



SUMMARY OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME: 4-8 APRIL 2005

The 20th session of the Governing Council (GC-20) of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) took place from 4-8 April 2005, at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya. Nearly 1000 participants attended, including delegates from 92 countries, as well as representatives of UN agencies, international organizations; local governments and their organizations, professional associations and the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and youth organizations. Forty-eight of the 58 member States of the UN-HABITAT Governing Council were represented.

During the week, delegates convened in high-level segment sessions, dialogues, a Committee of the Whole (COW), a drafting committee and a contact group to consider draft resolutions. On Monday and Tuesday, the high-level segment sessions considered: the activities of UN-HABITAT; implementing and monitoring the goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers; and the work programme and budget of UN-HABITAT for the biennium 2006-2007. On Wednesday, delegates conducted dialogues with local authorities and other partners, with a focus on recommendations on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities, and financing shelter and urban development.

GC-20 concluded its work by adopting 22 resolutions on issues relating to the budget and work programme; post-conflict, natural and human-made disasters assessment and reconstruction; the World Urban Forum (WUF); strengthening the Slum Upgrading Facility of the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation; decentralization and strengthening of local authorities; enhancing the involvement of civil society in local governance; global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance; gender equality in human settlements development; the thirteenth session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-13); small island developing States; Habitat Programme Managers (HPMs) and regional offices; the provisional agenda for GC-21; organization and themes for future GC sessions; sustainable development of Arctic cities; housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of

living for persons who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; youth and human settlements; establishment of the African Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD); preservation and sustainable development of the oases; least developed countries; access to basic services for all; and special and best practices, good policy and enabling legislation in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A draft resolution on the implementation of MDG Target 11 was not adopted by the closing plenary due to a lack of consensus on a proposal for resetting the target.

When delegates gathered at the closing plenary on Friday evening, they expressed general satisfaction with the outcomes of the session. Despite occasional confusion caused by the GC-20's complex and heavy agenda with several contentious issues dragging delegates into late night sessions, delegates succeeded in adopting a record number of resolutions. They collectively shared the conclusion of Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka that the session proved to be extremely interesting, thought-provoking, and successful.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN-HABITAT

As a result of the First United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which took place in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May - 11 June 1976, the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements officially established the UN Centre for Human Settlements as the major UN agency mandated by the UN

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of UN-HABITAT	1
GC-20 Report	2
High-level Segment	3
Dialogues	3
Committee of the Whole	4
Resolution	5
Closing Plenary	9
A Brief Analysis of GC-20	10
Upcoming Meetings	12



General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities, with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. By General Assembly resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977, the Commission for Human Settlements was also established as the governing body for the UN Centre for Human Settlements.

HABITAT II: The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 June 1996, on the 20th anniversary of the first Habitat Conference. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, adopted by 171 governments during the Conference, outlined over 100 commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements, emphasizing the themes of partnership and local action. Habitat II, as the culmination of a cycle of UN conferences, witnessed the participation of local authorities, the private sector, parliamentarians, NGOs and other partners in the formulation of the Habitat Agenda. When the international community adopted the Habitat Agenda, it set itself the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. After much debate, the Conference also reaffirmed the commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

ISTANBUL+5: The 25th Special Session of the UN General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the outcome of Habitat II took place from 6-8 June 2001, at UN headquarters in New York. At the special session, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, which consists of a political declaration reaffirming the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda; a review and assessment of implementation of the Habitat Agenda; and proposals for further actions for achieving the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable development of human settlements.

56TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: In its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly decided to transform the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements into the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT. The General Assembly also decided, in the same resolution, to transform the Commission on Human Settlements into the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT. The Governing Council, which was also made into a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and provides overall policy guidance, direction and supervision to UN-HABITAT. The resolution stressed a commitment to the implementation of the MDGs, including the need to improve the lives of over 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The resolution also called for the election and enhancement of the status of the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT to the level of Under-Secretary-General. In July 2002, Anna K. Tibaijuka was unanimously elected by the General Assembly as Executive Director of UN-HABITAT for a four-year term.

FIRST SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM: Designated by the UN General Assembly as an advisory body, the World Urban Forum is an open-ended think tank designed to encourage debate and discussion about the challenges of

urbanization in this century. The First Session of the WUF was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 29 April-3 May 2002. The overall theme was sustainable urbanization. Discussions also focused on: the effect of HIV/AIDS on human settlements; violence against women; basic services and infrastructure, including provision of water and sanitation; and the need for secure tenure.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The World Summit on Sustainable Development convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August-4 September 2002. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), calls for achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, as proposed in the Cities without Slums initiative. The JPOI calls for actions at all levels to: improve access to land and property, adequate shelter and basic services for the urban and rural poor; use low-cost and sustainable materials and appropriate technologies for the construction of adequate and secure housing for the poor; increase decent employment, credit and income; remove unnecessary regulation and other obstacles for microenterprises and the informal sector; and support slum upgrading programmes within the framework of urban development plans.

19TH SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING COUNCIL: This session took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5-9 May 2003. The purpose of the session was to discuss follow-up to the special session of the UN General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The special themes of the session were urban development and sheltering strategies favoring the poor, and the rural dimension of sustainable urban development. The session reviewed activities of UN-HABITAT, adopted its work programme and budget for the biennium 2004-2005 and its medium-medium plan for 2006-2009. The session also adopted 18 resolutions covering topics ranging from women's role and rights in human settlements development and slum upgrading, to water and sanitation, and decentralization and strengthening of local authorities.

GC-20 REPORT

Bo Göransson (Sweden), President of GC-19, opened the 20th session of the Governing Council on Monday, 4 April 2005, and welcomed delegates, noting that the world finds itself in mourning over the recent demise of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. After a tribute to the Pope read by UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka, delegates observed a minute of silence.

Tibaijuka then delivered a message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He underscored the importance of keeping the promise of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, and acknowledged the leading role of UN-HABITAT in tackling this challenge. He also encouraged GC-20 delegates to strengthen the capacity of local authorities and the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation when considering the UN-HABITAT budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate and Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya, highlighted UN-HABITAT's endeavors to confront challenges of environmental degradation in human settlements. Emphasizing the growing problem of "environmental refugees," she called



for protection of both built-up and natural environments through promoting individual and collective responsibility, and for UN-HABITAT to catalyze efforts by governments, local authorities, and civil society in order to provide adequate shelter for all.

Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), reported on cooperation between UNEP and UN-HABITAT on the urban environment, as a central issue for implementation of the MDGs. He highlighted the link between sustainable cities and climate change, the importance of a gender-based approach, and the theme of this year's World Environment Day, "Green Cities."

Tibaijuka, in her opening statement, stressed that poverty and slums are central to the Millennium Declaration. She criticized the current MDG Target 11 on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 as modest in absolute numbers, and lacking country benchmarks, and urged, as the key outcome of the GC meeting, to reset it as "halve, between 1990 and 2020, the proportion of slum dwellers in the urban population." Reporting on the integration of the MDGs into UN-HABITAT's work on slums, water and sanitation, she called for UN-HABITAT to closely follow-up on the policy recommendations of CSD-13.

Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, addressed the meeting, recalling his recent participation in UNEP's Governing Council, and noting that Kenya is privileged to host both UNEP and UN-HABITAT. He described how calamities such as the Indian Ocean tsunami have caused immense suffering and have had an impact on the sustainable development of human settlements. He noted that disaster preparedness at the community level is a theme of GC-20. He described Kenya's cooperation with UN-HABITAT through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2003, with a programme for upgrading slums in Nairobi. He also commended UN-HABITAT for strengthening the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation by establishing a special fund called the Slum Upgrading Facility.

Delegates then elected Amb. Petr Kopriva (Czech Republic) as GC President by acclamation. They also elected Rosalinda Valenton Tirona (the Philippines), José Luis Casal (Argentina) and Bernd Braun (Germany) as Vice-Presidents, and Edna Tobi (Nigeria) as Rapporteur. Delegates adopted the provisional agenda and the organization of work (HSP/GC/20/1 and Add.1). President Kopriva said that a drafting committee was established to consider draft resolutions. The credentials of delegates were examined by the GC Bureau, and presented to and approved by the closing plenary on Friday, 8 April.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

The high-level segment, chaired by GC President Kopriva, was held on Monday and Tuesday, 4-5 April, addressing: activities of UN-HABITAT; implementing and monitoring the goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers; the work programme and budget for the biennium 2006-2007; coordination matters; and issues of consideration by CSD-13.

On activities of UN-HABITAT (HSP/GC/20/2), many countries stressed: the beneficial effects of the UN-HABITAT global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance; the need for better coordination with other UN bodies, international

and national partners; and the importance of long-term strategic planning reinforced by monitoring and evaluation. The G-77/China supported the proposed global campaign on natural and human-made disasters assessment and reconstruction. The African Group highlighted the first AMCHUD, and stressed that UN-HABITAT should develop operational capacity in order to provide practical assistance to developing countries. Delegates, however, disagreed on the future directions of UN-HABITAT, in particular with regard to operationalization of its activities and the role of Habitat Programme Managers (HPMs).

On implementing and monitoring the goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers, although many countries expressed their support for the realization of the MDGs, the proposed reformulation of Target 11 as "halve, between 1990 and 2020, the proportion of slum dwellers in the urban population," generated much controversy. Several countries emphasized that natural and human-made disasters and the HIV/AIDS pandemic jeopardize the achievement of the MDGs.

John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Chair of CSD-13, opened the debate on achieving adequate water, sanitation and housing, with a view to providing GC-20 input to CSD-13. Delegates highlighted: poverty eradication and better access to basic services as a prerequisite for improving living conditions; the role of local authorities as key actors in implementation of MDG targets; the need for an integrated approach; and political will as the key for attaining the MDGs.

On the budget and work programme, the Executive Director encouraged donors to provide soft-earmarked funding through multi-year funding arrangements in order to allow UN-HABITAT more flexibility in prioritizing activities to be funded. Stressing that UN-HABITAT's financial base is among the thinnest in the UN system, the G-77/China expressed concern about the precarious financial situation in UN-HABITAT's regional offices and called for additional flexible funding in the form of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

Summaries of these discussions are available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1150e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1151e.html>

DIALOGUES

Two dialogues were held on Wednesday, 6 April, under the chairmanship of GC President Kopriva. In the morning, delegates conducted a dialogue on effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, including the draft guidelines on decentralization, prepared by the members of the Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization (AGRED), with participation of several panelists. They shared experiences in decentralization, with particular focus on the mandate and activities of the local authorities, and stressed that recognition, at Habitat II, of the need for effective governance at all levels is a major achievement in the process of strengthening local authorities. Several panelists stated their support for, and reported on their ongoing activities on, decentralization and strengthening of the role of local authorities. They also stressed: the strong link between democracy, decentralization and development; the need for flexibility, diversity, and adaptability of the guidelines; and the importance of adequate legislative frameworks and financing.



In the afternoon, delegates conducted a dialogue on financing shelter and urban development with the participation of several panelists. They elaborated on the housing policies in their countries, and presented the context of financing shelter and urban development in Africa. They also outlined their countries' efforts to provide adequate housing to their populations through innovative financial mechanisms. After the discussion, the following key points emerged: the assumption that poor people are high-risk borrowers has been proven wrong by microfinance initiatives; slum upgrading projects need to be turned into holistic programmes, including water, sanitation, education, and job creation components; and elevating housing on both national and international agendas is essential.

Summaries of these discussions are available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1152e.html>

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW, chaired by Bernd Braun (Germany), met all week to consider the following agenda items: special theme on involvement of civil society in improving local governance; special theme on post conflict, natural and human-made disasters; implementing and monitoring the goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on slums; the work programme and budget; cooperation matters including CSD-13; and themes for GC-21 and future GC sessions.

INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN IMPROVING

LOCAL GOVERNANCE: On Monday, 4 April, the COW considered the special theme on involvement of civil society in improving local governance (HSP/GC/20/4) in the form of a dialogue. Participants stressed the importance of involving civil society, identified obstacles such as limited participation and access to information, and ways to address these obstacles: capacity building; transparency of local governments and civil society organizations; building on the current momentum and ongoing partnerships; mobilizing resources to scale up community initiatives; strengthening local democracy and decentralization; promoting a common set of values for governments and civil society; and balancing the powers of civil society, the private sector and governments. A summary of this discussion is available online at:

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1150e.html>

POST-CONFLICT, NATURAL AND HUMAN-MADE DISASTER ASSESSMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION:

On Tuesday afternoon, 5 April, the COW considered the special theme on post-conflict, natural and human-made disaster assessment and reconstruction (HSP/GC/20/5). Participants highlighted the importance of: involvement of local communities and the private sector; disaster preparedness; donors' coordination; and the link between emergency relief and development. A summary of this discussion is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1151e.html>

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE GOAL OF THE UN MILLENNIUM DECLARATION ON

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF SLUM DWELLERS: The COW considered implementing and monitoring the goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers (HSP/GC/20/6 and Add.1) on Tuesday afternoon, and Wednesday morning. Discussions started with an exchange of national experiences, particularly among developing countries on

the improvement of the lives of slum dwellers, and then focused on the proposal by UN-HABITAT to reset Target 11, with some developing countries expressing their support. Summaries of these discussions are available online at:

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1151e.html> and

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1152e.html>

WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: On Wednesday, 6 April, the COW discussed the work programme and budget (HSP/GC/20/6 and Add.1; HSP/GC/20/9 and Add.1, Add.2; HSP/GC/20/BD/1 and BD/2; HSP/GC/20/INF/5), focusing on the proposed: additional staffing, particularly HPMs; introduction of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions; and greater flexibility in reallocation of funds. Algeria announced its voluntary contribution to slum upgrading activities in Africa, and Norway proposed including work on youth and children in the work programme. Summaries of these discussions are available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1152e.html>

COORDINATION MATTERS: The COW discussed coordination matters on Thursday, 7 April, covering: cooperation between UN-HABITAT and UNEP (HSP/GC/20/10); cooperation with agencies and organizations within the UN system, international organizations outside the UN system and NGOs (HSP/GC/20/12); matters arising out of the resolutions of major legislative organs of the UN and other intergovernmental bodies brought to the attention of the GC (HSP/GC/20/BD/3); and CSD-13 (HSP/GC/20/1/Add.1). Discussions focused on the CSD, with the EU calling for mainstreaming the Habitat Agenda into all the MDGs, and cautioning against the proposed reformulation of Target 11. Nigeria welcomed the recent General Assembly resolution that enabled UN-HABITAT GC sessions to be held prior to the CSD. Summaries of these discussions are available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol11/enb1153e.html>

