +5 was held in Nairobi from 8-12 May 2000. A high-level segment of ministers, heads of delegations and mayors met and focused on the key issues of: scope to be covered by the review and appraisal process; local, national and regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly; the role of local authorities, other partners and relevant United Nations organizations and agencies on the review and appraisal process; and preparation of a declaration on the role and mandate of UNCHS.

A second segment focused on dialogues with local authorities and other partners, in order to present and discuss the planned contributions of local authorities to the review of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Participants addressed initiatives such as global campaigns for good urban governance, a World Charter on Local Self-Government and global norms for security of tenure.

ECOSOC COORDINATION SEGMENT MEETING: The ECOSOC coordination meeting was held in New York from 10-12 July 2000, to discuss coordinated implementation by the UN system of the Habitat Agenda and the Secretary-General's report, which reviews the Habitat Agenda, outlines its relevance to the work of the UN system in the economic and social development field and provides information on the special session. The Council expressed support for the new strategic vision of UNCHS and its emphasis on the two global campaigns. It also agreed to request that the Secretary-General review participation of UNCHS in all aspects of the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, consider adopting a Habitat Agenda task manager system to facilitate coordinated implementation, and streamline reporting to UNCHS and ECOSOC.

55TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The General Assembly considered the ECOSOC report for 2000 at its 55th session. The General Assembly session adopted five resolutions relating to the work of the Preparatory Committee at its second session on the: scope to be covered by the special session, highlighting the need for the session to reconfirm the goals and commitments of the Habitat Agenda; preparations for the special session, which should include a Plenary, an *ad hoc* Committee of the Whole and a thematic committee; follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit; the ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); and the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

18TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: The 18th session of the Commission on Human Settlements took place at UNCHS in Nairobi from 12-16 February 2001. The purpose of the session was to discuss the future of the UNCHS, specifically: to debate the work programme and budget for the 2002-2003 biennium; to assess the progress made in the revitaliza-

tion of Habitat; to review the implementation of the resolutions passed by the Commission at its 17th session; and to decide on the theme, agenda and organization of work of the 19th session.

The Commission passed 12 resolutions addressing, *inter alia*: establishment of the Committee of Permanent Representatives as an intersessional body of the CHS; global campaigns for secure tenure and urban governance; the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II); cooperation between Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); youth; and illegal Israeli human settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

PREPCOM II REPORT

PrepCom Chair Germán García-Durán (Colombia) opened PrepCom II and introduced a UN choir, which sang three songs. In his opening remarks, Chair García-Durán outlined expectations of the PrepCom, called for concrete and practical outcomes, and asked delegates to show flexibility and tolerance during negotiations. He highlighted draft resolutions submitted to the PrepCom, including one on promotion of family support policies in the review and appraisal of the Habitat Agenda, and said that this resolution would be given priority. William Morogo, Kenya's Minister for Public Works and Housing, welcomed delegates to Kenya and wished the PrepCom success in its deliberations.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), discussed the preparation of the draft report on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (HS/C/PC.2/2) and outlined the progress report on the preparations for the special session (HS/C/PC.2/2/Add.1). She said Istanbul+5 must address the need for new political realities and partnerships in an era of global technological innovation, and highlighted various initiatives, including: efforts to improve and revitalize the CHS; new approaches to issues of secure tenure and urban governance; the establishment of an Advisory Committee of Local Authorities; and improved coordination with UNEP.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: The PrepCom adopted the agenda and organization of work, as contained in HS/C/PC.2/1 and HS/C/PC.2/1/Add.1/Rev.1. Chair García-Durán said a COW, chaired by PrepCom Vice-Chair Cheikh Sadibou Fall (Senegal), and a Drafting Committee, chaired by Vice-Chair Manfred Konukiewicz (Germany), would be established.

During the week-long meeting, delegates conducted their work in Plenary sessions, a Committee of the Whole (COW) and a Drafting Committee. During the Plenary, delegates held a general debate on the draft declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium and on the preparation of a draft report for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Plenary then forwarded the draft declaration to the Drafting Committee for consideration. The report of the Drafting Committee was adopted in the final Plenary on Friday evening, 23 February.

The COW deliberated on: a proposal for structuring of discussions among the various Habitat Agenda partners at the special session; recommendations of the CHS from its 18th session and of the 2000 ECOSOC coordinating segment; and the provisional agenda and the organizational arrangements for the special session, including the rules of procedure. On Thursday, 22 February, the COW adopted the its draft report (HS/PC.2/CW/L.1 and HS/PC.2/CW/L.1/Add.1) and forwarded these for adoption by the Plenary.

Editor's Note: As a matter of policy, the Earth Negotiations Bulletin does not directly attribute statements made by governments in informal negotiations when requested to do so.



PREPARATION OF A DRAFT REPORT ON THE OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA

On Monday afternoon, 19 February, the Plenary began its consideration of the preparation of a draft report on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. India, on behalf of the G-77/China Nairobi Chapter, supported resolving controversial issues before their inclusion in the draft documents and strengthening UNCHS to ensure full implementation of the Agenda.

The Advisory Council of Local Authorities urged for equal recognition of all government levels, called for discussion on the concept of subsidiarity and the role of local authorities, and said decentralization goes with good governance. The EU supported: communities through decentralization; good governance; better coordination between different levels of government; and the proposed world charter on local self-government.

Canada said while he advocated effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, the proposed world charter on local self-government was not an appropriate vehicle to this end. China highlighted shortcomings of the draft report, including a lack of analysis of globalization's impact and an unbalanced emphasis on decentralization and local governments, and opposed references to the world charter on local self-government.

UNDP stressed the importance of democratic governance at all levels in the fight against poverty. Zambia, on behalf of the Commonwealth countries, supported the development of strong working partnerships between national and local governments and between civil society and the private sector. Botswana highlighted good governance and decentralization to local authorities, and called for building more partnerships with the private sector. Cameroon highlighted the importance of effective financing, urbanization management programmes and reforming habitat policy.

On the regional level, the African Group emphasized new and additional resources for human settlements development in Africa. Mexico and Bangladesh called for modalities and indicators to monitor the implementation of the Agenda. Bangladesh said global, regional, national and local urban observatories are necessary to achieve the Agenda's goals.

Kenya said the draft declaration should draw from regional declarations. The Russian Federation lamented the lack of attention given to countries with economies in transition in the draft report. New Zealand urged that attention be given to the Pacific region countries and small island developing States (SIDS).

Indonesia advocated strengthening synergies between UNEP and UNCHS. Nigeria emphasized better organization in human settlements development and supported global campaigns on secure tenure and good urban governance.

On the issue of the family, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies stressed the centrality of the natural family in realizing the Habitat Agenda, noted that feminization of poverty arises from the disintegration of the family, and supported adopting a resolution on the family. Poland said family issues in human settlements planning should be promoted and announced its co-sponsorship of the family resolution. The Holy See drew attention to the plight of refugees and displaced persons, and said that although the Habitat Agenda makes reference to the family, the issue was missing in the Secretariat's documents on indicators and the Executive Director's report, rendering the UNGASS process at odds with its own agenda.

The Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized a human rights approach to the Habitat Agenda and the cross-cutting nature of housing, and said the right to adequate housing must

happen at the national level. Turkey called for more references, in the draft report, to tangible achievements in implementing the Habitat Agenda and to providing affordable housing

Uganda said reducing poverty will lead to sounder policies in good governance and improved land tenure systems, and called on developed countries to cancel debts, while Spain advocated mutually supportive global and local policies. Rwanda emphasized: linkages between poverty and human settlements; rural-urban development linkages; environment and sanitation; and participatory good governance in management of human settlements. She called for a global financial mechanism to support these areas. Norway highlighted, *inter alia*, an increased awareness of the issues since Habitat II and the need to empower women in order to address social inequality. He said addressing poverty required strong local governance, and called on countries able to contribute financially to the success of the Habitat Agenda to do so.

Delegates concluded discussion on this issue.

DRAFT DECLARATION ON CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

On Tuesday, 20 February, in Plenary, delegates began discussions on the draft declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium. The Drafting Committee, chaired by Manfred Konukiewitz (Germany), was scheduled to begin its work on Tuesday morning, but the meeting was postponed due to a procedural question regarding the participation of NGOs. On Tuesday afternoon, the Committee met informally as a decision had not yet been made regarding this issue. On Wednesday, it was decided not to allow NGOs into the negotiations and delegates met throughout the day and evening from Wednesday, 21 February, to Friday, 23 February. On Thursday, a decision was made by the Bureau to allow NGOs back into the meeting as observers. On Thursday, 22 February, a subcommittee, chaired by PrepCom Chair Germán García-Durán, was established to assist the Drafting Committee. The subcommittee met Thursday afternoon and evening and Friday morning. Chair Konukiewitz also referred some of the more contentious issues to informal consultations and a number of small contact groups, in the interest of saving time.

UNCHS Executive Director Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka introduced the draft declaration (HS/C/PC.2/3) and the supporting draft on further actions and initiatives to implement commitments of the Habitat Agenda (HS/C/PC.2/3/Add.1). She said the document on further actions and initiatives could be negotiated paragraph-by-paragraph or used to expand the section of the declaration on further actions. Chair García-Durán opened the floor for comments.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES: Some delegates opposed negotiating the document on further initiatives, noting that they had only recently received the document. Canada supported one outcome document, which would: restate the inclusion of all government levels and Habitat partners; emphasize environmental challenges and opportunities for cities; focus on poverty, women and children; and recognize decentralized cooperation for sharing experiences among municipalities. The US recommended that the special session recognize the importance of family. India highlighted private-public cooperation for housing initiatives, use of appropriate technology in housing for the urban poor, and the increasing presence of women in local body governance. The Republic of Korea called for providing shelter to the homeless and combating urban crime. The UN Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR) emphasized, *inter alia*, a specific commitment to gender equality and increased recognition of human rights by the executive and legislative arms of government. He said human rights and a rights-based agenda should be the declaration's guiding principles. The EU said the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21



should go hand-in-hand. The Habitat International Coalition called for the development of national definitions of "adequate housing" to be used as a benchmark in assessing progress. The World Bank underscored collaboration with local partners in launching the Cities Alliance Initiative.

DRAFT DECLARATION: The EU called for a more political and visionary declaration. Some delegates called for reference to, *inter alia*, rural-urban linkages; poverty reduction; commitment to international cooperation; mitigation and management of natural disasters; dialogue at the local level; and public housing policies. Bangladesh called for more specific language on the decisive role of micro-credit in reducing poverty. The Sudan, with China, opposed reference to the proposed world charter on local self-government. Mexico supported including the concepts of city and region, as well as aspects relating to the metropolitan approach, environmental improvement, and agreements for technical and international cooperation. The ILO proposed recognizing the rapid rate of urbanization and urbanization of poverty. Thailand said the declaration ignores the importance of regional commissions' assistance to member countries. The JMJ Children's Fund said the family is the basic unit of society and should be reflected in the declaration. In conclusion, the Secretariat recommended that delegates prepare two outcome documents: the first, a short political declaration derived from the draft declaration; and the second, a reworking of the draft document on further initiatives, which could incorporate related text from the draft declaration. Both documents were forwarded to the Drafting Committee.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Drafting Committee met informally after postponing a scheduled morning session due to unresolved procedural issues. During the informal meeting, Chair Konukiewicz said the Secretariat was still waiting for a response from UN headquarters in New York regarding participation of all Habitat partners in the Drafting Committee. The Chair noted the Committee would discuss: the draft declaration; the document on further actions and initiatives; and a resolution on the promotion of family support policies, recalling the commitment made at PrepCom I to take up the family resolution immediately. One proponent of the resolution offered to put it aside if a substantive paragraph on the family could be incorporated into the draft declaration. Regarding a way forward in elaborating an outcome document or documents, most delegates opposed negotiating the document on further initiatives, as it was submitted late in the process, but agreed that some of the elements could be incorporated into the draft declaration.

On Wednesday morning, 21 February, in a Drafting Committee, Chair Konukiewicz reported that UN headquarters in New York had submitted legal advice regarding the participation of local authorities and NGOs in the Drafting Committee. He said the Drafting Committee is not a main committee of the PrepCom, but rather a subsidiary body, and, distinguishing between public and private meetings, stated that in accordance with UN rules of procedure, local authorities may participate in public meetings and NGOs may observe as members of the public, but that private meetings were closed to both groups. He said this interpretation limits opportunities for NGO participation in the PrepCom's decision-making process, as compared to previous PrepCom practice. PrepCom Chair Garcia-Durán said an afternoon Plenary session would be held to give NGOs the opportunity to make statements on the draft declaration.

Canada expressed disappointment that the meeting would be closed to NGOs, and asked that his view be placed on record. The US said negotiations must be private and involve only governments. Norway said it did not want to kill the spirit of Istanbul, reiterated that the Habitat II Agenda is a partners' agenda, and proposed that meetings remain public until a request is made to revert to a private meeting, and

asked that his disappointment with the decision also be reflected in the record of the meeting. India noted the loss of valuable time, and suggested that a public meeting be held for general discussion on each section of the draft declaration, followed by negotiations in a private meeting. The Drafting Committee agreed to follow this procedure.

