



## WHAT IS HABITAT?

Some Questions and Answers on HABITAT,  
the United Nations Conference on  
Human Settlements to be held in  
Vancouver, May 31 to June 11, 1976.

### 1. HOW DID THE HABITAT CONFERENCE COME ABOUT?

At the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, one of the main agenda items was human settlements. It was felt that the issues are so numerous and so complex that they would require a full conference in order to deal properly with these problems. Canada offered to host a conference on human settlements and it was accepted by the United Nations at the 1972 General Assembly.

### 2. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF HABITAT?

To bring national governments together to take the necessary measures to improve the quality of life for all peoples of the world — in the home and community, in village and city, in each nation and region. In short, to achieve a charter of minimum standards of housing and services such as food, education, etc.

### 3. WHAT WILL HABITAT ACHIEVE?

A higher awareness of settlement problems, issues and solutions among the 140 or so member countries of the United Nations. It may also lead to establishing a number of new programs of

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international cooperation in these fields of settlement as the Stockholm Conference did for the environment.

4. WHY IS HABITAT BEING HELD IN VANCOUVER?

Vancouver is one of the few cities in Canada with the facilities to host a Conference of this size and it was felt that its unique setting made it particularly appropriate for a meeting looking into problems of urbanization and preservation of natural sites.

5. CAN ANYONE ATTEND HABITAT?

Basically, it's a conference of governments from around the world and participants are nominated as members of national delegations. However, also in Vancouver, a parallel conference - "Habitat Forum" will provide a meeting place for non-governmental organizations and individuals.

6. WHAT IS THE HABITAT FORUM?

Habitat Forum is a "parallel" conference, organized by NGOs, which will be held simultaneously at Jericho Beach. This will draw more than 5,000 persons representing national and international organizations. HABITAT FORUM will run from the 27th of May to the 11th of June. The FORUM begins before the official conference in order to have time to prepare recommendations for the official delegates participating

in HABITAT. In other words, in order to be in a position to present a collective "lobby" for a number of points on the HABITAT agenda.

7. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE AT HABITAT?

According to estimates, up to 5,000 delegates, official visitors and journalists; and, in addition, at the Forum, more than 5,000 persons — concerned individuals, world experts, and representatives of non-governmental organizations from all over the world.

8. WHERE WILL EVERYONE STAY?

Some 5,000 hotel rooms have been reserved for the official delegations and the media observers. There are also some 2,000 rooms which will be available in university residences. The Association in Canada Serving Organizations for Human Settlements (ACSOH), P.O. Box 48360, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, will try to arrange accommodation for people who wish to attend the Habitat Forum; they are planning dormitories, a tent and trailer centre and even accommodation in private residences, if necessary.

All commercial accommodation will be controlled through the Canadian Host Secretariat's accommodation reservation system.

9. WILL THERE BE ANYTHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE HABITAT CONFERENCE?

The emphasis is to be on SOLUTIONS and at this U.N. Conference, for the first time, SOLUTIONS can be introduced into the discussion through audio-visual presentations. This will permit speakers to introduce, in capsule form, audio-visual presentations of solutions implemented by their respective countries to alleviate human settlement problems.

More than 200 such audio-visual presentations will be shown at the Conference. The presentations will be in two formats — one, a three minute mini-version to be shown during the plenary and committee sessions. The other, the full version to run approximately 20 minutes, will be available for viewing by interested parties in several locations. The general public in Vancouver will be able to view the presentations in a downtown cinema, — the Fine Arts Theatre — and also on cable TV. The result will be a unique film library of solutions which will become available to the nations of the world.

10. WILL THE PUBLIC IN VANCOUVER BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON AT THE CONFERENCE?

Yes, on television monitors to be set up in the Visitors' Centre.

11. WHO IS DEVELOPING THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S PRESENTATION AT HABITAT?

The Canadian Participation Secretariat of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, together with active involvement on the part of the 10 provincial governments, two territories, NGOs, the public and numerous federal departments and agencies.

The Host Secretariat of the Department of External Affairs is preparing the accommodations and meeting facilities for the official delegations.

12. HOW CAN YOU INFLUENCE CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION AT HABITAT?

Through attending public meetings held in 16 communities across Canada where views are being submitted on settlement issues which individuals and groups feel should be discussed at the Vancouver Conference. Also, by attending the symposia, and, if an NGO, the National NGO Conference to be held in Ottawa December 11 - 13.

13. WHAT'S IN IT FOR CANADA?

Making Canadians aware of the settlement issues facing the country in the next 25 years during which we will have to build the equivalent of 8 new cities the size of Vancouver, to accommodate the net growth of Canada's population, if current trends continue.