Chair's Summary of GC-20 Discussion for CSD-13: On Thursday, 7 April, COW Chair Braun formed a Friends of the Chair group to draft a Chair's Summary of GC-20 discussions for CSD-13, and to be subsequently dispatched by GC President Kopriva to CSD-13 Chair Ashe. The draft summary was approved by the COW and presented for information to the closing plenary on Friday, 8 April, and then submitted to the CSD-13 Chair. The Chair's Summary highlights policies and action areas for consideration at CSD-13, including general principles, among which are:

- an integrated approach to planning;
- inclusion of all cross-cutting issues and pro-poor approach;
- the importance of sustainable urbanization;
- recognizing the urban context, i.e. the need to address urban poverty reduction in the context of slums upgrading in national policies;
- integration of CSD-13 themes at the human settlements level;
- secure tenure;
- reconstruction in post conflict and natural disasters;
- decentralization and strengthening of local authorities;
- enhancing participation of civil society in local governance;
- gender and youth in sustainable human settlements;
- financing human settlements development, slum upgrading, water and sanitation; and
- UNEP and UN-HABITAT cooperation.



The Chair's Summary also indicates that CSD-13 needs to recognize the role of UN-HABITAT as the designated focal point in the UN System for the follow-up and further contributions to the access to basic services, and that the urban dimension will continue to play a key role in future CSD implementation cycles.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT: The COW's draft report (HSP/GC/20/CW/L.1, Add.1, Add. 2, Add.2/Corr. 1, Add. 3 and Add. 4) was adopted in two sessions on Thursday afternoon, 7 April, and on Friday morning, 8 April.

RESOLUTIONS

Sixteen draft resolutions were prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) (HSP/GC/20/3/Add.1) and presented to GC-20 for consideration by the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, 5 April. An additional six draft resolutions were introduced to the Drafting Committee on Wednesday, 6 April. These draft resolutions were considered in: the high-level segment, the COW, the Drafting Committee, and the contact group. The draft resolution on a special human settlements programme for the Palestinian people was only discussed by directly involved parties during GC-20 and presented to the closing plenary for adoption on Friday, 8 April. Unless otherwise mentioned, all draft resolutions were adopted by the closing plenary, on Friday, 8 April.

Youth and Human Settlements: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.1) was introduced and adopted on Thursday, with minor changes. There was some discussion of the relevance of the Millennium Declaration and of the term "democratic" with reference to youth organizations, but no amendments were proposed or adopted.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.1/Rev.1), the GC invites governments to assist in capacity building, implement enabling strategies for youth organizations, support cultural expressions of youth, establish youth information and resource centers, create partnerships with other youth organizations, and requests the Executive Director to finalize a Youth Strategy for Enhanced Engagement.

Establishment of the African Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development: The draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.2) was introduced by the African Group in the Drafting Committee on Monday. On Thursday, the Drafting Committee considered the draft resolution, which was approved with one amendment recognizing the work of other conferences of ministers in the area of human settlements, such as the Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.2/Rev.1), the GC welcomes the establishment of the African Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), which is to serve as a consultative mechanism on the promotion of the sustainable development of human settlements in Africa under the auspices of the African Union. It requests the Executive Director to: work closely with AMCHUD in achieving the aims of the Habitat Agenda and in advancing the MDGs; continue to provide support to the implementation of the Cities Programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; and inform GC-21 on the progress of AMCHUD and its implications for the programme of work and the budget.

It further invites governments in other regions to strengthen or establish similar consultative structures in order to raise the profile of issues addressed by UN-HABITAT; and, those in a position to do so, to contribute to funding of these activities.

Preservation and Sustainable Development of the Oases: The draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.3) was introduced to the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, and approved with minor editorial amendments.

Final Decision: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.3/Rev.1), the GC requests the Executive Director to take into account the specific needs of the oases in the global programmes of UN-HABITAT, particularly in the Sustainable Cities and Localizing Agenda 21 programmes; and to strengthen mechanisms for consultation and partnership between interested parties in order to address human settlements issues affecting oases. It invites all Habitat Agenda partners to support concerted efforts towards the sustainable management of oases. It furthermore urges concerned governments to create an enabling legal, institutional, administrative and financial environment to combat social, economic and environmental degradation of oases in an integrated manner, giving a central role to local communities.

Least Developed Countries: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.4) was introduced to the Drafting Committee on Wednesday. One developed country proposed changing the text from "Millennium Development Goals" to "internationally agreed development goals" in an operative paragraph, noting that not all of the MDGs and targets are internationally agreed. The draft resolution was approved as amended.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.4/Rev.1), the GC invites: governments of least developed countries to implement national development strategies; governments of developed countries to increase development assistance; and the Executive Director to mainstream the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

Access to Basic Services for All within the Context of Sustainable Human Settlements: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.5) was introduced to and approved by the Drafting Committee on Thursday, after addition of an operative paragraph requesting the Executive Director to compile best practices on the delivery of basic services.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.5/Rev.1), the GC invites governments to establish partnerships for sustainable access to basic services, and requests the Executive Director to compile best practices on delivery of basic services.

Best Practices, Good Policies and Enabling Legislation in Support of Sustainable Urbanization and the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.6) was introduced to and adopted by the Drafting Committee on Thursday, with editorial changes.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.6/Rev.1), the GC commends the Executive Director on the progress of the UN-HABITAT Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme, and invites Habitat Agenda Partners to participate in the Dubai International Conference for Transfer of Best Practices.

Gender Equality in Human Settlements Development: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.9/Rev.2) was first debated in the Drafting Committee on Tuesday. Some delegations argued that it



duplicated other UN-HABITAT resolutions such as those adopted at GC-19; others argued that it should be repeated because of the persistence of inequality. This was resolved with new preambular paragraphs cross-referencing earlier resolutions as well as Habitat II and the Beijing Platform of Action. Additional new preambular paragraphs were proposed and adopted with little or no debate.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.7 Rev.1), the GC requests governments and local authorities to involve women in decision making, address violence against women, recognize the special needs and vulnerabilities of women in post-conflict and disaster situations, and calls on the Executive Director to implement normative and operational activities in UN-HABITAT to address gender equality and women's empowerment. The GC also urges governments to: address the special vulnerabilities of women in post-conflict and disaster situations, and to review policies that are discriminatory against women.

Sustainable Development of Arctic Cities: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.15/Rev.1) was discussed and approved in the Drafting Committee on Wednesday, with a minor amendment to add a reference to the North-North network.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.8), the GC requests the Executive Director to raise awareness of Arctic regional issues, and to consult with the Arctic Council, World Bank and the North-North network on sustainable development of Arctic cities. The GC also recognizes a "North-North" network of cities for sharing information and best practices; and requested the Executive Director to compile information on the area.

Organization and Themes for Future Sessions of the Governing Council: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.14/Rev.1) was introduced to and approved by the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, with no discussion.

Final Resolution: The resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.9) decides that special themes for future GC sessions should not be chosen two years in advance, but shall be selected by the GC Bureau at least six months before the session. It requests that the high-level segment and dialogues shall focus on the themes chosen by the Bureau, and that the CPR should recommend to GC-21 further proposals for improving the structure and organizational arrangements of GC-21 and future GC sessions.

