



**Governing Council
of the United Nations Human
Settlements Programme**

HSP/GC/20/2/Add.5

Distr. General
24 January 2005

Original: English

Twentieth session

Nairobi, 4–8 April 2005

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat): progress report of the Executive Director**

**UN-Habitat and youth: strategy for enhanced engagement, a working
document**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In May 2003, the Governing Council adopted resolution 19/13 on the engagement of youth in the work of UN-Habitat. The resolution requested the Executive Director to develop a strategy on enhancing the engagement of youth and youth organizations in the work of UN-Habitat, to be submitted to the Council at its twentieth session.

The development of the strategy involved broad consultation with young people and civil society organizations between April and September 2004. A broad spectrum of partners participated, including youth organizations and those working with them. The youth organizations involved included organizations with local, national and regional outreach.

The draft strategy paper was posted on the UN-Habitat home page with a link to the Taking IT Global web site, which has been discussing the youth strategy. A total of 44 members participated in the discussion, between 4 July and 7 August 2004, from the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Interviews were conducted within UN-Habitat to ascertain current strategies and programmes with regard to youth, as well as opportunities for enhancing such engagement. Research was also undertaken to assess opportunities for collaboration with other United Nations agencies.

The strategy was also presented and discussed at the following forums: Expert Group Meeting for Creating Strategies for Urban Youth Employment in Africa, June 2004; International Youth Day, Nairobi, 12 August 2004; and the second World Urban Forum, Barcelona, Spain, 13–17 September 2004.

The present report describes the main elements of the strategy for consideration by the Governing Council. It should, however, be considered a work in progress which will be continuously refined in the light of the increasing engagement of UN-Habitat with urban youth

* HSP/GC/20/1.

K0580273 100205

| Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| I. Introduction..... | 3 |
| A. The challenge..... | 3 |
| B. The response of the UN-Habitat Governing Council..... | 5 |
| II. Objectives and principles | 5 |
| A. Objectives..... | 5 |
| B. Principles..... | 6 |
| III. Components of the strategy..... | 6 |
| A. Component 1: youth participation in UN-Habitat organs and forums at global, national and local levels..... | 7 |
| B. Component 2: youth and human settlements programmes..... | 8 |
| C. Component 3: youth policy formulation and programme-planning capacity..... | 9 |
| D. Component 4: information, communication and knowledge management..... | 9 |
| E. Component 5: coordination and partnership strategies..... | 10 |
| IV. Implementing the strategy..... | 11 |

UN-Habitat and youth: strategy for enhanced engagement

I. Introduction

A. The challenge

1. The urbanization of poverty and the increasing vulnerability of youth

1. The world's population is becoming increasingly urban and three quarters of the urban population growth is occurring in developing countries. Cities in the developing world are characterized by inadequately planned and overcrowded settlements without access to even basic urban services.

2. Urban areas should provide opportunities in terms of access to better housing, health services, schools and employment. The majority of those growing up in cities in developing countries, however, face greater risks than they do opportunities. The risks include health risks from overcrowding and poor sanitation, increased vulnerability to natural disasters and risks of eviction and economic vulnerability because of the lack of secure employment. Those issues have far-reaching impacts on urban populations, particularly on youth.

2. The Habitat Agenda and youth

3. Eight years ago, in June 1996, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul, Turkey; during that Conference, a historic breakthrough was made in the concept of governance of cities and towns. National Governments for the first time recognized local governments, civil society, business communities, youth, women and other local stakeholders as equal partners in the decision-making processes that affect human settlements. The Conference resulted in the Habitat Agenda, which has laid a foundation upon which local partnerships can be fostered and developed to realize safer, healthier, cleaner and equitable cities. It provides a new challenge to stakeholders, such as youth, to organize themselves to participate in a more meaningful way in local development.

4. UN-Habitat is supporting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at local, national and regional levels through participatory, city-based programmes. Those programmes address issues such as urban poverty reduction, crime prevention and access to basic services such as water, sanitation and waste collection.

