



# Habitat World

Habitat Secretariat News  
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Dear Reader,

This is the first issue of HABITAT WORLD, a bi-monthly publication of the Habitat Conference Secretariat. Its purpose is to keep you up to date on the preparatory activities leading to the Conference on Human Settlements and on the development of the key themes and issues that will be taken up at Vancouver in June of 1976.

Habitat is expected to be the largest conference ever held by the United Nations, and the range of issues under the umbrella of human settlements should be of interest and concern to every citizen and every organization, private or public, throughout the world.

The challenge of the future is awesome. Towns and cities everywhere are failing to provide basic facilities and services and the quality of human life is deteriorating. Problems of unemployment, pollution, congestion, slums and squatter settlements, inadequate transport, crime and social alienation are mounting. And the population of the world will double again in about 30 years.

Past solutions to these problems have not worked. We need new techniques, new ideas and new forms of social organization. The preparatory activities leading to the Conference will help create a global understanding that new efforts and initiatives are needed, and a primary purpose of HABITAT WORLD is to engage your interest in taking part in the building of this new consensus.

In future editions HABITAT WORLD will include a Letters to the Editor section and we hope you will send us your views on all Habitat-related issues. (Address: HABITAT WORLD, 485 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017).

We also ask you to give this issue to a friend when you have finished reading it.

## 100 Countries Promise Film and Slide Projects For Showing at Habitat

Agrovilles in Brazil, microclimate management in the Federal Republic of Germany, new traffic systems for Japanese cities, the upgrading of squatter settlements in Zambia, and the reconstruction of Tashkent after the earthquake of 1966 are among the more than 100 proposals for audio-visual presentations to be shown by national Governments at the Habitat Conference and more are arriving each week.

The audio-visual component of the Conference on Human Settlements is unique in the history of United Nations conferences and is attracting widespread support and interest from governments and non-governmental organizations. Each presentation will follow the Habitat emphasis on solutions to human settlement problems, showing practical ways to improve the quality of community life in all parts of the world that are already proven to work. This programme will undoubtedly be the largest audio-visual exchange of experiences ever mounted on an intergovernmental level and could set a precedent for other conferences to follow.

Here is how it will work.

The Secretariat has invited all United Nations Member States participating in the Conference to present from one to three audio-visual presentations of human settlement demonstration projects in their countries. Each presentation is to show the nature of a problem, the approach chosen to solve it, the results achieved and to give recommendations.

Presentations will be either on 16mm film or 35mm slides which will then be transferred to videotape cassettes for conference showing. Presentations can be of any length up to 25 minutes maximum, but the secretariat is also asking governments to supply three minute capsule versions of each presentation. All the audio-visual presentations and the capsule versions will be translated into the five official languages of the Conference for showing at Vancouver.

At the Conference the full film and slide presentations will be shown at a special demonstration centre open to the public and to delegations. A number of screening rooms will be available. The capsule versions will be shown at the official sessions of the Conference, both in plenary and in committee meetings. For this inter-teleconference viewing, closed circuit television monitors are to be mounted in the meeting rooms.

The Habitat audio-visual programme is being supported financially by the United Nations Environment Programme, bilateral assistance of individual countries and by the Canadian Government. While Secretariat officials insist that Habitat will not be a "film festival" in approach or content, there is no doubt that the audio-visual programme will give the Conference a new and exciting element for all those involved. After the Conference, it is planned that all films will be turned over to a new human settlements film library. Also, the Secretariat plans for this material to be the base for several educational films for world showing.

Guidelines for the production of audio-visual presentations have been sent to all governments and,

## June Regional Meetings Next Major Step On Road To Vancouver

Three major regional preparatory conferences for Habitat are scheduled for June of this year under the auspices of the Habitat secretariat and the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions. They are to be held a full year before the world Conference at Vancouver in order to ensure that participating countries have ample time to study problems of human settlements nationally and regionally and to share fully in the formulation of themes and issues for the Conference agenda.