Small Island Developing States: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.11/Rev.1) was introduced to and adopted by the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, with no amendment.

Final Resolution: The resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.10) encourages governments to support the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and requests the Executive Director to raise awareness and assist small island developing States in implementing human settlements programmes.

World Urban Forum: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.3/Rev.3) was introduced to and approved by the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, with minor changes.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.11), the GC welcomes the invitation of Canada to host the WUF in 2006 and calls upon the Executive Director to provide organizational support.

Slum Upgrading Facility of the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.4/Rev.3) was introduced to the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, and approved on Thursday, with minor amendments, concerning the role of the UN Habitat Human Settlements Foundation in achieving its primary objectives.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.12), the GC invites governments and others to contribute to the Slum Upgrading Facility and requests the Executive Director to accelerate cooperation with the World Bank.

Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities: The draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.5/Rev.3) was considered in the Drafting Committee on Tuesday and Thursday. The issue was also discussed during the high-level segment on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the draft resolution was introduced in the Drafting Committee, where delegates could not reach an agreement on the text requesting the Executive Director to assist governments in promoting local democracy. On Wednesday, the draft resolution was discussed at the high-level segment, where both the concept of decentralization and strengthening of local authorities received broad support. On Thursday, the draft resolution was approved in the Drafting Committee, after discussion on, *inter alia*, the need for consultation between the Executive Director, the AGRED and the CPR.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.13), the GC recognizes the importance of decentralization policies in achieving sustainable human settlements development in line with the Habitat Agenda and the internationally agreed development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. It also welcomes the positive trends towards enabling local authorities to contribute to relevant international dialogues. It requests the Executive Director to:

- finalize the guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities with support of the AGRED and in consultation with the CPR, and to submit the guidelines to GC-21 for consideration;
- continue supporting the programme of work of the AGRED and the strengthening of local authorities; and
- assist in the development of the concept of a global observatory, which shall assess, monitor and evaluate the state of decentralization, accountability and local governance in the world.

It furthermore invites governments to provide their comments on the draft guidelines and, when possible, provide UN-HABITAT with the necessary financial contributions to ensure a successful dialogue on decentralization.

Enhancing the Role of Civil Society in Local Governance: The special theme on enhancing the role of civil society in local governance was discussed in the form of a dialogue on Monday in the COW. The corresponding draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.6/Rev.4) was discussed in the Drafting Committee on Tuesday, and was agreed upon in the Drafting Committee on Wednesday, taking into account the inputs from the COW, including: development of toolkits for local authorities and civil societies



for access to information about local governance, and a reference to civic values for a well-functioning society.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.14), the GC calls upon governments to create appropriate institutional and legislative conditions for: enhancing the involvement of civil society in local governance; strengthening processes in the local government reforms; and building the capacities of women, young people, the urban poor and local authorities.

The GC requests the Executive Director: to continue compiling lessons learned and best practices; to develop toolkits and recommendations for local authorities and civil society, in cooperation with governments and Habitat Agenda partners; and to include reference to the implementation of the resolution in her overall report at GC-21. The GC further: recommends that promotion of civil society involvement in local decision-making and implementation of programmes be given due consideration in UN-HABITAT monitoring activities; calls upon the Executive Director to promote civil society involvement in UN-HABITAT programmes and projects; and requests UN-HABITAT and other development partners to assist in building the capacity of civil society.

Global Campaigns on Secure Tenure and Urban

Governance: The draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.7) was considered and agreed upon with little discussion in the Drafting Committee on Wednesday.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.15), the GC endorses the centrality of the global campaigns as strategic points of entry for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and the need to reflect that centrality in the organizational structure, budget and programme of work of UN-HABITAT.

It requests the Executive Director to:

- ensure a higher global visibility of these campaigns;
- mainstream the principles of the campaigns through the activities and programmes of UN-HABITAT;
- support capacity building of local governments; and
- ensure the continued support to countries in their efforts to combat poverty and achieve the MDG on improving the lives of slum dwellers through improved urban governance and enhanced security of tenure.

It also invites governments, in a position to do so, to support the campaigns with financial resources.

Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living for Persons who are Vulnerable and

Disadvantaged: This draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.16/Rev.4) was discussed in and approved by the Drafting Committee on Thursday. Delegates agreed on a revised operative paragraph on protecting access of vulnerable and disadvantaged people to adequate housing.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.16/Rev.1), the GC urges governments to create mechanisms to tackle social problems, support laws for access to housing, strengthen gender mainstreaming in municipal planning, and requests the Executive to integrate protection of persons in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups into UN-HABITAT activities and programmes.

Post-Conflict, Natural and Human-Made Disaster

Assessment and Reconstruction: This agenda item (HSP/GC/20/5) was discussed in the form of a dialogue on Tuesday in the COW. The corresponding resolution (HSP/GC/20/L.2/Rev.4) was discussed in the Drafting Committee on Tuesday and in informal consultations focusing on the proposed guiding principles contained in HSP/GC/20/5. The resolution was agreed upon in the Drafting Committee on Thursday.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.17), the GC takes note of the guiding principles discussed at WUF II and contained in HSP/GC/20/5, and requests the Executive Director to elaborate the guiding principles to develop a strategic policy for the role of UN-HABITAT, for review by the CPR before the end of 2005. The GC further requests the Executive Director to mainstream prospects for risk reduction and limiting the after-effects of disasters, and to mobilize the necessary financial resources to implement the strategic policy. The GC also encourages governments to disseminate and share experiences and expertise on natural disaster mitigation, and invites them to support UN-HABITAT activities promoting sustainable human settlements development in emergencies and post-disaster situations.

CSD-13: The role of UN-HABITAT at CSD-13 was first addressed in the opening plenary by the Executive Director and many delegates on Monday, and then by CSD-13 Chair Ashe and other delegations in the high-level segment on Tuesday. The draft resolution on CSD-13 (HSP/GC/20/L.10/Rev.3) was discussed in the Drafting Committee on Wednesday, and then taken up in informal consultations. Discussions focused on the appropriate role for UN-HABITAT at CSD-13 and in the future implementation cycles. The draft resolution was approved by the Drafting Committee on Thursday.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.18), the GC encourages governments to actively pursue the integration of the three themes at CSD-13, and to prioritize urban water, sanitation and human settlements in national policies; and UN-HABITAT to contribute with case studies and registration of partnerships relevant to human settlements. The GC also recommends that UN-HABITAT should be the focal point for following up and monitoring the outcomes of CSD-13 pertaining to human settlements and providing policy options. The GC further invites the Executive Director to consider including the topic of interrelations between human settlements, energy and sustainable development in the agenda of WUF III, and requested her, if the topic is addressed at WUF III, to prepare a report on energy consumption in human settlements to be presented to GC-21 and CSD-15.

Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian

People: This draft resolution was introduced to and adopted by the closing plenary on Friday, without discussion.

Final Resolution: The resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.19) invites international donor community and all financial institutions to support UN-HABITAT in mobilizing funding for the Programme and to assist the Palestinian National Authority in its housing construction efforts.