5. UN-Habitat has launched two major global campaigns, one for secure tenure and the other on urban governance. The aim of the two campaigns is to reduce urban poverty through renewed policies which emphasize equity, sustainability and social justice. Strategic and operational partnerships with government, local authorities, non-governmental and community-based organizations, the private sector, youth, women and United Nations agencies are crucial to the success of the campaigns. Also, the campaigns provide an opportunity for young women and men, particularly those at risk, to participate in community-centred development.

3. Rationale for enhanced engagement of youth

6. The rationale for an intensified focus on youth is the fact that a high proportion of the world's population is young, especially in the developing world, and that segment of the population is inordinately affected by the problems of unsustainable development. At the same time, the target group of the UN-Habitat youth strategy, urban 15- to 24-year-olds in developing countries, possess immense potential to contribute to social development if afforded the right opportunities. The challenge of putting youth at the centre of development strategies can be compared to the challenge, two decades ago, of putting women and gender issues on the development agenda. It is no longer conceivable to solve the problems of developing countries without focusing on the role of women. UN-Habitat believes that a similar paradigm shift is required with respect to youth in development, and the present strategy is a first attempt to address that requirement.

7. Young people have the highest rates of unemployment and are in many ways the most vulnerable to the social depredations caused by unemployment and poverty. At the same time, they are the promise of the future, and failure to invest in the young generation imposes great constraints on the potential for future development.

8. Today, over a billion people are between 15 and 24 years of age and nearly 40 per cent of the world's population is below the age of 20. Of those young people, 85 per cent live in developing countries, where many are especially vulnerable to extreme poverty. Children and young people represent a very high percentage of urban populations in developing countries. In many African cities, over 50 per cent of the inhabitants are under 19.* The combination of poverty, unemployment, environmental and health problems, often exacerbated by violent conflicts, is placing increasing numbers of young people in cities at risk. Girls tend to be disproportionately at risk, as are young people from indigenous communities.

9. The World Youth Report 2003 states that most warfare takes place in developing countries, particularly in Africa, where an estimated 300,000 young soldiers between the ages of 10 and 24 risk their lives in the course of armed conflicts willed by adults. Even in countries not plagued by armed conflict, young people have often been misused in the political arena. While their energy and enthusiasm are powerful tools in promoting social or political issues, they are also vulnerable to being misled and misused, often with disruptive results.

10. Over the past 20 years young people have been particularly affected by growing urban poverty, the growth in trafficking in children and the young, sexual exploitation of young people, especially girls and young women, high levels of unemployment, the growing phenomenon of street children, crime and violence by young people, youth gangs, the recruitment of child soldiers, destruction of family patterns, environmental degradation, worsening health conditions and its impacts, i.e., the transmission of infectious diseases, the emergence of new diseases and the continued spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

11. Many UN-Habitat initiatives focused on youth have had successful outcomes and provide models for future work of UN-Habitat with youth, but the scale of the urban youth problem is such that it requires efforts to mainstream it across the entire UN-Habitat programme. Despite the aforementioned successful initiatives, some UN-Habitat programmes do not have any explicit focus on youth, and there is an expressed need for guidance on how to increase attention on youth.

12. The UN-Habitat mandate has been rearticulated to focus on its role in implementing the relevant Millennium Development Goals. That refocusing, as outlined in the UN-Habitat Strategic Vision (May 2003), envisions a unique integration of both normative and implementation functions and calls for a more radical rethink of how UN-Habitat goes about its work.

13. As the United Nations lead agency for addressing the Millennium Development Goal of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, UN-Habitat is faced with a pressing demand for action on the ground. The Strategic Vision begins to show how that can be achieved, including by shifting the focus of UN-Habitat from global policy discussion to local implementation. Included in the rethink are how UN-Habitat works with partners and what kind of partners it needs in order to implement the Strategic Vision effectively. The present note proposes a way to place youth at the centre of the UN-Habitat strategy.

* *Cities in a Globalizing World, Global Report on Human Settlement 2001*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat and Earthscan Publications.

