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Governing Council  
of the United Nations Human  
Settlements Programme

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**Resolution No. 18/10: The role of local authorities**

The Commission on Human Settlements,

Recalling the [Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements](#) adopted by the General Assembly, which identifies local authorities as the closest partners of Governments and as essential in the implementation of the [Habitat Agenda](#) within the legal framework of each country, and also recalling paragraph 213 of the Habitat Agenda, which states that, while Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Habitat Agenda, local authorities should be supported in their efforts towards implementing the Habitat Agenda inasmuch as local action is required,

Noting the importance of building working partnerships and coordination between the different levels of government - national, local and where appropriate intermediate - in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and achieving sustainable development at the local level, taking into consideration the diversity of legal frameworks of each country,

Further recalling paragraph 207 of the [Habitat Agenda](#) which calls upon the international community to promote and facilitate the transfer of expertise in support of the implementation of plans of action through, inter alia, supporting networks to facilitate the sharing of experiences on best practices,

Recalling its [resolution 17/16 of 14 May 1999](#) on local implementation of the Habitat Agenda with particular attention to Local Agenda 21s, requesting the Executive Director to increase efforts to sensitize and assist countries in the local level implementation of both the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21;6

Noting with satisfaction the important contributions made by local authorities from all over the world to the implementation of the [Habitat Agenda](#), as evidenced by the documentation of over 1,150 best practices since 1995 through the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment,<sup>19</sup>

Further noting the Urban 21 Global Conference on the Urban Future, held in Berlin, Germany, from 4 to 6 July 2000, which highlighted the importance of the role of local authorities for urban

development,

Recalling the Chengdu International Conference on Urban Construction and the Environment in the Twenty-first Century, held in Chengdu, China, from 16 to 18 October 2000,<sup>20</sup>

1. Takes note of the reports of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) regarding local implementation of the Habitat Agenda,<sup>21</sup>

2. Notes with appreciation those countries that have incorporated information on best practices and lessons learned in their national reports and those best practices documented on Habitat's Best Practices Database using the incentive of the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment, and urges all countries to submit documented best practices and lessons learned on a regular basis;

3. Invites Governments within the legal framework and national priorities of each country, to consider the following measures as appropriate:

(a) Fully integrate sustainable human settlements development within national sectoral policies and priorities and establish national standards and regulatory frameworks to ensure effective implementation of human settlements programmes at the local level;

(b) Adopt policies and instruments of empowerment that decentralize authority as well as financial, technical and human resources to the local level, ensuring that new responsibilities are matched by the requisite resources;

(c) Facilitate activities such as best practice competitions, policy round tables, training seminars and networks of Inclusive Cities to promote the process of identifying and learning from best practices and scaling up successful shelter and human settlements development programmes at the local level;

(d) Support the increased participation of local authorities in the work of the Commission on Human Settlements, in the work of the Centre and in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, within the relevant rules and regulations of the United Nations;

4. Invites national Governments to facilitate local authorities, with the assistance of their associations, within the legal framework of each country, to consider the following measures as appropriate:

(a) Adopt comprehensive city development strategies as a means of mobilizing all other Habitat Agenda partners behind a common vision and action plan for addressing issues related to adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development;

(b) Provide improved access to legal security of tenure and equal access to land for all people, including women and those living in poverty, as a key element of slum-upgrading and poverty reduction strategies;

(c) Ensure that women and men have equal access to decision-making processes, resources and basic services and that this access is measured through gender-disaggregated data;

(d) Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local revenue collection and use;

(e) Increase their accountability to local communities through transparent processes and by creating public feedback mechanisms, as appropriate, inter alia, local urban observatories, ombudsman offices, and procedures for public petitioning;

5. Invites the international community, as appropriate, in cooperation with national Governments to consider the following measures:

(a) Support international, regional and national associations and networks of local authorities and the Advisory Committee of Local Authorities and promote their contribution to the work of the Commission on Human Settlements and the Centre;

(b) Support local authorities through, inter alia, improved training, peer-to-peer learning, city-to-city transfers and international exchanges based on documented examples of best practices, good policies and action plans that match the demand for solutions with proven practice;

6. Calls upon the Executive Director to:

(a) Continue to involve local authorities and their international associations in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the work programme of the Centre, and particularly in the two global campaigns, within the rules and regulations of the United Nations;

(b) Continue and expand the identification, analysis and dissemination of best practices, good policies and enabling legislation and action plans, with a particular focus on sustainable human settlements development and urban poverty reduction at the local level;

(c) Report to it at its nineteenth session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

8th meeting  
16 February 2001