Provisional Agenda for the Twenty-first Session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements

Programme: On Monday, the draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/



L.13) was considered by COW, which deferred it to the GC Bureau. The draft resolution presented by the Bureau was adopted by the closing plenary without amendment on Friday.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.20), the GC adopts the provisional agenda for GC-21, including, *inter alia*:

- election of officers;
- credentials;
- progress report of the Executive Director on the activities of UN-HABITAT;
- consideration of a medium-term strategic and institutional plan for UN-HABITAT;
- cooperation with agencies and organizations within the UN system, intergovernmental organizations outside the UN system and non-governmental organizations; and
- matters arising out of the resolutions of major legislative organs of the UN and other intergovernmental bodies which are brought to the attention of the GC.

The special themes for GC-21 are to be determined in accordance with the procedure set forth in the resolution on the organization and themes for GC-21 and other future sessions (HSP/GC/20/CRP.9), which provides for the special themes to be chosen six months before the start of the next GC session by the GC Bureau upon advice from the Executive Director, in consultation with the CPR.

Work Programme and Budget of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the 2006-2007 Biennium:

This agenda item (HSP/GC/20/6 and Add.1; HSP/GC/20/9 and Add.1, Add.2; HSP/GC/20/BD/1 and BD/2; HSP/GC/20/INF/5) was first introduced to the high-level segment session on Monday. Delegates discussed the long-term sustainability of UN-HABITAT's financial base, with some supporting the proposed work programme and budget and others opposing the proposed voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

The contact group on budget and work programme, established by the COW and chaired by Rosalinda Valenton Tirona (the Philippines), met on Tuesday afternoon to conduct deliberations on this matter, on the basis of a draft resolution presented by the Secretariat (HSP/GC/20/L.1/Rev.6). A group of developed countries urged UN-HABITAT to develop a six-year medium-term plan in order to provide strategic direction for its future work programme and budget.

On the budget for the 2006-2007 biennium, some delegates suggested that it should remain at the same level as the revised budget for the 2004-2005 biennium. Many developed countries stressed that the Executive Director needs explicit authority to reallocate general purpose resources, while developing countries disagreed.

On the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, a group of developing countries proposed that such mechanism be discussed at GC-21. Many developed countries opposed it, with some indicating their willingness and readiness to consider innovative ways of resources mobilization instead.

On Wednesday morning, the COW was addressed by the Executive Director on this matter, who highlighted the focus of the budget and work programme and proposed: six new staff positions under the UN regular budget; the voluntary indicative scale of contributions; and the deployment of 45 HPMS.

Many developing countries supported, while Japan and the US opposed, introduction at GC-21 of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. Developing countries also favored the development of 45 HPMS, whereas the EU proposed to defer consideration of the proposal to GC-21.

On Wednesday afternoon, the contact group debated a revised text. Delegates agreed to add a new paragraph authorizing the Executive Director, in the event of shortfall or surplus in income, to adjust, in consultation with the CPR, the level of allocation for programme activities. With this agreement, delegates approved the proposed budget, which is US\$27,601,000 for the general purpose budget and US\$55,148,000 for the special purpose budget.

On a paragraph regarding the Executive Director's authority to reallocate general purpose resources, a group of developing countries proposed a maximum of 30% for such reallocations; others opposed it.

On the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, a group of countries proposed a new text requesting UN-HABITAT to look into the feasibility of introducing innovative financing mechanisms, *inter alia*, the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, for consideration at GC-21. Discussions on Wednesday continued late into the night.

On Thursday morning, Chair Tirona presented a revised text. Delegates agreed on an amended proposal requesting the Executive Director to develop a six-year medium-term strategic and institutional plan. The group also reached a compromise on the reallocation of funds, agreeing to limit such reallocations to a maximum of 25%.

The group also agreed to wording requesting the Executive Director to: report all reallocations and adjustments to the CPR in the Executive Director's quarterly financial reports, and develop an overarching resource mobilization strategy. With this, the reference to the voluntary indicative scale of contributions was deleted. Delegates also agreed on a paragraph calling for allocation of an appropriate share of the UN regular budget to UN-HABITAT.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.21) confirms the work programme and budget for the 2006-2007 biennium as set forth in the document "Work programme and budget of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the 2006-2007 biennium" (HSP/GC/20/9), with a total general purpose budget of US\$27,601,000 and a special purpose budget of US\$55,148,000. It authorizes the Executive Director, in the event of shortfall or surplus in income, to adjust, in consultation with CPR, the level of allocation for programme activities. It also authorizes the Executive Director to reallocate the general purpose budget to a maximum of 25%. The resolution requests the Executive Director to:

- report all reallocations and adjustments to the CPR in her quarterly financial reports, and to develop an overarching resource mobilization strategy and present it to GC-21, including options adopted by other UN bodies for broadening the donor base and encouraging non-earmarked contributions;
- report periodically to governments on progress made on the implementation of the work programme and budget;
- develop a six-year medium-term strategic and institutional plan; and



• invite the Office of Internal Oversight Services to undertake a review of the current administrative arrangements at UN-HABITAT to enable it to function more effectively.

The resolution finally calls for the allocation of an appropriate share of the UN regular budget to UN-HABITAT.

Habitat Programme Managers: This agenda item was first addressed during the high-level segment on Monday, when the EU requested an evaluation of their performance by the next GC. The issue was also debated in the COW on Wednesday during the discussion on the work programme and budget, when developing countries expressed their support to the Secretariat, who proposed 45 HPMS. The EU proposed deferring deployment of new HPMS until the proposed evaluation. The draft resolution on HPMS (HSP/GC/20/L.12/Rev.2) was then discussed in the Drafting Committee on Wednesday, when delegates debated on: aligning HPMS' work with the priorities of the UN system and national governments; reporting requirements; funding and evaluation; and the deployment of additional HPMS in the upcoming biennium. It was then deferred to informal consultations until Friday morning, when a compromise was reached in the Drafting Committee on the evaluation of the effectiveness of HPMS and the implications on budgetary allocations.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (HSP/GC/20/CRP.22), the GC stresses that HPMS' activities must be aligned with host country national development plans, and that normative and operational activities should be mutually supported within the framework of the UN Development Assistance Framework. The GC agreed that HPMS' activities, in consultation with national governments, shall mainly focus on: promoting integration of sustainable urbanization; promoting UN-HABITAT global and normative mandate; and supporting UN-HABITAT's operational activities at the national and local levels. The GC also acknowledged that HPMS report both to regional offices and the resident coordinators, and keep governments duly informed. In addition, the GC affirmed that HPMS should be sustainably funded from a combination of host country, general purpose, special purpose and earmarked contributions. The GC further requested the Executive Director to: undertake an independent strategic evaluation of HPMS' performance and impact by the end of 2006 and to report to GC-21; comply with the budgetary allocation from the general purpose contributions in the deployment of HPMS, and continue such deployment as other sources of financing are secured; and include the issue of HPMS' future deployment as part of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan, taking into account the evaluation.

The GC finally invites governments to support the financial viability of HPMS and to support UN-HABITAT regional offices financially or through in-kind contributions.

Implementing and Monitoring the Goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on Improving the Lives of Slum-dwellers: During the opening plenary on Monday the Executive Director highlighted the inadequacy of MDG Target 11 on slums and proposed resetting the target as "halve between 1990 and 2020, the proportion of slum dwellers in the urban population," as a priority for GC-21. This agenda item was then discussed in the COW on Tuesday and Wednesday, with several developing countries supporting the proposal to reset Target 11, and some

developed countries opposing the reopening of negotiations on the MDGs. A draft resolution on the MDGs (L.8/Rev.3) was discussed in the Drafting Committee on Tuesday and Thursday, and then taken up in informal consultations until Friday afternoon.

