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H A B I T A T I I — A R E T R O S P E C T I V E

The Legacy of Habitat II

by Eric Carlson

RANCHO SANTA FE. The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul, Turkey, from June 3 to 14, represents the culmination of decades of efforts by the UN and other agencies to deal with the vast panorama of problems and sectors affecting the sustainability of planet Earth in supporting a rapidly increasing and urbanizing human population.

It was a remarkable event and increased the pace toward democratization of the UN and other international development assistance institutions and programs. It also set forth recommendations and concepts that can be acted upon immediately by governments, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in all countries, North and South. The broad results of the conference were the following:

- provided a place in the UN system for other than national governments;
- laid a basis for substantive input from local authorities, professional bodies, and public and private sector; and
- emphasized the important role of private individuals and market forces.

Conference genesis

This conference, of course, has its roots in Habitat I, which was held 20 years earlier in Vancouver in 1976. Habitat I was designated by the UN General Assembly as a Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements. The conference adopted the Declaration of Vancouver and 64 recommendations for national implementation. Following the Vancouver Conference, a new United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) was organized and located in Nairobi under the supervision of the 58-member UN Commission on Human Settlements. It took a while for UNCHS to organize itself. However, the number of technical cooperation projects assigned to it grew rapidly.

Meanwhile, there were several key developments in the housing and habitat area. One was the initiative in Sri Lanka for an International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, to be celebrated in 1987. In response, the UN General Assembly adopted a Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. This is still in effect, buttressed by a special component on housing and urban finance.

Next, the private sector became engaged: the National Association of Realtors sponsored three International Shelter Conferences in Washington, D.C. (1984), Vienna (1986), and Washington, D.C. (1989). These well-organized events were sponsored by private sector entities and attracted a high level of participation. The recommendations were sharply drawn and clear—the main message was that governments should serve as facilitators.

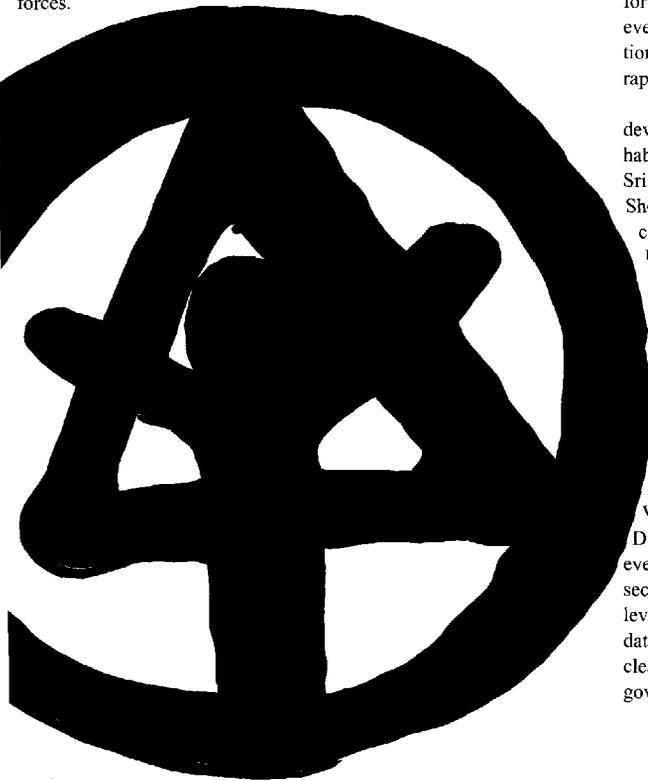
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THE URBAN AGE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your comments, thoughts, and suggestions about *The Urban Age*.

Editor:

Camilo Vergara's article "The New American Ghetto: Spirit of Survival" (Vol. 4, No. 1) evoked some bittersweet memories of a 10-month period I spent in the United States under the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program. Vergara's article graphically portrays the feelings of a person from a developing country on seeing America's cities for the first time. There is more to them than the glitter usually associated with urban America overseas.

What made the article particularly nostalgic for me were the photographs of the Bronx in New York City and Watts in Los Angeles, both of which I had visited. These two areas demonstrate that there is still life in the ghetto. I have fond memories of community redevelopment efforts by civic groups like the Mid-Bronx Desperadoes and several groups in south-central Los Angeles, as well as by local governments like Mercer County's Department of Housing and Community Development around Trenton's Waterfront Park.

Local initiative, buttressed by external support, seems to be the ghetto's only

salvation in its quest for "resistance from ruin."

Ian C. Mashingaidze
*Chief Planning Officer
Department of Physical Planning
Masvingo, Zimbabwe*

Editor:

I wish to commend you on the recent issue on the Human Environment of Cities (Vol. 3, No. 2). In particular, Ismail Serageldin's "The Human Face of the Urban Environment" and Michael Cohen's "The Challenge of Habitat II" raise numerous unresolved questions regarding the city's environmental agenda for the future. Forming international partnerships to resolve these questions is not only essential, but a prerequisite for future cooperation and coordination at the global level to develop environmentally sustainable cities and habitat for and by all men and women.

Tara Singh Chana
*Initiator
Citynet
Nairobi, Kenya*

Editor's Note

What is our commitment to urban matters? If this is the question that the 16,000 participants at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) known also as the City Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June are now asking, then the conference succeeded.

The themes of the conference were adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. Conferences so rarely achieve their stated purpose. But they do get people together. The results are then usually in the personal commitments that are struck rather than in the institutional mandates that are drawn. Those who attended Habitat II would probably agree with this assessment.

There were some heartening innovations at the conference such as the inclusion of new and crucial voices in the U.N. conference system: These were the creation of the NGO (non-governmental organization) Forum that ran as an official event the duration of the conference; the inclusion of local government voices; and the formal consideration in the Dialogues (day-long events) of a variety of topics such as the importance of financing options for cities, and access to information technology to name but a few.

In this issue we show a comprehensive but necessarily subjective slice of the hullabaloo that was Istanbul. An interview with Wally N'Dow, the man who brought us Habitat II; Mike Siegan, the alternate head of the US delegation writes about the harrowing but successful shaping of the housing rights debate; the lead is from Eric Carlson long-time architect of the Habitat Agenda; Bella Ahrup reminds us in the Guest Editorial that the voices of women and children must be heard in order for us to successfully provide adequate shelter for all, and an assessment by Michael Cohen of the World Bank on what could have been done better. Andrew Finkel, contributor to *The Economist* and *The Times of London*, writes about the results of the conference for Istanbul; and Nat Nuno-Amarteifio, mayor of Accra, Ghana, gives us his view of the conference preparation process and what he gained from the proceedings.

We also highlight the issues of gender, partnership, children and violence. From the field we show partnerships in action - The Tribal Welfare Society in New Delhi, India, whose members did not go to Habitat II but should have; from PLAN, a British children's NGO describing the struggle to give children's rights a place on the Agenda; and a community activist in Kingston, Jamaica describing a framework for assessing problems associated with violence. Through a conversation with Sitafat Kakakbel, who gained a well-deserved reputation for toughness as Chairman of Committee I, and with articles about indicators and best practices we cover the major areas of innovations and hear some of the compelling voices of Habitat II.

There were many unanswered questions: Was the question of governments including other partners to help provide housing a convenient cop out? Where was private industry at Habitat II, a question asked by author, Charles Landry? What kind of follow up will there be? Will governments really commit to implementing the Agenda?

It was an extraordinary two weeks. The feeling one had coming away from the conference was that serious consideration as to how to achieve a "positive vision of sustainable human settlements" and "Commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as provided for international instrument" (Istanbul Declaration) may now become a reality. Not just through the efforts of governments who have signed the Declaration but by those individuals who have spent the last 20 years planning for Habitat II.

As part of our continuing commitment to Habitatix issues the Bulletin Board highlighting interesting follow-up initiatives. As always we welcome your thought and comments on the issue.

Margaret Bergen

The Urban Age aims to stimulate lively debate and interaction on various topics in developed and developing countries. The ideas expressed in articles appearing in The Urban Age reflect the personal comments of each author, and are not representative of any one agency or organization. Individual articles appearing in The Urban Age may be reproduced or reprinted provided the author(s) and The Urban Age are cited, and a courtesy copy is sent to The Urban Age.

The Challenge of Our Times

Bella S. Abzug is president of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) in New York City and a former United States congresswoman.

NEW YORK CITY. I'm a city woman, born and bred. Count me as one of the "I Love New York" crowd. But as a citizen of our planet, I worry when I learn that within the next 10 years more than half the world's population will live in cities, and millions will be crowding into megacities with populations of over 10 million. Of 14 such megacities, 11 are in the developing world, which means that most of the inhabitants are poor—and most of the poor are women and children. Thirteen more megacities are expected to emerge in the next 20 years, all in the developing world.

That's why I and hundreds of other women from around the world went with an action agenda to the United Nations City Summit in Istanbul in June. It was a conference about the future of the world's cities. Women's interests and concerns and gender issues were a big part of that discussion. Women from hundreds of cities, towns, and communities participated in large numbers, in addition to women in official government delegations.

A steep road ahead

Despite the impressive progress women have made over the last few decades—particularly in organizing together through the Women's Caucus to influence official government deliberations at UN conferences—the road ahead is rocky and steep. Over the next 10 years, women's movements around the globe have lots of work to do. If the World Bank is smart, it will get behind us and other movements of social change. It's in everybody's long-term best interests.

Let's face it: We are living in desperate times. I've often said that I think the world is suffering from a global nervous breakdown. The evidence is overwhelming.

Just consult the latest United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report to examine the hollowness of global economic growth—growth that is all too often "jobless, ruthless, voiceless, rootless or futureless." It is a serious challenge to the World Bank, capable of attracting some of the world's most talented minds, to figure out how to "engender human development"

multilateral responsibility to provide the basics: sanitation, health services, education, property rights, credit, affordable child care, clean water and air, a decent environment, and other survival necessities. Governments reaffirmed that everyone has a right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families and to the continuous improvement of living conditions drawing on past human

family planning, credit without collateral, counting unremunerated work, the negative impact on women of structural adjustment, equal right to inheritance, recognition of the family in its various forms, eradication of and legal protection from discrimination, access to shelter and basic services, and equal access to ownership and control of land and other properties.

Despite the efforts of a small group of governments, a gender approach to shelter and human settlements was approved. The basic consensus was that gender is integral to the analyses of all issues. In addition, a separate commitment was agreed to that makes gender equality a goal in human settlements development.

Women in the WEDO network will keep habitat issues at the political center by linking Habitat II to the earlier Beijing Platform for Action implementation. We are using various means to do so, including the Huairou Commission, the Contract with the World's Women campaign, and a new report by WEDO entitled *Beyond Promises: Governments in Motion One Year After the Beijing Women's Conference*. We are using the Habitat process of building partnerships with all the key delegations in our countries. We are working with parliamentarians and other government representatives to implement Beijing and Habitat and bring our laws into full compliance with these agreements.

The World Bank and multilaterals can keep Habitat on its radar screen by promoting broad support for civil society; recognizing the need for and acting to rebuild critical social safety nets, ladders, and bridges; and promoting engendered social development that invests in women and helps to build communities—not markets.

We cannot solve our cities' problems until those who suffer most from them are powerful enough to promote solutions.

and make growth serve the interests of the bottom half of the economic pyramid.

More than a safe home

When you ask women what they most need, they often answer "a safe home" or a "good environment to raise my family." Women must have access to credit, without collateral if they are poor, to earn income and for housing. Women should be able to inherit their homes and land upon the death of their spouse or parents. Some 40 percent of families are headed by women, and the number is increasing as globalization erodes communities. Women need to earn a living wage and have their unpaid work valued and counted. Yes, it is true that women are the majority of the world's homemakers. But we are not miracle-makers. We cannot create healthy homes, families, and communities without the basics.

Yes to basic rights

Habitat II was a loud, resounding, global "yes" to government and

rights provisions.

Governments also agreed to make all corporations, including transnational corporations, follow the rules and act in socially responsible ways, to invest and reinvest in the communities in which they work, in partnership with the people living there.

This is the challenge of our times. We cannot let globalization—that is, the economic forces driven by unbridled greed and transnational corporations that build markets rather than communities—and the pressures from poverty, migration, and urbanization crush the future of our children, especially young women.

Toward gender equality

We cannot solve our cities' problems until those who suffer most from them are powerful enough to promote solutions. What can we do to expand gender-balanced dialogue and discussion at every level of decisionmaking?

The official Habitat II recommendations cover health care, sexual reproductive health and



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tors and *not* providers of housing. This was a reversal of one of the fundamental Vancouver recommendations.

In May 1992, one important initiative that early on promoted the inclusion of human settlement issues was the World Urban Forum that was sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme and the Urban Management Programme in Curitiba, Brazil. The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, was also expected to feature problems of the urban environment. However, in the preparatory meetings, human settlements had no place on the agenda. Finally, a special chapter in the UNCED Agenda 21—the conference's impressive Global Plan of Action—was finally allocated to human settlements.