On Wednesday afternoon, a brief Plenary session convened to allow NGO comments on the draft declaration. The Human Settlements Caucus proposed setting up a habitat watch to monitor progress and called for alternative financing mechanisms. Habitat International Coalition noted the regressive and anti-democratic trend on the part of some governments in their campaign to exclude NGOs from the negotiations, and said such action sets a dangerous precedent that contradicts the spirit of the UN's work and risks reversing progress made. He said that NGO exclusion at this time calls into question the sincerity of the Commission itself. The NGO Committee on Human Settlements emphasized, *inter alia*: empowerment of the poor in decision making; removal of legal impediments to security of tenure; and research on diverse forms of tenure for incorporation in the legal systems, as appropriate. The Youth Caucus called for consultations with youth as part of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Réseau Habitat Francophonie called for public housing and habitat policies, and emphasized the importance of public investment in housing. The Women's Caucus highlighted proposed amendments, including reference to women's empowerment in the new strategic vision and female-headed households.

Renewing the Commitments from Habitat II: On Wednesday, 21 February, delegates began consideration of the section on renewing Istanbul commitments, and agreed to reformulate the title of the section to conform to the title of the Habitat II conference. Delegates debated, *inter alia*: whether to include reference to the Millennium Declaration; three new EU-proposed paragraphs addressing urbanization and urban poverty, urban-rural linkages and rural settlements, and the environment; and whether to include a selective or exhaustive list of commitments.

Final Text: In the final document (HS/C/PC.2/3/Rev.1), this section contains seven paragraphs, including four new paragraphs. The draft declaration: recognizes progress made and identifies obstacles and emerging issues, and reaffirms commitments in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration; and reaffirms that human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development.

The text states that, *inter alia*, half of the world's population of six billion will be living in cities, and decisions made now will have far-reaching consequences; the need to eradicate rural poverty and to improve living conditions; the determination to address deteriorating environmental conditions; and that some activities at the local level that degrade the environment have implications at the global level and need to be addressed in the context of human settlements. Another paragraph reaffirms the seven commitment categories concerning adequate shelter for all, sustainable human settlements, enablement and participation, gender equality, financing shelter and human settlements, international cooperation, and assessing progress.

Progress in Implementing the Habitat Agenda: Discussions on this section began in the Drafting Committee on Thursday, 22 February, and were later deferred to a subcommittee, which concluded its deliberations on this section on Friday, 23 February. During general comments, Local Authorities called on UNGASS to recognize the important role of local authorities in good urban governance and called for support to develop and collaborate with the Advisory Committee of Local Authorities.

During negotiations on this section, delegates agreed to move text on ongoing housing policy reforms to the section on further actions. Delegates debated whether to include language reflecting support for



the decision of the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, after one delegate said he was not satisfied with the decision. Delegates were divided over the proposal to develop a UN Housing Rights Programme by UNCHR and the UNCHS. One delegate proposed alternative language reflecting the mandate of the Rapporteur to develop regular dialogue and discuss possible areas of collaboration with governments, relevant UN bodies, specialized agencies, and international organizations in the field of housing rights, making recommendations on the realization of the rights relevant to the mandate. After informal consultations, delegates agreed to this alternative proposal.

On a paragraph addressing exclusion and social fragmentation, a reference to family fragmentation remained in brackets until Friday evening when the proponent of the proposal agreed to delete the reference, noting that he understood social fragmentation to include family fragmentation as well. Delegates also debated whether to state that strengthened partnerships result in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda or in improved urban governance. Some also inquired about the relevance between the Advisory Committee of Local Authorities and the UNCHS Strategy within the context of security of tenure and urban governance. Delegates also considered new proposals relating to the contributions of national and other governments in the implementation of the Agenda, measures taken to enhance participation and the contribution of global parliamentarians in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

Final Text: The final document (HS/C/PC.2/3/Rev.1) contains ten paragraphs, including the three new proposals. Reference to noting with satisfaction the comprehensive nature of national and regional reports remains bracketed. The agreed text welcomes:

- progress made thus far in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;
- the UNCHR's decision at its 56th session mandating the Special Rapporteur to have regular dialogue and discuss possible areas of collaboration with governments, relevant UN bodies, specialized agencies, and international organizations in the field of housing rights, and to make recommendations on the realization of the rights relevant to the mandate;
- the increasing economic role of cities and towns in a globalizing world;
- efforts made by developing countries to effect decentralization; and
- the contributions of national and other governments in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

It also takes note of: the growing awareness of the need to address poverty, homelessness, unemployment, exclusion of women and other marginalized groups, including indigenous communities; social fragmentation; and the development of integrated and participatory approaches to urban development.

Recognizing Gaps and Obstacles: This section was negotiated during the subcommittee meetings on Thursday evening, 22 February, and Friday morning, 23 February. The section highlights the gaps and obstacles experienced by governments in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, identified as:

- continued widespread urban poverty;
- lack of political will and mass mobilization;
- lack of empowering shelter and urban policies;
- obstacles associated with limited institutional capacities at national and local levels;
- financial constraints; and
- insufficient international cooperation including lack of increase in funding for adequate shelter and human settlements since 1996.

Delegates considered these and also proposed inclusion of reference to additional gaps and obstacles. Contentious issues included:

- the statement that political will is the first and foremost hindrance to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;
- a statement that at present more people live in urban than in rural areas;
- a new proposal to eliminate the "digital divide" in information and communication technologies;
- a proposal to recognize the inequalities in access to information and communication technologies; and
- a suggestion that good governance at all levels with full transparency, simplicity of procedure and accountability, is yet to be realized at different levels of decision-making and management.

Whereas delegates found consensus on all other issues, the issue of governance in decision-making and management remains bracketed. Some delegates were opposed to references to "good" governance, since it is a political, not a technical term.

Final Text: The gaps and obstacles to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda contained in the draft declaration (HS/C/PC.2/3/Rev.1) include, *inter alia*:

- widespread poverty as the core obstacle;
- the discrepancy between commitments made at Istanbul and the political will to fulfill them;
- serious financial constraints in countries receiving an influx of refugees;
- policies that limit participation and partnership, including women's participation;
- different capacities and priorities, and absence of coordination among local authorities where metropolitan concentrations extend beyond the cities' original administrative boundaries; and
- economic and financial policies that constrain adequate resource mobilization.

The decision also recognizes that: for the first time in human history, a majority of the world's six billion people will live in cities; many people have experienced a deterioration, not improvement, in their living environment; global progress towards sustainable human settlements has slowed in the last five years; and, thus, States have the need to ensure that the Habitat Agenda is now translated into policy and into practice in every country.

Undertaking Further Actions: On Wednesday, 21 February, in the Drafting Committee, the Holy See introduced a proposal on the family, which noted, *inter alia*, that the family is the basic unit of society and should be strengthened. Chair Konukiewicz said a "Friends of the Chair" group would be established to further consider the proposal. On Thursday, 22 February, the facilitator of the group announced a compromise package deal consisting of three paragraphs had been reached, comprised of Habitat Agenda language from paragraphs 31, 40(k) and 119(e), respectively. One regional group could accept the package with the understanding that references to the family would not be included in other paragraphs of the declaration. A number of delegations opposed putting conditions on amendments others might offer. The regional group then bracketed the three paragraphs, pending resolution of the rest of the text in the declaration. On Friday, delegates agreed to remove the brackets.

