



Eighteenth session  
Nairobi, 12-16 February 2001  
Item 4 of the provisional agenda \*

**ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
(HABITAT): PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Report of the Executive Director

CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION .....	3
II. PROCESS LEADING UP TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA.....	4
A. Summary.....	4
B. Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its seventeenth session on the follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) .....	5
1. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (resolution 17/1).....	5
2. Views of the Commission on the preparations of the special session of the General Assembly (resolution 17/14) .....	6
III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME .....	6
A. Summary of progress .....	6

\* HS/C/18/1.

K0050443 030101

B.	Follow-up to resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission at its seventeenth session on specific substantive activities of the Centre.....	8
1.	Assistance for human settlements reconstruction to Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions as a result of recent natural catastrophes (resolution 17/2).....	8
2.	Countries with economies in transition (resolution 17/3).....	8
3.	The State of the World's Cities: 1999 (resolution 17/8).....	9
4.	Illegal Israeli human settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories (resolution 17/9).....	9
5.	The rural dimension of sustainable urban development (resolution 17/10).....	10
6.	Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (resolution 17/13).....	10
7.	Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 (resolution 17/15).....	10
8.	Local implementation of the Habitat Agenda with particular attention to local Agenda 21s (resolution 17/16).....	10
9.	International cooperation for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (resolution 17/17).....	10
IV.	THE GROWING ROLE OF PARTNERS: UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHERS .....	12
A.	Summary.....	12
B.	Follow-up to resolutions adopted by the Commission at its seventeenth session.....	13
1.	Cooperation with partners: role of local authorities in the work of the Commission (resolution 17/18).....	13
2.	Partnership with youth (resolution 17/19).....	13
3.	Cooperation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (resolution 17/22).....	13
V.	REGIONALIZATION OF ACTIVITIES: INCREASING THE CENTRE'S REACH.....	14
VI.	CONCLUSIONS .....	15

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the period following the seventeenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, the Centre took up the challenges from the international community and the United Nations system regarding the pressing need for a streamlined, consolidated and more visible response to the organizational complexities which had built up after the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul. These multiple challenges were mainly caused by an eroding climate of unsustainable and declining financial resources geared to help it carry out its newly defined mandate, a backlog of internal management issues, as well as an increasingly competitive climate within the United Nations system resulting from the long range of development agendas following the series of world conferences. Responding to that situation, the revitalization measures, which had been started in 1998 and 1999, gained further momentum, thanks also to the active cooperation with Member States and especially with the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The new organizational structure was approved by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 December 1999 (ST/SGB/1999/22).

2. Progress has been made in filling senior management positions at the reorganized Centre. The open recruitment process led to several new appointments, allowing UNCHS (Habitat) to take decisive steps towards reaching a more balanced geographical and gender distribution of senior positions as requested expressly by the Commission in its resolution 17/7 of 14 May 1999, on the revitalization of the Centre. After intensive consultations with Member States, and in response to General Assembly resolution 54/208 of 22 December 1999, this was followed by the Secretary-General's appointment of a full-time Executive Director of the UNCHS (Habitat), with effect from 1 September 2000, a most important step in the revitalization of the Centre which has been widely welcomed.

3. Further, and in accordance with Commission resolution 17/7, the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives has been monitoring the progress of the revitalization process and its impact on the implementation of the prioritized work programme of the Centre, and will report on this matter to the Commission at its eighteenth session. Close cooperation between the Executive Director and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, including with its working groups, has become a significant feature in the intergovernmental activities of the Centre. This has included intensive consultations on the future role of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNCHS (Habitat). As requested by the Commission, the Executive Director has explored possibilities for the Committee in its future status and role, which are the subject of a separate report to the Commission at its eighteenth session (HS/C/18/2/Add.2).

4. During the reporting period, the Centre did not escape the serious effects of the ongoing downward trend in official development assistance which particularly affected the Centre's work in capacity-building for sustainable and long-term improvements in human settlements conditions. This trend affected the Centre's cooperation with the United Nations system, particularly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as with bilateral development agencies. The Centre was able, however, to respond effectively to the increasing number of requests for assistance in post-conflict and post-disaster situations, thanks also to its enhanced flexibility in combining normative with operational activities.

5. The report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the follow-up to the 1997 review of programme and administrative practices of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (A/54/764) provides a detailed account of progress made by the revitalization process and of its effects on the Centre's ability to carry out its mandate. The report concludes that there are "encouraging signs of an emerging new work culture which puts a premium on initiative, creativity and flexibility". The report further argues that the Centre needs to "emphasize strong financial and personnel management, to ensure that the revitalization momentum is maintained and that staff morale and donors' confidence are not adversely affected". The Secretary-General has endorsed the recommendations of the report that the "financial and personnel management be given priority attention and be tackled as decisively, expeditiously and comprehensively as the programmatic areas" of the

Centre's work. Achieving this will be a priority of the new management, as the Centre must leave behind the past and achieve credibility in financial as well as other areas of management, if it is to fully regain and retain the confidence of Member States and all its partners.