A regional conference for all of Asia and the Pacific will be held in Teheran from 14-19 June, a meeting for Africa from 21-26 June in Cairo, and for Latin America from 30 June to 4 July in Caracas. The Teheran meeting will join the countries of the Economic Commission for West Asia and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The host of the other meetings will be the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Latin America.

In speeches before the ministers of the ECA and ESCAP in February and March, Habitat Secretary-General Enrique Peñalosa outlined several ways in which countries taking part in the regional meetings could expect to benefit. These include:

\* "The opportunity to exchange views and experiences on human settlement problems in a regional context in order to formulate the

themes and issues which should be taken up at the conferences;

\* "The opportunity to review and discuss working papers which are to be presented by the Regional Economic Commissions and the secretariat, and to make recommendations for the final policy papers and documentation;

\* "A forum for the dissemination of national policy papers, such as the national reports for Habitat, for the information of policy makers and experts from other countries in the region.

"In this way," he told the ministers, "working regionally as well as nationally you can assure that the needs, views and interests of your regions will be adequately represented when we come together again at Vancouver."

Discussions at the meetings are expected to bear on a number of themes: the establishment of national human settlement policies and strategies that consider towns and cities in relationship to each other and to the entire country; meaningful and minimum needs and standards, based on the real needs of peoples in each country; the redistribution and innovative use of resources; more efficient and low-cost means of transportation; and the implementation of firmer and fairer policies of land use.

Proposals for international cooperation and action leading to these goals and the role of inter-

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for those countries requesting assistance in preparing the films and slides, regional film workshops are planned for the coming months.

"The project is of such broad scope", says Andreas Fugelsang, senior Information Officer of Habitat in charge of audio-visual presentations, "that we strongly urge that all audio-visual material be produced in accordance with the technical specifications and the methodology outlined in the guideline brochure. Producers should use the yellow and red sheets attached to the brochure in the formulation of their scripts."

"We hope that the presentations will be short and to the point," Fugelsang adds, "and we hope countries will see that the 35mm slide format can be as effective or even more effective than the more expensive film presentations."

Deadline for delivery of the audio-visual material (with four release copies, separate tapes etc.) is 31 December, 1975. However, this means that the material must be despatched to the Secretariat no

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## June Regional Meetings (from page one)

national financing agencies in reaching them will also be discussed at the regional preparatory conferences. New and more appropriate institutions may be required to implement necessary new policies, to improve the management of existing systems, to educate and train the necessary manpower and to provide greater scope for participation in decision making and for self management. The need for and kind of new institutions to meet the challenges of human settlements will also be discussed at the regional meetings.

At each regional conference the Secretary-General of Habitat will make a progress report covering all aspects of the Habitat preparatory process to date. Reports prepared by the regional secretariats assessing the human settlement situations in the particular region will have been prepared prior to each conference. A draft of a progress report on the state of existing human settlements throughout the world being prepared under the aegis of the United Nations Centre for Housing, Building and Planning will be presented.

All Member States have been requested to submit National Reports on the status and problems in their respective countries by March, 1975; these will lead to further discussion at each regional preparatory conference. The status of the audio-visual programme, a major component of the Habitat Conference in Vancouver, will be assessed along with the general information programme and the parallel activities being planned for Vancouver by non-governmental organizations, to be known as the Habitat Forum.

The preparation of background papers in key areas affecting the urban environment — housing, land use, open space and recreation, transportation, urban environmental education, waste disposal, air pollution, environmental health, energy, water pollution etc. — has been assigned to leading experts in these fields; these papers will be available for each of the regional conferences and provide a further basis for discussion.

Participation in the regional conferences will be open to members and associate members of the regional economic and social commissions and all United Nations specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations concerned, representatives from non-governmental organizations whose interests are especially related to the topics of the Conference.



