

**REPORT
OF THE COMMISSION
ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-THIRD SESSION
SUPPLEMENT No. 8 (A/33/8)



UNITED NATIONS

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 19 December 1977, the General Assembly adopted resolution 32/162, in section II of which it decided, inter alia, that the Economic and Social Council should transform the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning into a Commission on Human Settlements, which would have 58 members to be elected for three-year terms. The Assembly laid down the functions, responsibilities and terms of reference of the Commission. It also decided that the first session of the Commission should be held in the first half of 1978 and the report of the Commission should be submitted to the Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

2. The Economic and Social Council, by resolution 1978/1 of 19 December 1977, transformed the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning into the Commission on Human Settlements.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Membership and attendance

3. The Commission on Human Settlements held its first session at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 7 April 1978.

4. At its 1st meeting, on 3 April 1978, a message was delivered on behalf of the Secretary-General, the text of which is reproduced in annex I to the present report.

5. The following States members of the Commission were represented:

Argentina	Malawi
Australia	Malaysia
Austria	Mexico
Bulgaria	Netherlands
Burundi	Nigeria
Canada	Papua New Guinea
Central African Empire	Peru
Chile	Philippines
Colombia	Poland
Cuba	Portugal
Czechoslovakia	Rwanda
Ecuador	Senegal
Egypt	Sierra Leone
Finland	Sri Lanka
France	Sudan
German Democratic Republic	Swaziland
Germany, Federal Republic of	Sweden
Ghana	Syrian Arab Republic
Greece	Uganda
Guatemala	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
India	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Iran	United Republic of Tanzania
Iraq	United States of America
Italy	Venezuela
Jamaica	Viet Nam
Japan	Yugoslavia
Kenya	

6. The following specialized agencies were represented:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development;
International Labour Organisation.

7. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was represented.

8. The following non-governmental organizations were also represented:

Category I:

International Co-operative Alliance;
International Union of Local Authorities;
United Towns Organization.

Category II:

Baha'i International Community;
Associated Country Women of the World;
Baptist World Alliance;
Caritas Internationalis;
Commonwealth Human Ecology Council;
International Council for Building Research, Studies and Documentation;
International Union of Building Societies and Savings Associations.

Roster

International Institute for Environment and Development;
International Real Estate Federation.

B. Officers

9. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 3 and 4 April, the Commission elected by acclamation the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Göte Svenson (Sweden)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Andrzej Jedraszko (Poland)
Mr. N. W. Mbekeani (Malawi)
Mr. Gregorio Valner Onjas (Mexico)

Rapporteur: Mr. Josué L. Villa (Philippines)

C. Agenda

10. The agenda as adopted by the Commission at its 1st meeting was as follows:
1. Election of officers.
 2. Adoption of the agenda and organizational matters.
 3. Preliminary consideration of policies and priorities on human settlements for national and international action.
 4. Review of United Nations priorities and programmes established in compliance with General Assembly resolution 31/116.

5. Co-ordination and concerted action on programmes on human settlements within the United Nations system and co-operation with non-governmental organizations in compliance with General Assembly resolution 32/162.
6. Provisional agenda for the second session of the Commission.
7. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

11. The documents before the Commission at its first session are listed in annex II to the present report.

12. Following formal meetings and informal consultations on the various items of the agenda, the latter having been conducted under the chairmanship of Mr. Andrzej Jedraszko (Poland), Vice-Chairman of the Commission, the Commission agreed on the following matters listed in sections II to VI below.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Appointment of the Executive Director

13. The Commission noted that the Executive Director was still to be appointed. In view of the scale, urgency and importance of the tasks awaiting the Executive Director, the Commission welcomed the assurances of the Secretary-General that the appointment of the Executive Director would be announced shortly.

B. Sessions of the Commission

14. In light of General Assembly resolution 32/162, the Commission recommended that its second session should take place at Nairobi for two weeks in 1979. The Commission expressed the view that it would need to meet annually during the establishment phase of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), but thereafter it should consider biennial sessions, as is usual for subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission recommended that the dates and duration of each session should reflect the need for co-ordination with the sessions of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the regional commissions, as well as the timing requirements of the reports of the Commission to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

C. Rules of procedure

15. The Commission noted that its proceedings were governed by the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council in accordance with rule 27 thereof. However, the particular needs of the Commission might require special supplementary arrangements. The Commission requested the Executive Director to report on this matter at its next session.