B. The response of the UN-Habitat Governing Council

1. The Habitat Agenda and the UN-Habitat Strategic Vision

14. A total of 14 out of the Habitat Agenda's 241 paragraphs address youth issues in human settlements development. In paragraph 13, member States stipulated that:

“The needs of children and youth, particularly with regard to their living environment, have to be taken fully into account. Special attention needs to be paid to the participatory processes dealing with the shaping of cities, towns and neighbourhoods; this is in order to secure the living conditions of children and of youth and to make use of their insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment ...”

15. Paragraphs 45 (e) and (h), 113 (l), 120, 123 (d) and (i) and 213 elaborate on how youth should be involved in human settlements development with specific focus on the development of a participatory approach in which young people can voice their views and demands in decision-making processes.

16. That is the context in which the UN-Habitat Strategic Vision has been refined to give more attention to strategic partnerships and also to knowledge management and the financing of housing and human settlements. The strategic partnerships, which include partnerships with youth, are intended to leverage resources and coordinate international programme activities which work towards similar ends.

2. Resolution on youth

17. In May 2003, the Governing Council adopted resolution 19/13 on the engagement of youth in the work of UN-Habitat. The resolution requests the Executive Director to develop a strategy on enhancing the engagement of youth and youth organizations in the work of UN-Habitat, to be submitted to the Council at its twentieth session. Resolution 19/13 also requests UN-Habitat to enhance the engagement of youth in urban governance and in addressing the problem of youth at risk, to focus on capacity-building and poverty alleviation and on the participation of UN-Habitat in the Secretary-General's initiative on youth employment, to develop a Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa and to establish an interim youth consultative mechanism. All those elements must therefore be taken into consideration in the proposed strategy for the enhanced engagement of youth in the work of UN-Habitat.

18. The development of the strategy involved broad consultations with young people, local authorities, civil-society organizations and national Governments between January and December 2004. The Partners and Youth Section facilitated those consultations and the development of the strategy.

II. Objectives and principles

A. Objectives

19. The objective of the strategy is to provide an integrated approach to urban youth development which will mainstream a focus on youth in the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat and will ultimately strengthen the impact of its work in reducing urban poverty. It will provide a road map for the promotion of urban youth empowerment and participation in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the related Millennium Development Goals.

20. The strategy must be clearly focused on the implementation of the UN-Habitat mandate with respect to youth. The Habitat Agenda commits Governments and UN-Habitat to working in partnership with youth in order to develop and enhance effective skills and provide education and training to prepare youth for current and future decision-making roles and sustainable livelihoods in human settlements management and development.

21. That imperative, however, could be interpreted as implying that the objective is a one-way street in which the work of UN-Habitat sees youth as objects of training as future citizens. Young people, however, have an important role to play in sustainable development: they can be effective advocates of change, both to decision-makers and to the general public, and they can and do make a significant difference in implementing change on the ground. Consequently, the UN-Habitat strategy must address youth as a major group partner with great potential to help carry forward the Habitat Agenda and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

B. Principles

22. In view of that mandate, and in order to work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, UN-Habitat is committed to developing, supporting and promoting initiatives, which contribute to:

- (a) Mainstreaming youth as a cross-cutting element in the design and implementation of UN-Habitat programmes and priorities;
- (b) Initiating and fostering inter-agency collaboration, as well as partnerships with youth organizations, as vehicles for outreach and youth participation;
- (c) Engaging youth concerns at the international level to help formulate an international understanding of pressing youth issues;
- (d) Recognizing the diversities among young people and enhancing their participation in the work of UN-Habitat so that young people's views and contributions are valued;
- (e) Providing youth with the best-available information resources and facilities pertaining to employment, health, crime prevention, governance, gender equality and empowerment and youth rights and responsibilities;
- (f) Providing evidence-based approaches that show how effective integration of youth in development strategies strengthens racial integration, inclusiveness and reliable impact.