Points of contention were whether the Executive Director or national governments in consultation with UN-HABITAT should take the lead and whether to: present the proposal to UN General Assembly at the Millennium Review Meeting or to GC-21; reset global or rather national targets; and reset targets or propose dynamic interpretations of Target 11. In the absence of a compromise, a draft resolution (HSP/GC/20/CPR.23) was presented to the plenary on Friday afternoon, in which the GC: calls on member States to give due attention to the needs of their urban population in the implementation of the MDGs, with a view to achieving sustainable human settlements; and requests the Executive Director to report to GC-21 on progress made in the implementation of the resolution, and bring it to the attention of the General Assembly.

President Kopriva noted that the draft resolution, as it stands, does not fully reflect the complexity of the problem and suggested it be reconsidered and brought to the attention of GC-21. With this remark, the resolution was not adopted.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday morning, 8 April, President Kopriva invited delegates to consider draft reports of the COW and the GC-20. COW Chair Braun introduced the draft report of the COW (HSP/GC/CW/L.1; L.1/Add.1; L.1/Add.2; L.1/Add.2/Corr.1; L.1/Add.3; and L.1/Add.4), which was adopted with one minor amendment.

Rapporteur Edna Tobi (Nigeria) introduced the report of GC-20 (HSP/GC/20/L.1; L.1/Add.1; Add.2; Add.3), which was adopted with amendments from: the US on the reference to the voluntary indicative scale of contributions; Canada on the reference to the host country of the World Urban Forum III; a youth representative on the reference to youth's involvement in the GC-20; and Senegal on recognition of human settlements as a priority sector in achieving sustainable development.

In the afternoon, the plenary reconvened to adopt draft resolutions, address other matters, and hear closing remarks. The Chair of the Drafting Committee, José Luis Casal, reported on the work of the committee, which had concluded its work by approving all draft resolutions entrusted to it. He also noted that: the draft resolution on the UN-HABITAT work programme and budget was referred to the contact group; and the draft resolution on the provisional agenda for GC-21 was referred to the Bureau, and will be presented by GC President.

President Kopriva then invited delegates to adopt these draft resolutions as a package. On a draft resolution on access to basic services for all within the context of sustainable human settlements, the G-77/China asked to be included as co-sponsor of the resolution. On housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living for persons who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, the Netherlands requested a reference to equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, as contained in the UN General Assembly resolution 46/96. On the draft resolution on the provisional agenda of GC-21, President Kopriva noted that the GC Bureau recommended that this matter



be referred to CPR for further consultation. The Bureau further recommended that the CPR, in deciding on the date of GC-21, should take into consideration several factors, particularly the dates of CSD-15, and consult with the Executive Director and the CSD Chair. With these amendments and remarks, 22 out of 23 draft resolutions were adopted.

With regard to the resolution on implementing and monitoring the goal of the UN Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers, President Kopriva noted that the draft resolution as it stands does not fully reflect the complexity of the problem, and suggested it be reconsidered and brought to the attention of GC-21. Following the President's suggestion, the plenary did not adopt the resolution.

In her closing remarks, Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka said GC-20 was extremely interesting, thought-provoking, and successful. She said the adopted resolutions reaffirmed the vision of UN-HABITAT and its role in meeting the MDGs and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and she called for joint efforts in meeting the challenge of rapid urbanization, the growing urbanization of poverty and building a better world. She thanked all those who had contributed to the meeting's success, including the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*.

Wojciech Jasiński (Poland), Chair of the CPR, urged all to play their role in stepping up efforts towards sustainable human settlements.

Algeria, on behalf of African Group, expressed overall satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting, and said that the Group will work closely with UN-HABITAT to advance implementation of resolutions adopted at this meeting. The Philippines, on behalf of the Asian Group, called for implementation of resolutions by all member States.

The Russian Federation, on behalf of Central and Eastern Europe, stated that governments should work closely with UN-HABITAT to achieve the MDGs. Mexico, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, said the decisions taken at GC-20 are strengthening UN-HABITAT. Germany, on behalf of the Western Europe and Others Group, stressed the need to improve the work of UN-HABITAT in order to improve the lives of millions of people.

Cuba, on behalf of the G-77/China, said GC-20's outcome is useful for the future work of UN-HABITAT. The Netherlands, on behalf of the EU, welcomed the resolution on the medium-term strategic and institutional plan and stressed the need to shift from delivery of activities to results. The US said there is a need to give more focus to the direction of UN-HABITAT.

Amos Kimunya, Minister of Lands and Housing, Kenya, stressed the close link of GC-20 to CSD-13, in particular in the areas of water and sanitation.

President Kopriva thanked everyone for their support that led to the meeting's success. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 7:00 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GC-20

Although almost 30 years have passed since the UN Centre for Human Settlements was established following the first UN Conference on Human Settlements, UN-HABITAT is still one of the "youngest" UN bodies, only upgraded to a full UN programme in 2001. The twentieth session of the Governing Council (GC-20) was thus an opportunity for UN-HABITAT to cement its mandate, and increase its visibility and role within the UN system, thereby broadening its donor base and partners, and even setting more ambitious targets for itself. Indeed, it was an opportunity for completing the transformation of UN-HABITAT into a "fully-fledged" UN programme, with a leading role on urban development, human shelter and slum upgrading. This brief analysis will focus on the organization and timing of the GC, the controversial MDG Target 11, the discussions aimed at further revitalizing UN-HABITAT, and the possible impacts of this week's deliberations on the future work of its programme and on other international processes.

THE RIGHT TIME TO BUILD

The timing of the GC-20 was the key both in terms of how the organization of work at GC-20 influenced the negotiations, and of the placement of the meeting in the UN calendar. From the perspective of the internal organization of work, the meeting started with some confusion, perhaps even dissatisfaction, among delegates. Negotiations in the Drafting Committee and in the contact group on budget and work programme ran in parallel with, or even in advance of, discussions in the Committee of the Whole (COW), which was supposed to inform the corresponding deliberations. As a result, the deliberations in the COW had much lower attendance than the Chair and the Secretariat expected. This was particularly disappointing when the discussion on MDGs attracted little comment from the floor in the COW, but then was the center of contention in the Drafting Committee. The matter was, however, soon readjusted during the remainder of the meeting. In fact, experiencing these organizational hiccups helped speed up the approval of the resolution on improving preparations for future GC sessions.

Looking at the broader picture of international processes, GC-20 took place just before the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13) and in the run up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress made in the fulfillment of the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration – both events inevitably attracting much attention in the negotiations. Thanks to a recent UN General Assembly resolution on patterns of conferences, it was possible to reverse the previous trend of overlapping meetings, and hold the GC sessions just prior to those of the CSD. As CSD-13 focuses on water, sanitation and human settlements, the themes also at the heart of UN-HABITAT, the Secretariat and many delegations wished to overcome the past marginalization of UN-HABITAT in the CSD process, stressing that urban issues are central and cut across all three themes of CSD-13. The final decision reserves for UN-HABITAT a role as "the focal point" for following up and monitoring the outcomes of CSD-13, thus responding fully to the Executive Director's call for UN-HABITAT to be "intimately involved" in these activities. The Chair's Summary, requested



by CSD-13 Chair Ashe, is designed to send a “clear message” to CSD-13, “raising the political profile of urban issues” and bringing human settlements “from the shadow into the sun of the international agenda on development.”