D. Future activities of the Commission

16. The Commission felt that the agenda for its future meetings would flow directly and naturally from the role and functions of the Commission and the Centre. It requested the Executive Director to provide if possible to the next session of the Commission a report outlining a framework for the Commission's activities over future medium-term periods. In addition to the reporting responsibilities of the Executive Director outlined in General Assembly resolution 32/162, this report should include information on the feasibility of undertaking the following:

(a) Periodic reviews of the state of, and prospects for, human settlements on a global scale;

(b) Regular reports on the human settlement dimension of financial and other assistance to developing countries;

(c) Periodic assessments of national progress in implementation of the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements; 1/

(d) Regular reports on interagency co-operation in the field of human settlements;

(e) Regular reports on co-operation with non-governmental organizations dealing with problems of human settlements.

17. The Commission requested the Executive Director to make appropriate arrangements for special and detailed presentation at its second session by some interested countries which had made major policy, planning or institutional changes and which had recently implemented new and innovative human settlements programmes and projects, and for discussion of these presentations. The costs involved would be defrayed by the Governments concerned.

1/ See Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements
(United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chap. I.

IV. PROGRAMME MATTERS

A. Programme structure and unification

18. The Commission recommended the adoption of a unified programme structure which would facilitate the rational planning, development, promotion, control and evaluation of programmes on human settlements. Consequently, it proposed to adopt the recommendations for national action of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, 2/ as approved by the General Assembly in resolution 32/162.

B. Range of the programmes

19. Considering the functions of the Commission outlined in General Assembly resolution 32/162 and in order to facilitate effective co-ordination between the activities of the Centre and those carried out at the regional level, the Commission expressed the view that at the global and interregional levels the Centre's programme should include research and methodology activities and the promotion and dissemination of information related to the programmes on human settlements, as well as assistance required for field activities.

20. At the regional level the programmes would be formulated by the regional commissions, taking into account the national, subregional and regional priorities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/162, focusing on technical assistance and the execution of the regional and subregional programmes. In this connexion, the Commission stressed the importance of proper utilization of human and material resources from within the regions.

21. The Commission also expressed the view that the geographical deployment of the Centre's resources resulting from the reorganization of the United Nations human settlements programme would have to comply with the goals and priorities established in the regional and subregional programmes, jointly with the programming at the international level that the Executive Director of the Centre would propose.

C. Selection, approval and evaluation of the programmes

22. In order to achieve, inter alia, the optimum use of the resources available and the gradual regionalization of the programme, the Commission recommended that the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- (a) Nature and importance of the regional and subregional problems;
- (b) Amount and availability of financial and human resources;
- (c) Co-ordination with national programmes on human settlements;
- (d) Possible impact on national and subregional socio-economic development in terms of efficiency and equity.

2/ Ibid., chap. II.

23. The Commission expressed the view that it should periodically review and recommend and, with respect to extrabudgetary funds for which it had responsibility, approve the use of available funds for programmes at the international, regional and subregional levels in accordance with the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolution 32/162, and the recommendations of the Commission and of the regional commissions.

24. The Commission understood that it would periodically evaluate the results of the programmes, especially with respect to the achievement of goals and objectives as established at the international, regional and subregional levels.

D. Priorities

25. The Commission recalled the six subject areas and eight functions identified for priority action under General Assembly resolution 32/162. In this connexion, the Commission identified as an important task for its next session the formulation of global priorities drawing on an assessment of needs and priorities of regions, subregions and countries. The Commission requested the Executive Director to reflect these priorities in the integrated programme he recommended. In so doing, he should consider ongoing activities as well as the medium-term plan and programme budgets of the different organizations related to human settlements. The Executive Director should also provide a document as the basis for the Commission's consideration of programme priorities.

26. The Commission noted the proposal made by the representative of the Netherlands and invited Member States to convey to the Executive Director their views and suggestions on the programme of work of the Centre as well as on priorities in order to assist the Executive Director in formulating proposals for the new medium-term plan, not later than 15 May 1978. The Commission requested the Secretariat to circulate a document containing such views and suggestions well in advance of the Commission's next session.

V. RESOURCES

27. The Commission recalled General Assembly resolution 32/162, as well as Assembly resolution 32/173 concerning resources of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, which, *inter alia*, noted the proposal of the Executive Director of UNEP regarding the target of \$50 million as a minimum for the total voluntary contributions by Governments for the years 1978-1981. The Commission was of the opinion that the establishment of definitive institutional arrangements for human settlements activities in the United Nations system would facilitate generous and early voluntary contributions to the Foundation. It stressed the importance of promoting human settlements activities in other parts of the United Nations system, where appropriate, taking into account the functions and responsibilities assigned to the Commission and the Centre in General Assembly resolution 32/162.

