



ISTANBUL+5 PREPCOM II HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2001

Delegates attending the Istanbul+5 PrepCom in Nairobi conducted their work in drafting committees for most of the day. After a morning meeting of the contact group to conclude negotiations on arrangements for the thematic committee, the Committee of the Whole (COW) met mid-afternoon for a report from the contact group and adopted its report. The Drafting Committee continued consideration of the draft declaration, working in two groups. Both groups adjourned at 1:00 am.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Delegates adopted HS/C/PC.2/4/Add.2, on participation and accreditation of local authorities, NGOs and other Habitat Agenda partners; and HS/C/PC.2/4/Add.4, on allowing accreditation of members of the Advisory Committee of Local Authorities, without comment. Chair Fall suspended the COW to allow delegates to consider the two draft documents submitted by the contact group.

In the afternoon, delegates approved the draft resolution on organizational arrangements (HS/C/PC.2/CW/L.3). It was agreed that the draft decision on the preparatory process (HS/C/PC.2/CW/L.2) would be submitted to the GA for adoption prior to the special session, as advised by the GA representative. 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 a key 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 would promote 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, all agreed to replace the list with a note referencing the key items used in country reporting contained in the Habitat website.

Regarding the proposed addition of eight speaking slots by Habitat partners at the UNGASS, the Chair of the contact group reported the lack of consensus. Chair Fall announced that this matter would be forwarded to Plenary for resolution. CHINA added reference 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 adopted the COW's draft report (HS/PC.2/CW/L.1 and HS/PC.2/CW/L.1/Add.1). Chair Fall adjourned the COW's final meeting.

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

DRAFT DECLARATION: The Drafting Committee continued consideration of the draft declaration. A subcommittee was established in the afternoon to address the sections on welcoming progress made at all levels and on gaps and obstacles. **Renewing Commitments:** The Drafting Committee continued consideration of this section and considered reformulated texts by the EU on urbanization and urban poverty, and on rural-urban linkages and rural human settlements. While there was general agreement on the text, delegates continued to informally resolve outstanding issues. Delegates agreed to include a proposal reaffirming the goals and principles of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world, as set out in the Habitat Agenda, which form the basis of commitments.

The African Group proposed text emphasizing the impact of, *inter alia*, reduction of public aid and obstacles of international commerce on the effectiveness of sustainable human settlements policies. Delegates continued to debate this proposal informally.

Delegates agreed to a proposal to replace a paragraph, which selectively highlighted various commitments, with a more inclusive paragraph reaffirming commitments 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 Implementation of the Habitat Agenda: A representative of LOCAL AUTHORITIES reiterated the need to allow local authorities' and NGO involvement in the Drafting Committee; called on UNGASS to recognize the important role of local authorities in developing good urban governance; supported referring to the Advisory Committee; and called for support to develop and collaborate with the Advisory Committee.

Delegates debated whether the UNCHS analysis of the national and regional reports was satisfactory but decided to retain the paragraph on the assumption that errors contained in the analysis would be corrected. Delegates diverged on whether to take note of the UNCHR decision at its 55th session to appoint a special rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and to call on the UNCHS and UNCHR to develop a United Nations Housing Rights Programme. These references remain bracketed.

On the issue of inclusiveness, a proposal to refer to "family" fragmentation was bracketed, pending conclusion of informal negotiations on the family. However, the Committee also agreed to refer to, *inter alia*, indigenous peoples and exclusion on the basis of gender.

Regarding the increasing economic role of cities in a globalizing world, delegates adopted a proposal stating that cities can provide an economic environment capable of generating employment opportunities and offering a diversity of goods and services.



They also agreed to text welcoming the effort made by developing countries to decentralize the management of cities, as a means of strengthening the operation of local authorities.

The references to the role and contribution of local authorities were debated, mainly regarding whether to refer to national governments and whether strengthened partnerships result in implementation of the Habitat Agenda or in improved urban governance. Some delegates noted that the debate reflected that of the previous week at the CHS, where the principle of governance was considered subjective by some, and others said it had been agreed in the Millennium Declaration. Delegates agreed to include a new paragraph welcoming the efforts of national and other governments in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, but the issue of governance remains pending.

Regarding establishment of the Advisory Committee, some delegates questioned its relation to the UNCHS strategy, in particular to urban governance and security of tenure, but the references were retained.