6. As requested in Commission resolution 17/23 of 14 May 1999 on the Ombudsman Unit services to UNCHS (Habitat), the Executive Director concluded an inter-agency agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on 23 June 2000 which allowed the extension of the Ombudsman services to the Centre on a no-cost basis until further review of the matter, including its cost implications, by the Commission at its eighteenth session. A summarized account of the activities of the Ombudsman Unit is contained in the report to the UNEP Governing Council at its twenty-first session (UNEP/GC.21/7). The Ombudsman Unit has also provided a statistical analysis of the time spent by the Unit in servicing UNCHS (Habitat). Discussions on the cost sharing proposal are currently underway within UNEP, the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) and UNCHS (Habitat) and finalization is expected shortly.

7. As an integral part of the revitalization process, the Commission requested in resolution 17/11 of 14 May 1999 that the empowerment of women, being one of the primary indicators in the strategic vision for a revitalized Centre, be translated into clear policy and action and promptly implemented in the Centre's work. With a view to effectively implementing its two-gender policy goals: the empowerment of women in human settlements development, and the mainstreaming of gender in all its programmes, projects and activities, it was decided to merge the Women and Habitat Programme and the Gender Unit. A new Unit, Women and Gender, Norms and Policies, was located in the Urban secretariat, to address policy coordination, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming throughout the Centre. Special voluntary contributions from the Governments of Norway and Sweden have been instrumental in setting up the activities of the Unit.

## II. PROCESS LEADING UP TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA

### A. Summary

8. At the global level, far-reaching responsibilities for coordinating and guiding the implementation of the outcome of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) were assigned to the Commission on Human Settlements. Being a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission was given the specific responsibility of promoting, reviewing, monitoring and assessing the progress made in implementing the Habitat Agenda in all countries. In recognition of this overall task, the General Assembly assigned the Commission with the mandate of serving as preparatory committee for the special session, with UNCHS (Habitat) as its secretariat.

9. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, the Centre submitted several new initiatives to operationalize its own role in assisting countries with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, such as the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign for Urban Governance, as well as the draft World Charter of Local Self-Government. Guidelines for national reporting on implementing the Habitat Agenda were sent to Member States in October 1999, as well as to United Nations agencies and Habitat Agenda partners. Based on a first analysis by the Centre of the more than 70 national reports which were received by the end of 2000, progress has been made by most countries in reviewing national human settlements policies in light of their commitments made in Istanbul on the two goals of the Habitat Agenda, in formulating priorities for national action, and in establishing monitoring procedures on the state of their human settlements in urban and rural areas. A detailed overview is made in the progress report of the Executive Director to the Preparatory Committee at its second session (HS/C/PC.2/2/Add.1) and in the regional reports (HS/C/PC.2/2/Add.2/3/4/5/6).

10. In the field of international cooperation, the Centre organized an inter-agency meeting on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda by the United Nations system (New York, 15 June 2000), to review the current state and further potential of United Nations organizations and agencies providing support to the implementation of Habitat Agenda action areas within the framework of their own work programmes. The coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council session in New York (10-12 July 2000) considered prospects and specific action on the coordinated implementation by the United Nations system of the Habitat Agenda. In its report for 2000 (A/55/3), the Council adopted a number of conclusions on specific coordination measures which would strengthen its role within the United Nations system on implementing the Habitat Agenda, such as adopting a Habitat Agenda task manager system, and facilitate better coordinated action. The report of the Council is submitted to the Preparatory Committee for consideration at its second session in document HS/C/PC.2/5.

11. Since the seventeenth session of the Commission, the Centre has established a small unit on the special session within the Urban secretariat, with the task of coordinating the Centre's activities in support of the preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly.

B. Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its seventeenth session on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

1. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (resolution 17/1)

12. The Centre prepared the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation by the United Nations system of the Habitat Agenda (A/55/83 - E/2000/62), which laid the basis for the discussion by the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council on the same topic from 10 to 12 July 2000. The report reflects on the significance of human settlements work in the context of economic and social development, particularly with regard to the urbanization process, and outlines the elements of a task manager system to promote, give direction and facilitate the exchange of information within the United Nations system for a better coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Based on that report and the Council's deliberations on the matter, the coordination segment adopted several conclusions which are intended to place the implementation of the Habitat Agenda into the broader development work of the United Nations on international cooperation. These conclusions are contained in the Report of the Economic and Social Council for 2000 (A/55/3) and are summarized in the progress report of the Executive Director to the Preparatory Committee at its second session (HS/C/PC.2/2/Add.1).