28. Accordingly, the Commission requested the Executive Director:

(a) Bearing in mind the responsibilities of the Centre as outlined in section III, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 32/162, to take the necessary action to integrate the functions and activities previously undertaken by the entities involved with a view to ensuring optimum utilization of resources, while avoiding jeopardization of ongoing projects;

(b) To submit to the Commission at its second session detailed information on the total human and financial resources available to the Centre;

(c) To submit to the Commission at its second session a report on the technical co-operation capability of the Centre, together with the financial resources available from regular budget and extrabudgetary sources and proposals for strengthening this capability, including that required for the management and implementation of those aspects of human settlements activities financed from resources of the United Nations Development Programme through the country programming procedure.

29. The Commission urged all States, particularly the developed countries, to increase their voluntary contributions for human settlements activities, especially for those activities directed towards fulfilling the objectives of the Foundation as now incorporated into the Centre, with a view to achieving the \$50 million target for the years 1978-1981. The Commission requested the Executive Director to make concerted efforts to mobilize voluntary contributions for the Centre to the Foundation from Governments and other sources.

VI. REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

30. The Commission recalled that General Assembly resolution 32/162, inter alia, called for a significant portion of posts of the Centre to be assigned during 1978-1980 to the regions for work on regional human settlements questions; for the regional commissions to consider the establishment of regional committees on human settlements as soon as possible, served by a secretariat unit in the parent regional Commission, each unit to be headed by a senior officer; and the additional budgetary and personnel resources for each regional secretariat unit to be made available from the Centre and resources currently available to each region.

31. The Commission recommended that the Executive Director of the Centre should meet as soon as possible with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions in order to discuss their existing and planned programmes of work and priorities on human settlements, the establishment of regional committees on human settlements, and mutually acceptable criteria and arrangements for the deployment of resources to the regional secretariat units.

32. The Commission recommended that the Executive Director of the Centre should organize consultations with the senior officers directly responsible for the human settlements programmes of each region immediately before or after each session of the Commission.

33. The Commission noted that the resources deployed from the Centre to the regional commissions were to supplement the resources made available by and to the regional commissions for work on regional priorities and programmes in the field of human settlements.

34. The Commission expressed the view that, to the extent that the resources available at this stage to the Centre were likely to be limited in relation to need, the deployment to the regions should take into account the areas where effective action was both needed and possible. An important indication of priority was the actual strengthening by the regional commissions of their respective intergovernmental and secretariat mechanisms to deal with human settlements problems.

VII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

35. At its 5th meeting, on 7 April, the Commission also agreed on the following provisional agenda for its second session:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Progress report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).
4. Statement by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.
5. Review of human settlements conditions, policies and priorities for national, international (regional and global) action.
6. Review of United Nations activities in human settlements:
 - (a) Work programme, organization and resources of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat);
 - (b) Co-operation and concerted action on programmes on human settlements within the United Nations system and co-operation with non-governmental organizations concerned with human settlement problems and having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council;
 - (c) Regional commissions.
7. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Cycle of sessions of the Commission in relation to the schedule of work of the relevant United Nations policy-making organs;
 - (b) Co-operation with organizations outside the United Nations system.
8. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the third session of the Commission.
9. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

36. At its 5th meeting, on 7 April, the Commission adopted the present report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

ANNEX I

Message of the Secretary-General to the first session of the Commission

I very much regret that long-standing commitments abroad prevent me from welcoming you personally at the 1st meeting of the Commission on Human Settlements. I would like, however, to convey to you my very best wishes for the success of your deliberations.

The Economic and Social Council decided that this session should be of an organizational nature because it takes place only a short time after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 32/162, which provided for the establishment of the Commission and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). I am giving personal attention to the prompt adoption of all the necessary administrative arrangements envisaged in that resolution, which have to take into account the restructuring decisions adopted by the Assembly. The establishment of the Centre at Nairobi will be carried out in good time to ensure the adequate preparation of your first substantive session next year. I also intend to announce shortly the appointment of the Executive Director of the Centre.

Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements constituted the first attempt to create awareness of human settlements problems on a world-wide scale. The Vancouver Action Plan comprised an inspiring declaration of principles and a set of far-reaching recommendations for national action. The Conference recommended the formulation of national settlement policies and strategies involving the integration and implementation of planning not only for individual communities but for the entire system of settlements; the provision of adequate housing, infrastructure and social services, especially for the poorest segments of the population; and the provision of land for human settlements. It was also recognized that the magnitude of the task required the full participation of all segments of society as well as appropriate national institutions, and effective arrangements for international co-operation for human settlements.

Many countries have already started follow-up activities and action programmes to address their particular problems of human settlements. The President of the United States of America has recently proposed a national urban policy. The Philippines, Poland, Egypt, the United Republic of Tanzania and many other countries are in the process of developing national settlement policies. All these decisions and policies draw their inspiration from the Habitat Conference.

The international community has an important role, indeed an obligation, to support national action on human settlements. This support may be given from the regional as well as from the global level. For example, the problems arising from rapid population growth and unprecedented rates of urbanization are clearly beyond the capacity of individual developing countries to solve, considering their limited resources. In view of the importance given by the Conference to activities at the regional level, most of the regional commissions have held follow-up meetings on human settlements and others plans to do so in the near future.

As regards action at the global level, complex and difficult negotiations culminated in the adoption of resolution 32/162 by the General Assembly. The convening of the meeting of your Commission constitutes the first step to give concrete expression to the decisions of the Assembly contained in that resolution - a step that has more than symbolic significance.

The Commission will review the current priorities and programmes at the United Nations in the field of human settlements. Its guidance will be invaluable for the development of future plans and programmes in pursuance of the recommendations of the Habitat Conference, taking into account concepts and strategies that have been evolved in other forums. I am thinking in particular of the work relating to the establishment of the new international economic order, technical co-operation among developing countries, the application of science and technology to development, as well as related endeavours with regard to population, food, unemployment, human rights and disarmament. The Commission will also ensure that the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation plays the key role foreseen for it when it was established.

Human settlements determine the quality of life. This Commission must accordingly concern itself with the great human and social issues of our time: how to improve the standards of living in both rural and urban settlements; how to provide essential human services; how to cope with the problems of slums and squatter areas; how to create effective institutions; how to facilitate public participation; how to enhance the environment; how to mobilize and conserve scarce resources. The main challenge facing this Commission will be to define the manner in which United Nations efforts, combined with those of other international governmental and non-governmental organizations, can be effectively used to support the activities and programmes in the field of human settlements around the world.

I am confident that the Commission will meet this challenge with vigour and determination.

ANNEX II

Documentation before the Commission at its first session

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Title</u>
E/C.11/1	Provisional agenda for the first session
E/C.11/1/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda for the first session
E/C.11/2	Preliminary considerations of policies and priorities on human settlements for national and international action: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/3	Review of United Nations priorities and programmes in human settlements for national and international action: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/4 and Corr.1	Technical co-operation activities of the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning
E/C.11/4/Add.1 and Corr.1	Technical co-operation projects (1975-1977) in the field of housing, building and planning: report of the Secretary-General
E/C.11/5 and Corr.1	United Nations Audio-Visual Information Centre on Human Settlements: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/6	Regional commissions: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/7	Co-ordination and concerted action of programmes on human settlements within the United Nations system and co-operation with non-governmental organizations in compliance with General Assembly resolution 32/162: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/8	United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation proposed programme activities for the period 1978-1981: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/9	Collaboration between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in the field of human settlements: note by the Secretary-General
E/C.11/L.1 and Add.1	Draft report of the Commission
E/C.11/INF.1	List of representatives

Document number

Title

- E/C.11/NGO.1 Statement submitted by the International Co-operative Alliance the International Union of Local Authorities, the United Towns Organization, non-governmental organizations in consultative status, category I; the Baptist World Alliance, the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration, the Friends of the Earth International, the Inter-American Planning Association, the International Council for Building Research, Study and Documentation, the International Federation of Home Economics, the International Federation for Housing, Building and Planning, the International Federation of Pedestrians, the International Real Estate Federation, the International Playground Association, the International Rural Housing Association, the International Society for Community Development and the Town and Country Planning Association, non-governmental organizations in consultative status, category II
- E/C.11/NGO.2 Statement submitted by the International Co-operative Alliance, non-governmental organization in consultative status, category I
- E/C.11/NGO.3 Statement submitted by the International Council for Building Research, Studies and Documentation, non-governmental organization in consultative status, category II
- E/C.11/NGO.4 Statement submitted by the World Assembly of Youth, non-governmental organization in consultative status, category I