Bus terminal in Teheran.



The entrance to El Tahrir Bridge, in Cairo.

A view of the City of Caracas, showing the Avenida Bolivar flanked by Government buildings.



## "A Better Way To Live" — World Contest Geared To Habitat

An international competition for amateur and professional photographers who wish to use their art and talent to help in solving one of the most urgent problems of today — the problem of human settlements — is already generating excitement and support throughout the world among photographers.

The contest is a joint effort between the United Nations and the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP). Winning entries in national contests will be judged by an international jury of photographic experts and will be displayed at the Conference in Vancouver in June 1976. Later, they will be exhibited on a worldwide tour. Winners will be awarded UN plaquettes, FIAP medals and other awards presented by sources and organizations outside the UN system. Simultaneously with the UN Conference and the International Competition, national photographic exhibitions will be organized and displayed.

Entries should deal with themes and subjects reflecting people's efforts to improve the quality of life and the human environment. The goal of the competition and international exhibition is to show that people CAN solve human settlement problems and create a healthy and productive environment where all can live in dignity.

Many human settlements throughout the world are in disarray as a result of overcrowding, lack of suitable housing, poor transport, pollution and other assorted ills generated in a world whose human population is growing at ex-

ponential rates and at the same time the predominant orientation of society is changing from rural to urban. The purpose of Habitat is to show that there can be answers to these problems and generally to elicit a cross fertilization of ideas and approaches as to how they can best be met. Photo entries should be geared to this general philosophy.

The International Competition will in principle be based on a series of national competitions organized by the International Federation of Photographic Art through its national affiliate or association. However, individual entries will also be accepted. No entry fee is required. All entries must be sent in duplicate to the national competitions by 15 August and one copy of each entry will be forwarded to the international competition committee. Each photographer may participate with up to eight angle photographs or picture series. The maximum size is 30 x 40 cm (14 x 20 in.) and entries may be submitted in colour or black and white.

Entry forms may be secured from the affiliated national federation of FIAP or from the Habitat Photo Competition, CESI, Room C-515, United Nations, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

## 100 Countries Promise (from page one)

later than 1 December, since transport, customs clearance and collection always take longer than anticipated.

The production of the language versions poses structural, technical and logistical problems. Fugelsang warns. The secretariat has appealed to all governments that have the necessary resources to produce more than one language version and also to try to get presentations to the secretariat before the deadline whenever possible.

## Delegates Speak Out On Human Settlement Problems



# First Prep Com Meeting Sets Conference Program

A broad programme of official activities leading to Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements won full endorsement at the first formal meeting of the 56-member Conference Preparatory Committee, held at United Nations headquarters from 15 - 24 January. Habitat Secretary-General Enrique Peñalosa, in a keynote address opening the committee session, termed 1975 the "year of action".

Almost all UN member states have indicated that they will take part in the Vancouver conference, scheduled for 31 May - 11 June, 1976, and 70 have designated official coordinators. Nearly 100 audio-visual presentations have been proposed and more commitments for national participation are arriving each day.

Of the 56 member states of the Preparatory Committee 54 sent delegations, most of them from their home governments, and 14 other nations sent observers. This usually high level participation, including many delegates heading governmental departments directly related to human settlement affairs, reflects the importance being given to the conference at this early stage.

Committee sessions were extremely active, especially in connexion with the timetable for the preparatory process, the substantive framework of proposed conference themes and issues, and the audio-visual programme for the presentation at Vancouver of demonstration projects.

The size and regional balance of the Committee, further enhanced by the observers from non-member governments, made the meeting, in effect, a first "preparatory conference." It gave the secretariat a broad outline of what nearly 60 nations expect and want from Habitat and was, in that sense, a mandate for the secretariat for its work over the coming year.

Peñalosa has repeatedly stressed that Habitat "is not an isolated event covering two weeks at Vancouver but part of a process which has already begun and must continue after the conference ends." The preparatory process is as important as the conference itself, he said. Events at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee underlined his view.

