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**COORDINATION MATTERS: COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS
CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT) AND THE
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**JOINT PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT) AND THE UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

Joint report of the Executive Directors

Summary

The present report has been prepared jointly by the Executive Directors of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements UNCHS (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/199 of 17 December 1985, on cooperation between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP, and as requested in Commission resolution 10/3 of 16 April 1987 and UNEP Governing Council decision 14/3 of 18 June 1987 on the same subject. 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).

Introduction

1. By its resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977 concerning institutional arrangements for international cooperation in the field of human settlements, the General Assembly urged that the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) and the bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements meet biennially with the Executive Director of UNEP and the bureau of its Governing Council "to review together their respective priorities and programmes for improving human settlements and to strengthen and extend cooperation between the two organizations". By its resolution 35/77B of 5 December 1980, the General Assembly

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decided that the joint bureaux meetings should be held once a year rather than on a biannual basis. On 17 December 1985, the General Assembly adopted resolution 40/199, in which it decided to discontinue the joint meetings of the bureaux altogether.

2. The decision of the General Assembly to discontinue the joint meetings was taken on the joint recommendation of the Commission on Human Settlements and the Governing Council of UNEP. The recommendation was based on Commission resolution 8/14 of 8 May 1985 and UNEP Governing Council decision 13/12 of 23 May 1985, in which both governing bodies furthermore expressed satisfaction at the continuing cooperation between the secretariats of UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP. They also urged intensification of that cooperation and decided to include in the agenda of their future sessions an item on cooperation between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP and to discuss the item on the basis of a common progress report of the two Executive Directors.

3. The present report on cooperation between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP has therefore been prepared jointly by the secretariats of the two organizations pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/199 and as requested in Commission resolution 8/14 and UNEP Governing Council decision 13/12.

I. COOPERATION UNDER THE FOUR SUBJECT AREAS

4. The present chapter contains information on the joint activities of UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP under the four subject areas established by the joint bureaux meeting at its seventh session.

A. Subject area 1: Assessment of environmental conditions in human settlements

Cooperation in city environmental profiles

5. The joint UNCHS (Habitat)/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme has supported the development of "environmental profiles" in cities preparing to become participants in the Programme. Profiles involve a broad range of local stakeholders and provide information not only on the state of the physical environment, but also on its implications for social and economic development and on existing environmental management arrangements. Most recently, such environmental assessments have been concluded in Hanam City (Republic of Korea), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Tagbilaran, Lipa and Cagayande de Oro (Philippines), the Leningrad region (Russian Federation), Kano (Nigeria), Ismailia Governorate (Egypt), ten municipalities in the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as Blantyre and Lilongwe (Malawi). The first phase of the Nairobi River Basin Project on information collection and identification of stakeholders for a broad-based consultative process has been completed thus opening the way for the second phase.

B. Subject area 2: Environmental aspects of policies, planning and management of human settlements - both rural and urban

1. Cooperation in disaster management

6. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) have strengthened their collaborative activities in disaster management focusing on environmental and human settlement interactions. In the period 1999-2000, joint assessment activities were carried out following floods and landslides in China, South Asia, Central America, Mozambique and Venezuela; earthquakes in Turkey; and post conflict situations in Kosovo and Liberia. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) are presently developing an environmental and human settlements flood vulnerability assessment tool and index that will assist countries and local stakeholders in making decisions on settlements and environmental management and vulnerability reduction. The development of this

normative tool is being complemented by a programme of collaboration with China and countries in South Asia aimed at establishing a regional network for technical exchanges and cooperation in flood vulnerability reduction. Joint activities in the African region have been focused on developing a regional strategy for disaster prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation in preparation for a regional workshop on disaster management for Africa south of the Sahara in 2001. In that regard, a series of joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) missions have been undertaken, including to Guinea, in response to the influx of refugees into the country, and to Mozambique, in a response to floods.

2. Cooperation in the Sustainable Cities Programme

7. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) cooperation in environmental aspects of policies, planning and management of human settlements entered a new era in 1996 when the two agencies formally established a full partnership in the Sustainable Cities Programme as recommended by Governing Council decision 18/15 of 26 May 1995 and resolution 15/8 of 1 May 1995 of the Commission on Human Settlements. Cooperation improved significantly after UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP agreed to share equally the cost of an expanded Sustainable Cities Programme core team. It is unclear, however, whether the joint programme will continue on a long-term basis since neither UNCHS (Habitat) nor UNEP has been able to commit the necessary resources for their respective contributions for 2001 and onwards.

8. From its initial function to package and apply the specialized know-how available from UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat), the Sustainable Cities Programme has become a primary tool for supporting Agenda 21 at the city level and for implementing the environment dimension of the Habitat Agenda. The Programme, working with more than 20 agency partners worldwide, is an important tool for promoting system-wide collaboration in urban environmental management at city, country, regional and global levels. It continued to gain momentum in 1999 and 2000 and is supporting city demonstrations in an increasing number of countries and within countries at increasing levels of joint activities. For example, in early 2000 UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) joined forces to prepare the Nairobi River Basin Project. In China, Sustainable Cities Programme activities have advanced to a new level of collaboration through a joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) memorandum of understanding with the Shenyang municipal government. Demonstration activities in Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific region, Latin America and Europe currently include some 50 city and national level initiatives. These are at various stages in the Sustainable Cities Programme-project cycle, and the numbers are expected to continue to rise as many others are still at the identification or formulation stage.