On Thursday, during general remarks on this section, a representative of Local Authorities lamented the absence of reference to the world charter on local self-government. She called for establishing an intergovernmental forum to consider formalizing a framework for effective decentralization processes. Delegates discussed various new proposals for this section on, *inter alia*: overcoming obstacles to implementation, especially poverty, establishment of a world soli-



parity and poverty reduction fund, involvement of countries with economies in transition, gender equality in human settlements, affordable housing, HIV/AIDS, youth, and micro-credit.

Delegates debated a proposal to establish an intergovernmental forum to consider formalizing a framework for effective decentralization processes. Others preferred undertaking further deliberations on issues related to effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, but no consensus on this issue was reached. On proposals regarding international aid, debt relief and poverty reduction, delegates could not reach consensus on new initiatives for debt relief. After consultations, language on mobilization of new and additional resources at both the national and international level was agreed, but three alternatives addressing the commitment to a 0.7% target of gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance (ODA) remain bracketed. Regarding a paragraph on governance, debate focused on whether to support reference to good governance at all levels or reference to improving urban governance, and whether these terms were political or technical. Both references remain bracketed.

Regarding a paragraph on sustainable environmental planning and management, delegates debated language referring to sustainable consumption and production patterns. Some supported specifying industrialized countries, others called for deleting the text altogether. Delegates agreed to refer to all countries and industrialized countries in particular. Delegates also debated language calling for a systematic undertaking of integrated approaches addressing social, cultural, economic and environmental issues. Several countries opposed, and others supported, reference to "cultural" issues. Chair Konukiewitz reminded delegates that the term appears in the Habitat Agenda, and after further discussion it was included. In Friday's closing Plenary, Egypt said he had requested deleting "cultural" in the Drafting Committee, but his request had not been reflected in the text. He called for deleting the reference to "cultural" and the Plenary agreed.

Final Text: In the agreed document (HS/C/PC.2/3/Rev.1), this section contains 34 paragraphs, including 20 paragraphs based on new proposals. Four paragraphs still contain brackets. Delegates agreed to highlight poverty as the major obstacle to implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Agreed language addresses strengthening support to poverty eradication and sustainable human settlements development, in particular in the least developed countries, through renewed political will and new and additional resources. This paragraph also contains three bracketed alternatives, which refer to the ODA target of 0.7% of GNP. An additional proposal recommending the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication is also bracketed.

The final text also states that effective decentralization can empower local authorities, NGOs and other Habitat Agenda partners to play a more effective role in shelter provision and in sustainable human settlements development, but two alternative texts remain bracketed to reflect that no consensus was reached regarding the establishment of an intergovernmental forum to deliberate on an enabling international framework to guide national legislative reforms on effective decentralization policies. Alternative formulations addressing inheritance also remain bracketed, as do references to urban governance and good governance.

Three paragraphs on the family are contained in this section. The first reaffirms that the family is the basic unit of society and should be strengthened, and notes that in different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist. The second addresses a poverty eradication strategy encouraging policies designed to meet housing needs of families. The third refers to promoting changes in

attitudes, structures, policies and laws and other practices related to gender, in order to eliminate obstacles to human dignity and equality in family and society.

This section also includes actions on:

- overcoming obstacles encountered in implementing the Habitat Agenda, especially poverty, the major underlying factor;
- raising awareness about human settlements through full and open dissemination of information;
- empowering the poor and vulnerable through, *inter alia*, promoting greater security of tenure;
- building capacities and networks to enable all partners to play an effective role in shelters and human settlements development;
- promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- supporting volunteer work and the work of community-based organizations;
- reducing vulnerability from natural and human-made disasters and implementing post-disaster programmes;
- strengthening existing financial mechanisms and identifying and developing appropriate innovative approaches for financing shelter and human settlements development;
- promoting upgrading of slums and regularization of squatter settlements, and reiterating the aims of the Cities Without Slums initiatives;
- promoting use of adequate low-cost and sustainable building materials and appropriate technology in the interest of affordable housing;
- formulating and implementing appropriate policies and actions to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on human settlements;
- intensifying efforts to enhance the role of youth and civil society, and increasing cooperation with parliamentarians in human settlements;
- promoting action against urban crime and violence, particularly violence against women, children and the elderly;
- addressing challenges posed by wars, conflicts, refugees and human-made disasters;
- promoting access to safe drinking water for all and facilitating the provision of basic infrastructure and urban services;
- intensifying efforts for improving environmental planning and management practices, and promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns in human settlements;
- integrating Local Agenda 21 in the Plan of Action for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;
- monitoring and evaluating progress, and identifying and disseminating best practices and applying shelter and human settlements development indicators by governments at all levels;
- translating best practices into policies and enabling their replication;
- strengthening institutional frameworks to facilitate the extension of micro-credit to those living in poverty; and
- encouraging and strengthening existing and innovative forms of international cooperation and partnership.

The final text also: recognizes the interdependence of implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the pursuit of sustainable development; reconfirms the role of the CHS and of the UNCHS in implementing the goals of adequate shelter for all through providing legal security of tenure and sustainable human settlement development in all countries; supports the establishment of the Habitat Agenda Task Manager, designed to allow better monitoring and mutual reinforcements of actions undertaken by international agencies; and agrees to regularly review further implementation of the Habitat Agenda with a view to assessing progress and considering new initiatives.



PROPOSAL FOR STRUCTURING THE DISCUSSIONS AMONG HABITAT AGENDA PARTNERS AT THE SPECIAL SESSION

On Monday, 19 February, COW Chair Cheikh Sadibou Fall (Senegal) introduced the proposal for structuring the discussions among the Habitat Agenda partners at the special session (HS/C/PC.2/4). The Secretariat further noted that HS/C/PC.2/4/Add.1 had been prepared to provide the PrepCom with the opportunity for acting upon the directive issued by the General Assembly for the creation of a thematic committee to convene during the special session, and HS/C/PC.2/4/Add.3 outlined organizational arrangements for the creation of such a committee.

Regarding the task of selecting themes that would provide a focus for the presentations during the special session, the Secretariat invited the COW to consider regrouping proposed themes into relevant clusters reflecting: adequate shelter for all; managing the local environment; urban socio-economy; and urban governance and institutional development. During the general debate, delegates suggested that discussions should include:

- both urban and rural settlements;
- a flexible approach to assure the inclusion of a full range of governments and partners;
- the importance of local authorities in the achievement of the Habitat Agenda;
- the need to follow UN rules of procedure regarding NGO participation in the General Assembly;
- the potentially large number of contributions by participants in the thematic committee and the lack of time to properly debate them;
- balanced representation of developing countries; and
- recognition of the special status of SIDS.

