

**REPORT
OF THE COMMISSION
ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
on the work of its seventh session**

30 April-11 May 1984

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 8 (A/39/8)



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NOTE

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[4 June 1984]

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Human Settlements was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977.
2. The report of the Commission on the work of its seventh session is submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with section I, paragraph 6 of resolution 32/162.
3. The Commission consists of 58 members elected for a three-year term: 16 from African States, 13 from Asian States, 6 from Eastern European States, 10 from Latin American States and 13 from Western European and other States. At present, the Commission is composed of the following members:

Algeria**	Haiti***	Pakistan***
Bangladesh*	Honduras***	Papua New Guinea**
Bolivia*	Hungary**	Peru**
Bulgaria***	India*	Philippines***
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic*	Indonesia**	Romania*
Canada**	Iraq***	Rwanda***
Central African Republic***	Italy*	Sierra Leone**
Chile*	Japan***	Spain***
Colombia**	Jordan*	Sri Lanka*
Cuba**	Kenya*	Sudan*
Cyprus*	Lebanon**	Sweden**
El Salvador*	Liberia*	Turkey***
Finland***	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**	Uganda**
France**	Malaysia**	United Republic of Tanzania***
Gabon***	Morocco*	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics***
Ghana***	Netherlands**	United States of America***
Guinea***	New Zealand*	Venezuela***
German Democratic Republic**	Nicaragua***	Zimbabwe*
Germany, Federal Republic of*	Nigeria**	
Greece*	Norway**	

* Term of office expires on 31 December 1984.

** Term of office expires on 31 December 1985.

*** Term of office expires on 31 December 1986.

4. The seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements was held at Libreville from 30 April to 11 May 1984, at the Palais International des Conférences de la Cité du 12 Mars, at the invitation of the Government of Gabon, and in accordance with section I of General Assembly resolution 31/140 of 17 December 1976.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening of the session

5. The session was inaugurated on behalf of the President of the Gabonese Republic by His Excellency Mr. Henri Minko, Minister of State. A summary of his address is reproduced in annex V.A. The Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) delivered a message from the Secretary-General marking the occasion; the text is reproduced in annex IV. The Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) made a statement in which he reviewed the state of human settlements development, with particular reference to the importance of rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing infrastructure and housing stock. A summary of the statement of the Executive Director appears in annex V.B. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 32/162, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) made a statement on collaboration between UNEP and the Centre on the development of environmentally sound human settlements. A summary of his statement appears in annex V.C.

6. The session was opened by Mr. Arno Hannus, Chairman of the Commission at its sixth session.

B. Attendance

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

Algeria	Hungary	Peru
Bangladesh	India	Philippines
Bulgaria	Indonesia	Romania
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	Iraq	Rwanda
Canada	Italy	Sierra Leone
Central African Republic	Japan	Spain
Chile	Jordan	Sri Lanka
Cyprus	Kenya	Sudan
Finland	Lebanon	Sweden
France	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Turkey
Gabon	Morocco	Uganda
German Democratic Republic	Netherlands	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Germany, Federal	New Zealand	United States of America
Republic of	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Greece	Norway	
Guinea	Papua New Guinea	

8. The following States not members of the Commission participated as observers:

Australia	Israel	Suriname
Belgium	Jamaica	Tunisia
Botswana	Lesotho	United Arab Emirates
Brazil	Malawi	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Burundi	Mali	Yugoslavia
Cameroon	Mauritania	Yemen
Chad	Mexico	Zaire
Denmark	Republic of Korea	Zambia
Djibouti	Saudi Arabia	
Egypt	Senegal	

9. The Holy See was represented by an observer.
10. The United Nations Secretariat was represented by the following units:

Economic Commission for Europe
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Economic Commission for Latin America
Economic Commission for Africa
Economic Commission for Western Asia

11. The following United Nations bodies were represented:

United Nations Development Programme
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United Nations Environment Programme

12. The following specialized agencies were represented:

International Labour Organisation
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Bank

13. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented:

Company for Habitat and Housing in Africa (Shelter-Afrique)
League of Arab States

14. The African National Congress, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) were also represented.

15. In addition, six non-governmental organizations were present as observers.

C. Election of Officers

16. At the 2nd plenary meeting, on 30 April, General Ba Oumar, Minister for Habitat and Housing of Gabon, was elected chairman. The following other officers of the Bureau were elected at the same meeting.

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Ramesh Chandra (India)
Mr. John J. Howley (United States of America)
Mr. Jorge Mora-Brugere (Chile)

Rapporteur: Mr. Youri Sokolov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

D. Credentials

17. Under rule 11, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the Bureau examines the credentials submitted by delegations and reports thereon to the Commission.

18. Pursuant to the above-mentioned rule, the Bureau reported to the Commission at its 11th plenary meeting, on 10 May, that it had examined the credentials submitted by delegations attending the seventh session of the Commission and had found them to be in order. The Commission approved the report of the Bureau on credentials at the same meeting.

E. Adoption of the agenda

19. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 30 April, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda for the seventh session, as contained in document HS/C/7/1, as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Credentials.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): progress report of the Executive Director.
- 5(a). A systematic and comprehensive approach to training for human settlements.
- 5(b). A systematic and comprehensive approach to information for human settlements.
6. International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.
7. Report on financial and other assistance provided to and among developing countries on human settlements and on the human settlements activities of the United Nations system, and progress report on the implementation of the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.
8. Matters arising out of the decisions of the major legislative organs and other intergovernmental bodies and brought to the attention of the Commission.
9. Other matters.
10. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the eighth session of the Commission.
11. Adoption of the report.

F. Organization of work

20. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 30 April, the Commission established two sessional committees of the whole, and allocated agenda items to them as follows:

Committee I: agenda items 5 (a), 5 (b) and certain issues under item 10;

Committee II: agenda items 6, 7 and certain issues under item 9.