How the world has changed

For Habitat II, the new pressing issues, dominant program principles, and strategies for human settlements development have moved toward democracy, human rights, participation, sustainability, decentralization of government, women's empowerment, and public-private partnership. This is quite a transformation since Habitat I. The Secretary General's report takes account of the following:

- World population has doubled in the last 20 years from 3 to 6 billion. By the year 2000, there will be 23 cities with over 10 million in population.
- Urban population has increased even more rapidly, at a rate 2.5 times faster than rural areas. By 2015, estimates show that the world will contain around 560 cities with more than 1 million people and dozens with more than 10 million.
- Despite vast increases in wealth and gross national product in some countries, the proportion of people below poverty levels has continued to increase. Today, 1.3 billion people live in absolute poverty, and 1.5 billion do not have even the most rudimentary health care.
- Environmental degradation has increased and provoked worldwide concern and actions to mitigate impacts.
- Transportation accounts for more than 50 percent of the world's fossil fuel consumption; the concentration of vehicles in urban areas causes greenhouse effects and traffic, health, and other environmental problems.
- The blossoming of the information age has allowed communications to inform the world of specific problems as well as the potential for improved living standards.
- Megacities have become major economic centers of trade and commerce, negotiating directly with each other.

The players have changed

Besides significant shifts in issues and approaches to human settlements, there have been significant changes in the voices heard as well. NGOs have been in steady ascendancy since a 1972 Stockholm

Conference, where they added to the excitement and energy of the environment by organizing varied events, demonstrations, and activities.

Later, Habitat I gave rise to the UN-NGO Committee on Human Settlements; this has since been converted in name and structure to the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), which has grown significantly in membership and influence. With headquarters in Mexico City, much of HIC's initiatives and responsibilities have devolved to its member regional organizations. With Habitat II, HIC achieved new status—as well as victory for many of its major causes. NGOs will now also have a key responsibility for activating and implementing the *Habitat Agenda*.

Another major breakthrough of Habitat II was to enlist the participation of mayors and representatives of local governments. They were given the opportunity to speak at conference sessions. A World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities met at Istanbul for two days before the conference. Mayors were speakers or panelists at various conference forums and other events. They will be the basis of a permanent and growing constituency for participation in future UN and other international events.

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while improving the quality
of life they can offer in
the third millennium.*

Habitat II highlights

Habitat II had two objectives: "Adequate Shelter for All" and "Human Settlement Development in an Urbanizing World." Despite this rather broad wording, Habitat II did quite well in achieving its aims. In fact, it established important parameters for future global conferences.

- **Participation.** Over 3,000 delegates from 171 countries attended, as well as some 300 parliamentarians, 579 local authorities, 89 special agency representatives, 341

people from intergovernmental organizations, and 2,400 NGO representatives. The parallel NGO Forum '96 attracted 8,000 registered NGO representatives, about 30 percent of whom were from Turkey. During the 16-day forum, 1,700 meetings and events were held. And, for the first time in UN history, NGOs were invited to speak at a major conference, participate in working groups, and help draft agenda recommendations.

- **Habitat Agenda.** This document reflects the wide range of inputs on key issues such as the human right to housing, housing and microenterprise finance, women's empowerment, public-private partnerships, government decentralization, democracy, and people's participation. For the most part, the *Habitat Agenda* does not need international or governmental action. It will be revised and updated periodically and will serve as an educational document for all constituencies concerned with the development and improvement of human settlements around the globe.

- **Best Practices.** Presentation of the best practices awards and database was probably the hands-down hit of the conference. Work converting best practices concepts into a regular annual production is already proceeding, and the best practices database is now available o

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Hagia Sofia, one of Istanbul's many treasures.

the Internet and World Wide Web. The database will be updated as new information becomes available. As of March 15, 1996, 640 submissions had been received from 51 countries, organizations, and associations; over 40 national competitions/exhibitions have been organized; and 85 audiovisuals comprise the foundations of a best practices video library. The Secretariat has proposed a three-year strategy for continuing this initiative. This includes establishment of Regional and Thematic Best Practices Resource Centers and a leadership program.

- **The Global Report on Human Settlements 1996, An Urbanizing World.** This high-quality 560-page volume produced by UNCHS and published by Oxford University Press was made available for Habitat II. It presents the latest information available on urbanization and housing drawn from 30 specially commissioned papers.

- **National Reports.** Reports for 140 nations were prepared and received. Many countries also established National Committees for Habitat II; some of these will continue in networking contexts.

- **Special Fora.** Habitat II boasted numerous fora, including the World Business Forum, the Forum of National Academics of Science and Engineering, the Parliamentarians Forum, the Trade Unions Forum, the Foundations Forum, the Professionals and Researchers Forum, and the Forum on Human Solidarity. Some were quite substantial: the Foundations Forum, for example, had 290 delegates from 210 foundations representing 54 countries. Several of the fora developed ideas for supportive actions for Habitat and/or supported establishing special task forces for this purpose. Each forum presented a summary report to the conference's Partnerships Committee.

- **Dialogues.** Ten thematic one-day dialogues were organized by various sponsors. These featured eminent presenters and panelists dealing with major issues confronting human settlements at the end of the century. The World Bank, for example, organized Dialogue 2, Finance and Cities of the 21st Century.

- **Regional Conferences and Consultations.** With the decision to feature housing finance prominently in the *Habitat Agenda*, several

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The Voices of Habitat

The meeting rooms, hotel rooms, dining rooms, and very streets of Istanbul were filled with intriguing, inspiring, and informative ideas. A sampling of overheard conversations and speeches follows.

On Democracy and Governance

"Democracy in a local context is new. We have to break down mistrust and change the mindset of the police and integrate them into society. Democracy and citizenship go hand in hand."

—Mayor of Johannesburg

"Understand that the culture of the masses is more important than the structure of the administration. The administration cannot damage society: only we can do that by our negligence."

—Zulfu Livanelli,
Turkish writer and poet

"We must try to find new ways to create effective relationships between civil society and government. We need to construct a new vision of the city and bring a new voice to these relationships."

—Richard Stren,
University of Toronto

"There is a new concept of urban governance, a new way of governing cities that is rational, efficient, and transparent."

—Daniel Biau, UNCHS (Habitat)

"The conference is an attempt to rethink urban issues. It is a chance for the American experience to be shared and enhanced."

—Henry Cisneros,
Secretary of U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development

"Justice and freedom for all."

—From a song performed
by a Turkish kindergarten class

On Employment

"Employment is not a residual but is an objective of economic growth."

—Samir Radwan,
International Labor Organisation

"Economic growth will not relieve poverty—we need to reallocate resources."

—David Korten,
Urban Employment Dialogue

On Finance

"We have been using the language of false dichotomies: top and bottom, rich and poor."

—Michael Cohen, *The World Bank*

On Gender

"We are committed to increasing the role of women in the planning process."

—Gorel Thurdin, Former Speaker
of the Swedish Parliament

On Housing and Partnership

"We need to start from the inside with decisions about public housing."

—Brenda Graham, Washington,
D.C., community activist

"We want to be what many of you think we ought to be. Take time to teach us. We must make partnerships with people who are essentially different from us."

—U.S. public housing resident

On Poverty

"We need a new kind of cooperation between NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and entrepreneurs. Improvements of the poor sectors depend on small-scale actions."

—Ruth Cardozo
Assessoria da Presidência
do Conselho da
Comunidade Solidária

"Poverty sets the lifestyle in Jamaica."

—Frances Madden,
Community Activist,
Kingston, Jamaica

On Urban Planning

"Urban development is the most scientific of arts, or the most artistic of sciences."

—Jonas Rabinovich,
United Nations Development
Programme, New York

On What Happens Next

"Action at all levels is necessary; otherwise, the goals of Habitat will remain unfulfilled."

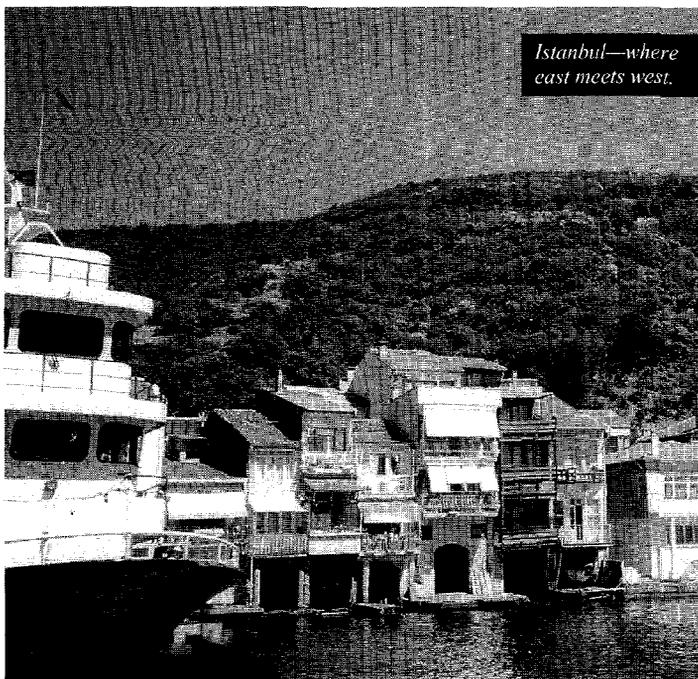
—Ms. Makela,
University of Lesotho

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organizations, such as the Regional Development Banks and the Eco-Hab International Foundation, organized special roundtables or fora on suitable financing strategies for housing.

UNCHS is to be congratulated for having carried out the sophisticated organizational scheme of the conference and its parallel events. In so doing, UNCHS may have reinvented itself as it moves toward the future developing new organizational modes.



Istanbul—where east meets west.

In conclusion...

There was a Spirit of Stockholm, a Spirit of Vancouver, a Spirit of Rio. Just as certainly, there was a Spirit of Istanbul.

The report of the conference and its *Habitat Agenda* will be considered by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly at its 51st session, which begins in New York in September 1996. The report will also be reviewed by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in 1997 and the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in April; UNCHS is next scheduled to meet in April/May 1997. Actions taken on the agenda will depend on the outcomes of the ongoing UN restructuring process.

The *Habitat Agenda* will be an important addition to the Agenda 21 work program. Integration will be required, but much of this should be welcomed. For example, Agenda 21 has virtually nothing to say about housing finance and its modalities. This subject receives good coverage in the *Habitat Agenda*. The same applies to other areas as well.

Meanwhile, the many partners represented at Habitat II can advance their own programs. Local governments have much to do without awaiting further international guidance. The same can be said for project development and investment groups in general.

Habitat II will be remembered for its role in gearing up public understanding and institutional capabilities to finance and implement habitat building and renovation in communities large and small, while improving the quality of life they can offer in the third millennium.

Eric Carlson is president of the ECO-HAB International Foundation and advisor for the Habitat Agenda.

Urban Facts and Figures

- According to the United Nations, some 50,000 people—mainly women and children—die each day from the consequences of inadequate shelter, polluted water, or poor sanitation services. (Source: United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1994 Revision*, New York, 1995, as cited in The Inter Press Service Daily Journal, *Terra Viva*, Vol. 4, No. 104.)
- Contrary to popular perception, rural-urban migration is not the sole cause of the enormous expansion of all cities in the developing world. Between 1960 and 1970, for 26 large cities in the developing world, it is estimated that 63 percent of population growth was due to national increase and 37 percent to migration. (Source: United Nations, *Migration, Population Growth and Employment in Metropolitan Areas of Selected Developing Countries*, New York, 1985; as cited in *The Future of Urban Employment*, International Labor Office, Geneva, May 1996, p. 9.)
- While levels of urbanization are still highest in the industrialized world (80 percent or higher), since the 1970s, there has been a consistent movement of population away from the large cities. This trend of counter-urbanization can be contrasted with developing countries, where “megacities” (with populations greater than 10 million) are rapidly forming. In 1950, there were only two cities, London and New York, with populations of more than 10 million. By 1994, of the 14 megacities in the world, 10 were in developing countries. Two decades from now, of the world’s 27 largest cities with populations of 10 million or more, 23 will be in developing countries, and only 4 in industrialized countries. (Source: *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1994 Revision*, as cited in *The Future of Urban Employment*, p. 10.)
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the urban informal sector is estimated to employ over 60 percent of the urban labor force. In India and Pakistan, the unorganized segment of the manufacturing sector comprised approximately 75 percent and 70 percent, respectively, of total manufacturing in 1990. In Latin America, the share of employment in the urban informal sector increased from 13.4 percent of the labor force to 18.5 percent between 1980 and 1992. (Source: International Labor Office, *World Employment Report*, Geneva, 1995.)
- In the Asia-Pacific region, unemployment rates between the mid-1980s and early 1990s have been higher for women than for men in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. In the former East Germany, women in 1991 made up 62 percent of all registered unemployed, and many other women were known to have been pushed out of the labor force. In Russia, the female share of the registered unemployed was 78 percent in mid-1992. (Source: *World Employment Report*.)
- The urbanization of poverty is growing. In Latin America, the annual rate of growth of urban poverty has increased from 2.25 percent (1980 to 1987) to 4.44 percent (1987 to 1990). In Africa, 41.6 percent of the urban population is living below the poverty line. In Asia, 23 percent of the urban population—or 136 million people—are poor. (Sources: De Janvry et al., *Poverty and Rural Labour in South Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa*, unpublished consultancy report, International Labor Office, 1995; and United Nations, *State of Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific*, New York, 1993.)
- In the early 1980s, around 18 million citizens within the European Union were homeless or extremely badly housed. This included 1.8 million people who, in the course of a year, depend on public or voluntary services for temporary shelter or who squat or sleep rough. (Source: Avramov and Dražana, *Homelessness in the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless*, Brussels, 1995.)

