



## THE 25TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (ISTANBUL+5): THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2001

Delegates met in Plenary and the Committee of the Whole (COW) for general debate on the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. As of 11:00 pm, when coverage was suspended, informal negotiations had reached consensus on four out of five outstanding paragraphs in the draft declaration. Delegates had begun considering newly proposed text. In the Thematic Committee, delegates heard presentations from Tanzania, Sweden, China, Poland, Brazil, France, Nigeria and Spain.

### PLENARY

At 9:00 am, delegates gathered for high-level debate on the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Statements were made by three Deputy Prime Ministers, 28 Ministers, eight Vice-Ministers, 21 Chairs of Delegations, one UN agency and three Habitat Agenda partners. A list of speeches is available on the Internet at <http://www.un.org/ga/habitat/statements/english.htm>.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW)

At 10:00 am, under Vice-Chair Andrzej Olszowka (Poland), delegates heard general debate on agenda item eight, the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and on item nine, further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles in the way of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Under Chair Germán García-Durán, delegates resumed informal consultations on item 10, the draft declaration.

### DRAFT DECLARATION ON CITIES AND OTHER HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

**PARAGRAPH 8 (REPORTS):** The G-77/CHINA proposed language commending the efforts of the Executive Director of Habitat, and adding that the reports are noted in conformity with the legal framework and national policies of each country. The EU inserted reference to noting "with appreciation." The G-77/CHINA expressed concern about the legal connotation of the term "note with appreciation" and added a footnote to clarify that the reports were presented as information documents to the Special Session. With these amendments, the paragraph was agreed.

**PARAGRAPH 33 (DEBT):** The paragraph was agreed following the G-77/China's acceptance of the phrase "as appropriate" in reference to considering further measures that would lead to durable solutions to the external debt burden of developing countries.

**PARAGRAPH 34 (WORLD SOLIDARITY FUND):** Delegates agreed to EU-proposed text, which welcomes the ongoing consultations by the Secretary-General on the establishment of a world solidarity fund. The paragraph was agreed.

**PARAGRAPH 37 (DECENTRALIZATION):** The G-77/CHINA proposed, and delegates accepted, language specifying dialogue "where possible," including, "inter alia," through the Commission on Human Settlements. Regarding EU-proposed language on discussing principles and, as appropriate, legal frameworks, INDIA, supported by MEXICO and TANZANIA, reiterated that this language was agreed to by the CHS. CANADA accepted the EU proposal, while EGYPT opposed. After consultations, the G-77/CHINA proposed deleting the reference to legal frameworks, and maintaining the reference to principles with a footnote stating that the term principles refers to national principles that are not intended to be implemented through legally binding international instruments. After more debate, the paragraph was referred to the COW.

**PARAGRAPH 43 (GENDER):** NORWAY proposed replacing language on the removal of obstacles and inequalities with reference to eradicating legal and social barriers. He noted this was language taken from the Habitat Agenda. The G-77/CHINA said the paragraph had a negative tone. UGANDA and SOUTH AFRICA supported NORWAY's proposal. Chair García-Durán expressed concern that there appeared to be a divide in the G-77/CHINA position, and asked the group to discuss the issue further. The G-77/CHINA later agreed to accept Norway's proposal, provided that their own proposal regarding the recognition of different national laws and systems of land tenure was also accepted. With respect to undertaking legislative and administrative reforms, the G-77/CHINA proposed replacing the phrase "we resolve to" with "we should continue to" to indicate that progress has already been made. The EU objected, stating that the word "should" is weaker than the original word "resolve." NORWAY noted that the G-77/CHINA proposal was weaker than similar agreed language in paragraph 78(f) of the Habitat Agenda. TANZANIA supported the stronger word "resolve." BRAZIL suggested "resolve to continue to undertake." MOROCCO proposed alternative text recognizing the ongoing efforts to eradicate legal and social barriers. NORWAY reformulated its proposal to refer to eradicating "remaining" legal and

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social barriers. As a compromise, NORWAY suggested deleting all proposals on eradicating barriers, and supported Brazil's suggested text. Delegates agreed to the paragraph with these amendments.

### THEMATIC COMMITTEE

Under Chair Habeddine Belaid (Tunisia), delegates heard presentations from eight countries. Chair Belaid noted that the Rapporteur for the Thematic Committee was not Laszló Miklós (Slovak Republic) as announced Wednesday, but his compatriot Elena Szolgayova of the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development. He also announced that Vice-Chair Erna Witoelar (Indonesia) would chair the afternoon session.

**UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA:** Tumsifu Jonas Nnkya, Professor at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, presented two case studies illustrating the advantages of environmental management plans. He said that holistically planned development strategies to implement environmental improvements can also create employment and income-generation opportunities. He also noted that labor-intensive methods, as opposed to capital-intensive ones, were more appropriate and sustainable. The ensuing discussion centered on how to start the dialogue among the actors, the effects of increased property values on the poorest residents of environmentally improved settlements, and the lack of youth involvement.