The work of the Committee was important in several ways:

1) It elaborated a number of key themes and issues which it believed were central to the Conference, but endorsed the view of the secretariat that the provisional agenda must be left open until after the analysis of the national reports and the regional meetings.

2) It endorsed the timetable of preparatory activities laid out by the secretariat, including the importance of the regional meetings and the reconvening of the Preparatory Committee in time to submit the provisional agenda to the thirtieth General Assembly.

3) It strongly supported the view of the secretariat that the audio-visual component of the Conference be given full support in order to permit participation by all governments.

In general the Committee approved the rest of the secretariat report on the progress over the past year and plans for the remainder of the preparatory process — including the programme for the UN theme exhibit, the state of the world report being prepared in conjunction with the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning and specialized agencies concerned, parallel activities of non-governmental organizations, the preparations of the Host Government, and information plans.

The Preparatory Committee envisaged that the outcome of the Vancouver conference will take three forms: a declaration of principles, recommendations for national action, and proposals for inter-

national co-operation.

The overall goal of the conference is to improve the quality of life in human settlements for present and future generations. Five major themes were cited which would provide a fruitful international exchange of experience... and an approach to that goal.

The themes, as formulated by the Committee, are: national settlement policies and development; social and economic aspects of human settlements; planning and management of human settlements; design and construction of shelter, infrastructure and services for human settlements; human settlements and the natural environment.

Of the many human settlement issues which were discussed, several appeared to be deserving of urgent consideration. A fundamental issue was the need for the establishment of national human settlement policies as a key element in the national social and economic strategy. A related issue was the development of explicit plans at national, regional and local levels concerned with the location, size, growth and interrelationship of human settlement networks.

Another urgent issue was to define meaningful minimum needs and standards as a target for the universal improvement of the quality of life in human settlements compatible with ecological constraints and within local socio-economic contexts.

Also considered of prime importance was the need to plan the redistribution and promote the innovative use of resources, as well as to evolve comprehensive policies and programmes for the use of land as a key resource.

Still another issue was the development of appropriate institutional structures required to implement new policies, to improve the management of existing systems, to educate and train the necessary

manpower, and to provide greater scope for participation in decision making and self management.

The Preparatory Committee also approved a decision by the Secretary-General of the Conference to set up ad hoc working groups of experts to study specific human settlement issues of broad concern, and the decision to set up an advisory panel to assist the secretariat in the mounting of the audio-visual component of the conference.

Major events on the timetable for the preparatory process include:

1—Submission by governments of the provisional version of national reports on human settlement policies, end of March.

2—Regional Preparatory Conferences: Teheran, 14-19 June for ECWA and ESCAP; Cairo, 21-26 June for ECA; Caracas, 30 June - 4 July for ECLA; Geneva, 3-9 September for ECE.

3—Reconvening of the Prep Committee to review the provisional agenda of the Conference for subsequent submission to the thirtieth General Assembly, last week in August.

4—Completion of audio-visual presentations by member states, end of 1975

5—Second session of the Preparatory Committee to review policy papers, January, 1976. Stressing the importance of major national efforts in this programme, Peñalosa warned that the outcome of the national and regional activities this year will determine the success of the Conference."

## Brazil

*B. Brito — Counsellor to The Permanent Mission to the United Nations*

"All human settlement planning has to be related to economic and development policies. Brazil has made significant progress in developing a national strategy for human settlements which is part of the economic development of the nation. It is very important to give attention to institutions, such as the Housing Bank of Brazil, which translate theoretical knowledge into practical application."

## Iran

*M. Vahidi — Minister of Housing and Urban Development*

"Although the problem of human settlements in developed countries differs from those in developing countries, it is a problem which is worldwide. There should be an international organization to direct settlement studies, coordinate national settlement plans and prepare an overall worldwide policy. And any human settlement policy should include the situation of the homeless and the refugees."