The US said that the creation of a thematic committee was not in keeping with practice of previous special sessions, but Norway noted that GA resolution 55/195 of December 2000 called for the creation of a thematic committee. The EU, supported by Canada, said that given the special nature of the process, innovations such as the thematic committee were required.

On Tuesday, 20 February, COW Chair Fall proposed the creation of a contact group to discuss the organizational arrangements for the thematic committee. Martti Lujander (Finland) was appointed to chair the group, which met from 21-22 February. During this time the COW was suspended, convening briefly on Wednesday, 21 February, to hear a progress report and a request for additional time. Discussion in the contact group centered on identification of major themes, sub-themes and key elements drawn from the Habitat Agenda. Issues of financing for urban development, participation in governance, city development strategies, and social inclusion were debated. Cross-cutting themes of poverty elimination, gender equality, and participation, partnerships and cooperation at local and international levels were identified as well. It was agreed that each presentation should emphasize how partnerships needed to implement the Habitat Agenda had been formed.

On selection criteria, the group agreed that presentations would represent national, local, NGO, grassroots and private sector initiatives and should be geographically balanced. Delegates stressed lessons learned, replicability and partnerships. Many agreed that emphasis should be placed on presentations that are innovative, interactive and involved frank and open dialogue. Delegates also agreed to a potential reduction in the number of presentations, to allow more discussion.

On Thursday, 22 February, the contact group submitted two documents to the COW relevant to the thematic committee. After consideration, delegates approved the draft resolution on organizational arrangements (HS/C/PC.2/CW/L.3). Regarding the draft decision on the preparatory process (HS/C/PC.2/CW/L.2), disagreement arose over a US proposal to delete a list of key items that would guide the

preparation of presentations. Canada and others preferred its inclusion. The EU suggested, and many supported, that the list be contained in an annex. Morocco noted that the key items correspond to those used to guide national reports. The US opposed an item on the list promoting the right to adequate housing, noting that language from the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) Covenant on Economic and Social Rights promotes adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living. Canada, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya and others opposed changing agreed Habitat II language. After debate on both issues, the list was replaced with a note referencing the key items used in country reporting contained on the Habitat website.

On Friday, 23 February, during Plenary's consideration of the draft decision on the thematic committee (HS/C/PC.2/L.6), Egypt proposed adding an eighth sub-theme on international cooperation and partnerships, within sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. Noting that the proposed sub-theme is a cross-cutting issue, the UK suggested, and delegates agreed, to integrate the proposal into the cross-cutting theme of participation, partnerships and cooperation. Iran proposed, and delegates agreed, to delete language on "combining" examples of legislation and best practices.

Final Decisions: The draft decision (HS/C/PC.2/L.6) states that the purpose of the thematic committee is to tell the story of the development of human settlements since Habitat II through presentations and dialogues designed to guide the quest for solutions and progress. It outlines themes and sub-themes, criteria for selection, format for presentation, management of the meetings, and timetables. It calls for presentations to be provided electronically in advance to the Secretariat. Deadlines for submission of descriptions and summaries were set, and funding of developing country presentations was briefly discussed. It was agreed that the Secretariat and the PrepCom Bureau would assure continuity of the preparations for the thematic committee after PrepCom II by liaising with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi. This decision will be submitted to the General Assembly for adoption prior to the special session.

Regarding the organizational arrangements for the thematic committee, the draft resolution (HS/C/PC.2/L.7), states, *inter alia*, that it shall hold five meetings focusing on the two main Habitat Agenda themes, that it shall be open to accredited Habitat Agenda partners and that presentations may be made only by members of government delegations and accredited Habitat Agenda partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHS AT ITS 18TH SESSION AND OF THE 2000 ECOSOC COORDINATING SEGMENT

On Monday, delegates were briefed by CHS Chair Sid-Ali Ketrandji (Algeria) on resolutions adopted during the 18th session of the CHS (HS/C/PC.2/5) that are relevant to the upcoming special session, including those related to: secure tenure, good governance, revitalization of UNCHS, the role of local authorities, and the Cities Alliance Initiative to promote partnerships to reduce urban poverty. The Secretariat highlighted relevant conclusions from the report on the coordination segment of ECOSOC (HS/C/PC.2/BD/1), including one regarding the adoption of a Habitat Agenda Task Manager System to facilitate coordinated implementation and streamline reporting. Norway praised ECOSOC's focus on coordination with Habitat, repeated the call for countries to assist least developed countries in participating in the special session, and, with Kenya, advocated the creation of a Task Manager System.

Final Decision: The decision (HS/C/PC.2/L.9) states that the PrepCom will bring the conclusions of ECOSOC on coordinated implementation by the UN system of the Habitat Agenda to the attention of the General Assembly for further consideration.



ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION INCLUDING RULES OF PROCEDURE

On Tuesday, 20 February, the COW discussed the provisional agenda for the special session (HS/C/PC.2/6) and organizational arrangements for the special session, including rules of procedure (HS/C/PC.2/7, Add.1 and Add.2). Regarding participation of speakers other than member States, the US proposed deleting a paragraph stating that the last two speaking slots at each Plenary meeting might be reserved for participants other than member States, on the grounds that this was inconsistent with the rules of procedure regarding observers. The EU said the narrow slots reserved for Habitat Agenda partners were recommended by the GA President in a letter to the PrepCom Chair (HS/C/PC.2/7), with a view to include accredited partners into the Plenary debate, and would in no way create a precedent for other special sessions. With Norway and Canada, he stressed that deleting this language would constitute a step backwards. The US and China said it would be premature to decide on speaking slots given time availability. Canada responded that while governments should have priority, they must also hear views from other partners.

Trinidad and Tobago suggested including language allowing for such speakers if time allowed. Jamaica noted that with only two slots for more than 300 partners, it would be difficult to determine which NGOs and local authorities should speak, and asked whether one representative could be chosen on behalf of all partners. The Secretariat said that networks could be formed to report partners' views. Algeria stated that the hyper-politicization of this issue placed the spirit of Istanbul+5 in danger and proposed creating a contact group to resolve it. It was agreed that this issue should be addressed in the contact group discussing the thematic committee and report to the next session of the COW.

On Wednesday, 21 February, the COW convened in a brief morning session. The Chair of the contact group, Martti Lujandén (Finland), reported disagreement over the inclusion of partners in the Plenary of the special session. The contact group continued its work throughout the day.

On Thursday, 22 February, the Chair of the contact group reported the continued lack of consensus on the participation of non-member States. COW Chair Fall announced that this matter would be forwarded to Plenary for resolution. China added language stating that the participation of Habitat partners in the special session should not be considered a precedent. Regarding Palestine, the US stressed that the participation of observer States should be consistent with GA rules of procedure. Delegates then approved the draft resolution on organizational arrangements (HS/C/PC.2/CW/L.3).