**SWEDEN:** Mats Pemer, Director of the Strategic Department, Stockholm City Planning Administration, described the development of Stockholm as a sustainable compact city, noting a planned growth strategy since 1952 that provides for good housing, efficient public transport and reclaimed industrial lands. He highlighted respect for ecological, social and cultural values through infrastructure incorporating green spaces and reducing environmental impacts. Discussion addressed the importance of long-term planning, land value and use, and inward expansion to avoid urban sprawl.

**CHINA:** Shaoxiong Wang, Vice Mayor of Chengdu Municipality, introduced the Fu and Nan Riverbank Refurbishment project as a successful example of comprehensive urban environmental renovation. He noted the synergies between public planning and market forces, and emphasized the importance of the role and support of the central government. The discussion covered, *inter alia*, the difficulty of making long-term comprehensive plans in countries with economies in transition, the regional nature of river management, the added difficulty of relocating businesses and private sector participation in infrastructure upkeep.

**POLAND:** The Mayor of Katowice, Peter Uszok, discussed an environmental management and city development strategy in Katowice Agglomeration involving reclamation and rehabilitation of industrial mining areas. He said that promoting sustainable development and environmental regeneration by strengthening local capacity in the field of urban environmental planning and management has required decentralization and transformation of post-industrial areas to serve local needs for commerce, recreation and other services. Discussion addressed the role of women, multilateral sources of finance, the importance of visibility and replication, and achievements in pollution reduction and capacity building.

**BRAZIL:** Celso Daniel, Mayor of Santo André, presented an integrated programme for social inclusion in this area located on the outskirts of São Paulo, highlighting the multi-dimensional character of social exclusion and the need to address economic, urban and social issues while empowering people and creating conditions for them to participate in activities related to health, education, literacy, employment and housing construction. Discussion focused on how to stimulate and sustain social inclusion, and the need for international funding and support from local government.

Joaquim Roriz, Governor of Federal District of Brasilia, spoke about transformation of the slum areas around Samambaia, where families were provided the means to relocate to an area where they could own a plot of land and build homes, through cooperation between the Inter-American Development Bank, the federal government and the local community. Discussion underscored the political will necessary for such a project, replicability, employment generation, infrastructure provision, and social inclusion in city planning.

**FRANCE:** Gérard Collomb, Mayor of Lyon, described "Millénaire3," his city's strategy for integrated urban development in the context of globalization. He explained that the plan aimed to improve economic competitiveness, particularly on the regional scale, while addressing the gap between rich and poor neighborhoods in order to avoid "two-track development." He related the creation of a municipal council for development, an innovative consultative group made of many social actors to help guide policy in managing the complexity of urban society. Topics of discussion included the relationship between participatory and representative democracy, and how to maintain public interest in urban renewal projects.

**NIGERIA:** J. O. Okunfulure, Director of Lands, Urban and Regional Development, and Garba Madaki Ali, Minister of State for Works and Housing, discussed sustainable urban development and good governance in Nigeria. Creation of geopolitical zones to balance regional growth and development and the establishment of an urban development bank were among the sweeping initiatives undertaken by the government in cooperation with the World Bank. Cross-cutting issues of poverty reduction and social integration were also addressed. Discussion examined corruption, transparency, security of tenure and the challenge of achieving decentralization without disintegration.

**SPAIN:** Joan Clos, Mayor of Barcelona, discussed sustainable economic transformation and decentralization in Barcelona. He described a growth model based on transformation of industrial seafont areas and revitalization of historic districts through investments involving joint capital companies and communities, emphasizing the importance of preserving historic patrimony. Discussion involved issues of investment, strategic urban planning, public-private ventures, and cultural sensitivity in urban renovation.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Heading into the last day of the Special Session, delegates reported uneasiness over the so-called Palestinian paragraphs. Some noted a handful of colleagues who are attending the meeting strictly to debate this text, Habitat Agenda or no. Tensions built in at least one group over the issue, and in another, delegates reported a sense of feeling "held hostage" to the behind-the-scenes caucusing of a select few members. They noted that those who have indulged in taking the floor on other issues received a special lunchtime briefing stressing solidarity on all fronts. Meanwhile, NGOs, unhappy about losing the reference to the right to housing at the PrepCom II, say they are strategizing on ways to get it back in. They are searching for an interested sponsor who might be willing to pull open that other bit of text that could hold up negotiations—the Chair's draft chapeau.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** Delegates will meet in the General Assembly Hall at a time to be announced.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:** The COW will meet at 10:00 am in the Trusteeship Council.

**THEMATIC COMMITTEE:** The Thematic Committee will begin at 9:00 am in Conference Room 4, and feature presentations from Thailand, Peru and Morocco. It will end with a session on general conclusions.