13. When debating the preparatory process for the special session at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Governments resolved to request the Secretary-General to consider further strengthening of the Centre, including making additional regular budget resources and sufficient human resources available (55/194 of 20 December 2000). The resolution also decided to include several items on the provisional agenda of the special session, among them a declaration on cities and human settlements in the new millennium. Further, it welcomed the launch of the Cities Alliance initiative by the Centre and the World Bank as part of the efforts of the United Nations system to achieve the twin goals of the Habitat Agenda, and requested the Executive Director to take a leadership and coordinating role in this initiative. In adopting resolution 55/194 on the scope to be covered by the special session, the General Assembly took decisions on the participation of Habitat Agenda partners and observers, and requested the President of the General Assembly to present the list of selected Habitat Agenda partners to the Member States in a timely manner, for approval. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also took decisions regarding the accreditation procedure of Habitat Agenda partners to the special session.

2. Views of the Commission at its seventeenth session on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (Resolution 17/14)

14. It will be recalled that the content of this Commission resolution focused on the organizational session and the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee. As requested by the Commission, the Centre identified 20 key items as universal priorities from the commitments and strategies adopted at the Habitat II Conference, in order to assist countries organize their reporting process in a concise and structured manner which would allow the reporting on priorities and specific performance objectives. The Centre assisted countries with guidelines for national reporting which stimulated intensive preparations of national reports for further analysis and monitoring by the Centre and the Preparatory Committee. During the second half of 2000, comprehensive reviews were organized with the help of the Centre in all regions. They were of fundamental importance in giving direction to the momentum created by the Habitat Agenda and its implementation process at regional and national levels, and resulted in renewed commitments and priorities for national- and regional-level action. At the invitation of the Government of Sweden, an expert meeting on urbanization and the international community was held with the participation of Member States of the Commission and Habitat Agenda partners. The expert meeting had an opportunity to review the documentation prepared by the Centre for the second session of the Preparatory Committee and discussed the initial draft of a political declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium. Details on the results of those consultations and review meetings, may be found in document HS/C/PC.2/2/Add.1.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

#### A. Summary of progress

15. It will be recalled that the design of the work programme for the biennium 2000 - 2001 provided the Centre with a first opportunity to translate the strategic vision of the revitalization effort into a comprehensive and integrated set of work objectives and planned activities, and corresponding statements of expected results. In doing so, the programmatic work of the Centre was summarized under two subprogrammes only, corresponding to the two action areas of the Habitat Agenda: adequate shelter for all, and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world. In adopting resolution 17/20 of 14 May 1999 on the work programme of the Centre, the Commission confirmed that the new work programme reflected the need for an improved focus with a limited number of well defined objectives. The Commission recognized that the strategy to combine normative with operational functions was directly responding to its resolution 16/8 of 7 May 1997 on revitalization and to key recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/51/884). Resolution 17/20 had further requested the Executive Director, when implementing the work programme in the context of the Habitat Agenda, to carefully consider the potential impact on reducing poverty, improving human shelter conditions and promoting governance.

16. In direct pursuit of these policy directives, UNCHS (Habitat) took decisive steps to build up the profile of an advocacy agency and focused on maximizing its normative and operational impact through the launching of global campaigns. This strategy was successful in the setting up of strategic partnerships with major agencies of the United Nations system and with key civil society groups, while developing a flexible response system to requests for assistance in post-conflict situations and post-disaster emergencies. An operationalized version of the work programme for the first year only (2000), including the specific responsibilities and objectives of the Centre's new organizational units, was submitted to the Committee of Permanent Representatives at the end of 1999: Habitat strategy for the year 2000.

17. Following intensive consultations with partner groups and stakeholders from civil society, the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure was launched in the different regions of the world during the period of July to October 2000. These well-attended events demonstrated the new advocacy role of the Centre and created political space for dialogue with the organized urban poor and women groups in the regions. They showcased the potential for productive partnerships between the urban poor and governments at local, provincial and national levels. The launching of events will be followed by slum upgrading projects under the City Alliance facility. As a first step in that direction, the Centre is in the process of setting up cooperation agreements with local federations of slum dwellers to provide support to local action plans, combining normative with operational activities. Progress was also made in activating international instruments on housing rights, by formulating a normative framework on secure tenure as an entry point to the application of housing rights within the framework of the rights to development. Further details on the subject, may be found in the theme paper before the Commission on security of tenure (HS/C/18/6).

18. In adopting the Habitat Agenda, Member States and their partners recognized the importance of good governance and committed themselves to enabling the practice of "transparent, responsible, accountable, just, effective and efficient governance of towns, cities and metropolitan areas". During the review period, the Centre conceptualized and launched the Global Campaign for Urban Governance which was endorsed by the Commission at its seventeenth session. The campaign represents the Centre's key contribution to implementing the Habitat Agenda's goal of sustainable development in an urbanizing world. The overall objectives of the campaign are to increase the capacity of local governments and urban stakeholders to practice good governance. To this end, the Centre has drafted a declaration on norms of good governance to guide the implementation of activities under the campaign which was a subject of the dialogue on urban governance at the first session of the Preparatory Committee.