9. Global and regional activities undertaken during the biennium include annual meetings of all Sustainable Cities Programme and associated cities (Cape Town in 2000), a package of communication and awareness-building activities, preparation of environmental planning and management tools, as well as global and regional meetings of the Urban Environment Forum (Cairo in 2000, Salt Lake City in 2000 and Cape Town in 2000).

10. The increase in Sustainable Cities Programme activities has provided more opportunities for the two organizations to work together and to realize the unique complementarities of their scientific, technical and financial resource. Joint technical support to help cities address urban environmental issues is being pursued especially with the UNEP Division of Policy Development and Law and Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. At a substantive implementation level, regular meetings between the relevant staff of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) are organized by the joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) unit from the UNEP side and the UNEP Focal Point from the UNCHS (Habitat) side respectively. To help facilitate closer collaboration and common future strategies and vision in the Sustainable Cities Programme, a joint operation and coordination group has been formed to meet regularly.

3. Cooperation in the Task Force on the Balkans

11. The Joint UNEP / UNCHS (Habitat) Task Force on the Balkans was established in early May 1999 when the Kosovo conflict was still going on. In addition to the unfolding humanitarian crisis there was growing concern about the environmental and human settlement consequences. To address those issues, teams of specialists were mobilized to assess the impact of the conflict. UNEP environmental teams produced a report calling for immediate action at recommended "hot spots" of environmental concern. Specialized UNCHS (Habitat) teams conducted rapid assessments of the housing rights, property registration, and local government sectors within Kosovo in close collaboration with the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo.

4. Cooperation in the "Managing Water for African Cities" programme

12. The programme is a collaborative initiative by UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP within the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, and is a direct follow-up to the Cape Town Declaration (1997), adopted by African Ministers addressing the urgent need for managing water for African cities. The programme intervention is the first comprehensive initiative to support African countries in effectively managing the growing urban water crisis and protecting Africa's threatened water resources and aquatic ecosystems from the increasing volume of land-based pollution from the cities. The programme began implementation on two parallel tracks:

(a) City demonstrations in the seven participating cities (Abidjan, Accra, Addis Ababa, Dakar, Johannesburg, Lusaka and Nairobi);

(b) Regional activities focusing on information sharing and awareness creation on urban water management. The International Water and Sanitation Centre at The Hague and the Water, Engineering and Development Centre in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland collaborated with the programme to develop an on-line network of African sector professionals (WACWeb and WACNet).

C. Subject area 3: Environmentally sound and appropriate human settlements technology

13. The International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC), which falls under the UNEP Division for Technology, Industry and Economics continued to cooperate with the Sustainable Cities Programme by supporting capacity-building activities, particularly in the area of transfer of environmentally sound technologies, environmental risk assessment and environmental technology assessment. Specifically, the UNEP Division of Policy Development and Law and IETC participated in the development and implementation of a memorandum of understanding with the municipality of Shenyang, China, and in the development and publication of an air-quality management tool in the context of global expert meetings in Cairo and Salt Lake City.

D. Subject area 4: Research, training and the dissemination of information on environmentally sound human settlements planning and management

14. The joint Sustainable Cities Programme continued its work on several programme-level support activities for the Sustainable Cities Programme city network. All these activities respond to priority needs identified at the city level and make use of lessons learned from operational experience.

15. There are three streams of products which, upon completion, are being put to immediate use in the cities. The first stream addresses the city demonstration process. Based on a synthesis of global

experiences, guidance for each step is provided in a volume of the Sustainable Cities Programme Source Book series covering such steps in the process as city profile, city consultation, working groups, strategy negotiation and institutionalization. The second stream is on thematic support with four new tools developed and published in 2000: air quality management, environmental management information systems, indicators to measure progress and gender responsive environmental management. The third stream addresses training requirements for strengthening city officials and stakeholders in their respective roles. Training modules are being built using the products of the first two streams. This will leverage the expertise and know-how available, reduce the need for backstopping and apply the lessons of operational experience to build capacities at the local level. In addition, Sustainable Cities Programme, UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP provide through the Programme an information service which systematically collates and disseminates urban environmental management know-how through publications, videos, exhibitions and Web sites.

16. UNCHS (Habitat) also contributed again to the UNEP global training programme in environmental law and policy held in Nairobi in November 1999, including through the following inputs: first, addresses during the opening and closing of the Programme; second, presentations on the Sustainable Cities Programme, urban planning and urban reform; and third, support to a field trip that explored human settlement and environmental issues. The level of UNEP-UNCHS (Habitat) cooperation during this Programme was much higher than in similar programmes held in 1993, 1995 and 1997, which benefited the participants and established an even stronger basis for the future collaboration of a similar nature.