## India

*R. Gopelaswamy — Secretary to the Government in Charge of Housing and Urban Development*

"The difficulty is in reconciling the needs and requirements of developed countries with those of the developing countries. For a person without anything, something is better; for a person with something now, something better is what he wants. International cooperation is needed."

"Just as the rich and poor in one nation should share the natural resources, so should the rich and poor nations share the resources of the world. Something should be done and if we don't act now the people at the bottom may overtake us. The one world must be one."

## Dominican Republic

*D. Fausto Correa  
Office of National Planning*

"We consider human settlements as vital to our country as its economic development. We are concerned about the basic relationship between rural and urban areas and about the rapid growth of urban areas which leads to squatter settlements."

"The problem of human resources — of training people to operate the technical equipment — is also our concern. We need people in every settlement who will promote the idea of developing that settlement."

## Tanzania

*M. Msangi — Commissioner for Urban Development*

"Until three years ago we thought a bulldozer was the best way to deal with squatter settlements. Now we realize that squatter settlements are an asset to the nation; a man has provided his own shelter. My government has decided to provide essential services to the people in squatter settlements — such as electricity, roads, water, sewage, schools and markets."

"We certainly hope that the Conference will bring into focus the problem of lower income people in developing countries and especially a commitment of the world community to assist both financially and in manpower. We have made a start but it is not enough. We'd like much more assistance."

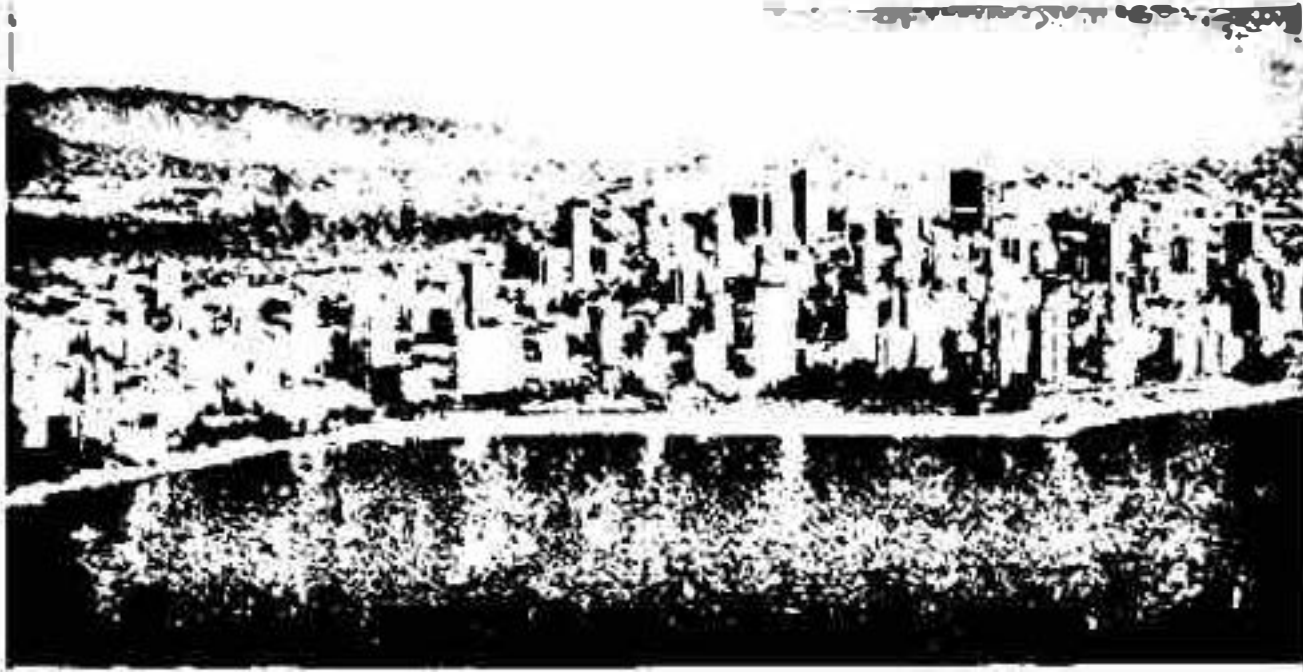
## Egypt

*M. El-Hifnawi — Chairman, General Organization of Housing, Building and Planning Research*