19. Consultations on the normative framework of the campaign were held during 2000 in all parts of the world, during a series of international and regional meetings on urban governance and urban development strategies. Together with the draft World Charter on Local Self-Government, the declaration on norms of good governance will be the principle vehicle for global advocacy. Furthermore, the campaign developed an approach to identifying, supporting and promoting "Illustrative Cities" which feed the campaign with examples and lessons and which serve to anchor the advocacy work into local contexts. Further details on the Campaign for Urban Governance, may be found in the theme paper before the Commission on urban governance (HS/C/18/7).

20. With the Cities Alliance, a major joint initiative between the Centre and the World Bank, as well as a range of bilateral agencies, was launched in May 1999. The Cities Alliance focuses on providing international financial and technical assistance for operational activities in two thematic areas: city development strategies, and upscaling of slum upgrading. The "Cities Without Slums" action plan is a component of the Cities Alliance which found entry into the Secretary-General's action plan on the work of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, adopted in September 2000 as part of the Millennium Declaration. In Montreal (June 2000), an agreement was reached between the stakeholders of the Cities Alliance on the core partnership between the World Bank and the United Nations system, represented by UNCHS (Habitat). The consultative group endorsed the vision statement of the Cities Alliance, reviewed a range of project proposals from all regions and approved a first set of projects for implementation starting in 2000. The consultative group meeting in Rome (end November 2000) approved a number of new proposals and decided to establish a steering committee of five members to support the work of the secretariat between two sessions of the consultative group. It also decided to invite the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNCHS (Habitat) on behalf of the Commission on Human Settlements to become a member of the consultative group.

21. A major focus in the operational activities of the Centre was generated by the rapidly increasing requests for intervention in post-conflict and post disaster situations. These activities are mainly funded through the United Nations system and by bilateral contributions to the Centre, either directly or through coordination by the

United Nations. Prominent among them are the Centre's efforts to strengthen municipal administration and land information systems in Kosovo, within the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), and the settlement and infrastructure rehabilitation projects in northern Iraq, under the "oil for food" agreement between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. Other operational interventions by the Centre on disaster mitigation and reconstruction have taken place in Afghanistan, China, East Timor, Mozambique, Myanmar, Rwanda and Somalia.

B. Follow-up to resolutions and decisions by the Commission at its seventeenth session on specific substantive activities of the Centre

1. Assistance for human settlements reconstruction to Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions as result of recent natural catastrophes (resolution 17/2)

22. In the last two years, several assessment missions were carried out to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean affected by natural disasters, such as Colombia (earthquakes), Venezuela (landslides) and countries in Central America (high winds, floods and landslides).

23. These missions led to the formulation of action plans for the rehabilitation of human settlements as well as for the mitigation of the effects of future events. Follow-up projects are being implemented directly by the relevant Governments or with the participation of other external support agencies. In the case of Colombia, the Centre has collaborated with the Government and the National Savings Fund, in designing a housing programme for families affected by the earthquake. Activities in Venezuela have led to the formulation of proposals for the development of plans to reduce the vulnerability of human settlements in coastal areas to heavy rains and landslides.

24. UNCHS (Habitat), through its disaster management programme and its regional offices, has also carried out several assessment and identification missions to countries in other regions affected by natural disasters. Missions to countries like Indonesia (forest fires), Turkey (seismic vulnerability reduction), and India (floods), have led to the formulation of technical recommendations and the eventual implementation of longer-term collaborative activities. The Centre has continued its collaboration with UNEP in supporting the activities of the Government of China on flood vulnerability reduction. The programme of collaboration initiated in 1999 focused on the execution of a series of thematic consultations on issues related to flood prevention and mitigation. UNEP and the Centre have now embarked on the development of a "vulnerability assessment tool and vulnerability index" to be applied in the Yangtze River basin in collaboration with the Government of China. Similarly, UNCHS (Habitat) in collaborating with UNEP and with support from the Government of Japan is developing a regional programme to promote the exchange of knowledge and technical capacity on flood prevention and mitigation among countries in South Asia including: Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal and Viet Nam.

2. Countries with economies in transition (Resolution 17/3)

25. Major activities of UNCHS (Habitat) are focussing on providing technical assistance to the Province of Kosovo, based on the Centre's close collaboration with the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK). Work is carried out mainly in three key areas: the rehabilitation of the municipal administration; the regularization of housing and property rights; and the restoration of property and land registries. Programmes for the training of councillors in preparation for the municipal elections in October 2000, were designed in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union.



26. UNCHS (Habitat) continues to provide support to UNMIK in the establishment of the Housing and Property Directorate and the Housing and Property Claims Commission. These institutions, currently managed by the Centre, perform three main functions: the settlement of disputes on housing and property rights; the temporary allocation of vacant housing; and the provision of legal guidance on housing and property issues. The Centre has also started its activities for the rebuilding of a modern cadastral system based on existing records and practices. For that purpose, UNMIK has created the Kosovo Cadastral Agency, the initial phase of which is being managed by the Centre.

27. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with economies in transition, there has been major progress in capacity-building for better urban governance. All countries of the region have new non-governmental organizations working in this area (the most active ones being in Poland, Romania and Slovakia), as well as networks of government training centres (e.g. Latvia and Ukraine), many of them involved in networking and collaboration through, among others, the Regional Programme for Capacity-building in Governance and Local Leadership for East and Central European Countries.

### 3. The State of the World's Cities: 1999 (resolution 17/8)

28. The Global Urban Observatory of UNCHS (Habitat) is presently assisting at least two countries and eight cities in each region in capacity-building to strengthen urban indicators and the collection of city-specific information and analysis. By now, more than 90 cities in 20 countries have designated urban observatories and are being trained on the use of indicators for policy development. These cities and countries will produce policy oriented "state of the city reports" and "state of the nations' cities reports." As decided by the Commission, the "State of the World's Cities" report has been incorporated as Part II in the third issue of the Global Report on Human Settlements which is to be published in 2001, on the occasion of the special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat agenda. The Global Urban Observatory has initiated a programme to apply geographic information systems to indicators analysis at the local level. It is also adapting an interactive reporting template for localizing Agenda 21 to the requirements of reporting on progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda, and designing an index or indices that can be used to track progress in poverty reduction, city investment potential and overall quality of urban life.

### 4. Illegal Israeli human settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories (resolution 17/9)

29. In pursuance of resolution 17/9, the Executive Director was requested to take the following three actions: first, to organize a meeting on the establishment of a human settlements fund for the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory; second, to cooperate with the Secretary-General in facilitating the organization of a conference of the High Contracting Parties of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva; and, third, to prepare and submit to the Commission at its eighteenth session a report on the housing situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the problems posed by the Israeli illegal actions in that respect.

30. With regard to the first two requests, on 14 July 1999, the Executive Director wrote to the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories informing him of the two requests and inquiring on how best the two offices could cooperate in their implementation. That procedure was followed in view of the fact that the General Assembly, in its resolution 53/89 of 7 December 1998 on assistance to the Palestinian people, had requested the Secretary-General to include in his report to the General Assembly on assistance to the Palestinian people an assessment of the needs of the Palestinian people which are still unmet, as well as specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The Secretary-General had subsequently entrusted that responsibility to the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. The Centre had also been given to understand

that the Office of the Special Coordinator was responsible for follow-up actions to the equally relevant results of the Paris Consultative Group Meeting (14-15 December 1997) where the first Palestinian Development Plan (1998 - 2000) was presented and the subsequent Ministerial Conference to Support Middle East Peace and Development which was held in Washington, D.C., on 30 November 1998. A reminder was sent to the Special Coordinator on 3 November 1999. Both the reminder and the letter from the Executive Director were copied to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Administrator of UNDP.

31. With respect to the third request to the Executive Director to prepare a report on the housing situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the problems posed by the Israeli illegal actions in this respect, the required report has been prepared and submitted by the Executive Director to the present session of the Commission (see document HS/C/18/2/Add.2).

#### 5. The rural dimension of sustainable urban development (resolution 17/10)

32. In pursuance of the request by the Commission that urban-rural interdependence be taken into consideration in the execution of the work programme of the Centre for the next biennium, given the strong synergy between urban and rural areas, a number of initiatives were carried out to outline the Centre's concern for the need to improve the multiple linkages between urban and rural settlements. UNCHS (Habitat) benefited from its ongoing collaboration with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) to prepare jointly in October 1999, the Bathurst Declaration on Land Administration for Sustainable Development, which provided direction to Habitat Agenda partners in addressing both rural and urban land policy and land management issues through an overall policy framework.

33. At the international conference on the future of rural development (Potsdam, Germany, 5-8 June 2000), the Centre had the opportunity of presenting its views on the importance of urban-rural linkages and outlined key issues for an integrated policy on regional development. Within the series of global dialogue sessions at the EXPO 2000 in Hannover, Germany, the Centre co-organized a number of workshops and panel debates on urban-rural linkages (Hannover 15-17 August 2000). The Commission on Human Settlements, at its eighteenth session, is invited to review an outline for a proposed theme paper on the rural dimension of sustainable urban development, to be prepared for the nineteenth session.

#### 6. Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (resolution 17/13)

34. Since the adoption of the Habitat Agenda, and in response to Commission resolution 16/1 of 31 May 1991 and General Assembly resolution 52/191 of 18 December 1999, the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 has been incorporated in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In addition, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy has become part of the monitoring activities of the Habitat Agenda, with specific reference to its component on "adequate shelter for all". Most countries have enhanced their national shelter strategies, based on the principles of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, and have incorporated them into their national Habitat Agenda action plans. This progress is particularly noticeable in policy formulation reflected in the adoption and strengthening of enabling and participatory strategies for shelter development, the encouragement and facilitation of public-private partnerships, the addressing of housing development with more focus on social aspects and the progressive realization of housing rights.