On Friday, 23 February, in the closing Plenary, delegates reopened the debate on the organizational arrangements for the special session, including rules of procedure. Regarding the participation of non-member States, the US, supported by China, said that an identical paragraph was recently deleted in the context of the organizational arrangements for the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. The EU, supported by Canada and Norway, reiterated its opposing arguments and stated that the PrepCom for the Special Session on Children had retained an identical provision. Responding to a US request for more time to study the question and a suggestion from India that the proposal be sent to the General Assembly for resolution, Chair Garcia-Durán reminded delegates that this text could not be forwarded with brackets. After further debate, the US proposal to delete the paragraph was put to a vote. The results were three in favor, 45 against, and seven abstentions. The motion was defeated, and the brackets were removed.

Final Decision: The decision (HS/C/PC.2/L.2) requests the General Assembly to adopt, *inter alia*, the following organizational arrangements during its special session in June:

- holding of six plenary meetings from 6–8 June 2001, with two daily sessions from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm;
- creation of a Thematic Committee and an *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole to consider substantive agenda items;
- the last two speaking slots in each plenary meeting, with the exception of the first and the last plenary meetings, shall be reserved for participants other than member States and observers; and
- the special arrangements regarding the participation of non-member States shall not constitute a precedent for other special sessions of the General Assembly.

CLOSING PLENARY

PrepCom Chair Garcia-Durán convened the Plenary at 7:45 pm on Friday, 23 February. Delegates agreed to the Chair's proposal for Plenary to first consider the report of the COW, then take up the report of the Drafting Committee, and conclude with a consideration of agenda items on other matters and the adoption of the meeting's report.

CREDENTIALS: Chair Garcia-Durán drew delegates' attention to the agenda item on credentials, which was postponed on Monday to enable the Bureau to examine credentials. Noting that Rule 11(2) of the PrepCom requires the Bureau to examine credentials submitted by delegations and to report their findings to the PrepCom, he said the Bureau had found the credentials to be in good form.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: COW Chair Cheikh Sadibou Fall introduced the report of the COW (HC/PC.2/CW/L.1 and HC/PC.2/CW/L.1/Add.1), and delegates adopted it with minor amendments. Delegates also adopted: the decision on organizational arrangements for the special session, including rules of procedure (HS/C/PC.2/L.2), after it was put to a vote; the resolution on structuring the discussion among the various Habitat Agenda partners at the special session (HS/C/PC.2/L.7); the provisional agenda for the special session (HS/C/PC.2/L.3); the decision on accreditation of agenda partners (HS/C/PC.2/L.5 and L.4); and the decision on the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements at its 18th session and of the year 2000 coordinating segment of the Economic and Social Council (HS/C/PC.2/L.9).

REPORT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: The Chair of the Drafting Committee, Manfred Konukiewicz, presented the draft declaration on cities and human settlements in the new millennium (HS/C/PC.2/L.8) submitted by the Committee, and noted that brackets remain in paragraphs 8, 24, 33, 34, 37, 42, and 49. Delegates adopted the Committee's report and agreed to transmit the draft declaration, as adopted, for consideration by the special session.

OTHER MATTERS: Delegates then considered the agenda item on other matters. Swaziland sought clarification on how the issue of further actions and initiatives, referred to in decision HS/C/PC.2/L.3, which is on the agenda of the special session, will be dealt with at the special session. The Secretariat said the draft declaration will be used to address both action and initiatives and the draft declaration and that both items will be contained in a single document.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SESSION: Plenary then considered, and adopted, the PrepCom's report (HS/C/PC.2/L.1).

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION: In her closing remarks, UNCHS Executive Director Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka emphasized that partnership is the fundamental premise upon which the Habitat Agenda is built. She expressed hope that UNGASS discussions will lead to a reaffirmation of this commitment and that the declaration will recommit the international community to the process of Istanbul, and



thanked partners for their understanding of the procedures of the General Assembly. She said the Center will produce a global report on human settlements to be ready for the special session.

Many countries and regional groups stated their appreciation for the work of the Bureau and Secretariat. Brazil stressed the need to identify and extend funding mechanisms to increase access to housing and infrastructural services, drew attention to the need for more favorable conditions for effective technology transfer and reiterated the importance of international cooperation and the consolidation of South-South cooperation. The United Kingdom, on behalf of the Western European and Others Group, said the efforts of small informal contact groups at the session were invaluable, noted the positive and creative working spirit of the informal working groups and expressed the hope of finding a fuller expression of this spirit at the UNGASS.

Bangladesh, for the Asian Group, said overall they were satisfied; but were a little disappointed at some developments, such as when some delegates, particularly Egypt, were not given the floor in the Drafting Committee. He added that he would forget the disappointments and cherish the memory of working together.

Algeria, on behalf of the African Group, expressed hope that the region's concerns will be adequately addressed by Habitat and requested the UNCHS Executive Director to work with the UN Economic Commission for Africa and other relevant institutions to support the Organization of African Unity ministers concerned with housing to meet every two years. He asked that their concern about the manner in which Africa's interests were handled in the Committee be placed on record, and expressed the hope that this situation does not recur at UNGASS.

Mexico, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, expressed gratitude for the willingness shown by all delegations to make progress on difficult issues. Algeria, for the Arab Group, expressed disappointment with the results of the conference and the declaration, noting that the declaration stresses internal factors and has avoided factors linked to the international economic environment, such as debt. He regretted that much work had been assigned to contact groups, and hoped the special session would come up with a declaration to better reflect the concerns of developing countries and give countries that wish to express their views the opportunity to do so.

Norway urged speeding up coordinated action to implement the Habitat Agenda, underscoring capacity building in developing countries. He supported the Cities Alliance Initiative and said the Commission and the Center should create an action plan for this initiative. He also supported convening an extraordinary meeting of the Commission in late 2001 or early 2002 to set in motion implementation of decisions taken at the special session, but lamented the divergence from what has been characteristic of the Habitat process, with respect to involvement and contributions from civil society.

The EU welcomed progress made regarding the thematic committee in the special session, but regretted that the inclusion of Habitat Agenda partners at PrepCom II had not been in the spirit of Istanbul. She was pleased, however, that partners would be able to participate in the special session, in light of the vote taken on the issue. She said the objective of the review of outcomes was to pave the way for full implementation of the Habitat Agenda, but expressed concern over tendencies to go back on agreed language. She also hoped the declaration would be refined at the special session and would become more political and visionary in nature.

India, on behalf of the G-77/China Nairobi Chapter, said the group was still trying to evaluate the outcome of the PrepCom. He said although the declaration was a valuable basis for future work, the aspirations with which they begun the week had not been entirely fulfilled, as they had hoped for a more significant political declaration. He noted

the present output is four times longer than the Istanbul Declaration, and said that on occasion, the group saw tendencies and mindsets that were not conducive to a constructive outcome.