III. Components of the strategy

23. Implementing the objectives and principles will require strategies that address both internal and external functions as well as normative and operational concerns. Mainstreaming a youth focus across all programmes is an underlying principle of the strategy. The effort by UN-Habitat in recent years to mainstream gender serves as a good model for this approach, and the Partners and Youth Section is learning from that experience.

24. The design of the strategy must take into account several inbuilt constraints on addressing youth issues. By their nature, young people lack experience in engaging in policy and governance activities, and therefore strong information, training, and coaching elements are required in all approaches. Secondly, the limited time span of any individual's participation in youth activities means that there is a higher degree of turnover among leadership than in other segments of society. That high turnover necessitates a concerted focus on enduring institutions rather than on individuals, such as larger, more established youth organizations or permanent governmental institutions. In other words, the approach must focus on institutionalizing youth engagement. Thirdly, there is a pervasive tendency by institutions and Governments to accord marginal importance to youth organizations and issues. In that connection it will be critical for UN-Habitat not only to show that it takes youth seriously, but also to demonstrate that addressing youth concerns effectively has a positive impact on sustainable development.

25. It is envisioned that the strategy will consist of five principal components, as outlined in the following sections.

A. Component 1: youth participation in UN-Habitat organs and forums at global, national and local levels

26. The problems of youth in human settlements cannot be addressed without the full participation of youth in defining the problems and in identifying and implementing solutions. Effective participation in governance requires both a demand to participate and a capability to do so. UN-Habitat must therefore focus on strategies to raise the awareness of youth about rights and the value of civic participation, and on building youth capacity to play an active role in local and national governance and development.

27. Youth should be seen as social change agents, just as much as advocacy non-governmental organizations, women's groups or other activist groups in society. Supporting and guiding youth groups to channel energies into promoting and fostering principles of sustainable development, good governance and human rights can have a significant effect on enhancing the achievement of those values.

28. Groups that have the capacity will grasp existing opportunities while others require assistance to do so. There are many active youth groups which are doing a substantial amount with considerable impact on the ground. They are responding to felt needs with innovation and creativity. It is important that the efforts of such groups are promoted so that they can attract greater support and recognition. At the same time, there is a need to provide opportunities for those who are marginalized, which will also help ensure that youth potential is better understood, accepted and adopted in mainstream development planning.

29. The present component will target youth organizations and networks operating at the regional or international level which have the capacity to reach a broad constituency of national- and local-level youth-focused groups. The approach will be to develop awareness-raising and advocacy programmes jointly, including activities to build skills in advocacy, which the partner organizations can implement through their membership.

30. The present component will focus on all levels of governance:

1. Global level

31. Enhancing youth engagement at the global level through participation in UN-Habitat governing processes, catalysing demand for youth to be part of national policy formulation, and strengthening recognition among youth groups that they can have an important influence on local development.

32. Establishment of an interim youth consultative mechanism, as requested by the Governing Council, will be the first step in implementing the present component of the strategy. The organizations and networks envisioned as taking the lead in those initiatives will form the core of the consultative body and will provide guidance for the further formulation of the initiatives. The consultative mechanism will give young women and men a forum to influence Governing Council decisions and will also facilitate the flow of information to youth at local, national, regional and international levels.

33. Based on the experience of the interim mechanism, recommendations will be made for the establishment of a more institutionalized structure. It is envisioned that the mechanism, such as a youth advisory council, would meet during the regular sessions of the Governing Council and would also convene during meetings of the Global Youth Congress in conjunction with World Urban Forum events. The composition of the consultative body will be determined through the discussions with key stakeholders which began at the Global Youth Congress in September 2004, and will take into consideration not least gender balance and regional representation.

34. Programmes and campaigns will also include youth representatives in their steering committees. To ensure effective linkage is made, youth organizations in the campaign steering committees should be represented in an appropriate manner in the youth advisory/consultative mechanism of UN-Habitat.

2. National level

35. The Habitat Agenda has been further refined into national plans of action coordinated by national steering committees housed in the focal ministries of member States. The engagement of youth in the work of UN-Habitat can be further advanced through the inclusion by Governments of youth or a youth subcommittee within those national steering organs. Also, the national human settlements programme offices which have been established in some countries offer further possibilities for youth access and engagement. The same applies to the national campaign steering committees in countries where the national launches have been implemented or are at the preparatory stage.