35. Despite this progress in policy formulation and diversification of focus, however, the gap between policy formulation and actual implementation has continued to widen in many developing countries. Progress in carrying out programmes to improve living and housing conditions of low-income groups has generally been slow and inadequate as compared to the growing magnitude of the problem. In view of the complexities of

translating enabling policies into broad and sustained housing delivery programmes which have a visible impact on the housing conditions of low-income groups, the Centre has shifted its own approach on assistance to countries. In line with its new emphasis on establishing and promoting norms and standards in the shelter policy sector, the Centre launched a global campaign on secure tenure which is geared towards the promotion of secure land tenure conditions as a fundamental policy prerequisite for mobilizing a people-centered housing process. Further reference to this issue may be found in the report to the Commission on the special theme: Security of tenure (HS/C/18/6).

7. Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 (resolution 17/15)

36. The Centre's activities in the context of the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of Agenda 21 continued to focus on the local level, which allowed for synergies with the local-level implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Specifically, the Sustainable Cities Programme became the Centre's primary tool for supporting the sustainable development goals of Agenda 21 at the city level, which also allowed for a coordinated and focused implementation of the environmental dimensions of the Habitat Agenda. Working with more than 20 partners worldwide, the Sustainable Cities Programme was able to expand and intensify its activities through a system-wide collaboration with the large number of local Agenda 21 initiatives which are presently operational in all regions of the world. The Programme provides support to city demonstrations on capacity-building for environmental management in an increasing number of countries. These demonstration activities currently include 50 city and national-level initiatives. Furthermore, the Centre made available a package on communication and awareness building, as well as on environmental planning and management tools for global and regional meetings of the Urban Environment Forum which took place during 2000 in Cairo, Salt Lake City and Cape Town.

8. Local implementation of the Habitat Agenda with particular attention to local Agenda 21s (resolution 17/16)

37. Pursuant to decision 17/16 of 14 May 1999, the Commission on Human Settlements requested the Executive Director to report on progress made at the local level in implementing the Habitat Agenda at the Commission's eighteenth session. The report: Local Implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including the role of local authorities (HS/C/18/3), reviews information available from national reports for the special session, progress reports prepared for regional preparatory meetings for that session and local-level best practices according to the five broad themes of shelter, social development and poverty eradication, environmental management, economic development and governance. The report states that globalization is increasing vulnerability to global shocks, particularly for the poor, and that strengthening the decentralization process is an effective means of responding to global challenges. The report concludes, therefore, that strong local authorities are vital for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

9. International cooperation for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (resolution 17/17)

38. The above matter is reported on separately in report HS/C/18/4: International cooperation and the review of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, for consideration by the Commission under item 5 of the provisional agenda. The report recalls the dramatic decline of official development assistance allocated to human settlements, recommends that advocacy strategies be formulated to reverse this situation, reaffirms the potential of the United Nations system for this purpose and stresses the need for improved coordination and international cooperation, as stated by the coordination segment of the Economic and

Social Council in July 2000. It also recommends that appropriate action be undertaken to develop mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

#### IV. THE GROWING ROLE OF PARTNERS: UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AND OTHERS

##### A. Summary

39. It will be recalled that the deliberations at the Habitat II conference and the resulting Habitat Agenda embraced the concept of partnership as fundamental for implementing the commitments made towards the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world. Since Habitat II, the Commission has held intensive deliberations at its last two sessions on principles, modalities and action areas for engaging in effective and productive forms of collaboration between state authorities and its Habitat partners at global, national and local levels. The Centre has, in the past, been active in devising specific guidelines for cooperation with the various Habitat partner groups in civil society on mechanisms for partnership to implement, coordinate and monitor the Habitat Agenda. Today, partnerships with the multiple stakeholders in civil society are considered a fundamental principle for implementing global development agendas, as recently underlined at the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations.

40. In May 1999, the Commission on Human Settlements, in its resolution 17/18, decided to establish a committee of local authorities as an advisory body for the main purpose of strengthening the role of cities and local authorities in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. For the first time, an intergovernmental body of the United Nations had officially recognized the need and advisability of establishing a visible and official relationship with cities and local authorities, and singled them out from the large variety of civil society and non-governmental organizations. Fully in line with the mandate and terms of reference set by the Commission, the Committee was established in Venice, Italy in January 2000 and held its second meeting in Nairobi, in conjunction with the first session the Preparatory Committee.

41. Following the seventeenth session of the Commission, a series of regional consultations were held on the joint World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC)-UNCHS initiative of preparing a World Charter of Local Self-Government. At the second session of the Preparatory Committee, UNCHS (Habitat) organized a global dialogue on the theme: Towards a World Charter of Local Self-Government, which was attended by a number of mayors and local authority representatives from all parts of the world, as well as from international associations of local authorities. During the discussions, there was broad agreement that an institutional and legal framework for decentralization was essential for facilitating action on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the local level. The Preparatory Committee adopted a resolution requesting the Commission on Human Settlements to hold consultations on this topic at its eighteenth session (see 18/3/Add.1).