21. Committee I held 11 meetings from 1 to 10 May, and Committee II held 8 meetings from 3 to 10 May. The recommendations of both Committees have been incorporated into the present report.

G. Adoption of the report of the Commission

22. The present report was adopted by the Commission at its 13th plenary meeting, on 11 May.

III. PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

23. At the 7th meeting, on 3 May, the representative of Jamaica extended, on behalf of her Government, an invitation to the Commission to hold its eighth session at Kingston. The representative of Jamaica also stated that her delegation supported the proposal made by another delegation, that, since the session of the Commission in 1987 coincided with both the tenth anniversary of the Commission and the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, it should be held at the headquarters of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) at Nairobi, and that the ninth session should, in the absence of other invitations also take place at Nairobi.

24. At its 12th plenary meeting, on 10 May, the Commission decided that its eighth session would be held from 29 April to 10 May 1985.*

25. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the following provisional agenda for its eighth session:

1. Election of officers.
2. Credentials.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Progress report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).
5. Planning and management of human settlements, with emphasis on small and intermediate towns and local growth points.
6. International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.
7. Work programme of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for the biennium 1986-1987.
8. Proposed budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 1986-1987.
9. Matters arising out of the resolutions of the major legislative organs of the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies which are brought to the attention of the Commission.
10. Themes for the ninth and future sessions of the Commission.
11. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the ninth session of the Commission.
12. Other matters.
13. Adoption of the report.

* The Commission also expressed its appreciation to the Government of Jamaica for its generous invitation and decided to accept, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140 of 17 December 1976, the invitation to hold its eighth session in Kingston, Jamaica.

IV. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

26. In his closing remarks, the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) expressed his appreciation for the co-operation and support which the Centre had received from many Governments and called attention to the urgent need for increased voluntary contributions in support of the work of the Centre. In their closing statements, representatives of the regional groups expressed their appreciation to the Government and people of Gabon for the hospitality extended to all participants during the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements.

27. The representatives of the regional groups also expressed their appreciation to the Government of Jamaica for its kind invitation to the Commission to hold its eighth session at Kingston.

28. In his concluding remarks, the Chairman thanked the members of the Bureau and all participants for their contributions to the successful completion of the work of the seventh session of the Commission. A closing statement was made by the Second Vice-Prime Minister of Gabon, representing the President of the Gabonese Republic.

29. The Chairman then declared closed the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements.

ANNEX I

Resolutions and decision adopted by the Commission
at its seventh session

A. Resolutions

		<u>Date of adoption</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. <u>Resolutions requiring action by the General Assembly</u>			
7/1.	International Year of Shelter for the Homeless	10 May 1984	10
7/2.	Living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories	9 May 1984	13
2. <u>Other resolutions</u>			
7/3.	Assistance to victims of <u>apartheid</u> and colonialism in Africa	10 May 1984	14
7/4.	Participation of youth in the solution of housing problems	10 May 1984	15
7/5.	Biennial cycle of sessions for the Commission	9 May 1984	16
7/6.	Co-operation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Company for Habitat and Housing in Africa (Shelter-Afrique)	9 May 1984	17
7/7.	Special theme for the Commission at its ninth session	10 May 1984	17
7/8.	Activities for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in the occupied Palestinian territories	10 May 1984	18
7/9.	A systematic and comprehensive approach to information for human settlements	10 May 1984	18
7/10.	A new approach to the financing of housing within the framework of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless	10 May 1984	20
7/11.	Report on the implementation of the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements	10 May 1984	20
7/12.	Report on financial and other assistance provided to and among developing countries	10 May 1984	21

	<u>Date of adoption</u>	<u>Page</u>
7/13. Joint meetings of the bureaux of the Commission on Human Settlements and of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme	10 May 1984	22
7/14. A systematic and comprehensive approach to training for human settlements	10 May 1984	23
7/15. Dissemination among developing countries of information on the construction industry	10 May 1984	25

B. Decision

7/16. Other matters	10 May 1984	27
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A. Resolutions

1. Resolutions requiring action by the General Assembly

7/1. International Year of Shelter for the homeless

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling its resolution 6/1 of 5 May 1983 and General Assembly resolution 38/168 of 19 December 1983 on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

Noting with special appreciation that, since the sixth session of the Commission over one hundred countries have designated official national focal points for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

Noting also that urgent action is needed for national programmes in accordance with the programme for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, a/

Recognizing that the initiative regarding national action should be taken by countries themselves,

Also recognizing that past and present human settlement activities can be important in developing that initiative,

Recognizing further that, in addition to new projects for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, other relevant projects can be developed by incorporating innovative components in existing projects, as well as by enlarging the scale and scope of such projects,

Convinced that national assessments of resources and needs, as described in the annex to General Assembly resolution 38/168, are an essential means to develop strategies and programmes for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

Convinced also that, in the implementation of strategies, programmes and projects for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, all possible means of co-operation and bilateral arrangements between and among international agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations should be used to the full,

1. Endorses the report of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless; b/

a/ See Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May-11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chap. II.

b/ HS/C/7/5.