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Interview with Wally N'Dow, Assistant Secretary-General, UNCHS (Habitat)



UA: *What do you think the Habitat II Conference will be best remembered for?*

W N'D: There are three very important answers to that question. First, the conference has seriously attempted to address how our planet can be made more livable for all people in the 21st century. Our footfall has been heavy on the ecosystem. We have been stressing the planet. That is why the debate on human settlements is so important. A greater consciousness of human settlements is priceless, and will undoubtedly make humanity stronger.

Second, Habitat has furnished many practical solutions to the problem of how governments can provide people with access to land and housing.

Third, Habitat has provided a much-needed forum for the sharing of ideas and a spiritual commitment for rewriting the

development mandate. There is a millennial excitement about this conference—we are creating a new era not dominated by provision of resources but of ideas.

This has been a unique conference in the history of international relations because it has not been dominated by any single point of view. This conference has been about what keeps societies together—and ultimately about what makes them tolerant.

UA: *Why did you decide to set up a best practices database?*

W N'D: As you know, best practices are community actions, initiatives, or projects that demonstrate a commitment to implementing lasting solutions to urban problems. The best practices database will allow these success stories to be celebrated and shared around the

world. Also, a formalized data collection and monitoring process will enable us to measure how, where, and when the *Habitat Agenda* has been implemented.

UA: *What are some of the more interesting new ideas that have come out of the Habitat conference planning process?*

W N'D: That actions and resources must come increasingly from the local level. Local voices must be heard if our agenda is to be successfully implemented.

You can feel the positive reaction to our new partners. At the mayors' mini-conference, municipalities were engaging in discussions about their new role in a global context. We need to continue this process with the local players and also encourage governments to go out and look for local or national partners. This is an aspect that we need to emphasize more.

UA: *What will the role of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements be after the conference?*

W N'D: The role of UNCHS will be to help put into place, at the national and local levels in each country, our *Global Plan of Action*. We will continue to advocate and promote the aims of the conference, and we will assist in the monitoring of government programs, by providing measures and indicators with which to evaluate their progress.

A Conversation with Shafqat Kakakhel

Shafqat Kakakhel is Pakistan's high commissioner to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. He served as chairman of Committee I. Following are some of his views on the conference and the committee process.

Issues tackled

"The crisis in human settlements is a simmering crisis. Human settlements is not a provocative issue like women, population, or the environment. It does not ignite the imagination of the policymakers. In fact, it is a crisis with no explosion to remind us of the gravity of the situation . . .

"Pairing the platforms of 'adequate shelter for all' with 'sustainable human settlements' was problematic. Shelter is a problem of the majority of the world's population; but in the South it is a problem of survival—a different, but crucial, emphasis . . .

"The conference was asked to define the problem. How big is it? What are the principles that inform the process? What are the prospects of resolving the problems? What are the actions required to implement solutions? This is too broad a mandate."

Conference organizers and participants

"Conferences sponsored by governments are not terribly interesting. Diplomats and bureaucrats go to conferences not with causes but with briefs. Delegates are naturally hesitant, equivocal, and reluctant; the government people hold fast to their briefs and are rooted in the status quo . . .

"The governments' job is to de-escalate, whereas NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] are boisterous and are always trying to change the status

quo. For example, at the Rio, Copenhagen, and Cairo conferences—where there were no mandated structures—NGOs played a spontaneous role . . .

"The problem for the delegates [to Habitat II] is a problem of their place in history. In this post Cold War era, the system has changed and the shape of things has altered."

In the final analysis

"The conference was held in an unfavorable global context of conference fatigue. There is a feeling that developing countries ask for conferences as a means of getting international support for things they cannot provide in their own countries. There is a constant tug of war between the seekers and the reluctant givers . . .

"This conference should have been an opportunity for the participants to analyze what has gone wrong and what needs to be done. The South is not seeking charity, we are seeking partnership. Developing countries need help in promoting shelter provision. We are calling for cooperation not limited to money . . .

"My assessment is cautious. Conferences are important events because they increase awareness of the issues. We need to recognize the right to housing as an evolutionary process within the context of international law and consensus. We need to give more attention—and more money—to how people live."

Habitat II: A Critical Assessment

by Michael Cohen

Michael Cohen is senior advisor to the office of the Vice President, Environmentally Sustainable Development, The World Bank.

Habitat II capped a three-year process of preparation which involved all of the world's governments and hundreds of its nongovernmental institutions, organizations, and individuals. Both the preparation and the conference itself were global dialogues about experiences in managing urban problems from housing and infrastructure to decentralization of government responsibility and environmental protection. The growing importance of urban phenomena in the world's future was strongly affirmed during and through these dialogues.

Agreements achieved

While a few debates— involving, for example, language about occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and reproductive rights—delayed conclusion of the conference by half a day, these did not significantly undermine the broad consensus of participants (and governments) on several key points:

- The future of the Earth will be heavily determined by the quality of life in cities.
- The economic, social, political, and environmental futures of countries will depend on how urban issues are addressed.
- The scope and scale of these issues has changed since Habitat I. Participants at Habitat II focused their attention on government decentralization; the roles of nonpublic actors such as community groups, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations; the roles and particular vulnerabilities of women, youth, and children in the urbanization process; and the importance of social factors in

urban decisionmaking.

- International assistance flows will not provide developing countries with most of the needed financing for housing, infrastructure, social services, and other urban requirements. Instead, most financial resources will have to come from the countries, cities, and communities themselves.

- Local and national capacities must be strengthened to address urban issues. This includes training of official and unofficial actors, as well as financial and technical strengthening of institutions. One agreed-upon approach was identification of best practice cases that might serve as examples for governments and communities to consider as they develop their own local solutions to problems.

Substantive problems

Despite these achievements, the conference was disappointing in several important respects.

Sector-based discussion. Most of the discussions remained largely sectoral. Housing experts talked about housing without focusing sufficiently on social or environmental dimensions; environmentalists did not refer to the financial or economic costs of environmental management; social activists did not place the dilemmas of communities against the broader problems of mobilizing financial resources for social welfare policies or social safety nets. This lack of cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary thinking did not offer many new solutions to old problems. Few delegates reached across sectors to find new combinations that would suggest new approaches.

National reform issues not explored. Few delegates raised the

broader issues of how national reform processes—such as welfare reform in the United States or Europe—would affect the economies, social fabric, and physical landscape of cities. The interactions between national policy processes and local management of their consequences are major results of the decentralization process, yet these consequences were not frequently addressed. This is even more surprising because the urban impacts of these processes are conditioning the very social and economic character of cities.

Lack of creative tension. The conference's success in bringing nongovernmental organizations to the table, and in breaking with traditional UN practice of keeping official and unofficial activities separate, may have diminished the creative tension between the two perspectives. There was no equivalent to Greenpeace which had provoked the official conference at Rio to come up with more political postures to address environmental problems. While some regarded the order and lack of open conflict at Habitat II as positive, the lack of political and substantive pressure from the periphery may have diminished the urgency of the discussions and the subsequent political energy and imperatives to take action after the conference.

Little attention to capacity-building. Another disappointing feature of the conference was the weakness of the discussion on building capacity to solve solutions to urban problems. In recognizing the need for decentralized, multiple solutions to urban problems, one would have thought that participants would engage with the problem of strengthening the training of urban professionals and citizens in the process. There was no reference to seeking an appropri-

ate balance between, for example urban planning and economics or environmental science, or architecture and social analysis. Major work needs to be done on curriculum reform in urban-related disciplines to produce effective urban practitioners for the future.

Little attention to research.

There were very few references to research during the conference. Fewer than 5 percent of the conference's sessions mentioned research studies. Further, the empirical basis for discussions was largely experiential, and there were very few references throughout to methodology in general. This is a dangerous omission: Methods of empirical inquiry in theoretical framework are essential for testing hypotheses about changing urban patterns at the evaluation of actions to address urban problems. In Istanbul, the research community was neither very visible nor very effective in conveying that the pace and scale of change require more, not less, research if the world, nations, localities, and communities are to understand the full significance of the processes of urban transformation.

Sustainable development largely unaddressed. The biggest gap in Habitat II was the lack of progress in operationalizing the notion of environmentally sustainable development. At Vancouver, "habitat" had been discussed with reference to human settlements but without an environmental context; at Rio, "habitat" had been used to mean ecosystem. The Istanbul conference did not succeed in bringing the two definitions together; it neither demonstrated the interdependency of the two nor the risks to settlements associated with deterioration of natural resources. Further, while "sustainable

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The Right to Housing Debate

by Michael A. Stegman

Michael A. Stegman is assistant secretary for policy development and research with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He served as alternate head of the U.S. delegation to Habitat II.

WASHINGTON, D.C. What does the "right to housing" mean? What is the relative distribution of rights, responsibilities, and obligations among governments, nongovernmental organizations, and private citizens when popular access to decent housing is at issue within a particular country? These and a host of related questions became a key issue and the subject of heated debate as countries prepared for the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in June 1996.

Elusive consensus

In discussing drafts of the *Habitat Agenda*—the official policy document that emerged from the Istanbul conference—the "right to adequate housing" proved to be a contentious issue. Disagreements arose regarding the words themselves, their meanings, and their implications for other international conferences and national government policies.

When the conference opened on June 3, the various delegations were still trying to reach a workable consensus on the wording of this right. The European Union insisted that the *Habitat Agenda* contain an explicit and unqualified recognition of a separate, distinct, and existing "human right to adequate housing." In contrast, the United States, Japan, Argentina, Brazil, and other Latin American countries regarded housing as an important component of the existing "right to an adequate standard of living," which is set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was provided for in several subsequent international conventions. The U.S. position is that housing is a derivative right—along with food, clothing, and other basic elements—of an adequate standard

of living; this right should be realized progressively based on the availability of resources.

Failure to reach consensus regarding the right to housing could have severely undermined the value of the Habitat conference. For one thing, it might have prevented consensus on the entire *Habitat Agenda*, meaning that the conference would not have been able to produce a general policy statement. For another, it could have turned a conference supposedly organized to provide practical solutions to pressing urban problems into a fruitless exercise in moral and political philosophy. The inhabitants of urban regions and their governments expected—and did, in fact, receive—a much more pragmatic approach to housing problems.

A negotiated agreement

In one of the most challenging tasks I have ever undertaken, I led the U.S. team in negotiating these issues with the representatives of many other governments. On the fourth day of the conference, the group drafting housing rights language reached agreement on all related issues in the text of the *Habitat Agenda*. The U.S. belief that the right to housing is an important component of the right to an adequate standard of living is reflected; so is the European Union's concern that an obligation of governments must be recognized in protecting, promoting, and ensuring the progressive realization of this right.

The U.S. delegation was pleased both with the spirit of cooperation that prevailed in the drafting group sessions and with the agreed-upon text, which is consistent with three U.S. objectives:

- It maintains the principle that all human rights are universal,

indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated.

- It defines the meaning of the right to housing in the framework of enablement—the empowerment of individuals to become principal actors in improving their own lives and in building sustainable communities.

- It defines specific actions that governments can take to realize the goal of housing for all.

From philosophy to practicality

The *Habitat Agenda* clearly states that the provision of adequate housing for everyone requires actions not only by national governments and international organizations, but by all levels of government and all sectors of civil society—including the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, communities, and local authorities, as well as by partner organizations and entities of the international community. This language reinforces the concept of empowerment, a major conference theme.

The text moves the discussion of housing rights to a new level of practical significance. In the "Commitments" section, the text identifies 14 separate actions that governments, in partnership with others, should take "to promote, protect, and ensure the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing." These actions include:

- providing effective protection against discrimination of any kind;

- providing legal security of tenure and equal access to land for all, including women and the poor;

- adopting policies to increase the supply of habitable, accessible, and affordable housing to those who are unable to provide it for themselves;

- mobilizing financial and other resources for housing and community development;

- designing and implementing standards that provide accessibility to people with disabilities;

- supporting community-based, cooperative, nonprofit and owner-occupied housing programs;

- promoting supportive services to the homeless and other vulnerable groups; and

- putting in place effective assessment and evaluation programs to identify the extent of homelessness and inadequate housing, and planning processes that engage affected populations in the development of effective strategies.

Consensus lends moral authority

While the *Habitat Agenda* does not have the force of international law, it should have great moral authority because it represents the consensus of 170 governments on the question of housing rights, responsibilities, and obligations. As a major reference document, it will be used to frame discussions at all levels, thus influencing thought and engendering change in a broad range of communities and organizations.

Habitat II has not answered all the questions about access to decent housing in a sustainable living environment. However, it has certainly advanced the dialogue on this critical issue. In fact, one of the conference's most important legacies will be to spark conversations in many countries—including the United States—that could ultimately transform abstract consideration of housing rights into actual housing policies and specific programs designed to improve the living conditions of countless millions around the world.