42. During the reporting period, the Global Parliamentarians for Habitat organized and held several national and regional meetings, culminating in the Third Global Forum of Parliamentarians, in Manila, 25-28 July 2000, which brought together over 220 parliamentarians and about 300 other participants from 40 countries from the five continents. The Forum reviewed the achievements of parliamentarians and adopted the Manila Declaration, which endorsed the new strategic vision of UNCHS (Habitat), including the campaigns on urban governance and security of tenure. It further committed its support to the World Charter of Local Self-Government and the establishment of a Legal Unit at the Centre.

43. During the period 1999-2000, cooperation and collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other Habitat Agenda partners were intensified in the context of the revitalization of the Centre. The cooperation and collaboration were focused on the implementation of the Centre's two global campaigns on

security of tenure and urban governance and on the global monitoring of the urbanization trends. UNCHS (Habitat) is also currently capitalizing on new partnerships with regional networks of non-governmental organizations, urban professionals, researchers, academics, women and youth groups.

44. More detailed information on the Centre's cooperation and collaboration with Habitat Agenda partners is contained in document HS/C/18/11: Cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations.

## B. Follow-up to resolutions adopted by the Commission at its seventeenth session

### 1. Cooperation with partners: role of local authorities in the work of the Commission (resolution 17/18)

45. The role of the Advisory Committee of Local Authorities covers several facets of the Habitat Agenda's implementation process. On the strength of its unique membership - individual mayors and presidents of global and regional associations of cities and local authorities - it brings to the United Nations a vast and diverse experience in shelter and sustainable urban development policy and management. This experience is invaluable in supporting the Centre's normative and operational work, but also in identifying future challenges of urbanization and appropriate solutions tested in the real world.

46. The Committee has already revealed its potential in expanding the range and impact of the Habitat Agenda implementation process. In their capacity as special advisors, the members of the Committee bring the message of the United Nations to new audiences and forums. This role has been recognized by the Preparatory Committee process and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his inaugural address in July 2000 to the World Conference on the Urban Future (Urban 21). The third session of the Committee is taking place in conjunction with the eighteenth session of the Commission and the second session of the Preparatory Committee. Further reference to this matter is contained in the report to the Commission: Local implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including the role of local authorities (HS/C/18/3).

### 2. Partnership with youth (resolution 17/19)

47. UNCHS (Habitat) continued to work with youth organizations to promote and support their involvement and contributions to human settlements development. In this connection, and as part of the work programme of the Centre, a report was completed documenting and evaluating youth activities in human settlements development globally, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Youth for Habitat International Network. Youth organizations in Brazil, Colombia, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Senegal and Turkey actively took part in this initiative and provided national reports based on which an overview is prepared to evaluate common problems that youth generally confront and areas where youth should focus their activities and governments should take priority actions to support youth. The network is actively participating in the special session. In this connection, it organized a parallel youth programme during the first session of the Preparatory Committee held in Nairobi, Kenya from 8 to 12 May 2000.

### 3. Cooperation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (resolution 17/22)

48. The above matter is a standing item of the Commission, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/199 of 17 December 1985 and pursuant to Commission resolution 10/3 of 16 April 1987 and UNEP Governing Council decision 14/3 of 18 June 1987 on the same subject. Progress in this area is covered under a

separate report to the Commission on cooperation between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP, referenced under HS/C/18/10. The report highlights the cooperation between the UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP in the four previously established subject areas (chapter I) and within the system-wide efforts of the United Nations (chapter II), and then outlines the future prospects for cooperation (chapter III).

49. In summary, cooperation has continued on city environmental profiles, city demonstrations in broad-based urban environmental planning and management, normative work on guidelines and tools, as well as joint efforts for environmentally sound human settlements technology under the joint Sustainable Cities Programme. The report further describes cooperation on disaster management, the Joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Task force on the Balkans, the Managing Water for African Cities project, and the UNEP Training Programme in Environmental Law and Policy. Regarding cooperation in system-wide efforts, the report mentions cooperation in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Environmental Management Group (EMG) and the Urban Environment Forum. Regarding future prospects, the Executive Directors highlight as a major breakthrough the proven catalytic potential of the Sustainable Cities Programme to bring together cities and urban programmes of other international organizations in joint operational and normative work. The Executive Directors further agree that the Urban Environment Forum represents an important achievement towards global partnership in urban environmental management. They conclude that the future of the Sustainable Cities Programme is unclear due to problems with the UNEP and Habitat core funding, and they plan to explore options for mobilizing the required resources for a more continuous secretariat support to the Urban Environment Programme, promising to continue their cooperation under the Managing Water for African Cities programme while making efforts to develop similar joint projects with extrabudgetary funding.