2. Notes with satisfaction that many countries have already launched intensive programmes and projects for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and have reported on them to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session;

3. Expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made pledges of voluntary contributions to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

4. Notes with appreciation that over eighty per cent of the amount pledged so far has come from developing countries;

5. Urges those countries that have not yet done so to make a voluntary contribution;

6. Calls upon all Governments, especially those in developing countries, to take all necessary action to begin the implementation of programmes and projects for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

7. Emphasizes the need for associating the beneficiaries in all projects for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless from the formulation stage onwards so as to secure their full involvement and community responsibility;

8. Draws attention to the urgent need to launch concurrent urban improvement and environmental amelioration programmes to preserve the quality of life in cities and villages;

9. Requests United Nations agencies and organizations, including regional commissions, bilateral and multilateral financing institutions, and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, to review their policies and programmes with a view to incorporating in their activities the objectives of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

10. Urges the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to develop a detailed and long-term strategy for programme support information, for presentation to the Commission at its eighth session;

11. Requests all countries to prepare and submit to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) their national progress reports by 1 March 1985, noting in particular the points made in the annex to the present resolution;

12. Recommends to the General Assembly the adoption at its thirty-ninth session of the following draft resolution:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 37/221 of 20 December 1982 and 38/168 of 19 December 1983 on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

"Noting with appreciation that over one hundred countries have established national focal points for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and that national programmes and projects for the Year are already underway in many countries,

"Noting also that most of the voluntary contributions pledged to date have been pledged by developing countries and that further voluntary contributions are needed in order to carry out effectively the overall plans c/ endorsed by the General Assembly for the activities before and during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

"1. Expresses its appreciation to those Governments which have already made voluntary contributions and pledges to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

"2. Appeals to all Governments that have not yet announced a voluntary contribution, especially those of developed countries and others in a position to do so, and to international financial institutions, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to provide effective financial and other support to the programme for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

"3. Requests specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, to review their policies and programmes with a view to incorporating therein and augmenting activities which serve the objectives of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session on progress achieved in the implementation of the approved programme of measures and activities to be undertaken before and during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless;

"5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda for its fortieth session an item entitled 'International Year of Shelter for the Homeless'."

12th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

ANNEX

National action to be initiated or completed before the eighth session of the Commission

1. Those Governments that have not yet made a voluntary contribution to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless are urged to do so, in order to provide effective financial and other support for the programme for the Year.

2. Those countries that have not yet established an official national focal point for the Year, along the lines specified in the annex to General Assembly resolution 38/168, are urged to do so.

c/ A/38/233 and Corr.1.

3. Based on the preliminary assessment referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 38/168, countries are urged to identify, select and implement projects for the Year.

4. Countries are urged to distribute the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Project Guidelines to agencies, universities and other organizations that might be interested in implementing projects for the Year.

5. Countries are urged to submit to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) a completed Project Information Sheet for each project for the Year.

6. Countries are urged to establish procedures for monitoring and reporting on the progress of projects for the Year.

7. Countries are urged to initiate a comprehensive shelter and settlements assessment of prospects, priorities and resources leading to the formulation of national shelter strategies to the year 2000.

8. Countries are urged to establish and implement an information campaign using the brochure and posters of the International Year of the Shelter for the Homeless and, as appropriate, newsletters reporting on national projects and activities, media presentations and exhibitions for the Year.

7/2. Living conditions of the Palestinian people
in the occupied territories*

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements on the activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, d/

Noting with satisfaction the efforts of the Executive Director to implement Commission resolution 6/2 of 4 May 1983,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 38/166 of 19 December 1983 on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories,

Recalling further resolution 3 entitled "Living conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories", contained in the recommendations for international co-operation adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, e/

* Adopted by 25 votes to 1, with 12 abstentions.

d/ HS/C/7/2.

e/ See Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May-11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chap. III.

Concerned by the refusal of the Israeli occupying authorities to give United Nations experts access to the occupied Palestinian territories,

1. Commends the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements for his efforts to implement its resolution 6/2 of 4 May 1983;
2. Condemns the Israeli settlement policies exercised by the occupying authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have been declared null and void and a major obstacle to peace;
3. Rejects the Israeli plans and actions intended to change the demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territories by building and establishing settlements;
4. Reaffirms the need for a comprehensive report on the impact of the Israeli settlements on the security and the social, economic and cultural life of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories;
5. Requests that a senior representative of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) accompany the United Nations experts to the occupied Palestinian territories in order to prepare the comprehensive report, which would be submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements at its next session;
6. Requests that the General Assembly take appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in the event that the Israeli occupying authorities refuse to co-operate in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/166 and resolution 6/2 of the Commission on Human Settlements.

9th plenary meeting
9 May 1984

2. Other resolutions

7/3. Assistance to victims of apartheid and colonialism in Africa*

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 36/80 of 9 December 1981 on co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity,

Further recalling the provisions of its resolutions 5/19 of 7 May 1982 and 6/11 of 5 May 1983,

Aware of the deplorable conditions to which the majority population is being subjected by the racist apartheid régime in South Africa and in the international

* Adopted by 29 votes to 1, with 8 abstentions.

territory of Namibia, which the racist régime in question continues to occupy by force, in flagrant violation of several United Nations resolutions,

Concerned about the increased repression by the Pretoria apartheid régime of the African people of South Africa and the people of the occupied international territory of Namibia, and about the intensified aggression of the apartheid régime against the front-line States,

1. Strongly condemns the Pretoria apartheid régime for its inhuman repression in South Africa and its illegal occupation of Namibia, as well as for its acts of aggression and destabilization against the front-line and other neighbouring States;

2. Commends the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for the efforts made so far in implementing resolution 6/11 of the Commission on Human Settlements as described in his report to the Commission; f/

3. Further commends member States of the Organization of African Unity and all other supporting members of the international community for their unswerving efforts in support of the struggle against apartheid and colonialism in southern Africa;

4. Requests the Executive Director to continue and intensify his efforts for the provision of increased technical and other forms of assistance to victims of apartheid and colonialism, pursuant to Commission resolution 6/11;

5. Further requests the Executive Director to continue to provide additional assistance to those countries in which human settlements have been disrupted or overburdened by the Pretoria racist régime and to report to the Commission on Human Settlements at its eighth session on the progress made in that regard.

10th plenary meeting
9 May 1984

7/4. Participation of youth in the solution of housing problems

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI), of 1 May 1974, containing the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, and 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 34/151 of 17 December 1978, in which 1985 was proclaimed the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, and resolution 37/221 of 20 December 1982, in which 1987 was proclaimed the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

f/ HS/C/7/2.