With regard to the UN Millennium Review Meeting, participants stressed that the process of UN reforms, especially in terms of minimization of duplication within the UN system, and the assessment of progress towards the achievement of the MDGs, are crucial for the future work of UN-HABITAT. This item received the greatest attention at GC-20 by far.

MISSING A BRICK OR A WALL?

The overall framework of the UN Millennium Declaration is clearly shaping the work of all UN agencies, with significant implications for most bilateral donors as well. However, the Executive Director stressed that slums are the “highly concentrated toxic mixture” of all the issues of the Millennium Declaration. The peculiarity of the MDGs in the UN-HABITAT context lies in the formulation of Target 11 on slums, which is the only one given as an absolute number (upgrading 100 million slum dwellers) rather than a proportion. The top priority for UN-HABITAT at GC-20 was, therefore, clear from the very beginning: to achieve consensus to propose at the Millennium Review Meeting resetting the target as “halve, between 1990 and 2020, the proportion of slum dwellers in the urban population”. As it turned out, this became the “crack in the wall.”

Most agreed that the current target is inadequate, covering only 10% of the current worldwide slum population, which, if not addressed, could multiply threefold to three billion by the year 2050. However, developed countries felt that to reopen negotiation on the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration may lead to dropping slum dwellers off the Millennium agenda altogether, and some developing countries feared that a more ambitious target would be unattainable. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a large group of developing countries found unacceptable that the current target is far too modest and that progress is hardly measurable in the absence of benchmarks that reflect each country’s responsibility.

When time was running out and delegates were on the verge of putting the matter to a vote, unable and unwilling to compromise, the only option left was leaving out the proposal to reset the target. An extremely watered-down resolution on the implementation of Target 11 was considered by the GC president as inadequate in reflecting the complexity of the issue, and was consequently not adopted by the plenary. Although this outcome (or rather lack of an outcome) comes as an unexpected disappointment to UN-HABITAT, it is now in the hands of the supporting countries, particularly the African Group, to push the proposal forward in other fora, most immediately at CSD-13. Several other countries that recognize the limits of current Target 11 but oppose its resetting, have proposed alternative solutions such as an interpretation that translates it into meaningful regional and national targets.

REDECORATING OR REWIRING?

The underlying theme of GC-20 was strengthening UN-HABITAT’s mandate, which is both normative and operational. The emerging question, therefore, was whether UN-HABITAT should shift towards the latter or rather achieve a

better balance between these two components. Some developing countries favored a shift towards the operational mandate, in order to enhance regionalization and in the hope of being the main beneficiaries. Several developed countries, on the other hand, cautioned against broadening excessively the spectrum of activities of UN-HABITAT, and rather suggested that the Programme capitalize on its strengths, by equally working at the global level through normative activities, and at the regional or national level through operational activities. The special themes on civil society involvement and on post-conflict and disaster assessment and reconstruction were expected to feed into this debate, but received limited attention in the Committee of the Whole, or rather “the Committee of the Few” in the words of its Chair, due to overlapping schedules of parallel negotiating groups. Nonetheless, enhanced participation of civil society was evident in both side events and formal sessions, particularly the dialogue on financing shelter and urban development. Developing country delegations commended the work of UN-HABITAT in post-conflict and disaster situations, which, after the “wake-up call” of the Indian Ocean tsunami, has greatly increased its visibility.

Revitalizing UN-HABITAT inevitably led to lengthy discussions on the budget, where the Secretariat’s proposal to introduce a voluntary indicative scale of contributions, following UNEP’s example, was strenuously opposed by major donors. Drawing similarities between UNEP and UN-HABITAT was perhaps not the best strategy to reach consensus on this, considering that UN-HABITAT’s budget is only one third of UNEP’s, and that UNEP’s voluntary indicative scale of contributions went through a longer gestation period than just one GC. The compromise decision instead focused on providing greater flexibility in the use of the budget. This was achieved by mandating the Executive Director to reallocate resources and encouraging non-earmarked contributions. Rewiring UN-HABITAT thus remains conditional upon broadening its donor base. The announced contributions from Sweden, Germany, Algeria, and the city of Dubai bring a sense of hope in this regard.

Further increasing UN-HABITAT’s impact in the field became inextricably linked to the question of deploying 45 new Habitat Programme Managers (HPMs), an issue that was addressed by the GC for the first time. HPMs, as national officers posted by UN-HABITAT in UNDP country offices, were presented as a cost-effective way to step up UN-HABITAT’s activities in developing countries, especially LDCs, without incurring high consultant fees and mission expenses. A compromise was reached between the position of those developing countries supporting the immediate deployment of HPMs and requesting better coordination with national governments, and the EU wishing to defer such a decision until an evaluation would be undertaken and funding would be further discussed at the next GC. The resulting decision responds to developing countries’ concerns, allowing the continued deployment of new HPMs in the next biennium and providing for respect for national priorities in their work. The compromise also addresses the EU’s concerns, by conditioning HPMs’ deployment to availability of funds and requesting an evaluation of their performance and impact by the end of 2006.



LAYING STRONGER FOUNDATIONS OR BUILDING SAND CASTLES?

In her closing statement, the Executive Director described GC-20 as “extremely interesting, thought-provoking and successful”. Many delegations agreed that stronger foundations have been laid in terms of mainstreaming the urban dimension and strengthening the role of UN-HABITAT in the CSD process, and generally continuing the revitalization of UN-HABITAT, thanks to the approved budget and programme of work. Other positive outcomes certainly are gender mainstreaming and youth involvement, as demonstrated by the UN-HABITAT Youth Forum and Women’s Caucus, and the adopted resolutions on gender equality and youth in human settlements development. The decision, based on a EU proposal, on developing a medium-term strategic and institutional plan will also contribute to both the credibility and visibility of UN-HABITAT. The plan will take into account the evaluation of the HPMS, hopefully adding some evidence of their impact on further enhancing the performance of UN-HABITAT. This should also address the concern of the US that GC-20 offered “a set of directions” rather than “the direction” for UN-HABITAT’s future work. The risk of building sand castles, that of diffusing resources on a broadened mandate without strategic focus, was thus identified.