The Private Sector: An Afterthought?

by Charles Landry

U Charles Landry is director of Comedia, a research and planning consultancy. He is the coauthor of *The Creative City* (London: Demos Books, 1995) and *The Art of Regeneration* (Stroud: Comedia, 1996).

STROUD. How can the massive task of providing dwellings worldwide for several billion people be accomplished over the next decade? How can the ravages of urban stress, unemployment, poverty, and social fragmentation be ameliorated?

The answer lies in harnessing the resources, talents, and skills of the public, private, and voluntary sectors. Each has a distinct contribution to make. Public authorities—whether local, national, or international—need to provide the framework for planning infrastructure, urban design, and the rules by which the market is allowed to operate. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can assist in unleashing

the fact that bringing in the business sector was an afterthought and not integral to the core planning of Habitat. Consequently, there was no effective exchange of views among the various parties: The private corporations had not contributed to the thinking and agenda-setting that formed part of Habitat's genesis. They had not been able to show where and how they might add value. And, at the event itself, they disappeared by the time the real business of politics began.

The World Business Forum

The forum's 350 delegates represented an interesting array of socially concerned business

ity of business; and

- The Business Coalition for Sustainable Cities, which attempts to mobilize and channel business resources toward common goals to achieve highest value at lowest cost.

Also included were "real" business people from Volvo, Dow Europe, Pfizer, Mitsubishi, and CNN all presenting their best practices. But because the group had not met before, it was difficult for it to focus its deliberations on a common agenda or precise action plan—let alone define a common platform of operations in collaboration with the public and voluntary sectors.

Nevertheless, a mass of best practices was put forward—over 100 in all (which could have warranted a wider audience). The practices described included Monsanto's educational and mentoring programs;

Volkswagen's community trust, which helps women and the unemployed get into business; Group Schneider's new apprenticeship scheme; Sun Microsystems Community Action Volunteer Program and Employee Matching Gifts Scheme; and Van City Savings and Loan initiative, which creatively uses interest rates to support affordable housing.

Corporate involvement and philanthropy

Of course, corporations aim to help their own bottom line, but the world over has witnessed a long history of corporate generosity. And, moreover, corporate community involvement is evolving. Three distinct evolutionary phases are discernable. The first typically involves small amounts of cash given on an ad hoc basis, largely at the whim of

the company head. The second phase entails companies adopting a more sophisticated approach, setting aside an annual budget and establishing an in-house department for community affairs. By now, many leading companies have advanced to the third phase, which involves the complete integration of community affairs with business objectives.

This new corporate philanthropy has been pioneered by firms like Levi Strauss, Reebok, IBM, and Fel Pros. Their aim is to use giving not only to help recipients but also to develop and widen employees' interests, skills, motivation, and commitment; improve internal corporate communication and morale; increase a company's name recognition among consumers; influence government programs; and reduce research and development costs—all the while remaining profitable.

The more progressive of today's companies define their community as a large and heterogeneous group, no longer restricted to a relatively small number of stakeholders (directors, investors, and senior management) who are primarily interested in short-term performance and profit. The corporate community now extends to include the company's employees and their dependents, the neighborhoods and towns that surround a firm's locations, suppliers and business partners, and an increasingly well-informed customer who is often as interested in a firm's contribution to the quality of life and global well-being as in the quality of its products.

The World Business Forum was a start in addressing these concerns—but who among the Habitat delegates knew it was actually happening? **U**

Harnessing the resources, talents, and skills of the public, private, and voluntary sectors will ameliorate the ravages of urban stress.

the inventive and entrepreneurial capacity of communities to help themselves and become self-reliant. And the private sector can direct its profit-oriented drive, entrepreneurship, and ability to deliver and make things happen.

An afterthought

The public sector presence at Habitat was overwhelming, and the NGO contribution clearly visible. But where was the private sector? Squeezed in, it seems, at the front end—that is, at the World Business Forum organized by Marcello Pallazzi of the Progressio Foundation on behalf of Habitat. Strangely though, that forum ended the moment the real conference began. This was a pity. It reflects

people, their organizations, and various social entrepreneurs concerned with urban renewal. These included such organizations as the following:

- Common Purpose, which seeks to establish practical visions for cities by creating new urban leaderships of concerned citizens and bringing together—among others—retailers, developers, banks, the teaching professions, hospitals, and even artists;
- Social Venture Network Europe, a group of business people concerned with venture capital investment in companies working toward sustainable development;
- The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, which advocates the social responsibility

Implementing Habitat II's Objectives: The Role of USAID

by Sarah Wines and Annick Salomon

Sarah Wines is the assistant director for strategy and policy for the Office of Environment and Urban Programs at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Annick Salomon is a nongovernmental organization liaison for the Office of Environment and Urban Programs.



WASHINGTON, D.C. "Habitat II was a once-in-a-lifetime event, bringing together the best and brightest in their fields to discuss a major 21st century issue," states Peter Kimm, associate assistant administrator for the Center for Environment of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). "It was a unique opportunity to benefit from their combined experience."

It also was an opportunity for the agency to reaffirm its commitment to bilateral aid programs addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization worldwide.

Partnerships

Habitat II emphasized the creative role of partnerships in developing effective approaches to urbanization issues and focused on the empowerment of local authorities, community groups, and individuals. USAID's long-standing commitment to empower local governments and support the development of partnerships among all levels of government, businesses, and community groups has been embedded in a variety of programs, the most recent of which is the Resource Cities program.

Resource Cities' primary objective is to provide a quick, cost-effective means for delivering technical assistance and exchanging information between U.S. cities and cities in the developing world. This year, the program will be expanded to include businesses and nongovernmental organizations in the community. The goal is to foster involvement by private citizens in urban community development.

Best practices

The sharing of information and

ideas is expanding far beyond city exchanges of purely technical information. Habitat II highlighted the need to identify and share information on model programs and best practices. This information should be widely available and shared across borders; between different levels of government; and among the private, public, and nongovernmental sectors. "What is important is the lessons learned from best practices and how these experiences can be made accessible and useful to urban practitioners," says Vivianne Gary, director of USAID's Office of Environment and Urban Programs.

USAID is involved not only in the sharing of information on best practices but in the actual development of these innovative practices. Of the 12 best practices selected by an international jury as Awards for Excellence winners at Habitat II, two are USAID projects. In Agadir, Morocco, USAID and the Moroccan government helped slum-dwellers improve their living conditions (see "Best Practices," page 18). USAID also assisted with the rehabilitation of lower income neighborhoods in Lublin, Poland.

This was the first project in that country to focus on participatory development; its success confirms the benefits of community participation. Habitat II reaffirmed the crucial role donors can play in promoting innovative urban programs and sharing information on successful projects with the widest possible range of partners.

Urban finance

USAID has been working closely with the World Bank and other donors to develop ways of addressing the enormous investment requirements of urban areas. These urban financing efforts are

focused on three goals: increase access to shelter and urban services, improve urban management, and reduce urban pollution. USAID is continuing to explore and identify new governance structures and financial tools for leveraging a broad range of financial resources to support urban investments, including those from the private sector. USAID believes it can best help countries by working with local governments, businesses, and communities to develop efficient pricing policies, foster financial market development, and promote microfinance lending. USAID aims to provide financial and technical assistance that supports new practices, and also to analyze and disseminate information about these practices and thereby foster innovative approaches and increase understanding of their effectiveness at the host country level.

Indicators

Habitat II affirmed that the use of performance measurements and indicators is key to leveraging change in organizational and institutional behavior to promote sustainable development. For instance, gender- and age-differentiated data can illustrate the differential impacts that urban policy decisions have on women and children. USAID assisted many countries in preparing and collecting indicators for Habitat II, and will continue to help countries further refine and implement sectoral indicators. Agency efforts will focus on refining the analysis of indicator data currently available and including consideration of indicators in the policymaking process.

Environment

The official negotiations of the *Habitat Agenda* gave the international community an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment made to sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio four years ago. Habitat II participants agreed that the best framework for development is centered around the principles formulated in Rio, which recognize environmental protection, economic development, and social growth as mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. During Habitat II, the U.S. delegation introduced language on phasing out lead in gasoline and reducing its use in paint and other materials. The final *Habitat Agenda* includes these goals. The specific focus on lead will ensure that countries eliminate what the World Health Organization has identified as the single most dangerous pollutant threatening the lives and health of children. USAID's Office of Environment and Urban Programs is currently looking at ways to develop effective lead-reduction programs.

Conclusion

Habitat II produced an ambitious agenda; the international community must now rise to the challenge and implement the agreed-upon policy recommendations. By working together as partners at the local, national, and international levels to achieve the objectives formulated at Habitat II, USAID and its global partners can have a positive and lasting impact on sustainable human settlements development around the world.



Ahmedabad's Credit Rating: Building the Basis for Better Urban Finance

by Margaret Bergen

Much of the debate at the United Nations Habitat II City Summit was about how to make cities sustainable. One aspect of this debate is to increase their financing options. Cities need new sources of financing since they can no longer rely on national governments to subsidize their needs. The summit's Urban Finance Dialogue explored the opportunities this presents and the new ways of doing business it occasions. The story of Ahmedabad, India, was told—an Asian city that turned its financial situation around, moving from failure and dysfunction to an internationally recognized credit rating. Ahmedabad shows that, if they are to become effective players in the global economy, cities must set their own financial priorities and explore the many new financing techniques and options available to them to fund these.

ISTANBUL. One of the ironies Keshav Varma noticed on becoming commissioner of Ahmedabad in 1994 was that this city, one of the six municipal corporations in the state of Gujarat, was among the richest in India—seat of professionals, merchants, and traders with a population of 3.7 million and a historic exposure to the international business community. Yet, the municipal corporation had been in debt since 1983, no capital works had been initiated since then, and 85 to 90 percent of revenues covered salaries.

In the autumn of 1994, these financial problems were eclipsed by the arrival of a horrific plague. Varma, then Ahmedabad's housing commissioner, was called in as the city's plague coordinator. His reputation as a tough, non-nonsense officer served him well. He cleared the city, oversaw the removal of 75,000 tons of garbage, and refocused attention on the need to get the city working again. In the process, he won back credibility for the municipal corporation.

Analyzing the problem

When Varma became commissioner in December 1994, the city workers allowed him a free hand to clean house. For the first three months, his team tried to discover why the corporation was not making money. Varma learned that, in the past, finance and accounts had not been a focus. There was no efficient system to track revenues and to streamline revenue-earning departments.

This administrative and

financial malaise was compounded by a healthy dose of well-organized crime, particularly at the customs checkpoints surrounding the city. Vehicles bringing commercial goods are supposed to pay duty—this octroi tax is one of the main sources of the city's revenue.

The local Mafia had been playing a major role in helping vehicles escape detection. And, as Varma notes, "There was no moral courage to stop them." Varma drew on the authority vested in him by his Indian civil service training. "We do not have a populist system: India is a controlled democracy. Actions must be clear cut. Corruption is basic and must be stamped out."

Taking severe, but effective, public action

Varma's first strategy was to confront the Mafia in the field. The corporation went after all illegalities. It increased the number of its surveillance vehicles and searched all vehicles at the checkpoints. Income went up in the first three months by \$100,000 per day. This dramatic showdown with the Mafia, says Varma, "was a sign to the people that they were not alone, that everybody was now taking a risk together. The notion that the municipal corporation was going to be the dominant force now prevailed."

Varma took the same head-on approach to other city problems. The Midland Hotel, one of the most important buildings in the city, was in noncompliance with the local building code. In front

of a well-orchestrated press gathering, the corporation demolished the first three floors of the hotel. To promote better tax collection, Varma set up a computerized system that allowed for identification of tax dodgers. With a combined strategy of cutting off utilities for nonpayment and using jeeps and trucks as enforcement backup, the corporation began to collect an outstanding balance estimated between US\$200 to \$300 million.

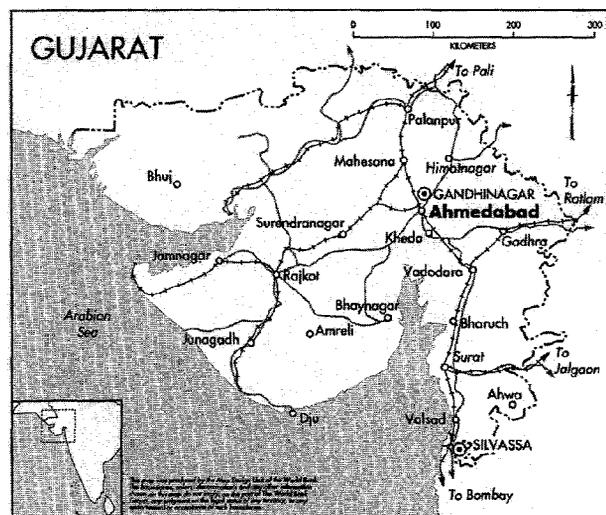
Going after the credit rating

As the corporation's reputation was restored, the city's tax base increased. By February 1995, the city's debts were erased. And in

million, a sizable financing gap existed.