1. Acknowledges that the solution of housing problems is a long-term process which requires the participation of all groups of the population;

2. Acknowledges also that the efficient participation of youth in the solution of human settlement problems is feasible only under conditions of lasting peace and security for all States, which will enable future generations to contribute to the improvement of housing conditions;

3. Urges all Governments to curb the arms race and focus their efforts on ensuring that the social and economic needs of youth in the fields of shelter, education and the provision of related infrastructure are met;

4. Invites all countries to prepare information on their national experience in ensuring the participation of youth in the solution of housing problems and to make that information available to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat);

5. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to take note of that national experience in a report to be submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements at its ninth session.

12th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

7/5. Biennial cycle of sessions for the Commission

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on matters arising out of the decisions of the major legislative organs of the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies and brought to the attention of the Commission, g/

Noting Economic and Social Council decision 1984/104 of 10 February 1984 on the question of a biennial cycle of sessions,

Recognizing that the adoption by the Commission on Human Settlements of a biennial cycle of sessions is a matter which involves considerable institutional and substantive implications,

Aware that the adoption by the Commission on Human Settlements of a biennial cycle of sessions before 1987 could seriously affect the work and activities of the Commission as the preparatory body for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

1. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to prepare a comprehensive report on the implications involved in the adoption by the Commission on Human Settlements of a biennial cycle of sessions;

g/ HS/C/7/9.

2. Decides to take up the question of a biennial cycle of sessions at its eighth session, on the basis of the information provided in the comprehensive report of the Executive Director.

10th plenary meeting

9 May 1984

7/6. Co-operation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Company for Habitat and Housing in Africa (Shelter-Afrique)

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling its resolution 6/7 of 5 May 1983, entitled "Co-operation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and Shelter-Afrique",

Having noted the various steps of an organization nature which have been taken to enable Shelter-Afrique to commence operations at its headquarters at Nairobi, Kenya,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on Shelter-Afrique h/ and the fact that a draft memorandum of understanding identifying specific areas of co-operation and the modalities of such co-operation was prepared by the Centre and submitted to Shelter-Afrique for consideration,

1. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to continue to provide assistance, within existing resources, to Shelter-Afrique and to report to the Commission on Human Settlements at its eighth session on the progress made in finalizing the draft memorandum of understanding;

2. Further requests the Executive Director to submit to the Commission at its eighth session a report on the specific nature of technical assistance and support rendered to Shelter-Afrique.

9th plenary meeting

9 May 1984

7/7. Special theme for the Commission at its ninth session

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Having considered the proposals put forward in the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on themes for the Commission at future sessions, i/

h/ HS/C/6/2/Add.2.

i/ HS/C/7/10/Add.1.

1. Decides that the special theme for the Commission on Human Settlements at its ninth session should be "The role of community participation in human settlement work";

2. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to submit to it at its eighth session an outline on the theme paper, giving the Commission further opportunity to provide guidance as to the way the theme should be developed.

12th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

7/8. Activities for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in the occupied Palestinian territories

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Considering the difficult living conditions imposed on the Palestinian people in the occupied territories,

Considering the refusal of the occupying authorities to carry out any housing programme for the Palestinian population and the deliberate intention of those authorities illegally to establish human settlements rejected by the General Assembly of the United Nations as benefiting persons other than the legitimate owners of the land,

Given the difficulties created by the occupying authorities with a view to preventing the Palestinian population from building housing with its own resources,

1. Recommends that the Executive Director of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat) consider the possibility, on the occasion of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, of carrying out, under the supervision of the United Nations and in co-operation with specialized bodies, a housing programme for the Palestinian population in the occupied territories;

2. Requests the Executive Director to submit a study on the subject to the Commission at its eighth session.

12th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

7/9. A Systematic and comprehensive approach to information for human settlements

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), entitled "A systematic and comprehensive approach to information for human settlements", j/

j/ HS/C/7/4.

Taking note of the report "A systematic and comprehensive approach to information and communication as a part of overall human settlements work" submitted by the Expert Group Meeting on Information and Communication, held at The Hague, the Netherlands, from 5 to 9 September 1983,

Noting that the two reports referred to above complement each other - the Executive Director's report concentrating more on information and the one by the Expert Group focusing more on communication,

Aware of the important role information and communication play in the formulation and execution of human settlements policies, programmes and projects,

Aware also of the usefulness of establishing, at policy, programme and project levels, an information and communication unit with the following tasks:

- (a) To contribute to the preparation and implementation of policies and programmes,
- (b) To give information, by as simple a means as possible, to the various interested parties and persons in human settlements activities,
- (c) To open a communication channel for collaborative action between people and governmental agencies,
- (d) To offer a professional vehicle for the transfer of people's views and wishes to the decision-making level,

Taking into account the comments and views of delegates to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts and achievements of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) with regard to information for human settlements,

1. Endorses the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centres for Human Settlements (Habitat); j/
2. Takes note of the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Information and Communication;
3. Urges Governments to formulate information and communication policies and plans in the field of human settlements in order to promote full participation in the exchange of information at various levels, in particular at the project level;
4. Also urges Governments to establish human settlements communication and information units, including documentation centres, within human settlements ministries, planning agencies and project organizations;
5. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to promote within existing budgetary resources - inter alia, through the regional information offices - assistance to Governments and non-governmental organizations in the formulation of a communication and information policy in the field of human settlements and to advise on the establishment of special units for that purpose;

6. Suggests that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) act as a focal point in the gathering and documentation of information on human settlements;

7. Further requests the Executive Director to strengthen collaboration with relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system with a view to avoiding duplication and to developing prototype schemes for data and document collection, and also for the sake of preserving the wealth of existing scientific and technical literature;

8. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Commission at its ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

12th plenary meeting

10 May 1984

X 7/10. A new approach to the financing of housing within the framework of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling its resolution 5/4 of 7 May 1982 and General Assembly resolution 37/221 of 20 December 1982 on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), which contains specific proposals concerning the targets and overall plans adopted for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, and priorities for action at the national and international levels,

Recalling the proximity of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, a year full of hope for the most disadvantaged populations,

Invites the developed countries, in co-operation with developing countries as well as national and international financial agencies, to consider, until 1987, within the framework of their development projects, providing for or increasing the percentage of financing for shelter and allied services for the most disadvantaged, at favourable financial terms.