II. COOPERATION IN SYSTEM-WIDE EFFORTS

17. This chapter contains information on cooperation between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP in a number of United Nations system-wide efforts directly relevant to the work and activities of both organizations. This information is given for reference purposes only. Details on the actual state and implications of any of these system-wide efforts for future cooperation between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP may be found elsewhere in the documentation for the Commission on Human Settlements and the Governing Council of UNEP.

1. Cooperation in the Administrative Committee on Coordination

18. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) are collaborating in the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Water Resources, particularly with regard to the Global International Waters Assessment.

2. Cooperation in the Environmental Management Group

18. Proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on environment and human settlements and endorsed by General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, the Environmental Management Group is a mechanism designed to support UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) in their respective inter-agency coordination functions through time-bound issue-specific management groups. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) are cooperating in making the group an operational reality for selected issues of mutual interest at the nexus of environment and human settlements development.

3. Cooperation with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

20. The intention of UNEP, UNCHS (Habitat) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives to collaborate more closely in the fields of sustainable urban development, local governance and capacity-building was formalized through a memorandum of understanding, signed in June 2000. The next

phase will be the development of a work programme which builds on ongoing collaboration related to the Urban Indicators Programme, the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance, the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme, the Sustainable Cities Programme, the Managing Water for African Cities Programme and activities of GRID-Arendal.

4. Cooperation in the Urban Environment Forum

21. Another notable example of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) cooperation is the Urban Environment Forum. The Forum was established on the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) at its third session in March 1994, and was later endorsed by the Commission on Sustainable Development as a mechanism for cross-sectoral collaborative programming in sustainable urban development and city-to-city exchange of know-how.

22. The Urban Environment Forum is a global network which joins cities and their partners in international support programmes in their common commitment to improve social and economic conditions in cities through better urban environmental planning and management. From the special meeting held in association with Habitat II in 1996 came the Istanbul Manifesto which established the Urban Environment Forum. A large and successful meeting was held in the following year in Shanghai, mandating a variety of regional and thematic follow-up meetings which were held in 1998. These included regional meetings for Europe in Moscow and for Arab States in Ismailia, as well as a thematic meeting on gender in Nairobi. In 2000, thematic meetings on air-quality management were held in Cairo and Salt Lake City.

23. The most recent global meeting of the Urban Environment Forum (UEF 2000) was held in Cape Town, from 26 to 28 September 2000 and was co-hosted by the Cape Metropolitan Council. Some 250 participants from around 80 cities and 40 international support programmes attended the meeting. The overall theme: "Local capacities for international environmental conventions, agreements, and norms" particularly responded to the concerns of both UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP for more effective city involvement in the local implementation of global norms and agreements on the one hand, and the bringing of local expertise into the formulation of operationally more relevant norms and agreements on the other.

24. Between the meetings, the secretariat of the Urban Environment Forum maintains communication as well as linking and supporting other activities of the Forum's members, including the steady accumulation of case-study information, which is being used in updating the Environmental Planning and Management Source Book. Volume 3 of the Source Book contains a directory of Forum members as of early 1997, although the membership has since expanded significantly to include some 300 cities and 50 international support programmes originating from multilateral and bilateral organizations, international non-governmental organization and associations of local governments.

III. FUTURE PROSPECTS

25. Thanks to the catalytic potential of the joint UNCHS (Habitat)/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programmes to bring together other urban programmes of international organizations and cities in city-level demonstrations and global normative work, a major breakthrough has been achieved in ensuring a more effective integration and coordination of the activities of the United Nations system with those of local communities and local authorities. Through this joint work, UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP have positioned themselves prominently at the forefront of a new United Nations development cooperation paradigm, that emphasizes the advancement of collective know-how rather than the provision of ready solutions. It is in such efforts that the United Nations excels, and where UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP have a unique comparative advantage for linking local operations with global normative work. However, the expanding opportunities afforded by this successful long-term cooperation may no longer be fully realized as the

prospects for continued core support are now unclear. This is due to the difficulties experienced by both UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) in mobilizing and allocating the resources necessary for continued collaboration under this joint venture.

26. Through their cooperation in the Urban Environment Forum, UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP now manage jointly a global network which links not only cities and international programmes, but also other networks from local to global levels and across geographic regions. As an important achievement towards global partnership in urban environmental management, the Urban Environment Forum is an initiative in which the two organizations play a facilitating and catalytic role, mobilizing an ever-widening range of cities and international support programmes, helping to focus their collective energy and know-how on concrete improvements in the living environment - and sustainability - of human settlement everywhere. At the most recent global meeting of the Urban Environment Forum held in Cape Town, it was decided to consider some possible options for consolidating the Forum into a more formal urban forum with regular biennial global meetings and inter-sessional meetings of regional and thematic forums that would report to the global gathering every two years. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) have offered to explore the options, including possibilities of mobilizing the necessary resources for a more continuous secretariat support, and to report back at the next meeting in 2002 to be hosted in Nairobi.

26. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) will continue their cooperation in the Managing Water for African Cities Project and will endeavour to identify and develop other similar projects with extrabudgetary funding.