"Because of the destruction of many dwellings in the entire Suez Canal region and the increasing national population, Egypt is very concerned about human settlement problems. Unfortunately, since 1967 Egypt's development programmes, such as improvement of housing, have been postponed in favour of military priorities and other important projects. That is why we are very interested in new ideas or a new philosophy of human settlements in connection with international, national or regional planning."

# NGO's Announce Program For Habitat Forum

by J.G. van Putten



The two main groups of non-governmental organizations related to United Nations activities, the Conference of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and the Environment Liaison Board, have together created an NGO Committee for Habitat. This Committee is composed of 14 members from different geographical areas representing a variety of concerns and professional interests. Its function is to encourage and facilitate the involvement of professional organizations, voluntary bodies and other groups and individual citizens in Habitat.

The Committee will organize an NGO Conference called Habitat Forum in Vancouver to be held simultaneously with the official Conference. This Forum will provide for an exchange of views and experiences between NGOs. It will sponsor a series of lectures and seminars on subjects related to

Habitat as well as demonstration exhibits and artistic performances. The NGOs hope to see developed a dialogue between participants in the governmental conference and those in the NGO events. The NGO Committee hopes therefore that the Preparatory Committee and other UN bodies concerned will adopt a liberal attitude to the admission of NGO observers to the governmental conference in Vancouver as well as to the regional and other preparatory meetings. For our part, we will welcome government delegates who wish to take part in the Forum.

The NGO Committee will make a special effort to promote and assist the participation of NGO representatives from developing countries in the Forum.

Although the Habitat Forum is an important element of the programme of our Committee, it

is not the only one. Our aims are much more ambitious. We aim to mobilize public opinion in preparation for the Conference. The term Human Settlements covers many subjects of a technical nature on which non-governmental experts can make important contributions.

The NGOs also plan to set in motion a worldwide discussion on at least some of the questions related to Habitat which are of a 'human' nature, and some of which are of great urgency. These questions should be discussed against the background of interrelated problems which were on the agenda of other important United Nations conferences: environmental degradation, the food crisis, scarcity of resources, population growth, economic and trade relations. In these discussions, the human factor should be central and our international responsibilities should be stressed. Hopefully the outcome will lead to suggestions for intensified international cooperation.

Without trying to be exhaustive or exclusive the NGO Committee has decided that this discussion initially should concentrate on the following six questions:

1. How should we provide all human beings with shelter and basic services (such as water, sewage, health, education)?
2. How should the quality of life be improved taking into account the fulfillment of basic minimum human needs and the existence of cultural and individual differences?
3. How should the interrelationship and parity of living standards as between urban, rural and fringe areas be improved?
4. How can the population be involved in the process of decision-making on human settlements issues?

5. Which measures should be taken in order to use land in a way which satisfies the needs of the community as a whole?

6. How should technology transfer and industrialization take place to give the maximum possible benefit to communities?

The NGO Committee will promote this discussion by a variety of means: the publication of an NGO newsletter; articles in professional journals, NGO magazines and the general press, radio, television and travelling exhibits. We will do this in cooperation with the UN information services. We also plan to publish a discussion guide and to promote the formation of national NGO committees to stimulate public participation in the preparations for Habitat. We want to organize regional NGO meetings.

We realize that this is an ambitious programme. We believe, however, that it is vital to associate large sectors of the population with the Conference and to make them aware of the issues.