12th plenary meeting

10 May 1984

7/11. Report on the implementation of the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 34/116 of 14 December 1979 and Commission decision 5/24 of 7 May 1982,

1. Invites all Member States of the United Nations to submit to the Commission on Human Settlements at its ninth session a comprehensive report on the implementation over the past decade, 1976-1985, of the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements;

2. Decides that at its ninth session the Commission will decide on the desirability of requesting the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to prepare an overview report on national action for the Commission at its tenth session, based on the above-mentioned national reports.

12th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

X 7/12. Report on financial and other assistance provided to and among developing countries

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on financial and other assistance provided to and among developing countries for human settlements, k/

Noting with appreciation the efforts made to supply the Commission with information in that field,

Considering that comprehensive and analytical information on human settlement assistance to and among the developing countries is essential for the fulfilment of the task of the Commission,

Considering also that the information so far available to the Commission does not cover all the aspects necessary for the deliberations of the Commission,

1. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to continue his efforts to improve the information on financial and other assistance to and among developing countries, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/114 of 14 December 1979, by, inter alia:

(a) Consulting with main donor and lending agencies on how best their activities can be reported;

(b) Considering the posing of different types of questions to different agencies;

(c) Expanding the part of the report dealing separately with each agency;

2. Calls upon major donor and lending agencies within and outside the United Nations system to give the Executive Director full support in complying with the present resolution;

k/ HS/C/7/6.

3. Further calls upon Governments to supply the Executive Director with their views on the policies followed for financial and other assistance to and among developing countries;

4. Also requests the Executive Director to provide, in his biennial report to the Commission on Human Settlements, an analytical overview of the views received from donor and lending agencies as well as from Governments.

12th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

7/13. Joint meetings of the bureaux of the Commission on Human Settlements and of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977 on institutional arrangements for international co-operation in the field of human settlements, and in particular section VI on concerted action and co-ordination,

Noting resolution 11/1, section IV, of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, specifically paragraphs 6 and 7,

Recognizing the desirability of the closest co-operation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat),

Expressing satisfaction at the continuing co-operation between the Executive Director and secretariat of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme,

Welcoming an intensification and, where possible, an increase in that co-operation,

Recalling its resolution 7/5 of 9 May 1984 on the question of a biennial cycle of sessions for the Commission,

1. Recognizes that changes in the practice of annual joint bureau meetings of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) involve institutional implications;

2. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), in preparing his report on the implications of adopting a biennial cycle of sessions, to assess the full implications of the discontinuation of the joint bureau meetings, as contained in decision 11.1, section IV, of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;

3. Decides to take up the question of continuation of joint bureau meetings at its eighth session, as an integral part of its discussion on the adoption of a biennial cycle of sessions;

4. Also requests the Executive Director to bring the present resolution to the attention of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

11th plenary meeting
10 May 1984

7/14. A systematic and comprehensive approach to training for human settlements

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling its resolution 5/16 of 7 May 1982, in which it requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to continue to give high priority to the information activities of the Centre in research, training and technical co-operation,

Recognizing the urgent need of developing countries for training as a basic prerequisite for the development of their human settlements,

Recognizing also that only speedy and concrete action on the part of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), other United Nations and international bodies, including the World Bank, and their member countries can have a meaningful impact on training,

Recognizing further that training of cadres should be firmly rooted in the social milieu in which human settlements programmes are undertaken,

Bearing in mind the following factors:

(a) That the lack of trained manpower is one of the major obstacles to the improvement of human settlements and the development process in the developing countries,

(b) That training for the improvement of human settlements is an essential instrument for development and should be seen as an integral part of the development process,

(c) That training of personnel for the improvement of human settlements must proceed within the framework of manpower planning and must be designed to respond to the needs of each country under prevailing economic, social and institutional opportunities and needs,

(d) That analysis of manpower requirements indicates the need for a range of skills based on a range of tasks and a hierarchy of responsibilities,

(e) That the hierarchy of job responsibilities and a comparable hierarchy of skills must reflect the social, economic and political development goals of a country and its region,

(f) That the training for that hierarchy of skills can only accomplish its mandate through multidisciplinary education for interdisciplinary professional practice and that each country has developed some training for certain levels of skills and responsibilities and should now complement those available human

resources with further training and education, with the fullest support of donor countries and agencies,

1. Endorses the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), entitled "A systematic and comprehensive approach to training for human settlements"; 1/

2. Takes note of the recommendations made in Sharing Responsibilities and Roles for Training in Planning and Development, a report prepared by a seminar of experts organized by the Centre for Human Settlements, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, and submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventh session by the Government of Canada;

3. Requests the Executive Director to intensify his efforts in order to respond effectively to the increasing training needs of developing countries;

4. Also requests the Executive Director to take the following specific measures with a view to enhancing effective manpower development:

(a) Continue work on the preparation of human settlements manpower development strategies and action plans to train human settlement project managers and other habitat personnel in essential specialities following an interdisciplinary approach in collaboration with interested United Nations member countries and, for that purpose, initiate co-operation with other international and national agencies;

(b) Identify, for the Commission at its ninth session, in collaboration with interested United Nations member countries, specific training institutions that could be used as centres for human settlements to facilitate collective self-reliance in manpower development among developing countries and direct training to specific regional needs, and initiate new training institutions with explicit identification of the resource requirements;