Recognizing gaps and obstacles: Delegates reached consensus on a paragraph that takes note, with great concern, of the current conditions of human settlements worldwide. They added language referring to lack of legal security of tenure, and noting that poverty remains a core obstacle. One delegate suggested text on gender aspects of poverty. Delegates agreed to include this in a new paragraph.

Delegates debated a new paragraph recognizing political will as the first and foremost obstacle to implement the Habitat Agenda, but delegates recognized: other equally important obstacles to implementation; other factors hindering implementation where political will exists; that the proposal was prescriptive; and that discrepancy was not between commitments and political will, but between commitments and their fulfillment. After informal consultations, delegates agreed to merge the proposal with the paragraph on gaps in public information. The new paragraph: notes with concern that one of the basic obstacles to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda is the discrepancy between commitments made in Istanbul and the political will to fulfill them, and acknowledges the gaps in both public information and awareness-raising as impediments. The subcommittee continued discussions into the night.

Undertaking Further Actions: During general remarks on this section, a representative of the LOCAL AUTHORITIES lamented the absence of the world charter on local self-government. She called for establishing an intergovernmental forum to consider formalizing a framework for effective decentralization processes.

During negotiations on overcoming obstacles and undertaking further actions to ensure implementation of the Habitat Agenda, delegates agreed to a proposal to highlight poverty as the major underlying obstacle to implementation.

Bangladesh, facilitator of consultations on the family, reported that 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. 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. 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. The African Group proposed a paragraph requesting, *inter alia*, the establishment of a world solidarity and poverty reduction fund, but

no consensus was reached. Delegates agreed to a paragraph on raising awareness about human settlements' challenges and solutions through full and open dissemination of information.

Regarding a paragraph addressing decentralization, delegates agreed to text empowering local authorities, NGOs and other Habitat Agenda partners to play a more effective role in shelter and human settlements planning and management. Delegates agreed to text reflecting that a more effective role can be achieved through, *inter alia*, effective decentralization, where appropriate, and sufficient resources, where possible including revenue collection authority. Delegates agreed to include language on ensuring the role of women in decision-making. A reference to the world charter on local self-government was deleted and alternative proposals were put forward. The EU proposed language on establishing an intergovernmental forum to deliberate on guiding principles of local self-government. Others opposed, preferring to undertake further deliberations on all issues related to effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities. Both proposals remain bracketed.

An EU proposal on empowering the poor and vulnerable through, *inter alia*, greater security of tenure, was agreed. To a GRULAC proposal on metropolitan coordination, Chair Konukiewicz proposed, and all accepted, replacing coordination with planning. One delegate called for deleting reference to "local" authorities, which was agreed. Delegates also agreed to a paragraph on capacity building, which emphasizes, *inter alia*, management, decentralization and participation. References to individuals, families and organized communities were debated, but not included.

Regarding a proposal on volunteer work, one delegate suggested adding language on acknowledging and valuing the work of voluntary and community-based organizations. Another added reference to individual voluntary work. All agreed to replace reference to social capital with reference to social solidarity. With these changes, the paragraph was agreed.

Regarding the paragraph on financing shelter, delegates considered references to improving existing shelters, regulatory and legal frameworks, and strengthening existing financial mechanisms. One delegate proposed language on recognizing the needs of women. Several proposed, while others opposed, inclusion of reference to family. One country suggested text on resolving to undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources. Another added the phrase "consistent with our legal authority." With these modifications, the paragraph was agreed to.

Editors Note: The ENB's coverage of the Drafting Committees ended at 10:00 pm.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

A low key "don't ask don't tell" informal agreement that allowed NGOs and local authorities back into the negotiations reverberated through the breezeways. In what nearly turned into what one participant referred to as a "wild day," NGOs wearing red arm bands to protest Wednesday's decision to lock them out of the informal negotiations met with the PrepCom Chair and UNCHS Executive Director to discuss the decision. Most participants were tight-lipped about the agreement reached, but it was apparent that delegates had agreed to keep the negotiations open even though the option to close them remains at their discretion, in keeping with rules of procedure. With procedural issues resolved and with coffee in hand, delegates proceeded to work late into the night.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary is scheduled to meet in the afternoon to receive the reports of the Committee of the Whole and the Drafting Committee, and to adopt the report of the session. Refer to the journal for the time.

DRAFTING COMMITTEE: The Drafting Committee is expected to meet in the morning to hear the results of the subcommittee and conclude its work. Refer to the journal for the time.