Public opinion must be mobilized in order to generate the political will without which it is impossible to take the decisions which are called for. The participation of NGOs and voluntary groups is therefore an essential component of the entire Conference.

Many governments have realized this and have expressed their interest in NGO involvement. I should like to appeal to them to support our efforts financially and to follow the example of the Canadian Government, which has generously agreed to finance host facilities for the NGO activities including administrative and secretarial services.

## Canadian NGO to Handle Vancouver Arrangements

A special non-governmental organization has been created in Vancouver to handle arrangements for Habitat Forum in the host city. It's called the Association in Canada Serving Organizations for Human Settlements (or ACSOH for short).

ACSOH was established last year by a group of representatives of international, national and local NGOs and concerned individuals. Its purpose is to stimulate, facilitate and coordinate NGO activities for Habitat. It is primarily a "hosting" organization, and has no responsibility for the substantive content of the parallel conference, which is being handled by the international NGO Committee for Habitat.

However, ACSOH is working closely with the NGO Committee on such things as arranging for meeting rooms and living accommodations, and the distribution of news about Habitat Forum. Its services are also available to those non-governmental organizations who want to organize their own participation in Habitat outside the framework of Habitat Forum. Several organizations have already expressed their intention of doing this. They include groups of landscape architects, building owners and managers, and environmental consultants.

As a non-profit corporation, ACSOH is also soliciting and dis-

bursing funds for various NGO projects for Vancouver. It is incorporated under the law of Canada to do this. Sources of funds include the national, provincial and local governments, foundations, private corporations, associations and private individuals.

While it has figured prominently in early arrangements for NGO participation in Habitat, ACSOH will more and more function as a back up service organization, operating principally on behalf of "Habitat Forum." Though it will remain active, most of what it does will be under the name Habitat Forum, while the acronym ACSOH will be little used. Thus, its office (PO Box 48360, Bentall Centre, Vancouver) is now established as the main contact point for those associations and individuals seeking information on NGO activities. A regular NGO news and information service will also originate from the Vancouver office.

Habitat Forum, because of its open structure, should be able to accommodate most, if not all, NGO activities. However, some activities may be devoted to the interests of a specific group which wished to participate independently from the Forum. The NGO Committee will in no way attempt to dictate the form of content of such individual events, and the Vancouver Secretariat will be available to service such activities.

Would-be commercial participants — for example, firms wishing to display pollution control equipment, etc., in a proposed industrial exhibition, will definitely not be included under the umbrella of the Habitat Forum. However, part of the revenue from such events may well be used to cover part of the cost of non-commercial activities. It has been suggested that their exhibition be called Habitat Expo, to distinguish it from the UN Conference and Habitat Forum.

Cultural events are anticipated, too, such as an exhibition at the Vancouver art gallery, theatrical performances and concerts. It has been suggested that these may be collected together as a 'Celebration of Urbanity' festival. Extensive film showings are planned also: both of the official demonstration projects (up to 200 half-hour films) as well as commercial films related to the conference themes.

Habitat events will take place throughout the Vancouver metropolitan area. The city is Canada's third largest, with a population of some 600,000. It has one of the most spectacular sites of any city of the world, walled by snow-capped mountains on one side and the ocean on the other.

Most of the Habitat Forum activities will take place on the campus of the University of British Columbia, where up to 4,500 delegates will

also be housed in attractive, modern, but relatively low-cost student accommodations. A shuttle bus service will link the university campus to downtown (about 20 min. ride) where the UN meetings will take place in a civic theatre and the large public rooms of the city's several major hotels. It is hoped that some of the NGO events, such as a daily briefing on the progress of the UN conference and major lectures will take place downtown, too.

Arrangements for both meetings and living accommodation for NGOs will be handled by the Vancouver NGO secretariat (write: Habitat Forum, PO Box 48360, Bentall Centre, Vancouver). Registrations are already being accepted.