(c) Devise, as a matter of urgency and for the purpose of undertaking the steps outlined above, appropriate criteria for assessing manpower and training needs, after full consultation with Governments;

(d) Establish an appropriate institutional capacity within existing resources within the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for training, involving experts on the subject-matter from developing countries, for the purpose of responding effectively to the manpower needs of developing countries;

5. Also requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to reflect, in the draft work programme and programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987, the urgent priority accorded to the proposed role of the Centre in training, which may entail adjustment in or deletion of other work programme responsibilities;

6. Further requests the Executive Director to promote within existing budgetary resources, mainly through existing institutions, the training of

information and communication experts in human settlement matters and the training of policy makers, architects, planners, housing experts, project staff and community development staff in information and communication skills;

7. Recommends that Governments should focus increased attention on providing training, including vocational training, to a full-range of professionals and para-professionals and that, in so doing, they should reflect the diversity of skills and experience required for successfully building, improving and managing human settlements as well as assisting and supporting community efforts, including policies for human settlement training, methods for evaluation, training aids and specific workshops;

8. Urges Governments to assume their appropriate role in creating, expanding and financing training programmes and facilities within the framework of the proposals contained in the report of the Executive Director; 1/

9. Also urges Governments to provide an opportunity on the agenda of the Commission, on an annual basis, for discussion of training and, whenever possible, expert advisory services to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in formulating and carrying out its priority work in training;

10. Requests countries to pay special attention, when preparing and executing programmes and demonstration projects for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, to creating, expanding and strengthening training programmes, including those on regional institutions, in order to meet the objectives of the Year;

11. Calls upon developed countries to support actively human settlements training in the developing countries by specifically including a training component in human settlements projects and, by providing more substantial resources to training through technical co-operation projects to support the strengthening and establishment of training centres;

12. Calls upon developing countries to increase priorities for human settlements manpower planning and training by, among other means, providing adequate resources for training, which is a prerequisite for self-reliance and long-term development, and by encouraging the establishment of training centres to facilitate multinational co-operation in manpower development;

13. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Commission at its ninth session on progress made in implementing the present resolution.

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7/15. Dissemination among developing countries of information on the construction industry

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 38/168 of 19 December 1983, in which the Assembly welcomed and endorsed the overall plans for the activities before, during and after the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's message to the Commission at its seventh session, in which attention was drawn to the appropriateness of holding the International Year in the context of the current world economic crisis, which is affecting all countries in general and developing countries in particular,

Taking note also of the report submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), m/ which describes the preparations for the International Year and calls upon Governments to continue efforts, through projects and financial contributions, to ensure the successful celebration of the International Year,

Welcoming the forthcoming consultation on the building materials industry to be arranged by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization with the co-sponsorship of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat),

Having taken note of the interesting and useful debate held by the Commission at its seventh session in connection with item 6 of its agenda, entitled "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless",

Noting with appreciation the information on simple building methods which the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements has already published,

Convinced of the existence in developing countries of construction technologies capable of increasing and improving housing output through simple building methods, making use of local building materials in ways suitable for self-help builders and local craftsmen,

Convinced that those technologies should be disseminated among the developing countries as appropriate means of dealing with technical, social, economic and other aspects of the housing problem,

Considering that, among the efforts being made for the celebration of the International Year, a better knowledge of opportunities for technical co-operation among developing countries represents an additional means in the search for opportunities to enable developing countries to apply construction techniques appropriate to their environment and economy,

1. Invites the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), working in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, to disseminate among developing countries information on construction technologies existing in those countries and, through an analysis of the relevant national development plans, to highlight opportunities for horizontal co-operation, allowing the application of construction programmes technically appropriate to the environment and economic possibilities of the developing countries;

2. Calls upon the developing countries to increase exchanges of experience in the field of housing construction technology, either directly or through the co-operation referred to in paragraph 1 above;

3. Also calls upon the developed countries and international organizations to collaborate in that undertaking in order to achieve effective co-operation among developing countries in tackling the difficult problem of housing, an opportunity so appropriately offered by the celebration of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, in the conviction that that type of co-operation in no way replaces existing forms of co-operation between developed and developing countries, whether bilateral or multilateral.

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B. Decision

7/16. Other matters

At its 12th plenary meeting, on 10 May 1984, the Commission on Human Settlements, on the recommendation of Committee II, took note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on financial matters. n/

ANNEX II

List of special presentations

A. Audio-visual presentations on information and training for human settlements

Canada	"Old houses/new skills"	English
Costa Rica	"Enfoque sistematico y amplio de la información para los asentamientos humanos"	Spanish
Hungary	"Information systems for human settlements in Hungary"	English
Jordan	"Information review on housing"	Arabic
Morocco	"Habitat - Formation et information"	French
Philippines	"Training and information for human settlements: the Philippine experience"	English
Sri Lanka	"Training for shelter"	English
Yemen	"The training of Yemenis"	English

B. Other themes

German Development Assistance Association for Social Housing	"A house for a lifetime"	English
India	"The roof"	English
Indonesia	"Housing the urban poor"	English
Jamaica	"My own piece of ground"	English
Japan	"Water resources in Japan"	English
Jordan	"The other face"	Arabic
Mexico	"Plan nacional de adiestramiento"	Spanish
Morocco	"Special programme on housing and construction in Casablanca"	Arabic
Sri Lanka	"My dialogue with a community"	English

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	"The reality"	English
Yemen	"Earthquake and reconstruction"	English
Zimbabwe	"Pilot low-income housing projects"	English
Gabon	"L'habitat au Gabon"	French

C. Photo displays

Gabon	Squatter settlements
Japan	National land information
Spain	Low-cost housing
Papua New Guinea	Self-help housing
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	The reality; facing the reality