3. Local level

36. UN-Habitat operational activities at the city level can explore possibilities for having youth subcommittees incorporated into the administrative structure of city projects while working to support the objectives of those projects. Project offices could also be encouraged to provide employment for young people.

B. Component 2: youth and human settlements programmes

37. In youth and human settlements programmes – including strategies on unemployed youth and other special risk groups such as slum youth, substance-abusing youth, youth in conflict with the law and HIV/AIDS orphans – UN-Habitat must be proactive in targeting vulnerable young people in its programmes to address urban slums and poverty as a key strategy for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Pilot projects and technical assistance to Governments and civil society must be accelerated to address the problem of providing decent and productive livelihoods through empowerment and social inclusion.

38. The process will be complementary to and build on the concurrent initiatives of UN-Habitat in support of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, the Secretary-General's Special Report on Violence and the Secretary-General's World Youth Report 2003, thereby enhancing inter-agency collaboration on building and strengthening the current areas of the work programme dealing with youth.

39. Urban slums – and their youth – are the front line for any such efforts. Thus, in its programmes aimed at slum upgrading, urban planning and management, and also regional development, UN-Habitat will engage in capacity-building for all key stakeholders the better to address youth problems in communities. Local authorities are the lead actors, but citizens' groups, faith-based organizations, youth networks, indigenous groups, women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and research and educational institutions all have an important role to play. UN-Habitat programmes with those partners will concentrate on addressing youth unemployment and youth at risk in urban areas.

40. The recently developed Strategy for Youth at Risk in Africa and the conception of a similar strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean represent a first multisectoral effort to define and target urban youth vulnerability factors. Implementation and programmatic responses to such strategies must be supported and scaled up.

41. A particular initiative in working with partners on a large scale will be the pilot Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa, where, in cooperation with selected cities in Africa and worldwide, UN-Habitat will work towards implementing the Millennium Development Goals through launching and strengthening programmes at the city level which focus on and work with urban youth in Africa. As the Global Partnership Initiative will build on the current initiatives of various UN-Habitat programmes in cities in Africa, it will require a high level of cooperation between the programmes in planning and implementation, and thus will serve as a model for mainstreaming youth approaches in UN-Habitat.

42. At the same time, focus on slums and youth at risk must not lose sight of broader issues of youth and development. For example, youth unemployment is also critical for university graduates and other newly skilled young people who are unable to find jobs and contribute to the development of their countries. Building the capacity of national and local Governments to address the employment issue must be part of UN-Habitat programme approaches.

C. Component 3: youth policy formulation and programme-planning capacity

43. For youth participation and governance strategies to be effective, it will be as important to create an enabling environment as to recognize the implications of policies and programmes for young women and men. Creating an enabling environment means, in particular, strengthening the capacity of institutions such as local authorities to address youth in their development planning and to build mechanisms for the effective participation of young women and men in decision-making and implementation activities. It will be important for UN-Habitat to collaborate with other United Nations agencies and international organizations in implementing the present component.

44. The present component will be achieved primarily through a capacity-building approach in which the UN-Habitat Training and Capacity Building Branch will play a lead role. At the national level it will require the support of the ministries responsible for various aspects of urban planning and management – including water, health, social services, security, in addition to ministries for local government or for youth or women’s affairs – in developing policies and strategies to strengthen youth participation in planning and decision-making structures at the local level. That process at the national level should at the same time have the participation of youth representatives, especially from vulnerable groups.

45. At the level of local authorities, UN-Habitat supports the development of models for participatory governance structures. A number of programmes are addressing participatory governance to some extent, such as Safer Cities, the Urban Management Programme, the Sustainable Cities Programme and the Training and Capacity Building Programme. There is a need, however, to ensure a consistent approach across the different programmes towards strengthening youth engagement in local governance. Such coherence is particularly important where there is a need to develop models which can be replicated or scaled up by other agencies and organizations. The proposed interdivisional task force (see component 5) will spearhead the development of such a coherent approach.