In his closing remarks, Chair Garcia-Durán recognized the efforts of all who participated, thanked the Chairs of the committees and the Secretariat, and also extended thanks to the representative of the General Assembly for her guidance. He then gaveled PrepCom II to a close at 11:30 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF PREPCOM II

BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION OF HABITAT II

The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly (UNGASS) for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda was, in the words of the Executive Director of UNCHS, a week of highs and lows. Overall, the challenges delegates faced in translating national and regional reports on implementation of the Habitat Agenda into a political declaration in the form of concrete proposals for further action were met with a spirit of cooperation and dedication to the work at hand.

However, many felt that a focus on the issues was often diverted by political maneuvering in the form of attempts to tear down agreed language and to shut out key actors, betraying the spirit in which the Habitat II Conference was negotiated. If partnership is the cornerstone of the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda, some would say that the events of this PrepCom revealed a crack in the base of diplomatic unity forged among member States, local authorities and NGOs five years ago. Yet, as one participant observed, the method of constructing international agreement is rarely straightforward; "tearing down is sometimes part of the process."

In assessing the achievements of the preparatory process, it is necessary to examine what the PrepCom has realized thus far in relation to the goals set for it by the General Assembly, and to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed actions in the post-UNGASS process. In this regard, the issue of partnerships, in particular participation and coordination — as well as the level of satisfaction regarding the outcome document — serve as the yardsticks for measurement.

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION

The main output of Istanbul+5 will be the draft declaration on cities and human settlements; therefore its preparation rightfully drew much attention at PrepCom II. Some registered their dissatisfaction over the draft that had been provided by the Commission, stating that the document did not reflect economic realities. Although developing country participation was relatively high, the African Group felt that their proposals were being marginalized in favor of numerous new paragraphs proposed by the EU. On a more positive note, much of what was tabled met with acceptance, and overall the work of the Drafting Committee was perceived as exceptionally effective, given the time lost to procedural issues. And in the opinion of some, the efforts of the thematic committee to organize an innovative and useful forum for the exchange of success stories and replicable examples of progressive projects proved to be the most concrete addition to General Assembly special sessions. The upholding of the inclusion of Habitat partners in the Plenary of the GA was another positive outcome.

As with other review processes such as Beijing+5 and Copenhagen+5, success at Istanbul+5 will hinge on issues not being subsumed by those seeking to sneak their usual agendas in through the back door. At PrepCom II, the uncertainty of the status of the proposed document on future actions and initiatives offered an opportunity for such tactics, resulting in a bulky declaration that few were satisfied



with. Some speculate that the entire package may have to be renegotiated at the UNGASS. But even if a better document were to emerge from the special session, some still raise the broader question of whether a five-year cycle is sufficient to evaluate progress.

CLOSING THE DOOR ON NGOS

The Habitat II Conference has been referred to as a "Partners' Conference" because of its unprecedented inclusion of many different actors working to improve living conditions in cities around the world. It was thus a surprise to many when one of the first obstacles of the week appeared in the form of a decision to lock NGOs out of the Drafting Committee negotiations. Common practice over the last five years has been to allow greater participation of NGOs as observers, although UN rules of procedure allow for the exclusion of NGOs from closed negotiating sessions. Thus, the strict opposition by a few delegations at this PrepCom, most notably the US, to NGO involvement had the effect of straining the cordial relations that have characterized the Habitat II process. Tensions over wasted time mounted until midweek, when a quietly negotiated resolution to keep all drafting sessions open found relieved delegates eagerly getting down to the business of negotiating a draft declaration in an environment of calm and cooperation.

Yet the same walls were erected during the COW's discussion on arrangements for the participation of speakers other than member States during the special session. The US joined China and Iran in an unlikely alliance opposing a provision allotting eight speaking slots to partners during the UNGASS Plenary. No consensus was reached all week and, as a result, Chair Garcia-Durán put the matter to a vote. When the outcome overwhelmingly favored inclusion of NGOs in the UNGASS Plenary, the mood in the room was, for the most part, one of amusement and triumph. While the near unanimity of the result confirmed for many that the spirit of Istanbul is alive and well, others saw the need for a vote at all as a sign that Habitat can still be, at times, a house divided.

Opinions on the underlying reasons for such attempts to reverse what was once heralded as a breakthrough in the global development agenda were numerous. One observer pointed out that "this is the United Nations, not the United NGOs," revealing concerns that the trend of innovative culture of inclusiveness in the General Assembly special sessions may be in jeopardy, as those perceiving a threat to State sovereignty invoke the supremacy of process and rules-based General Assembly culture in New York. As some delegates observed, the most apparent explanation for the abrupt shift in the US position is the recent change in administration. One delegate acknowledged that loss of institutional memory could be a factor. Another explained that it was too early for new policies to be clearly developed and US positions at present were based on campaign language. Another view is that their positions were derived from the policies of previous Republican administrations. This played out most obviously in the reversal of US policy regarding support for language proposed on the family.

With NGOs no longer feeling at home in the Habitat process, participation may wane. In a time when UNCHS is focused on revitalization this would prove to be unfortunate since Habitat will need partners more than partners need Habitat. Many will be watching closely to see what happens at the special session, and what the impact such a trend may have on other processes, most notably on the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

SUPPORTING PILLARS

Linkages to other bodies, such as UNEP and UNCHR, presented this PrepCom with the tricky task of understanding how to harmonize language in the draft declaration with that of related policies and agree-

ments regarding the right to adequate housing, debt relief, international cooperation, security of tenure, gender and urban-rural links. Crossovers and similarities to issues discussed at Copenhagen+5 and Beijing+5 were apparent at times, as the usual arguments surfaced over good governance, the commitment to 0.7% of GNP set aside for ODA, and the central role of the family. Delegates also grappled with questions of the procedures to follow at UNGASS, with a representative from New York on hand to offer frequently needed legal advice.

A lack of awareness and knowledge of such linkages at times prompted some delegates to comment on the low standard of professionalism at this meeting. Others noted the persistent misconceptions over perceived differences in interests related to environmental and housing issues dear to the North versus those of the South. The Habitat Agenda's broad focus on poverty, environment, society, public administration, governance, gender, finance and cooperation underscored the difficulties inherent in trying to address topics that fall under several UN initiatives.

The issue of a world charter for local self-government was another issue that had haunted the Habitat II process and reappeared at the CHS meeting held the week before PrepCom II. Having been buried then, it was resurrected at the PrepCom within the draft declaration. Some delegates were opposed to giving local authorities the power to legitimize and consolidate as a global governmental network, resisting centralization of what they thought should be decentralized. Resource implications were also reasons for opposition. The heart of the matter is whether central governments can deliver without local authorities. The suggestion to explore an alternative approach to address the issue may provide the way out of a perennial problem of a need for a charter. One delegate said as long as local authorities are not fully recognized, the agenda will remain up in the air. This debate will certainly resurface at the UNGASS, as the issue remains unresolved.