ANNEX III

List of documents

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>
Invitation and notification to Governments		
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HS/C/7/1	Provisional agenda	3
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HS/C/7/2	Activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements: progress report of the Executive Director	4
HS/C/7/2/Add.1	Report of the Sixth Joint Meeting of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Bureau of its Governing Council: report of the Executive Director	4
HS/C/7/2/Add.2	Financial and advisory institution for human settlements in Asia and the Pacific: report of the Executive Director	4
HS/C/7/3	A systematic and comprehensive approach to training for human settlements: report of the Executive Director	5 (a)
HS/C/7/4	A systematic and comprehensive approach to information for human settlements: report of the Executive Director	5 (b)
HS/C/7/5	International Year of Shelter for the Homeless: report of the Executive Director	6
HS/C/7/6	Financial and other assistance provided to and among developing countries for human settlements: report of the Executive Director	7
HS/C/7/7	Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations for national action adopted by Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements: report of the Executive Director	7

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>
HS/C/7/7/Add.1	Summaries of responses received from Governments after 31 December 1983: report of the Executive Director	7
HS/C/7/8	Financial matters: use of extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): report of the Executive Director	9
HS/C/7/9	Matters arising out of the decisions of the main legislative organs of the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies and brought to the attention of the Commission: note by the secretariat	8
HS/C/7/10	Preparation of the theme paper for the Commission on Human Settlements at its eighth session: note by the secretariat	10
HS/C/7/10/Add.1	Themes for the Commission at future sessions	10
HS/C/7/INF.1	Geographical distribution of officers elected at previous sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements	1
HS/C/7/INF.2	List of documents before the Commission	
HS/C/7/INF.3	Co-operation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations: report of the Executive Director	4
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<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>
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HS/C/7/INF.10	Review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade: note by the secretariat	8
HS/C/7/INF.11	National plans, priorities and activities for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless: note by the secretariat	6
HS/C/7/INF.11/Add.1	National plans, priorities and activities for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless: note by the secretariat	6
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ANNEX IV

Message from the Secretary-General to the Commission
on Human Settlements at its seventh session

1. It gives me great pleasure to convey my greetings to the participants of the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements. I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Government and people of Gabon for the generous hospitality they have extended to the Commission.
2. It is most appropriate that this year the Commission is meeting in Africa. This should enable it to focus its attention anew on the grave threat to the livelihood and indeed the very lives of nearly 150 million inhabitants of this continent posed by an unprecedented combination of adverse circumstances, both natural and human-induced. During my recent tour of several African countries in the Sahel region, I was deeply distressed to observe the deterioration in the capacity of many countries to provide the basic needs of life for their citizens. Widespread drought and desertification, massive movement of displaced populations, severe food shortages bordering on famine, acute lack of adequate shelter, unhygienic water supplies, and generally weak economic and social infrastructures have exacerbated the already negative impact of the current international economic environment. This alarming situation, which has not only arrested the development process in many countries but is threatening to reverse it, poses a challenge to the international community. I would urge that it be kept in mind throughout your deliberations with the urgent aim of helping to enhance the capacity of the most seriously affected countries to cope with the difficult problems involved.
3. Despite the efforts of Governments over the past two decades, the seemingly modest goal of decent shelter for all has yet to be reached. Rapid population growth and lopsided population distribution, uncontrolled urbanization, deteriorating employment bases in rural areas, high cost of construction, inadequate capacity and resources for carrying out shelter programmes - all have combined to deny great masses of people the satisfaction of this most basic of human needs. Indeed, the shelter needs of most communities have increased rather than diminished. The Commission's recommendation to the General Assembly to designate 1987 as International Year of Shelter for the Homeless is, therefore, most timely. In 1987, the international community should be able to show actual improvements in the shelter and neighbourhoods of a significant proportion of the poor and the disadvantaged. These improvements must provide a basis for new policies and strategies whose implementation would assure benefits to all the world's homeless by the end of the century. This is a challenging task, no doubt, but one that must be accomplished.
4. The selection for specific review at this session of the twin issues of a systematic and comprehensive approach to training and information for human settlements is also a timely one. As Governments address themselves to the complex problems of how to accommodate the world's rapidly increasing population, the acquisition and proper utilization of information related to human settlements and the availability of trained manpower to plan and implement the agreed national programmes will assume a pivotal importance.
5. I wish you every success in your deliberations at this session.

ANNEX V

Summaries of statements

A. Welcoming address and inaugural message by the President of the Gabonese Republic, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, read by the Minister of State of Gabon, Mr. H. Minko

1. Mr. Minko welcomed all participants at the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements to Gabon, thanking them for having responded positively to the invitation of his Government.
2. He reiterated his Government's support for the work of the Commission, revealing his Government's efforts in implementing the national plan of action in the field of human settlements. He reminded delegations of the intrinsic link between human settlements development and the fulfilment of basic human needs, pointing to the fact that human settlements activities were not limited to the provision of housing for the poor but included adequate co-ordination of efforts in both the public and private sectors to provide clean drinking water, fuel, food, medical services, education, culture, sports and leisure.
3. In view of the forthcoming International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, he considered it most appropriate that the Commission on Human Settlements had chosen to discuss the themes of training and information in depth during the current session, since it provided an opportunity to reflect on the fundamental problems of the use of knowledge, the exchange of experiences, the dissemination of information, and ways and means to create and manage human settlements.
4. Expressing the hope and expectation that it would be a successful one, Mr. Minko declared the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements open.

B. Address by the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

1. The Executive Director observed that there were certain benefits deriving from holding the sessions of the Commission in a variety of venues, bringing delegations to different parts of the world where they could see first-hand some of the problems and solutions they discuss at the sessions. Meeting in Libreville was especially appropriate, since Gabon had always been one of the strongest and most consistent supporters of the work of the United Nations in the field of human settlements.
2. The Executive Director reminded the participants that, in his opening statement in the previous year, he had suggested that the current economic problems of developing countries should be seen as an opportunity to rethink investment goals and priorities, and to concentrate on development sectors with the highest local investment components. In the current year he would address another aspect of human settlements problems in times of economic constraints - namely, the heightened need for the greatest possible efficiency in the management and maintenance of settlements. Investments in infrastructure and structures had often been largely nullified by failures to operate the installations properly and by lack of measures to keep them in good condition and maximize their working life.