#### V. REGIONALIZATION OF ACTIVITIES: INCREASING THE CENTRE'S REACH

50. In pursuance of resolution 17/4 of 14 May 1999 of the Commission on Human Settlements and the issuance of the Secretary-General's bulletin SGB/1999/22 of 23 December 1999 on the organization of UNCHS (Habitat), the Centre has finalized a comprehensive regionalization strategy which takes into account its responsibilities in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, its new strategic focus and its new structure. This strategy is based on two premises: first, a regional presence is necessary to increase the policy and operational capacities of the Centre; and, second, this regional presence should be financially affordable and sustainable.

51. Based on the Secretary-General's bulletin SGB/1999/22, the regional strategy of the Centre should be implemented by a limited number of regional offices whose functions would be the following:

- (a) Providing support to the regionalization of the global campaigns and ensuring the incorporation of the regional dimension into the global campaigns;
- (b) Providing support to the development of urban strategies at the regional and national levels;
- (c) Assisting in the establishment, promotion and support of regional networks;
- (d) Providing support to local authorities in their regional activities;
- (e) Providing experience and information to headquarters for incorporation into the Centre's policy and work programme;
- (f) Providing technical cooperation services upon request from Governments;
- (g) Providing implementation capacity and advice to other organizations within the United Nations system, particularly to UNEP.

52. Presently, the Centre has three regional offices based respectively in Nairobi for Africa and the Arab States, in Fukuoka, Japan, for Asia and the Pacific and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for Latin America and the Caribbean. Each office has five to seven professionals. The Centre has liaison offices at United Nations Headquarters in New York (2 Professionals) and Geneva (1 Professional) and one new office in Brussels (1 Professional). To complete its revitalization, the Centre should now consolidate its regional network in the first instance by strengthening existing offices and in the second instance by addressing the specific needs (particularly in terms of operational activities) of the two regions which are currently covered from Nairobi.

53. Since their establishment, regional offices have been funded by extrabudgetary resources generated by operational activities associated with financial and in-kind support from host cities (Fukuoka and Rio de Janeiro). Based on the Office of the Internal Oversight Services recommendation, the Centre intends to enhance the linkage between its operational and normative activities by allocating one regular budget post to each existing office as of January 2002 (see programme budget HS/C/18/9). Liaison offices are funded by extra-budgetary resources (Geneva and Brussels) and regular budget (New York). They should be strengthened through earmarked contributions.

54. Activities in the Arab States currently fall under the responsibility of the Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States. The Centre intends to approach Arab Governments (using the process applied in 1995-1996 for Latin America and Asia) and solicit offers to host a possible office for the Arab States, which should operate at no cost to the Centre's core resources (i.e. Foundation and regular budget).

55. Activities in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia are currently managed from Nairobi (coordinated by the Programme Support Division). National liaison offices, funded by host countries, are in operation in Moscow (Habitat Executive Bureau) and Budapest (Information Office for Central Europe). The presence of the Centre in most countries with economies in transition is very low. An offer by the Government of Turkey to host and fully finance an office of UNCHS (Habitat) in Istanbul was noted with appreciation at the seventeenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements. This office would deal with interested countries of the above-mentioned subregions. Further consultations with the Government of Turkey have confirmed that the offer stands and can be implemented in 2001.

56. The Executive Director intends to finalize the negotiation with the Government of Turkey, taking into account the views of the Commission on Human Settlements that will be expressed at its eighteenth session on this matter, and to invite each Government of the concerned subregions to decide whether they prefer to work exclusively with Nairobi or to cooperate with the Istanbul office.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

57. The progress report of the Executive Director provides evidence that, after a complex time of transition, the Centre has started to take on its new strategic vision and is in the process of generating a new profile in its work with its Habitat Agenda partners. This new profile of complementary and coordinated focus on normative and operational activities is also based on a new organizational structure which allows the Centre to combine institutional memory with equally needed innovations in strategic approach and work styles. This has also allowed a new approach to what has become central to the work of the organization and what remains marginal.

58. Within its overall mandate as defined by the Habitat Agenda, the Centre needs to make a more visible and determined contribution to the intensifying challenges of the urban transformation of our societies in a globalizing world, so as to intervene more effectively within the United Nations system and with its partners in Government and civil society. While the scope of issues which call for urgent and better coordinated attention becomes even wider, it may be helpful to focus the Centre's limited energy in human and financial resources on a few concerns as a matter of immediate priority:

- (a) The need for consolidating and integrating the Centre's main initiatives concerning the global campaigns, the Cities Alliance and the range of operational projects, in order to achieve a better impact at local and national levels;
- (b) The need to increase the role of the Centre within the coordination machinery of the United Nations system, so as to give the Centre's work with the Habitat Agenda more impact in the development agendas of the United Nations;
- (c) The need to address the rural-urban continuum in a globalizing world, through increased attention to rural-urban linkages, subnational development and medium-sized cities;
- (d) The need to make the Centre's work on security of tenure, housing rights and good governance more relevant to supporting women-headed households;
- (e) The need to confirm Habitat as a Centre of excellence for monitoring urban conditions and trends.

-----