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Habitat:

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Vancouver, Canada, 31 May-11 June 1976

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Round-up

HABITAT: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS,  
VANCOUVER, CANADA, 31 MAY-11 JUNE

Adopts Declaration of Principles, Recommendations for National Action  
To Improve Settlements, Proposal on United Nations Activities

A blueprint for national and international action to improve the living places of people throughout the world was approved in Vancouver, Canada, this week by Habitat: the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

The Conference brought to fruition two years of preparatory work and studies with the adoption of a Declaration of Principles and a series of recommendations to meet the urgent problems of housing shortages, contrasting crises of urban and rural communities, the proper use of land, access to essential services, and public involvement and participation in remedial action.

The programme hammered out at Vancouver between 31 May and 11 June by officials of 131 Governments concerned with human settlements -- including many ministers responsible for settlement planning, urban and rural development -- consists of three elements:

-- A "Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, 1976" intended as a broad guide for bettering standards in villages, towns and cities, and starting from the premise that "the improvement of the quality of life of human beings is the first and most important objective of every human settlement policy".

-- A set of 64 recommendations, addressed directly to Governments, suggesting concrete ways in which people might be assured the basic requirements of human habitation -- shelter, clean water, sanitation and a decent physical environment, plus the opportunity for cultural growth and the development of the individual.

-- A resolution calling for action to set up new United Nations machinery concerned exclusively with human settlements, including an intergovernmental body and a central secretariat whose job would be to help countries to better the lot of their citizens in urban and rural communities everywhere.

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The Declaration of Principles was adopted at the closing meeting of the Conference by a roll-call vote of 89 in favour to 15 against, with 10 abstentions. The Declaration, proposed by the "Group of 77" developing countries, was opposed by a number of Western European developed countries, which said they could not accept some of its political implications.

The recommendations for national action were approved mainly by consensus, except for two amendments by which the Conference condemned certain activities relating to settlements in territories under foreign occupation.

In adopting by consensus the proposal to create new United Nations machinery to deal with human settlements, the Conference left it to the United Nations General Assembly to decide exactly where the new secretariat unit should fit into the existing structure.

In other action, the Conference:

-- Recommended unanimously that the General Assembly establish an audio-visual information centre on human settlements, to be located at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

-- Urged all Governments to support and fully participate in the United Nations Water Conference to be held next March at Mar del Plata, Argentina.

-- Recommended that the General Assembly request the United Nations Secretary-General to submit a report on "the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories".

The report of Habitat is to be considered by the United Nations General Assembly when it meets in New York in September/December 1976.

#### Attendance at Habitat

The Habitat Conference, which brought together representatives of 131 countries, six national liberation movements, 160 non-governmental organizations, and a number of intergovernmental bodies, was opened by Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim on 31 May. The delegates were welcomed by Jules Leger, Governor-General of Canada, the host country, whose Prime Minister, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, also addressed the opening plenary.

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The central theme of the Conference was, as Secretary-General Waldheim told the delegates, "concerned with people -- where and how they live, about the quality of their lives and about the future for themselves and generations yet unborn".

The urgency of human settlements questions was underlined by Prime Minister Trudeau, who told the delegates that "human settlements are linked so closely to existence itself, represent such a concrete and widespread reality, and are so complex and demanding ... so racked with injustices and deficiencies that the subject cannot be approached with leisurely detachment".

Barney Danson, Canadian Minister of Urban Affairs, the President of the Conference, said in a closing statement that what Governments did after Habitat would be "the real test of our achievements here". He added: "I believe that all of us will leave this Conference with a better idea of what we ought to do and how we might do it."

Enrique Penalosa, Secretary-General of Habitat, also speaking at the closing meeting, described the recommendations for national action as "revolutionary in scope" and said the Vancouver Declaration would serve "not only as an inspiration but as a yardstick for measuring the health of each society and the state of man's conditions everywhere on earth".

The Conference was organized along lines worked out during the preparatory phase, with the tasks divided among three main committees. Committee I dealt with the draft Declaration of Principles and programmes of international co-operation. Recommendations regarding national action were divided between Committee II, which examined policies and strategies (planning, institutions and management), and Committee III, which dealt with shelter, infrastructure and services, land and public participation. The main committees held a total of 39 official meetings and many more of working and drafting groups.