To meet the need for additional resources, the idea of a credit rating was posed—although initially it met with some skepticism. Varma was so closely identified with Ahmedabad's success that people wondered if the city's achievements would dissipate when he left the job at the end of his three-year appointment.

This fear notwithstanding, Ahmedabad already possessed many of the attributes requisite to attain a credit rating: professional and transparent city management modernized accounting systems, and accurate and trustworthy financial reporting. The city was



March, for the first time in Ahmedabad's history, there was a surplus.

The corporation prepared an infrastructure improvement plan. Even given the city's vastly improved financial health and the fact that it could now finance investments of up to US\$500

also beginning to recognize, as Varma explains, that "local bodies must create their own priorities backed up by their own money."

Credit Information Rating Services (CRIS), a company associated with Standard & Poor the U.S. credit rating organiza-

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Life After Habitat II in Istanbul

by Andrew Finkel

For several years, Andrew Finkel has been a correspondent based in Istanbul for various publications including *The Times* and *The Economist*. He also has a regular column in the Turkish daily newspaper, *Sabah*.

ISTANBUL. The proposition has a ring of common sense: If Habitat II, the recent UN city summit, is to make any impact at all, it will be on the future of Istanbul, the very city where it occurred. Stand the proposition on its head, and it makes better sense still. Habitat II was an event as diverse and confusing as Istanbul itself. It was not so much a conference as a mini-city in its own right—a reflection of all the problems and virtues of its formidable host. If Habitat II does have a special meaning for Istanbul, it is in part because the city could not help but create a conference in its own image.

Certainly the organizers were convinced of the appropriateness of Istanbul as a setting in which to discuss human settlement. Istanbul is everything the tourist posters claim—a modern metropolis with an uninterrupted urban tradition stretching back over millennia. Less publicized is the fact that it continues to grow at a rate of anywhere up to 400,000 people every year. The city proudly points to the symbolism of its suspension bridge connecting Europe to Asia—although sometimes Istanbul appears to be less a bridge between cultures or a link between North and South than a place that falls between two stools.

Istanbul is, therefore, a city with something to prove.

Istanbul: An emerging player

To stage Habitat II, Istanbul recreated out of the center of the city what it called “a conference valley”—a complex of grand hotels and newly built or refurbished convention halls. It re-laid every bit of paving with pink-colored brick (for years, residents

have complained that the danger of their streets was not due to muggers but to unexpected gaps in the road). There were suggestions that the civic authorities were trying to turn a city of well over 10 million persons into a white-washed Potemkin village. But not all was for show—the

The shadow of Habitat II has not depoliticized urban issues but helped redefine them outside the debates of current party politics.

municipality was still paving remote neighborhoods two months after the guests had gone home.

If a UN conference can have a subtext, then it was to show that Istanbul has realized its goal to be a regional node in a global nexus. Little wonder that the extravagant closing ceremony was sponsored by the committee cherishing the city's next ambition—the right to hold the Olympic Games in the year 2004. With Habitat II, Istanbul has shown itself to be an amiable host.

Will it also be better able to cope with urban sprawl, traffic, and pollution, as well as social problems still on the horizon? Staring out from a vantage point on the Bosphorus across the well-kempt conference valley to an ever-expanding periphery and ill-defined future, it would be a brave act to see Habitat II as a watershed in the administrative fortunes of not just Istanbul but other Turkish cities. And yet this just may turn out to be the case.

Conference legitimated decentralization

The staging of the conference was not simply an exercise in public

works nor a test of Istanbul's hospitality industry. For those involved in the preparation of the substance and for those co-opted into the partnership committees and a nongovernmental forum larger than the official conference itself, Habitat II was the confirmation of a slow-moving but

inexorable process. It legitimated administrative decentralization in Turkey and a transfer of responsibility to the institutions of civil society.

This, rather than the laborious drafting of the Habitat II declaration, was the message that hit home. In the final analysis, it was not simply that Istanbul could not ignore its responsibilities as host. Rather, it realized that the Habitat process, sanctioned by a vast international apparatus, reinforced its own struggle with a jealous central government.

Once upon a time, this was seen as wrestling a “zero-sum” quantity of power from the capital, Ankara. In Istanbul—and in Turkey in general—this is a struggle that has continued regardless of the political complexion of the mayor's office. Indeed, the most radical recent charter for the decentralization of power to local authorities in Turkey, a 1983 municipal law, occurred almost by accident when the Turkish military transferred power to a civilian government. The outgoing generals simply adopted wholesale reforms that were proposed during the 1970s but which were considered much too politically charged at the time.

Although the fight to devolve centrally collected revenues and greater legal powers continues, local government in Turkey is much more aware of the possibility of bypassing central government altogether and making use of the organizational capacity of its own community. More importantly, that community no longer sees itself as the bottom of a hierarchy but as a source of power itself. Historically, neighborhoods in Istanbul—most of them built illegally—did negotiate with political authority first to exist and then for basic services. But now the negotiations are more complex. They arouse pragmatic and ethical issues within a society that is not one homogeneous entity, but—to use the language of Habitat—an assembly of partners. Not all partners are equal. Habitat II may not force Turkish industrialists to be socially responsible. But after Habitat, consumers are bound to tell them if they are not.

Redefining urban issues

It is curious to see, two months after Habitat II, the central government resorting to an old politician's trick of filling its coffers and increasing its popularity by selling pardons for illegal construction. Maybe not this time but perhaps the next, the ruse just won't work. The equally pragmatic mayors of Turkey's metropolitan municipalities all object, even those of the government's own complexion, precisely because it is a move that diminishes their ability to administer the sustainable city. The shadow of Habitat II has not depoliticized urban issues but helped redefine them outside the debates of current party politics.

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Partnership in Action

by *Patralekha Chatterjee*

4 *Patralekha Chatterjee is a former student of the Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford, and a development journalist. She is currently based in New Delhi.*

NEW DELHI. In the barn-like room, under an asbestos roof, the temperature is nearing 120°F. It is quiet—just the click of looms, the clack of a manual typewriter, and the click of the striker on the carom-board. The light-skinned, sloe-eyed women in bright sarongs, who are learning to weave hand-knotted carpets, do not look up from their looms when a visitor enters. The men, squatting on the floor and playing carom, are equally absorbed.

This is the office of the Tribal Welfare Society and the home of its members—women (and a few men) displaced by conflicts in India's northeast region. For its 25 residents, the society is the last refuge.

The silence is broken shortly before noon, with the arrival of a white van from the food bank next door. Set up by an expatriate Indian in memory of his mother, the food bank has an arrangement with select five-star hotels in New Delhi. Their surplus is tested by a nutritionist, and then distributed twice daily, to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working with the poor and needy.

This is just one of many partnerships forged by Maria Mangta, the Tribal Welfare Society's founder and general secretary, in order to transform displaced and marginalized people from liabilities into assets. In the last three years, the society has helped nearly 50 poor and displaced men and women.

Maria did not attend the City Summit in Istanbul this June, nor were her successes at building partnerships for problem solving showcased. But hearing her tale, one wishes she *had* been at Habitat II, sharing her experiences of negotiating with bureaucrats, tough-talking businessmen, and NGO representatives.

Genesis of the society

Maria used to be a foreign exchange dealer in Bangkok. She gave it up in 1993 and moved to New Delhi. Her apartment in West Delhi was located in a neighborhood frequented by students and migrants from the northeast. Soon she found herself providing shelter to young women from her home province—Manipur in northeastern India, on the Myanmar border.

"I was feeding them, clothing them, and lodging them. Then one day, I said, 'This has to stop. Everyone has to work for their livelihood.' The women had one skill—they knew how to weave—it is part of their tradition. We set up a makeshift workshop and started weaving shawls with traditional Manipuri designs. On weekends, we would hawk them door to door."

During one such sortie, Maria ran into a man who suggested she get in touch with the All India Tribal Development Organization, a quasi-official national body. "I followed up on his suggestion. I started attending their weekly meetings, and even helped organize a cultural evening of tribal dances from the northeast," recalls Maria.

Her participation paid off. She succeeded in not only becoming a member of the organization's executive committee, but also in solving her housing problem. She, along with 15 other displaced women, had registered themselves as the Tribal Welfare Society. As a nonprofit body dealing with women in distress, they got top priority for accommodation. Soon, the society had its own address. And Maria quit her day job.

That was the genesis of the Tribal Welfare Society. Today, it has moved beyond shelter to

rehabilitation. And it uses the skills of the displaced women themselves for this purpose.

Charity and employment

For the past three years, society members have been meeting their expenses out of the money they earn selling hand-made shawls at exhibitions. An impressive display at one such exhibition convinced a senior official at the Central Wool Development Board of the Indian Ministry of Textiles that it was worth his while to do the society a good turn. Consequently, he provided the group with a grant worth US\$5,714; these funds were spent to set up a carpet-weaving training center comprised of six looms and a weaving instructor, Karma Sherpa.

Before the Central Wool Board gave them the money to buy carpet-looms, the women had worked on small strap-looms, weaving shawls and mufflers. Weaving carpets is a new skill: "They are learning fast," says Sherpa.

The looms are a new acquisition, Maria proudly declares. But she firmly believes that charity alone does not solve the problem. "I want to tie in with carpet-buyers, as the women learn how to weave intricate designs. Some buyers have already started showing interest," she says.

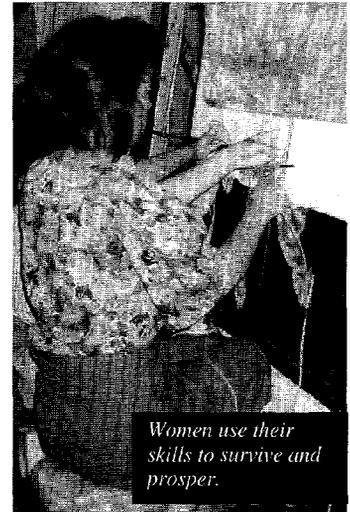
Toward empowerment

Many of the conflict-scarred women and men who make up the Tribal Welfare Society have lost their most precious possessions—their home, their belongings. Some have lost their loved ones. Picking up the pieces of their lives and moving on is not easy. Banks will not lend them money, because they have no assets and

can provide no collateral.

But despite scant resources, many are determined to show that they will not be dependent on hand-outs all their lives and that the displaced need not be damned.

Maria wants her charges to "learn as well as earn." She adds, "I want them to go back to their home state after the training period and teach others."



Women use their skills to survive and prosper.

Partnership leads to solutions

Partnership was the buzzword of much of the discourse at Habitat II. But it is not just another lofty idea; rather, it is a practical way of finding solutions to the increasingly complex problems facing human settlements in today's world. The exchanges at the partners' fora, a special feature of the City Summit, hopefully will lead to networking among different agencies and a cross-fertilization of ideas in the future. This will not only reduce the cost burden for each player, but may well lead to innovative approaches to seemingly intractable problems—problems as severe as those faced and conquered by Maria Mangta and the empowered residents of the Tribal Welfare Society.

Children at Habitat II

by Dr. Hans J. Hoyer

Dr. Hans J. Hoyer is PLAN's international regional director in South Asia and was the leader of the Habitat II policy team.



To promote and illustrate the habitat needs of children, PLAN International—the world's largest private child sponsorship organization—exhibited 21 works of art on the theme of habitat at the conference. These artworks were produced by children from around the world, aged 6 to 17. Entitled “We Live Here Too!—The Habitat of the Child,” this exhibition helped show that children have a critical role to play in identifying habitat needs and in implementing solutions.

More specifically,

- Children's habitats have a powerful influence on their development.
- Children have special and specific needs from their habitat that might not necessarily be met by general improvements.

“I would like my neighborhood to look like this: a very safe place designed for me as a child, away from things dangerous to my health and with a wide place for me to play. Trees where I can take a rest when I am tired and clean water to drink when I am thirsty. A river where I can swim.”

—Jason C. Neric, age 15

• Children not only can but must participate in the selection, design, and implementation of habitat improvement projects.

This message was clearly

heard at Habitat II. The final *Global Plan of Action for Habitat* includes:

- repeated references to children and their special needs

and vulnerabilities;

- consistent emphasis on community-based organizations and processes that fully include women and children in defining problems, setting priorities, and implementing solutions;

- a broad view of habitat that extends from the home through the community to the human and natural environments around them;

- a call to measure urbanization and habitat programs by their specific impact on children.

Additionally, in a separate Declaration of Mayors and Local Authorities, municipal officials called for measuring “the well-being of children as an indicator of effective implementation of human settlement policies.”

Violence and Its Effects on Women's Access to Social Services

by Frances Madden

Frances Madden, a community activist living and working in Jamaica, was one of the guest speakers at a special event held at Habitat II called *Gender, Social Policy and the City*. The event was co-sponsored by the World Bank; UNCHS (Habitat); the Huairou Commission; the Women, Homes and Community Super-Coalition; and Urban Poor Associates, the Philippines.

KINGSTON. Jamaica is the largest of the English-speaking Caribbean Islands, with an area of approximately 11,000 square kilometers. Its current population is about 2.5 million, more than one-quarter of whom reside in the capital, Kingston. Much of the nation's industrial activity is focused in the cities; agriculture is the mainstay of rural areas.