LIVING UNDER ONE ROOF

With so many partners and agendas, the stakes are high and hopes for a successful UNGASS are generating heat. The efforts to revitalize CHS were also perceived by some as adding pressure to succeed. Delegates had to be mindful of the multi-faceted agenda they were evaluating and its wide implication to ensure that the Habitat process left PrepCom II a united house. Following the hard-won inclusion of partners in the UNGASS, delegates left the final Plenary with the knowledge that the spirit of Istanbul would prevail in June. With the goal of providing adequate and sustainable human shelter for all in a world being redefined by globalization and characterized by varying levels of institutional capacity, economic development and environmental management, the need for increasing cooperation and coordination at all levels is proving to be not only the key to the success of the Habitat Agenda but also its primary stumbling block. PrepCom II ultimately reinforced the foundation of the Habitat process, but it is the upcoming UNGASS that will truly demonstrate that Habitat is not a house of cards that will topple over in the winds of change.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE ISTANBUL+5

45TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: This meeting will be held from 5-16 March 2001 at UN headquarters in New York. For more information, contact: Division for the Advancement of Women; fax: +1-212-963-3463; e-mail: erturk@un.org or daw@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/women-watch/daw/csw/>

FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS: This session will meet from 19 March to 27 April 2001, at the United Nations in Geneva. For more information, contact:



Conference Secretariat, tel: +41-22-917-9290; fax: +41-22-917-9022; e-mail: husbands@un.org; Internet: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/2/57chr/57main.htm>

BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR MAINSTREAMING

GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN LDCS: This workshop will be held from 21-23 March 2001, in Cape Town, South Africa. The workshop is being organized by UNCTAD and the Government of South Africa and is aimed toward policymakers from LDCs dealing with development strategies, as part of the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCIII), to be held in Brussels from 14-20 May 2001. The primary objective of the workshop will be to highlight the links between gender, poverty reduction and development and emphasize the necessity to mainstream gender in LDCs' national policies and programmes. For more information, contact: Ms. Massi Sahami-Malmberg, UNCTAD; tel: +41-22-907-5537 or 907-5882; fax: +41-22-907-0050; e-mail: gender@unctad.org; Ms. Mmabatho Matiwane, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa; e-mail: Mmabatho@dti.pwv.gov.za; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/en/subsites/lcds/lcd3preconf/gender.en.htm>

HOUSING FINANCE SEMINAR: This conference, which is jointly organized by UNCHS (Habitat) and the Swedish Ministry of Finance, will be held in Gävle, Sweden, on 28 March 2001. The conference will address lessons learned so far from housing finance operations experiences in both developed and developing countries and what these experiences portend for the realization of the goal of adequate shelter for all. For more information, contact: Ebba Vallgarda, Ministry of Finance, Sweden; e-mail: ebba.vallgarda@finance.ministry.se; and Don Okpala, UNCHS; tel: +254-2-621234; fax +254-2-624266; e-mail: Don.Okpala@unchs.org; Internet: <http://www.unchs.org/seminar.htm>

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: The Commission's 34th Session will take place from 2-6 April 2001, in New York. The theme for the meeting will be "Population, environment and development." For more information, contact: UN Population Division; fax: +1-212-963-2147; Internet: <http://www.undp.org/popin/unpopcom.htm>

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: "BUSINESS & MUNICIPALITY": This conference, which will be held in Bremen, Germany, from 4-7 April 2001, will provide an ambitious round-up of all that is most innovative and exciting in business and municipality partnering. For more information, contact: The Bremen Initiative; tel: +49-0-421 230011-0; fax: +49-0-421 230011-18; e-mail: info@bremen-initiative.de; Internet: <http://www.bremen-initiative.de/conferences/>

CSD-9: The ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development will be held in New York from 16-27 April 2001. This session will focus on: atmosphere; energy/transport; information for decision making and participation; and international cooperation for an enabling environment. The topic of the multi-stakeholder dialogue segment will be energy and transport. Prior to CSD-9, intersessional meetings will be held from 26 February – 2 March (Energy Expert Group), 6-9 March (Working Group on transport and atmosphere) and 12-16 March (Working Group on information for decision-making and participation and on international cooperation for an enabling environment). For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm#. For information for major groups, contact Zehra Aydin-Sipos, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8811; fax: +1-212-963-1267; e-mail: aydin@un.org

CSD-10 (PREPCOM): The tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to convene for a meeting in New York from 30 April - 2 May 2001 to serve as the Preparatory Committee for the ten-year review of UNCED (World Summit for Sustainable Development). For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev or Zehra Aydin-Sipos (see above).

PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL EVENT ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT: The third substantive session of the PrepCom for FFD will meet in New York from 30 April - 11 May 2001, in preparation for the high-level international meeting on Financing for Development to be held in February/March 2002, which will consider national, international and systemic issues relating to financing for development in a holistic manner in the context of globalization and interdependence. The event will address development through the perspective of finance, as well as the mobilization of financial resources for the full implementation of the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s. For more information, contact: Harris Gleckman, Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat, United Nations Headquarters, New York; tel: +1-212-963-4690; e-mail: gleckman@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>

IULA-FMCU UNITY CONGRESS: "THE COMMUNITY AGENDA": This conference will be held from 3-6 May 2001, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is being organized by the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the World Federation of United Cities, the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro and UNCHS (Habitat) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. For more information, contact: Roberto Ottolenghi; e-mail: ro.habitat@rio.rj.gov.br; Internet: <http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/iula-fmcu>

THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (UNLDC III): This conference will be held in Brussels, Belgium, from 14-20 May 2001. An intergovernmental preparatory committee for the LDC Conference will be held from 2-6 April 2001, in New York. For more information, contact: Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries, UNCTAD, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-907-5893; fax: +41-22-907-0046; e-mail: ldc@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/en/subsites/lcds/document.htm> and <http://www.un.org/events/lcd3/conference/>

MEETING OF MAYORS ON CITY-TO-CITY COOPERATION: This event will be held in parallel to the Third UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, 14-20 May 2001, and is being organized by UNCTAD, UNDP, Habitat and United Towns Organization. For more information, contact: Lianne Losier, UNCTAD; tel: +41-22-917-4054; fax: +41-22-917-0056; e-mail: lianne.losier@unctad.org

IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE URBAN CONTEXT: This meeting will be held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 27 May - 2 June 2001. The conference will focus on the many roles of environmental assessment in realizing sustainability in urban, regional and global contexts, and on the family of related techniques, scientific and ethical principles used by impact assessment practitioners, together with the influence of societal, economic and political agendas in the context of sustainable development. For more information, contact: IAIA International Headquarters, Fargo, North Dakota, USA; tel: +1-701-297-7908; fax: +1-701-297-7917; e-mail: info@iaia.org; Internet: <http://www.iaia.org>

THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGASS) FOR AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA: This special session will be held 6-8 June 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. For more information, contact UNCHS; tel: +254-2-621234; fax +254-2-624266; Internet: <http://www.istanbul5.org/>