Concurrently with Committee deliberations, the Conference held 13 plenary meetings devoted to a general debate in which 150 speakers contributed to a global exchange of experience in problems of human settlements and of ideas of policies and programmes best suited to their solution. The debate was opened on 31 May with a statement by the President of Mexico, Luis Echeverria Alvarez, who was followed in ensuing days by the representatives of 111 countries, four national liberation movements, seven intergovernmental organizations, 15 non-governmental organizations and 13 agencies and bodies in the United Nations system.

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An unusual feature of the Conference was the use of audio-visual equipment to facilitate the exchange of information among delegations and between the Conference and the media. In the general debate 80 delegations illustrated their addresses with capsule versions of films on human settlements especially prepared for screening at Habitat. In Committee II, 41 film capsules were shown, and 37 in Committee III.

Parallel with the official Conference, a Habitat Forum was held at Jericho Beach in Vancouver, where private individuals and a broad cross-section of interested organizations discussed the issues being debated by Government representatives at four different sites in the city centre.

Habitat originated in a recommendation of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm. The United Nations General Assembly, accepting the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference, affirmed in 1973 that the main purpose of what later came to be known as Habitat "should be to serve as a practical means to exchange information about solutions to problems of human settlements against a broad background of environmental and other concerns which may lead to the formation of policies and actions by Governments and international organizations" (Assembly resolution 3128 (XXVIII)).

A 56-nation Preparatory Committee met in three sessions between January 1975 and 26 May 1976 to work out a framework and an agenda for Habitat. These were approved by the General Assembly last December (resolution 3438 (XXX)).

(For further background on Habitat, see Press Release HE/V/3, issued on 27 May.)

#### Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements

The 55-paragraph "Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, 1976" was submitted to the Conference by the Group of 77. Composed of a preamble and three sections setting forth "opportunities and solutions", general principles and guidelines for action, it follows the outline of a draft elaborated by the Habitat secretariat prior to the Conference following recommendations by the Preparatory Committee and subsequent consultations with Governments, but contains a number of new provisions.

Among the points in the preamble of the Declaration, the Conference recognizes "that the circumstances of life for vast numbers of people in human settlements are unacceptable, particularly in developing countries, and that, unless positive and concrete action is taken at national and international levels to find and implement solutions, these conditions are likely to be further aggravated". As factors aggravating the problem the preamble singles out inequitable economic growth; social, economic, ecological and environmental deterioration;

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a world population growth which is expected to double the present population in the next 25 years; uncontrolled urbanization; rural backwardness and dispersion; and "involuntary migration, particularly politically, racially and economically motivated, relocation and expulsion of people from their national homeland".

In the section of the Declaration entitled "Opportunities and solutions", the Conference speaks of the need for increased activity by Governments and the international community, "aimed at mobilization of economic resources, institutional changes and international solidarity". Among the goals of such a mobilization would be to adopt "bold, meaningful and effective human settlement policies and spatial planning strategies realistically adapted to local conditions", and to create "more livable, attractive and efficient settlements which recognize human scale, the heritage and culture of people and the special needs of disadvantaged groups especially children, women and the infirm in order to ensure the provision of health, services, education, food and employment within a framework of social justice".

"In meeting this challenge", the text declares, "human settlements must be seen as an instrument and object of development. The goals of settlement policies are inseparable from the goals of every sector of social and economic life. The solutions to the problems of human settlements must therefore be conceived as an integral part of the development process of individual nations and the world community."

In the section entitled "General principles", the Conference would state that "the improvement of the quality of life of human beings is the first and most important objective of every human settlement policy. These policies must facilitate the rapid and continuous improvement in the quality of life of all people, beginning with the satisfaction of the basic needs of food, shelter, clean water, employment, health, education, training, social security without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, ideology, national or social origin or other cause, in a frame of freedom, dignity and social justice". In striving to achieve to this objective, "priority must be given to the needs of the most disadvantaged people".

Another of the general principles states that "human dignity and the exercise of free choice consistent with over-all public welfare are basic rights which must be assured in every society. It is therefore the duty of all people and Governments to join the struggle against any form of colonialism, foreign aggression and occupation, domination, apartheid and all forms of racism and racial discrimination as referred to in resolutions as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations".

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The Conference declared that "the establishment of settlements in territories occupied by force is illegal" and "is condemned by the international community". It noted, however, that "action still remains to be taken against the establishment of such settlements". It further declared that "the right of free movement and the right of each individual to choose the place of settlement within the domain of his own country should be recognized and safeguarded".

Among other general principles contained in the Declaration are these:

-- "Every State has the right to exercise full and permanent sovereignty over its wealth, natural resources and economic activities, adopting the necessary measures for the planning and management of its resources, providing for the protection, preservation and enhancement of the environment."