Growth, poverty, unrest

In recent years, there have been high levels of migration to the city, as people seek work and/or training opportunities. This trend of rapid, unchecked urban growth has placed great demands on housing and physical and social amenities—many of which were already lacking. A variety of factors has led to:

- relatively high national unemployment levels—15.3 percent in general and 21.8 percent among women;
- excessive political tribalism, which limits access to housing in those communities with strong political affiliations; and
- a concentration of houses in urban settlements, giving rise to the establishment of squatter communities and ghetto areas.

These factors often create highly volatile communities, prey to issues of political control and criminal activities. The situation is exacerbated by violence.

A key impact of violence is disruption of access to critical services. Poverty is a fact of life in inner-city communities. Social services—including health care, self-employment opportunities, and child care facilities—have become extremely valuable to women as they struggle to maintain their households and build a life for their families.

Violence disrupts access to such services by creating fear, hostility, and isolation. Three types of violence prevail in Jamaica: gang, interpersonal, and domestic. Each takes a toll on women's access to services.

Gang violence

Gang violence is usually politically or drug-related. It takes the form of retaliatory killings, beatings, stonings, or rapes involving guns and knives. This type of violence creates severe hardships for families, destroying the fabric of home and community life.

When a gang member dies, the gang retaliates against the families and community of its rivals. The community, in response, disbands. The younger males usually leave for rural areas. Children are sent to other relations. Entire families move away, returning only when the war is over. It then takes great resources and time to re-establish the family.

Gang members are suspicious of people going outside the community, especially women who do domestic work. They believe these women will inform the police of gang-related activities. Thus, these women lose their only means of economic support. Men who reside outside the community cannot visit their families; their women can receive no support for the children.

There are other consequences as well:

- Parents withdraw their children from school, as most of the educational institutions are closed.
- Women make sure they are friendly with the community leader in order to receive protec-

tion. This in turn leads to jealousies, rivalries, and jockeying for position among the women and their illegitimate children; it can spark instances of interpersonal violence as well.

Gang violence also affects the provision of all local services simply because both service providers and service recipients are afraid to leave their homes.

Interpersonal violence

Interpersonal violence can be carried out by woman against woman, man against man, man against woman or woman against man, parent against child, child against parent, or child against child.

One of the main factors in adult situations of interpersonal violence is jealousy of other sexual partners. Other factors derive from the forced sharing of spaces and amenities typical of inner-city communities. Violence erupts in the most pedestrian of settings; for example:

- At communal water facilities, violence can arise if one person uses the pipe for too long.
- In playing spaces, children may fight among themselves due to limited space; the mothers may get involved—sometimes leading to stabbings.

Interpersonal violence results in hostility, suspicion, and malice. Sharing, cooperation, and neighborliness are nonexistent. Thus, for example, mothers must pay for child care, rather than trust a neighbor. Additionally, access to community credit—e.g., at local shops—is lost.

Domestic violence

In Jamaica, there are no clear definitions for classifying

domestic violence. There is a range of offenses existing on the books that could potentially involve domestic disputes and murders.

A typical sequence of events seems to lead to domestic violence, or at least to its potential. This begins with a family history of physical abuse, combined with a situation of extreme poverty. In this setting, a young girl becomes involved in a sexual relationship with an older boy or man for emotional and/or financial support. Her ignorance and naivety often lead to pregnancy. The girl is then generally forced out of school, possibly made to leave home, and often abandoned by the baby's father.

The impact of domestic violence on women often results in:

- reduced opportunities for personal development;
- reduced opportunities for use of community services, such as informal child care;
- isolation from friends and community, since the man might fear that these outside influences might convince the woman to leave the household; and
- reduced access to services from nongovernmental organizations and government institutions, e.g., health, family planning, and counseling.

Solutions and recommendations

There are a number of recommendations for addressing the three problems outlined above.

General

- Create incentive programs for youth to stay in school, e.g., by providing increased exposure

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through youth camps and summer programs.

- Conduct parent education, to include parent-child relationships and communication, child development issues, and the influence of the environment on behaviors.

- Perform sustained and ongoing research, including the use of participatory methods and the need for longitudinal assessments.

Gang violence

- Interface with gang and community leaders to reduce the levels of violence.

- Sensitize youths to available choices other than guns.

- Invite political leaders to small group discussions to identify alternatives to violence.

Interpersonal violence

- Work with young girls to increase their levels of self, self-worth, and self-respect.

- Work with leaders in community organizations to prevent the development of further interpersonal animosities within communities.

- Work with young children, especially those in the school environment, in the development and clarification of realistic value systems and moral codes.

Domestic violence

- Clearly define categories of domestic violence to assist the police in taking decisive action and to allow women to understand their rights.

- Extend the activities of community women's groups to include discussion on issues of trust and management of domestic disputes, and provide opportunities for obtaining interim relocation funding.

- Create opportunities for women to gain economic independence.

East-Central European Urban and Housing Indicators System

by József Hegedüs and Iván Tosics

József Hegedüs and Iván Tosics are co-directors of the Metropolitan Research Institute in Budapest, Hungary.

BUDAPEST. The new governments of the transition countries of Eastern Europe that were elected in the early 1990s started to restructure their centralized housing policies in response to both political and macroeconomic pressures.

Within a very short period of time, massive wealth transfer programs were undertaken through privatization of the state rental housing stock and restitution of property. As a result, the states' central role in determining housing policies diminished as these policies became more market oriented.

These major reforms have not been without conflict and failure. For example, privatization and rent and price reforms were, in many cases in the region, not accompanied by much-needed institutional changes—such as functioning condominium laws or housing allowances for the poor—creating both inefficiencies in management of the housing stock and inequities among different population groups.

Measuring the success of restructuring

To investigate the restructuring of housing policy in East-Central Europe, a project to develop qualitative and quantitative shelter and urban indicators was begun in November 1994. Indicators are statistics, the interpretation of which directly inform policy decisions. These indicator data can be used to evaluate ongoing sectoral developments and provide insights into both ongoing and proposed housing reforms. This project has resulted in the first systematic and comparative data collection effort since the transition. The U.S. Agency for

International Development was the project's main sponsor; additional support was provided by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Economic Commission for Europe.

Indicators and Habitat II

Indicators on human settlements were a high priority for Habitat II. Around the world, urban and housing data were collected for inclusion in the Global Indicators Database, a collaborative program developed through the World Bank and UNCHS (Habitat) which presents a unique description of human settlements in over 90 countries and 190 cities.

The East-Central European regional housing and urban indicators program received substantial interest at Habitat II. Two presentations—one at the Economic Commission for Europe's special event and a second at the Indicators Seminar—about the program were made during the conference.

Future work

Both the international institutions and participating countries involved in the indicator project plan to continue their regional cooperation. Their aim is to start institutionalizing the indicators in the East-Central European countries. A further aim is to coordinate this regional activity with the Western European indicator efforts, especially with Eurostar and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development working groups.

To meet these objectives, future work on the indicators system should concentrate on the

following areas:

- Further develop those modules of the housing indicators system that belong to the most important policy areas and that need more work in order to establish reliable indicators (e.g., targeting of subsidies, measuring arrears and social safety net, monitoring rehabilitation/deferred maintenance of the multifamily housing stock).

- Address key areas of local government functioning (such as socioeconomic development finance) in the system of urban indicators; regionalize the urban indicators (i.e., develop new indicators that measure the special problems of the East-Central European region); and bring the system of indicators closer to the process of local government budgeting (i.e., establish basic information for program budgeting).

- Enlarge the geographical coverage of the indicators from the capital city to a national sample of settlements (to be able to get national values of indicators as weighted averages of local data); decide on the frequency of data collection; improve data collection methods; and determine the relationship between the indicators and the existing system of housing statistics.

- Suggest uses for the quantitative and qualitative data; establish organizational and institutional processes to ensure that indicators are taken into consideration in policy formation.

Urban and housing indicators provide us with a powerful tool in analysis and policymaking: we cannot make our cities better and solve our habitat and housing problems effectively until we know exactly what's out there.

Best Practices in Istanbul...and After

by Szilard Fricska

Szilard Fricska works in the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme at UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi, Kenya.

NAIROBI. "This is, in my view, one of the most important events at Habitat II." United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali was referring to the Best Practices Award Ceremony, the culmination of a two-year search for solutions to the problems of our urbanizing world. Habitat II, the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements, injected new life into the genre of international conferences by focusing on solutions—not simply on the problems.

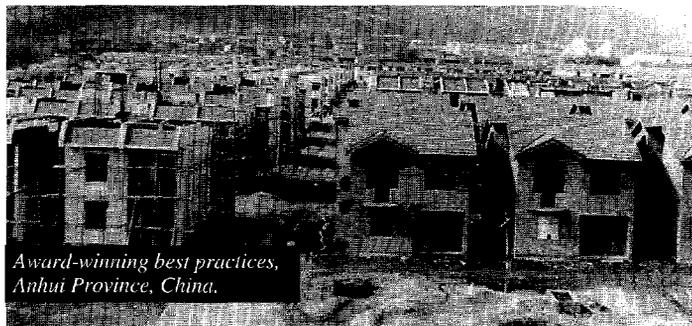
A wealth of inspiration

"The basic idea," explains Nicholas You, the coordinator of the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme, "was that most previous UN conferences have been remarkably successful in forging the consensus on what needs to be done . . . but one of the key areas that the international community has had to work on in

terms of follow-up was how do we actually address these problems? The whole idea was that we would address the *how* from the onset, by looking for success stories, successful solutions that have been implemented."

These solutions—best practices—involve partnerships between such key actors as national and local governments, nongovernmental and civil society organizations, the private sector and professional organizations which have made tangible and sustainable improvements in the living environments of people around the world. At Habitat II, 12 such partnerships received the Awards for Excellence in Improving the Living Environment. Ranging from a small, community-based initiative in Cote d'Ivoire to the citywide revival of Chattanooga, Tennessee, these programs represent a wealth of inspiration and experience to be shared with the rest of the world.

As Boutros Ghali observed at



Award-winning best practices, Anhui Province, China.

the award ceremony, "All 12 share one common feature, whether they be from developed or developing countries. They represent change: change in the way we define problems and search for solutions, change in attitudes and behavior, change in governance and management systems. They demonstrate that positive change and sustainable human development are indeed possible and 'do-able.'"

Standardizing best practices criteria

Best practices are actions,

initiatives, or projects that clearly demonstrate the commitment of people, their communities, and a wide range of stakeholders to implement lasting solutions to their urban problems. As such, they provide valuable lessons and serve as examples for further application whether in a similar or adapted form. Many best practices address critical areas such as job creation; access to housing, land, and basic services; environmental rehabilitation; and the social integration of women and youth.

While best practices information and case studies have existed in a variety of forms and been available from many different sources, there has never been a consistently applied set of criteria to define success, nor a consistent format for documenting these initiatives. The UN General Assembly, however, accepted three criteria for a best practice:

- tangible impact,
- partnership, and
- sustainability.

From these criteria, an unified reporting format was devised that greatly facilitates comparison among cases.

Best practices database

The award recipients, along with several hundred other good and best practices, are now available on a best practices

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1996 Best Practices Awards for Excellence

The following 12 initiatives have been awarded the Tokyo and Dubai Awards for Excellence in Improving the Living Environment at Habitat II:

- Project on Sites and Services for Family Groups with Low Incomes Living in the North of Gran, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Integration Council in the Favelas Rehabilitation Process, Fortaleza, Brazil
- Metro Toronto's Changing Communities: Innovative Responses, Metro Toronto, Canada
- Post-Calamity Reconstruction of Anhui Province's Rural Areas, China
- Successful Institutionalization of Community-Based Development in the Commune of Adjame, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire
- A Women's Self-Help Organization for Poverty Alleviation in India: The Case of SEWA Bank, India
- Shelter Upgrading, Agadir, Morocco
- City Management in Tilburg, The Netherlands
- Local Initiative Program: Community Planning Process and City/ Neighborhood Partnership in Lublin, Poland
- Community Information Resource Center (CIRC), Alexandra, South Africa
- Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA: A Living Laboratory for Sustainable Development
- "Don't Move, Improve," South Bronx, New York City, USA

For more information about best practices, best practices award winners, or the best practices database, contact Nicholas You, Coordinator, Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme, UNCHS (Habitat), P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 254-2-624328; fax: 254-2-623080; e-mail: best.practices@unchs.org; Internet: <http://www.bestpractices.org>

Or contact Bill Sims, Executive Director, The Together Foundation, 55 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021, USA. Tel: 212-628-1939; fax: 212-628-4265; e-mail: bill_sims@together.org

BEST PRACTICES

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database. This database was developed by UNCHS in partnership with the Together Foundation and features a search engine that allows the user to browse through the cases by such criteria as sector, region, ecosystem, scale, and keywords.

The database is a powerful tool for national and local authorities, policy analysts, capacity-builders, and researchers. A city manager, for example, looking for alternatives to a solid waste management

problem, can not only find other tested solutions, but can easily contact those responsible to explore further means of cooperation. The database is available on CD-ROM and computer diskette, and via the Internet.