D. Component 4: information, communication and knowledge management

46. Under its new Strategic Vision, UN-Habitat intends to ensure that its promotion of norms such as housing rights and good governance make a difference in the way UN-Habitat and its partners work, and that lessons learned from programme implementation expand its knowledge of how to make development initiatives more effective. That means that communication and learning systems must be strengthened, and that the partners engaged in the youth strategy must be fully part of this process.

47. The Evaluation Unit will develop mechanisms for information management on how UN-Habitat is working with non-State partners, including those engaged in youth activities, and on how that work can be strengthened. Such mechanisms will involve indicators for measuring the effectiveness of interactions, their outcomes and their impact. Regular reports will be prepared and distributed to all UN-Habitat programmes, providing assessments of the extent to which the UN-Habitat mandate on youth engagement is being realized. A comprehensive database will be developed on current and potential partners.

48. The contribution of youth and the impact on youth on urbanization trends will be defined and further analysed and monitored by the Monitoring Systems Branch. The Branch will also analyse the substantive work which UN-Habitat is carrying out on youth together with the quality of the partnerships developed. The Disaster, Post-Conflict and Safety Section and the Urban Governance Section will be in liaison with the Partners and Youth Section to advance the development of an information inventory/source book on youth.

49. Mechanisms will also be strengthened to disseminate and share information on work with youth, youth services organizations and other partners in addressing the concerns of young people at local, national and international levels. The Partners and Youth Section web page will be enhanced for that purpose as an interactive site for young people to use in networking, advocacy and reporting on developments, and will feature a listserv targeting youth organizations and activists. To ensure that youth who lack access to electronic communication are not excluded, printed publications will also be used as a means of informing, reporting and networking. The printed publications will include regular features in existing UN-Habitat publications, such as "Habitat Debate", and other youth-focused print media will also be explored. Youth organizations will be actively invited to contribute news and opinion articles to those media initiatives.

50. Working with schools is another important vehicle for disseminating information to youth and encouraging their involvement in sustainable development activities. The Water for African Cities Programme has had considerable success in focusing on youth in its value-based water education initiatives, linking local water authorities with schools and water and sanitation clubs. That Programme provides a good model for other programmes.

51. In that regard, information communication technologies should also be seen as an opportunity for youth employment and empowerment. Strategies will therefore be developed to incorporate information communication technology activities in all strategy components – especially those in component 3 – and approaches will be explored to promote those technologies and their youth aspects in all UN-Habitat programmes. Internet cafes could be included in youth employment information centres in slums and community centres focused on youth at risk, and training programmes could be offered to enhance young people's skills in internet usage and also their entrepreneurial skills in information-communication-technology-based businesses.

E. Component 5: coordination and partnership strategies

52. The Partners and Youth Section of UN-Habitat will have the lead responsibility for overseeing and supporting implementation of the strategy, while the various programmes will have direct responsibility for integrating and implementing youth-focused normative and operational activities. In order to mainstream inclusion of youth in all UN-Habitat activities, an interdivisional task force will coordinate the implementation of the strategy.

53. The Partners and Youth Section will function first and foremost as a liaison between major youth partners and internal programmes, promoting the programmes to potential partners, facilitating accessibility and guiding the programmes in identifying suitable partners to engage in their activities. It will further facilitate linkages, with respect to youth engagement, between the two major UN-Habitat campaigns and the relevant programmes. At the global level, the Partners and Youth Section will coordinate activities which support the participation of youth partners in major policy forums such as the Governing Council and the World Urban Forum. It will also conduct promotional activities to encourage the participation of young people in UN-Habitat campaigns and initiatives.

54. The above does not imply that the Partners and Youth Section will be simply a "post office" or information broker between external and internal organs: it will also play a very active role in coordinating the development of tools and mechanisms to enhance the engagement of UN-Habitat with youth. As an early step in implementing the strategy, the Partners and Youth Section will develop guidelines for all programmes on how to strengthen their engagement with youth. Those guidelines will ultimately be incorporated into formal project and programme planning procedures used by the Project Review Committee.