-- "Land is one of the fundamental elements in human settlements. Every State has the right to take the necessary steps to maintain under public control the use, possession, disposal and reservation of land. Every State has the right to plan and regulate use of land, which is one of its most important resources, in such a way that the growth of population centres both urban and rural is based on a comprehensive land use plan."

-- "Nations must avoid the pollution of the biosphere and the oceans and should join in the effort to end irrational exploitation of all environmental resources, whether non-renewable or renewable, in the long term."

-- "The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly for the peoples of developing countries."

-- "To achieve universal progress in the quality of life, a fair and balanced structure of the economic relations between States has to be promoted. It is therefore essential to implement urgently the New International Economic Order, based on the Declaration and Programme of Action approved by the General Assembly in its sixth special session /1974/, and on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States" adopted by the Assembly in 1974.

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-- "The highest priority should be placed on the rehabilitation of expelled and homeless people who have been displaced by natural or man-made catastrophes, and especially by the act of foreign aggression. In the latter case, all countries have the duty to fully co-operate in order to guarantee that the parties involved allow the return of displaced persons to their homes and to give them the right to possess and enjoy their properties and belongings without interference."

-- "Historical settlements, monuments and other items of national heritage, including religious heritage, should be safeguarded against any acts of aggression or abuse by the occupying Power."

-- "Every State has the sovereign right to rule and exercise effective control over foreign investments, including the transnational corporations within its national jurisdiction, which affect directly or indirectly the human settlements programmes."

In the section of the Declaration entitled "Guidelines for action", the Conference stresses that national and international efforts should give priority to improving the rural habitat and that "efforts should be made towards the reduction of disparities between rural and urban areas".

The Conference states that human settlements policies and programmes "should define and strive for progressive minimum standards for an acceptable quality of life". It draws attention to "the detrimental effects of transposing standards and criteria" that could only be attained by a minority of a population, thus heightening inequalities. It recommends that Governments promote programmes which will encourage and assist local authorities to participate to a greater extent in national development.

Another guideline states that land is an essential element in the development of both urban and rural settlements. Therefore, "the use and tenure of land should be subject to public control because of its limited supply through appropriate measures and legislation including agrarian reform policies ... that will facilitate the transfer of economic resources to the agricultural sector and the promotion of the agro-industrial effort".

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Among other guidelines are the following:

— "Access should be granted, on more favourable terms, to modern technology, which should be adapted, as necessary, to the specific economic, social and ecological conditions and to the different stages of development of the developing countries."

— "International, technical and financial co-operation by the developed countries with the developing countries must be conducted on the basis of respect for national sovereignty and national development plans and programmes and designed to solve problems relating to projects, under human settlement programmes, aimed at enhancing the quality of life of the inhabitants."

The Declaration was adopted by a roll-call vote of 89 in favour to 15 against, with 10 abstentions. Voting in favour were most of the developing and the socialist countries. Voting against were: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom and United States. Abstaining were Austria, Colombia, Fiji, Honduras, Japan, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The countries voting against the Declaration said their primary objection was the inclusion of an implicit endorsement of General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) of November 1975, which characterized zionism as a form of racism.

#### Recommendations for National Action

The recommendations which Habitat addressed to Governments concerning action which it felt should be taken at the national level to improve human settlements : were divided into six broad categories: (a) settlement policies and strategies; (b) settlement planning; (c) shelter, infrastructure and services; (d) land; (e) public participation, and (f) institutions and management.

Recommendations on all these subjects had been drawn up during the two years of preparatory work for Habitat (document A/CONF.70/5). At Vancouver, Committees II and III, each taking three of the main subject areas, spent eight working days considering and revising this preliminary draft. Following a discussion in which each delegate had the opportunity to comment on the recommendations, each Committee set up a drafting committee that was open to all delegations. The products of the drafting committees, with further modifications by the two main committees, were then sent on to plenary meetings of the Conference, where they were adopted in final form, along with introductory and preambular texts prepared by the committees.

The texts of the recommendations, including the introductory material approved by the Conference, took up 80 pages in the reports of Committees II (document A/CONF.70/10) and III (document A/CONF.70/11). With two exceptions, relating to the recommendations on land management (recommendation D.1) and on settlement planning (preamble to recommendations B.1-16), the Committee recommendations were approved by the Conference without a vote. (Details of the amendments are given below.)