Benefits for users; validation for projects

The enthusiasm evident in Istanbul has helped secure the future of the best practices initia-

tive as an ongoing program of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme will continue to identify, document, and disseminate successful initiatives through a network of regional and thematic resource centers. With the database as its backbone, the program will provide such value-added information products as a roster of expertise. It has longer term

goals involving the monitoring and evaluating of transfers of best practices knowledge, experience, and expertise.

And what of the award winners themselves? As Ms. Ewa Kipta, coordinator of the Local Initiative Programme in Lublin, Poland, recently remarked, "Due to the award, our experiences have finally been treated seriously, and the mainstream of urban thinking is slowly changing."

Award-Winning Best Practices

We highlight below 5 of the 12 award-winning best practices recognized at Habitat II.

Successful Institutionalization of Community-Based Development in the Commune of Adjame, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Adjame, Abidjan, with a population of 220,000, is an old commercial district where high residential densities and inadequate water supply, sanitation, and solid waste collection services are major problems in the poorer neighborhoods. In 1988, Adjame's municipal government established civic committees (*Comites de Developpement de Quartiers*—CDQs) to promote sociocultural, economic, and environmental development at the community level. Today, Adjame's 19 neighborhoods all have operational CDQs involved in many activities, including street cleaning and garbage collection, security services, sanitation, revenue-generating operations, small infrastructure improvement, and social services. CDQs receive seed capital from the municipality but do not receive any operating subsidies. The municipality also transfers to the CDQs public facilities such as public latrines and water fountains which can be operated for profit, and commercial premises that can be leased to diversify their revenue sources. The success of the CDQ concept has enabled the launching of more ambitious initiatives such as health centers and micro-incubators to encourage young Ivoirians to start commercial businesses.

Shelter Upgrading in Agadir, Morocco

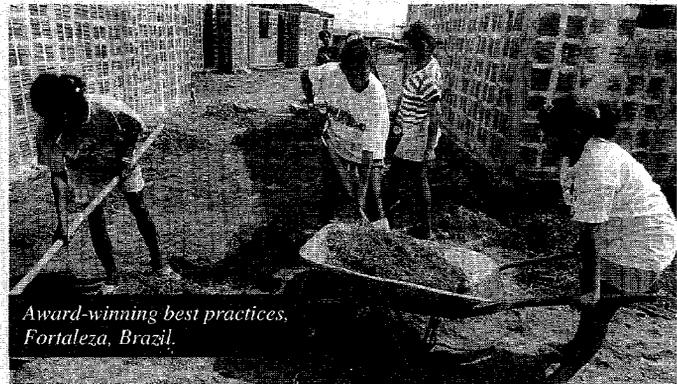
More than 20 percent of the families in the Agadir region (which comprises six municipalities with a total population of 500,000) were living in marginal squatter settlements when the ANHI program was initiated. ANHI assists residents of these settlements in improving self-built housing; provides rehousing for squatters; provides integrated, community-oriented social services; and creates jobs and fosters income-generating activities. The program's success was based on a collaborative approach involving government agencies and community members; institutionalizing a sustained outreach effort; adopting a flexible approach to self-build development so that individual households defined processes that best suited their situation; and cross-subsidization to ensure continued financial viability.

Integration Council in the Favelas Rehabilitation Process, Fortaleza, Brazil

Fortaleza has 2.5 million inhabitants and a very high level of poverty. This program addressed the challenge of rehabilitating the city's 400 poor neighborhoods while avoiding demolition and relocation. It did so by reinforcing the status of the residents—respecting their priorities and interests, building on existing dynamics, and strengthening local authority. The program focused first on education and capacity-building to enable people to assume responsibility for improving their living conditions. An educational program was established covering both general education and technical training in construction and urban planning. Innovative technology was adopted in the rehabilitation effort. Among its other attributes, the program was singled out for its creation and institutionalization of a democratic space.

Post-Calamity Reconstruction of Anhui Province's Rural Areas, China

The 1991 flood in Anhui Province left a half-million households homeless. This project carried out a comprehensive reconstruction plan and unified planning strategy that drew on the combined efforts of the victims, civic society, local authorities, and central government. It used this opportunity of reconstruction to replace the old, ineffective techniques used in the area's individual housing with modern methods based on scientific principles of organized construction; better, less costly, building materials; respect for environmental concerns; new leveraging of funds; involvement of the victims in decisionmaking and policy processes; and less disaster-prone codes and standards. The initiative has improved the layout and organization of villages and has integrated housing construction with the development of a "courtyard economy."



Award-winning best practices, Fortaleza, Brazil.

Local Initiative Program: Community Planning Process and City/Neighborhood Partnership in Lublin, Poland

In 1990, the city of Lublin initiated a new participatory planning process to engage residents in the development of their neighborhood and rehabilitate older districts. The program, launched in two low-income districts of multifamily housing, involved residents in discussing and planning the future of their neighborhoods. New development plans were approved by the city council, and the city adopted an act to stimulate initiatives in infrastructure development by sharing investment costs. In 1995, the local initiative program was institutionalized to guarantee its continuity as a key environmental improvement strategy. As a result of the neighborhood partnership initiative, houses have been built, rundown houses renovated, shops and businesses established, and infrastructure improved. Young people who had left the area have returned, and multigeneration families have been re-established. The program represents a completely new approach to community planning which ensures an ongoing dialogue between the municipality and the residents.

Habitat II: A Time and a Place to Share Ideas

by Nat Nuno-Amarteifio



20 Nat Nuno-Amarteifio is the mayor of Accra, Ghana.

ACCRA. In retrospect, it is impossible to imagine a conference about urban life in the 21st century in any city other than Istanbul. Beijing, New York, Paris, London, Rio de Janeiro—these cities all have huge populations, vast strategic economies, important financial infrastructure, and tremendous continental histories. But few cities—and certainly none of the above—have the unique, Janus-like qualities of Istanbul.

The participants

One could not help but be overwhelmed by the sheer variety of people who attended this conference. There were presidents, prime ministers, and ministers; big businessmen and small businessmen; mayors and senior government officials; representatives of nongovernmen-

tal organizations, of environmental groups, and of every conceivable interest group. I was part of a 30-person delegation that represented Ghana. As the mayor of a fairly large African city (population about 3.5 million), I am intensely interested in solutions to the myriad problems facing my city. I know that these problems are not unique to Accra. All over the world, the capitals of developing countries are undergoing the same transformation. I wanted to meet the mayors of

The preceding conferences

these cities. I also wished to meet the policymakers whose decisions in the governments of so-called developed countries, or as heads of various multinational groups or international organizations, affect the economy and social growth in my city. I wanted to meet the thinkers whose theories are providing the intellectual basis for these policies. I wanted to meet the businessmen whose investments affect the growth of cities thousand of miles from their institutional headquarters.

For me, the road to Istanbul had started two years ago, when I attended my first preparatory conference in Manchester, England. That road has led through New York, Dakar, Abidjan, Johannesburg, and

national governments. Few national governments can afford the cost of infrastructural development in emerging cities. New financial interests would have to come into play. The relationship between city government and the business community would have to change dramatically.

Finance for development would now stretch beyond national boundaries, and city governments would have to look into international markets for this resource. This in turn would necessitate new structures for city government. Emerging cities would have to build their administrations to meet this new challenge, while at the same time coping with their changing demographic structures. City governments cannot afford to sit back and watch this new world emerge without creating international networks to help integrate their cities into this new world order. Whilst participating in these conferences leading to Istanbul, I realized that *my* city can no longer afford to compare its pace and range of development to its sister cities in Ghana. I now have to measure our growth and appeal against other continental capital cities such as Dakar, Johannesburg, Nairobi, and even Cairo.

The conference

The Habitat conference was an endless round of meetings, committees, panel discussions, working cocktails, working lunches, and occasional boat trips. I wanted to meet as many mayors of African cities as I could. It was fascinating to observe the extent to which our problems were similar.

Ghana has, in the last six years, achieved a well-balanced

local government system. By the standards of an emerging economy, we have achieved a remarkable decentralization of our government structure. Our government has been serious in creating capacity in municipal government to handle the new responsibility now vested in that level of government. These were major themes of local government debated and discussed at Istanbul. I sat on many panels where I was able to discuss these new forms of governance.

The future

But what is the future of Habitat? I believe that the ideas of Habitat can be best sustained if the United Nations or the organizers of this conference can help cities stay in touch with one another and maintain the new working relationships that were established at the conference. City management in most Third World countries is—at best—crisis management. One has very little time to think deeply or clearly about solutions to problems.

Every country has its own political culture, and it is impossible to carry a solution from one context to another without tailoring it to fit. Many Third World governments feel threatened by the demands of new voices wanting to be heard in government. By bringing together the different participants at Habitat, we saw that we could accommodate different points of view. ■

City governments cannot afford to sit back and watch this new world emerge without creating international networks to help them to integrate their cities into this new world order.

tal organizations, of environmental groups, and of every conceivable interest group.

I was part of a 30-person delegation that represented Ghana. As the mayor of a fairly large African city (population about 3.5 million), I am intensely interested in solutions to the myriad problems facing my city. I know that these problems are not unique to Accra. All over the world, the capitals of developing countries are undergoing the same transformation.

I wanted to meet the mayors of

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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development" was mentioned repeatedly, little progress was made in suggesting how it could be operationally applied in urban areas. There were, for example, few references either to resource efficiency or conservation. No links were made to the potential of new patterns of employment associated with more sustainable uses of natural resources.

Taken together, these substantive problems suggest that Habitat II did not effectively attain its ambitious objective of integrating the concerns expressed in the previous global summits. This ambition may have been too great in the first place, but—as Wally

N'Dow declared many times along the road to Istanbul—the real test of the conference's value will be in the actions taken in its aftermath. In this respect, the success in mobilizing interests and groups beyond governments may prove to be the important ingredient in longer term impact. This does not solve the substantive problems noted, but it may at least provide some political rationale as to why they continue to need attention.

UR

Latin America and the Caribbean's Contribution to Habitat II

Motivated by the solid support of the most important regional networks in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional office of the Urban Management Programme disseminated a broad call for reporting of positive experiences on urban management, in order to make a concrete positive contribution to the City Summit at Istanbul. Out of the 306 cases that were received, 22 were provided with air tickets and well-deserved space to present their cases at the Sali Pazary "Best Practices Exhibition Centre" during the City Summit.

The cases received make evident the creativity and the dynamics of urban actors at all levels of government, the civil society and the private sector. Stimulated by the participation of stakeholders and the search of effective solutions to improve city life and overcome concrete problems, many cases emphasize on the importance of solid and lasting partnerships; the reconstruction of democracy starts at the city level in many countries.

There are no instant solutions. The achievement of improvements in the quality of life at neighborhood, municipal or city level, according to many of the experiences received, is the consequence of a lasting effort, of a process that begins not always with success but

with conviction and the definition of a common idea of the city that is wanted. It usually means rediscovering the values of democracy, leadership, accountability, transparency, participation, and of a common effort.

The list of 306 cases reported in Latin America and the Caribbean was published in the Spanish edition of the Urban Age and is going to be in the internet for open consultation. A book is being published with the 22 cases selected to participate at Habitat II and a broad program of horizontal cooperation is being prepared. The supporting institutions will surely be ready for a permanent mechanism of reporting of positive experiences of urban management as it will benefit them: Regional Organization of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development (MINURVI); Regional Network of National Associations of Municipalities; Ibero-American Union of Capital Cities (UCCI); Latin American Chapter of IULA; Cities Unies et Development (CUD); Interamerican Federation of the Construction Industry (FIIC); Interamerican Union for Housing (UNIAPRAVI); and networks of NGOs like REDES, FICONG, and others.

Urban Management Programme Phase III Launched at Habitat II

by Randa Fouad

Randa Fouad is head of the Information and Press Relations Department of Environmental Quality International in Cairo, Egypt, and regional information adviser for the Urban Management Programme, Arab States.

ISTANBUL. "As we are entering a new era in our thinking on urban issues, the Urban Management Programme also renews itself to provide support to the implementation of the *Habitat Agenda* over the next five years." So saying, Dr. Wally N'Dow, secretary general of the Habitat II Conference, formally launched the third phase of the Urban Management Programme (UMP) on June 12, 1996, during the Habitat II Conference.

The UMP is a long-term technical assistance program that aims to strengthen the contribution that cities and towns in developing countries make toward sustainable human development. Now in its 10th year, it is the largest worldwide program of technical cooperation on urban management. It represents a successful partnership of UNCHS (Habitat), the executing agency; the World Bank; and UNDP, which provides core funding and overall monitoring. Bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, and nongovernmental organizations also provide various forms of support.

The UMP works through four regional offices in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. It seeks to strengthen urban management by harnessing the skills and strategies of regional networks of experts, communities, and organizations in the private sector. In so doing, it addresses the areas of land management, infrastructure management, municipal finance and administration, environmental management, and poverty alleviation.