55. When dealing with any specific group it is important to define the major characteristics and qualities which that group should possess. Any definition of youth groups must take into consideration the age group, socio-economic status, gender profile, education level, access to education and other factors which would assist in identifying the strengths and weaknesses within each "category" and engage a group in a more effective and efficient manner. The Partners and Youth Section will thus establish and maintain an informative contact database to enable effective and efficient interactions. That database should become a fundamental resource for all UN-Habitat programmes in designing programmes and projects.

56. All UN-Habitat divisions will be responsible for developing and implementing plans for incorporating the youth strategy into their programmes. In general the focus of each division should include the following:

(a) The Regional and Technical Cooperation Division will play a lead role in working with regional- and national-level youth organizations and networks in implementing component 1, and with national and local Governments for component 3;

(b) The Global Division will lead the process of developing models for the inclusion of youth in governance processes at the local level (component 3), addressing youth issues in human settlements programmes (component 2), and, in liaison with the Partners and Youth Section, overseeing the implementation of the youth strategy and in particular designing modalities for component 1;

(c) The Monitoring and Research Division will be responsible for the monitoring and knowledge-management elements of component 4.

57. A concerted effort will be made to enhance the engagement of partner networks and organizations, including key youth networks, in implementing the strategy, with a focus on strengthening the Youth Advisory Council. The UN-Habitat regional offices will play an important role in that regard by identifying and collaborating with youth organizations and engaging with Governments and local authorities, particularly through training programmes and governance strategies, to ensure enhanced focus on youth. Particularly at the national level, the partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should include a focus on working together with youth organizations.

IV. Implementing the strategy

58. Responsibility for implementing the mainstreaming strategy is agency-wide and rests at the highest level within UN-Habitat, and its departments; also, adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress in UN-Habitat interventions must be established within each and every area of work. The staff and management are also committed to promoting and ensuring a youth perspective in their collaboration with partners and other agencies.

59. Political will on the part of senior management, expressed by providing competent leadership and enabling the allocation of adequate resources for youth mainstreaming, is required, as are the necessary financial and human resources. Provision of training to all personnel at UN-Habitat headquarters and in the field is essential, as is appropriate follow-up in order to reinforce competence and knowledge regarding youth mainstreaming and awareness for both staff and management.

60. In the light of the above, UN-Habitat needs additional staffing for youth matters across the board, enhancement of information management systems, and additional resources for publications and communication.

61. The main functions of the Partners and Youth Section with respect to youth will be as follows:

(a) Promoting the youth strategy within and to all UN-Habitat programmes, multilateral agencies, partner organizations, Governments and donors, and negotiating opportunities and modalities for collaboration in its implementation;

(b) Convening the interdivisional task force and serving as its secretariat;

(c) Preparing annual work programmes and reports;

(d) Developing and maintaining information systems, including a database on youth-focused organizations and programmes, a tracking system for monitoring the engagement of youth in UN-Habitat activities and a database on best practices;

(e) Facilitating the development of tools by the normative programmes to support the effective engagement of youth in UN-Habitat activities, including guidelines for incorporating youth in the process of project design;

(f) Facilitating pilot projects and developing innovative approaches to working with youth;

(g) Convening global and regional meetings of partners focused on youth and serving as the secretariat for the youth consultative mechanism.

62. Implementation of the strategy will require generation of resources and innovative approaches, such as a special trust fund or grants programme for youth initiatives, partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and joint activities with other United Nations agencies.

63. An early priority for the Partners and Youth Section and the sections working with youth will be to formulate project and programme proposals which will engage the aforementioned development partners and secure resources for implementation of the strategy. Examples of projects which warrant further development in that regard are one-stop youth information resource centres, the pilot Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa, the database on best practices, tools to implement youth-at-risk strategies, tools to enhance the role of cities and youth organization networks, and guidelines on youth involvement in political processes.