3. Building deterioration had reached proportions in the inner-city areas of many developing countries whereby valuable assets had been lost, making the housing shortage even more serious than it needed to be. Poor management and neglect of water supply, sanitation and solid-waste collection systems caused increasing public expenditures, created health hazards and increased pollution of the environment. A consequence of the situation was likely to be an emigration of affluent households from affected areas and their replacement by low-income population, intensifying the segregation of different social groups which could lead to further deterioration of the physical environment.

4. The most important factor contributing to the situation was probably the priority given to new construction. Thus, the share of construction output devoted to the repair and maintenance of the existing stock of constructed facilities in developing countries ranged from 6 to 15 per cent, whereas in industrialized countries it ranged from 25 to 35 per cent. Another factor was the relative complexity of operational and maintenance activities, coupled with the problems of programming, managing and financing them. Furthermore, many operational and maintenance difficulties were caused by the inappropriate design of building and services, either by choosing the cheapest solutions or by adopting sophisticated - often imported - technologies.

5. In the majority of developing countries, systems of urban administration had largely followed Western models. Urban authorities managed public services but did not seem able to cope with many of the management issues which related directly to the needs of low-income groups. A promising line of approach for administrations would be to decentralize urban administration and to delegate responsibilities - including financial responsibility - to local communities.

6. For developing countries, the importance of rehabilitation and maintenance could not be overstressed. First of all, the cost of rehabilitating existing housing stock and infrastructure was considerably less than the cost of constructing new buildings and infrastructure. Secondly, loss of valuable housing for low-income groups could be prevented, relocations reduced and disruption of social fabric minimized. Thirdly, effective operation and maintenance of the existing settlement plant was a prerequisite for the efficient use of investments. Emphasis should be placed on revitalizing areas affected by progressive decay and neglect, to prevent further deterioration. Large-scale demolition in inner-city areas should be avoided. Building regulations, codes and standards should be reviewed and modified to ensure their appropriateness for promoting rehabilitation. Governments should stimulate the development of rehabilitation techniques in the construction industry and improve supplies of materials and components. New approaches to financing systems were needed for rehabilitation projects, preferably based on principles of cost recovery. Furthermore, it was crucial that maintenance be carried out on a continuing basis. All that, however, required immense financial resources. A barely adequate maintenance of roads in Africa, for example, was estimated to cost 0.7 per cent of GNP, whereas the present level of expenditure was 0.4 per cent.

7. A specific feature that must be encouraged was community participation. For instance, co-operation among all users was necessary for the effective operation of water supply and sanitation systems. Educational and training programmes should provide a basic understanding of how to use and maintain buildings and services. Direct community participation provided a great potential for the use of local labour in rehabilitation and repair works, with resulting employment, income generation and enhancement of skills.

8. In a period of economic constraints, the rational utilization of human settlements deserved much more attention than it had received in the past, but the development of new approaches to the management, operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of housing and infrastructure required political commitment on the part of national and local governments. Donors and international agencies should direct assistance programmes towards an emphasis on the effective use of existing capital stock in human settlements. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) had made a serious commitment to that cause and was devoting a part of its work programme to the effort. As regarded the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the programmes which countries were developing for the Year should give evidence of thoughtful consideration to maintenance and rehabilitation as essential elements of housing strategies.

9. In conclusion, the Executive Director stressed the necessity for professionals and experts to advance practical and innovative ideas for the optimal use of scarce resources to meet the fundamental need: shelter. The rehabilitation and maintenance of existing housing stock was one such practical idea that deserved the serious attention of Governments.

C. Statement by the Executive Director of the United Nations
Environment Programme

1. The Executive Director drew attention to a report on strife-ridden Central American countries, published by the United States Agency for International Development. The report concluded that the fundamental causes of the problems in those countries were as much environmental as political, stemming from problems of resource distribution in overcrowded areas. The report, according to the Executive Director, was a sign that the environmental dimension to the political, social and economic problems facing nations alone and together was beginning to be taken into account.

2. The Executive Director recalled that, in addressing the Commission on Human Settlements in previous years, he had affirmed that the concern of UNEP for the environment did not stop at the city limits. He outlined UNEP views on the developing crisis in the city's internal and external environment. He said that later in the year he would be making a statement on why UNEP considered ecological collapse to be one of the root causes of the deterioration in the quality of life in towns and cities.

3. The Executive Director mentioned urbanization spreading over prime agricultural land, river pollution and acid rain as samples of the many ways conurbations - small, large and mega-sized - undermined the health and productivity of the environment beyond the city limits, such as poor use of the land, added to urbanization and other environmental problems within cities. The problems confronting large settlements, he said, were to a large extent a reflection of the state of the whole environment.

4. The Executive Director said that many nations, in effect, have been pursuing a development process which ignored, and thereby punished, the poor. In towns and rural areas they were being pushed to the margins of existence. He stressed the urgent need to use the environment to inject a new sense into the dialogue between and among developed and developing countries, a dialogue which would address

poverty, which for a decade and more had been recognized as the main destroyer of the environment.

5. The Executive Director said that UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) should do more to disseminate their appreciation for a co-ordinated approach - one that would turn their understanding of interrelationships into practical action. For that reason UNEP welcomed the choice of information and training as the two main themes for the seventh session of the Commission on Human Settlements. He mentioned the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless as an important vehicle for further co-ordination, and assured delegations of the total commitment of UNEP to the aims of the Year in order to generate a new political will which would help the poor themselves.