As Indonesia pointed out in the closing plenary, the real success of GC-20 depends on “what happens afterwards.” The World Urban Forum III, in 2006, will be an important milestone for showcasing its work on gender and youth. CSD-13 and the UN Millennium Review Meeting will be the most immediate testing ground for UN-HABITAT as a fully-fledged UN programme and for prioritizing slum upgrading. They will both be arenas in which the controversy surrounding the proposed reformulation of Target 11 is expected to resurface. It remains to be seen whether the international community will be able to overcome this impasse and agree on adequate benchmarks to effectively address urban poverty.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

2005 WORLD EXPOSITION: This event takes place from 25 March-25 September 2005, in Aichi, Japan. Organized under the theme “Nature’s Wisdom,” the first world exposition of the 21st century aims to present “a model of society and new directions in the development of cultures and civilizations by learning from Nature’s Wisdom, realized through a broad range of interaction among the people of the world.” The Expo, which is expected to attract some 15 million visitors, will also contain an NGO Global Village to allow NGOs to organize learning programmes directed toward the development of a sustainable society. For more information, contact: Yukio Kamino, Co-Chair, International Coordination Committee, OISCA-International; tel: +81-52-569-2108; fax: +81-52-569-2115; internet: <http://www-0.expo2005.or.jp/en/>

THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-13 will be held from 11-22 April 2005, in New York. CSD-13 will be a policy year to decide on measures to speed up implementation and mobilize action to overcome obstacles and constraints for the thematic clusters of water, sanitation and human settlements. For more information, contact the Division for Sustainable

Development; tel: +1-212-963-3170; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd13/csd13_2004.htm

UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL SECTION: This event will take place from 26-29 April 2005, in Daegu, Republic of Korea. Organized by the United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific Regional Section (UCLG ASPAC), this event will be held under the theme “Glocalization for the future” and is expected to address the following issues: decentralization/local autonomy; local globalization; urban development strategy; e-governance; and cooperation among Asia-Pacific local governments. UCLG ASPAC is one of the seven regional sections of the United Cities and Local Governments. For more information, contact: Local secretariat office; tel: +82-53-601-5051; fax: +82-53-601-5059; e-mail: uclgaspac@excodaegu.co.kr; internet: <http://www.uclg-aspac2005.org/>

UN SYMPOSIUM ON INTEGRATED IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

This Symposium will be held from 11-13 May 2005, in Nanchang, China. This symposium is co-sponsored by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Jiangxi, and will address the integrated implementation of sustainable development goals and targets. For more information, contact: Zhu Juwang, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-0380; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: zhu@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/calendar/symposium_announcement.pdf

UN WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: This event will take place from 1-5 June 2005, in San Francisco, California, US. World Environment Day festivities will include special events focusing on urban environmental issues. Each day of the five-day event will consider a specific theme: Urban Power (energy, renewables and energy conservation); Cities on the Move (transportation); Redesigning Metropolis (waste diversion and the built environment); Pure Elements (food, water and air); and Flower Power (open space, biodiversity and greening the urban environment). For more information, contact: World Environment Day 2005; tel: +1-415-355-9905; fax: +1-415-355-9933; e-mail: info@wed2005.org; internet: <http://www.wed2005.org/>

2005 ECOSOC HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT AND SUBSTANTIVE SESSION: This meeting will be held from 29 June-27 July 2005, in New York. The ECOSOC high-level segment will convene from 29 June-1 July 2005, to address the theme “Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities.” The substantive session will also convene the: Coordination Segment (5-7 July); Operational Activities Segment (8-12 July); Humanitarian Affairs (13-18 July); General Segment (18-25 July); and conclusion (26-27 July). For more information, contact: Sarbuland Khan, ECOSOC; tel: +1-212-963-4628; fax: +1-212-963-1712; e-mail: khan2@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/meetings2005.html>



FIFTEENTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT: This conference will take place from 10-13 July 2005, in Toronto, Canada. This meeting will discuss "The Changing Face of Disaster Management – Defining the New Normal." The conference programme includes speakers from many parts of the world and provides opportunities for training and networking among those attending, including representatives from the Emergency Planning/Management, Emergency Response, Disaster Management Research, Environmental and Community Planning fields. For more information, contact: Alysone Will, Conference Coordinator, Absolute Conference and Events; tel: +1-416-595-1414 ext: 224; fax: +1-416-979-819; e-mail: coord@wcdm.org; internet: <http://www.wcdm.org/>

THIRD WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS: This meeting will be held from 30 July-8 August 2005, in Stirling, Scotland. The congress theme is "Young People working together for a sustainable world community." This congress will bring together young development activists, and government and UN development professionals to review best practice in youth-led development, and devise strategies to mobilize more young people to take part in them. The achievement of the MDGs will be a major theme. For more information, contact: Ray Bugg, Media and Communications Manager; tel: +44-131-244-7425; fax: +44-795-726-1178; e-mail: ray.bugg@scotland.gsi.gov.uk; internet: <http://www.scotland2005.org>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT ISSUES IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: This conference will be held from 14-19 August 2005, in Kingston, Jamaica. Convening in the context of the WSSD, the conference will address the special circumstances of SIDS, and the role of academic institutions in this international framework. The event will focus on issues affecting the built environment. For more information, contact: David Harrison, Dean, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of Technology, Jamaica; tel: +876-970-2242; fax: +876-970-2242; e-mail: daharrison@utech.edu.jm; internet: http://www.cdera.org/cunews/uploads/utech_conf_aug2005.pdf

WORLD WATER WEEK: This event will take place from 21-27 August 2005, in Stockholm, Sweden. Organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute, it is a global gathering of leading experts from the business, civil society, governmental, inter-governmental, scientific, and water management sectors. The Stockholm Water Symposium forms part of the event. The overall theme for World Water Week 2005 is "Drainage Basin Management – Hard and Soft Solutions in Regional Development." For more information, contact the Stockholm International Water Institute; tel: +46-8-522-139-60; fax: +46-8-522-139-61; e-mail: sympos@siwi.org, internet: <http://www.worldwaterweek.org> and <http://www.siw.org>

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT: This meeting will be held from 14-16 September 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. The meeting is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made towards the commitments articulated in the UN Millennium Declaration. The event will also review progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the

outcomes and commitments of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. For more information, contact: Office of the President of the General Assembly; tel: +1-212-963-2486; fax: +1-212-963-3301; internet: <http://www.un.org/ga/>

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: This event will take place from 11-13 October 2005, in Geneva, Switzerland. This multi-stakeholder platform will comprise three elements: a conference, an exhibition, and a number of workshops/side events. The objective of the event is to present innovative solutions in the fields of technologies, governance, civil society and enterprises from urban areas in both the Northern and Southern hemisphere. There will be an emphasis on creating partnerships: public/private; north/south; local/global. For more information, contact: Otto Frei AG; tel: +41-31-311-3566; fax +41-31-311-3567; e-mail: info@s-dev.org; internet: <http://www.s-dev.org>

NINTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/SEVENTH GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: This meeting will be held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. For more information, contact: Secretary for UNEP Governing Council; tel: +254-2-623431/623411; fax: +254-2-623929/623748; e-mail: beverly.miller@unep.org; internet: <http://www.unep.org>

WORLD URBAN FORUM III: This meeting will be held from 19-23 June 2006, in Vancouver, Canada. Organized by UN-HABITAT and the Government of Canada, this meeting will bring together public and private institutions, experts and leaders from around the world to discuss the key challenges of rapid urbanization, including urban sustainability and meeting the MDGs. The working arrangements of the Forum, held every two years, are kept simple and informal to generate healthy and dynamic exchanges on urban issues. For more information, contact: Lars Reutersward, Information Services Section, UN-HABITAT; tel: +254-20-623120; fax: +254-20-623477; e-mail: Lars.Reutersward@unhabitat.org; internet: <http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006/default.asp>

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UN-HABITAT: The dates for this meeting will be decided by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-HABITAT, in consultation with the Executive Director and the CSD Chair. For more information, contact: Information Services Section, UN-HABITAT; tel: +254-20-623120; fax: +254-20-623477; e-mail: press.unhabitat@unhabitat.org; internet: <http://www.unhabitat.org>