Dr. N'Dow explained that a major thrust of the program's third phase will be to ensure the continuity and sustainability of its regional, national, and city-level support activities. Also, in this phase, the program will redirect its emphasis—and use a significant chunk of program resources—to support the preparation and implementation of citywide action plans. Special effort will be made to enhance synergy within country operational programs and projects supported by UMP partners. UMP Phase III is also expected to contribute to implementation of the *Habitat Agenda*.

James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted that Phase III represents a unique opportunity for the international community to test the potential for concrete actions leading to improved urban living conditions. It also represents an opportunity to demonstrate the new collaborative and results-oriented initiative of the United Nations system. He stated that "UMP has established throughout the years a comprehensive network of contacts with the most important urban institutions worldwide."

Shabbir Cheema, Director, MDGD, UNDP, praised UMP as a "shining example" of collaboration among United Nations organizations. He stressed that urban policy designed through a participatory process was good politics because it created ownership by all of those whom it affected.

"The UMP is a major program focusing on the human development side of urban development rather than on physical investment," Dr. N'Dow said. "This is particularly important as we start realizing how the complexity of urban problems is rapidly increasing."

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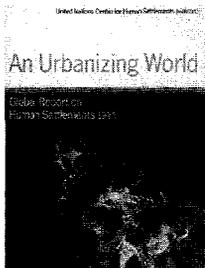
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An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements, 1996

by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, 1996. ISBN 0-19-823346-9.

Culled from specially commissioned papers by urban experts and the latest population censuses,



this book is the most comprehensive review available on urban conditions worldwide. It immediately strikes a warning note:

Unless urban problem solving is revolutionized, the current statistic of more than 600 million people living in towns who are homeless or in life- or health-threatening situations will be trebled by 2025. The book notes that a first step in trying to solve urban problems is good governance and good policies. Cities, the book says, have the potential to be both healthy and safe, and they have immense cultural resources and environmental advantages—the point is using such resources positively.

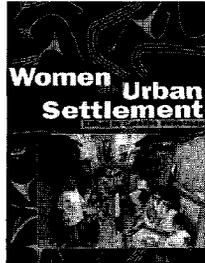
For example, one advantage of the high population density that is a characteristic of cities is that costs per household and per industry are lower for piped treated water, waste collection and disposal, advanced telecommunications, and most forms of health care and education. Emergency services for fire control and accidents are also much cheaper. The book mentions that new directions in urban planning and management are also followed in the way homeless people are being settled and land developed. Public authorities now encourage the participation of the private sector and of grassroots and nongovernmental

organizations to find solutions. A project in Manila, for example, involves women living in slums who relate their life histories and explore critical events to avoid a repetition of such events. A Pakistani project draws on the local community's expertise to prepare rapid and low-cost surveys of areas that are to be provided with secondary drains.

Women and Urban Settlement

Gender and Development Vol. 4, No. 1 (February), edited by Caroline Sweetmen, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7D2, 1996. ISBN 0-85598-348-5.

This volume of the Oxfam Focus on Gender series emphasizes that, since the first Habitat conference in Vancouver in 1976, the idea of cities as focal points for industrial activity that would help solve



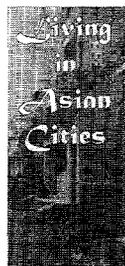
urban unemployment has collapsed. Instead, the aim of Habitat II in Istanbul in June 1996 was "generating worldwide action to reverse the deterioration in living environments." A principal symptom of this deterioration is the increase in the numbers of urban poor. Moreover, there is growing evidence that women are disproportionately represented among those whose long-term poverty is deepening and those for whom poverty is a relatively recent state. The reality of much of women's work—whether it is in export-processing zones, the factories of transnational corporations, or the informal sector—is low earnings, insecurity, and poor working conditions. Migration is also particularly affecting women, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. Urban life can offer women emancipation from the constraints of rural traditions, and the city can be a place where women can

increase their income, giving them the opportunity to be independent.

Living in Asian Cities: Report of the Second Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, March 11-15, 1996

United Nations, New York 1996. The forum was sponsored by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Development Programme under the framework of the Urban Management Programme for Asia.

The main issues raised in this book—which were developed at a regional meeting held before the Habitat II Istanbul conference—are the need for a new approach in urban policy, the dilemma that exists between macroeconomic goals and microeconomic needs, and the need to empower poor Asian people. The book emphasizes that various perils could undermine the predictions made—for instance, by the World Bank—about Asia's economic dominance in the 21st century, when 7 of the 10 largest economies of the world are expected to be China, Japan, Korea, India,



Indonesia, Taiwan, and Thailand. By 2020, the book says, the air over large areas of

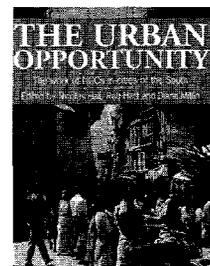
China could be literally unbreathable, and twice as bad as the notorious Black Triangle in Eastern Europe, if China continues to use its abundant supplies of high-sulfur coal to fuel its development. Similarly, water shortages, which are already common in many parts of Asia, can only become worse as both

populations and lifestyles expand. A third peril is the rate of urbanization in this region, which is without precedent in the world. Indeed, virtually all of Asia's expected population increase of 1.1 billion by 2020 will require doubling the number of cities in 25 years.

The Urban Opportunity: The Work of NGOs in Cities of the South

edited by Nicolas Hall, Rob Hart, and Diana Mitlin. Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd., 103/105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HA, 1996. ISBN 1-85339-347 9.

The work of the industrialized world's nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the developing countries of the South basically involves tackling urban poverty. But each NGO has its own ideas about what poverty means and how to overcome it, this book affirms. An NGO like Water Aid, for example, focuses on problems related to water and sanitation in slums; while Help Age, another NGO, concentrates on one segment of the poor population—older people. NGOs from northern cities also tackle



the problem of the scale of urban poverty differently. In general, however, they all try and add

value to the finance they pass on by developing local skills, knowledge, and experience. For example, International Cooperation for Development helped a Peruvian NGO clean up the River Rimac Basin and also passed on skills to district and provincial municipalities in the Lima area or the design and implementation of environmental engineering projects aimed at cleaning rivers.

Below is a selection of urban events and training courses culled from The Urban Age's current files. We are not always able to list events more than once, given space limitations. Please refer to past issues of The Urban Age for additional events scheduled in 1996. Send your announcements to: The Editor, The Urban Age, Room S6-147, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA. Fax: 202-522-3232; e-mail: mbergen@worldbank.org



Conferences

San José, Costa Rica—September 9–13, 1996. **Geological Risks in Urban Areas (Urban Geohazards)**. Contact: M.Sc. Sergio Paniagua P., Presidente del Comité Organizador y Director, Escuela Centroamericana de Geología Central, No. 35 (2060) UCR, Universitaria Rodrigo Facio, Costa Rica, Central America. Tel: 506-225-7941; fax: 506-234-2347; e-mail: spaniagu@cariari.ucr.ac.cr

New Delhi, India—September 9–13, 1996. **Reaching the Unreached: Challenges for the 21st Century**. Contact: Professor John Pickford or Rowena Steele, WEDC, Loughborough University, Leicestershire LE11 3TU, UK. Tel: 44-1509-222390; fax: 44-1509-211079.

Washington, DC—September 25-27, 1996. **Rural Well-being: From Vision to Action**. Contact: The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Room S8-019, Washington, DC, 20433, USA. Tel: 202-458-4398; fax: 202-522-3265; e-mail: ESDCO@worldbank.org

Cleveland, Ohio—September 29–October 2, 1996. **Creating Jobs in a Competitive Environment**. Contact: Chris Mead, National Council for Urban Economic Development, 1730 K Street, NW, Suite 915, Washington, DC 20006. Tel: 202-223-4735; fax: 202-223-4745.

Strasbourg, France—October 6–9, 1996. **The First European Conference of the IATR**. Contact: Palais de la Musique et des Congrès, Place de Bordeaux, 67082 Strasbourg Cedex, France. Tel: 88-37-67-67; fax: 88-25-61-96.

Cairo, Egypt—October 13–17, 1996. **New Urban Communities: Past Experience and Future Responses**. Contact: INTA Secretariat, Nassau Dillenburgstraat 44, 2596 AE The Hague, The Netherlands. Tel: 31-70-324-4526; fax: 31-70-328-0727.

Jerusalem, Israel—October 13–16, 1996. **Migration and the Global Economy: Planning Responses to Disintegrating Patterns and Frontiers**. Contact: ISoCaRP, Mauritskade 23, 2514 HD The Hague, The Netherlands. Tel: 31-70-346-2654; fax: 31-70-361-7909; e-mail: isocarp@bart.nl.

San José, Costa Rica—October 21–26, 1996. **World Congress on Air Pollution in Developing Countries**. Contact: J. Gruetter, ProEco, Apdo. 2105 San Salvador, El Salvador. Tel: 503-224-0514; fax: 503-223-7826.

Education Programs and Courses

University of Wales—The University of Wales, Cardiff offers 12-month MSc courses in urban planning; urban and regional transport; technical change and regional development; and sustainability, planning and environmental policy, and a 24-month course in city regional planning. Contact: Admissions Secretary, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Wales, P.O. Box 906, Cardiff CF1 3YN, UK. Tel: 44-1222-874000; fax: 44-1222-874845.

University of Stuttgart—The Center for Infrastructure Planning offers a two-year post graduate course leading to the degree of Master of infrastructure planning. Contact: University of Stuttgart, Centre for Infrastructure Planning, Nina Mapili, Manager, 70550 Stuttgart, Germany. Tel: 49-711-685-6560; fax: 49-711-685-6582.

Environment and Urbanization

The twice yearly journal about environmental and urban issues in Africa, Asia and Latin America, published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

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AHMEDABAD

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tion, was engaged to assess the strength of the corporation and its financial position. "It was a

4 learning exercise for both CRIS and the corporation," Varma remarks. No one, including CRIS management, knew how to set the parameters to assess a credit rating for an Indian city; the corporation also had a "dubious track record." But Varma's argument that he was increasing revenues, professionalizing the administration, and streamlining systems was persuasive.

Varma knew the importance of attaining an investment-grade rating. Issuing a bond for the corporation on the basis of a credit rating would be a pioneering move for the city—and the country. This would be a key step to access both national and international credit to create a sound basis for sustained fundraising by the corporation.

Receiving the rating

The credit rating was finally set at A+ in early 1996 with a reassessment due after six months. The impact in the country was tremendous. "But is it sustainable?," everyone asked. To which concern, Varma replies, "Whether I go, it will continue. Because of the transparency and growing professionalization of the cadres, the system is not as vulnerable now to change in commissioners."

The corporation asked for U.S. Agency for International Development's support and International Lease Financial Services to help administer the first bond issue of \$30 million done through private placement. [This placement had not yet been made as of press time.] The rating has now become a sensitive issue in the city. The politicians want to preserve the city's financial status—which Varma hopes will translate into greater accountability, increasing levels of professionalism, and more focus on financial strengthening.

The lessons of Ahmedabad

The people of Ahmedabad are now undertaking their own projects: slum upgrading networks that are demand driven and where the beneficiaries pay, the development of private sector partnerships to build roads, corporate sponsorship of public parks.

Keshav Varma summarizes the example set by his city. "We are people who can reflect the reality and problems occurring in cities to help evolve effective strategies bound in reality. The question of funding urban infrastructure is crucial to the sustainability of cities in the next century. Municipal bodies should position themselves to raise resources from the capital market. The overall trend in the economy underscores this move. But to achieve this, municipalities must increase their efficiency, transparency, and accountability."

LIFE AFTER HABITAT II

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The committee responsible for preparing the Turkish national Habitat report adopted the core concept of "livability." Wielded properly in local Habitat agendas, this is a hard-edged way of insisting that policies be assessed for an overall impact on the quality of life. Along with a right to housing is the right not to breath dangerous levels of carbon monoxide or not to see a cultural heritage destroyed by unregulated construction.

Fifteen years ago, urban master plans were imposed on individual cities by a central ministry. Ten years ago, they were amended by municipal offices behind closed doors. As part of the local Habitat agenda for Bursa, Istanbul's neighbor, the mayor debates the plan in public meetings. To be sure, he would have done something similar without the prompting of an expensive UN conference.

Was Habitat II worth the fuss?

As usual, it is the critics who end up being the best advocates. Nur Atabay, an Istanbul city

councilwoman and leading environmental activist, describes Habitat II as "an extravagant bit of PR." In the same breath, she explains that she is off to the city's water authority to discuss how nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can be effective in the fight to preserve water cachement areas from illegal settlement. No event in recent Turkish history has done more than Habitat II to mobilize nongovernmental and community-based organizations and prove their worth. At one stage during the conference, a police panzer car was positioned directly in front of the door of the headquarters of the NGO host committee. In what may turn out to be a gesture of some resonance, the panzer was moved along.

Today inside that building, Emel Korma, a member of that committee, reflects on the mistakes of Habitat II. As a first experience with an international conference, she says, "it was natural for us to put all our effort into the actual conference itself." Now she and her colleagues see more clearly that the challenge at the time was to prepare for what will come next. **U**

Next Issue

The next issue of *The Urban Age* will focus on mayors and partnerships. We look forward to receiving your comments and thoughts on this upcoming issue.

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