The second and final substantive session of the preparatory committee for Istanbul +5 (PrepCom II) commenced in Nairobi at the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) with opening speeches and adoption of the agenda. Plenary then heard statements on the preparation of a draft report on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Committee of the Whole (COW) considered proposals on structuring discussions among the various Habitat Agenda partners, and on the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements (CHS) at its 18th session and of the year 2000 coordinating segment of the Economic and Social Council.

OPENING PLENARY
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 on the special session’s organization of work and on the promotion of family support policies in the review and appraisal of the Habitat Agenda. William Morogo, Kenya’s Minister for Public Works and Housing, welcomed delegates to Kenya and wished the PrepCom success in its deliberations.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaïjuka, 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) and outlined the progress report on the preparations for the special session (HS/C/PC.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 Sidibou Fall (Senegal), and a drafting committee, chaired by Vice-Chair Manfred Konukiewitz (Germany), would be established.

PLENARY
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.

Urging for equal legitimacy of all government levels, the ADVISORY COUNCIL OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES called for discussion on the concept of subsidiarity and the role of local authorities, and said decentralization goes with good governance. He called attention to two issues: strengthening local authorities, leading to the elaboration of a local autonomy charter; and adopting resolutions to guarantee social advancement. SWEDEN, on behalf of the EU, said the special session’s outcome will provide contributions to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. He supported, inter alia: empowering people and communities through decentralization; good governance as a prerequisite for sustainable development; better coordination between different levels of governments; and the World Charter on Local Self-Government. CANADA supported a structure for the special session that avoids sterile debate and maximizes opportunities for real dialogue. He advocated effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, but said 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. He hoped the Secretariat would revise the draft report based on proposals made by delegations.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION lamented the lack of attention given to countries with economies in transition in the draft report. KENYA said the draft declaration should draw from regional declarations, and avoid issues on which no consensus has been reached. CAMEROON highlighted the importance of effective financing, urbanization management programmes and reforming habitat policy.

ETHIOPIA emphasized institutional capacity building and increasing social and economic development through defined operational activities. 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.

NIGERIA, on behalf of the African Group, emphasized new and additional resources for human settlements development in Africa. BAHRAIN said the recommendations of the regional conference in the Western Asia region, held in October 2000, is contained in the Manama declaration. CHILE, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, presented results of its regional preparatory conference and noted new challenges arising.
from globalization. MEXICO called for: modalities and indicators to monitor the implementation of the Agenda; and strengthening collaboration between the UNCHS and Latin American and Caribbean ministers. NEW ZEALAND urged that attention be given to the Pacific region countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). BANGLADESH supported using indicators to monitor the Habitat Agenda and said global, regional, national and local urban observatories are necessary to achieve the Agenda’s goals.

BOTSWANA highlighted good governance and decentralization to local authorities, and called for building more partnerships with the private sector. MOROCCO, SRI LANKA, CUBA, LIBERIA, COLOMBIA and others outlined their national initiatives towards implementing the Habitat Agenda. 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. He added that Nigeria was honored that the launch of the proposed urban governance campaign would be held in Nigeria.

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. SPAIN advocated mutually supportive global and local policies. 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.

The OFFICE OF THE HIGH 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. RWANDA identified the following aspects requiring emphasis: 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. TURKEY called for more references, in the draft report, to tangible achievements in implementing the Habitat Agenda and to providing affordable housing.

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 report on the coordination segment of ECOSOC, including one on human rights. INDONESIA noted that even if the issue is not resolved at this session, it is likely to be formally later this week, others say its proponents are very few, and that in light of the large opposition to such a charter expressed at the Madrid ministers. NEW ZEALAND urged that attention be given to the Pacific region countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). BANGLADESH supported using indicators to monitor the Habitat Agenda and said global, regional, national and local urban observatories are necessary to achieve the Agenda’s goals.

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