A summary of the Habitat recommendations for national action follows:

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Settlement policies and strategies (recommendation A.1-7): The seven recommendations approved by Habitat on this topic deal with national settlement policies, their content and their relationship to the distribution of population, the environment, economic and social development, and the use of resources.

In a preamble to the recommendations it is stated that national development strategies must be devised so that the goals and objectives of human settlement policies become an integral part of national development objectives. Such policies "must not be used to dispossess people from their homes and their land, or to entrench privilege and exploitation".

The first of the recommendations suggests that "all countries should establish as a matter of urgency a national policy on human settlements embodying the distribution of population and related economic and social activities" (A.1).

The next recommendation is that "a national policy on human settlements and the environment should be an integral part of any national economic and social development policy", and should take into account, among other things, "the changing roles of women" (A.2).

In addition, such a policy "should concentrate on key issues and provide basic directions for action" (A.3). It should promote the goals and objectives of national development, establish priorities among regions and areas of a country, and "be led by public sector action".

A further recommendation states that "human settlements policies should aim to improve the condition of human settlements, particularly by promoting a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development among regions and by making such benefits and public services equally accessible to all groups" (A.4). Public sector investments, subsidies, and fiscal and legal incentives and disincentives are among the measures mentioned in this context.

Concerning settlement development strategies, Habitat recommends that they be "explicit, comprehensive and flexible" (A.5). They require, among other things, the designation of a body responsible for policy formulation, the active participation of governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and all sectors of the population, and the means for their periodic review.

Another recommendation says that "the improvement of the quality of life in human settlements must receive higher priority in the allocation of conventional resources, which ought to be carefully distributed between the various components of human settlements; it also requires the planned use of scarce resources and the mobilization of new resources, in particular human capacities" (A.6).

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In recommending that Governments "report publicly on a continuous evaluation of human settlements conditions", the Conference suggests such measures as a permanent national review body, a periodic report on past achievements and future goals, and independent monitoring and evaluation components in all major settlement programmes, projects and institutions (A.7).

Settlement planning (recommendations B.1-16): Sixteen recommendations treat settlement planning in the national, regional and local context, and deal with such subjects as the availability of resources, urban improvement and expansion, reconstruction after disaster, new settlements, temporary settlements, and the settlements of mobile groups such as nomads and migrant workers.

Noting that "planning is a process to achieve the goals and objectives of national development through the rational and efficient use of available resources", the preamble to these recommendations states that plans must include clear goals and adequate policies, objectives and strategies along with concrete programmes, and should promote and guide development rather than restrict or simply control it. It is recommended that planning and development of rural settlements should become a focus of national development policies and programmes.

To the text of the preamble submitted by Committee II, the Conference, in plenary session, voted to add a paragraph proposed by Cuba (document A/CONF.70/L.3), stating in part as follows: "Settlement planning and implementation for the purpose of prolonging and consolidating occupation and subjugation in territories and lands acquired through coercion and intimidation must not be undertaken, and must be condemned as a violation of United Nations principles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The vote on this amendment was 77 in favour to 8 against, with 20 abstentions.

The first of the recommendations on settlement planning suggests that "settlement and environmental planning and development must occur within the framework of the economic and social planning process at the national, regional and local levels" (B.1). It urges special emphasis on balanced development for all regions, a unified approach, and the use of suitable methods and procedures.

In addition, "settlement planning should reflect national, regional and local priorities and use models based on indigenous values" (B.2). Particular mention is made of such national objectives as social justice, employment opportunities, economic self-sufficiency and cultural relevancy, and of the need to bring planning and planners in close contact with the people.

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The next recommendation is that "settlement planning should be based on a realistic assessment and management of the resources actually and potentially available for development" (B.3). It calls for the preparation of a "comprehensive national ecological and demographic inventory to guide long-range settlement planning", and the development of special technical and managerial skills.

The Conference further recommends that national settlement planning must co-ordinate factors of national significance such as population distribution and the development of certain economic sectors (B.4).

In regard to regional planning, Habitat recommends that "planning for rural areas should aim to stimulate their economic and social institutions, improve general living conditions, and overcome disadvantages of scattered populations" (B.5). Planning for metropolitan regions "should aim at an integrated approach over the territory affected by the metropolis", and should include such measures as the co-ordinated provision of food, utilities and services and the protection of regional ecology (B.6).

As to local planning, it "must be concerned with social and economic factors and the location of activities and the use of space over time" (B.7). Among the measures called for in this connexion is the "provision of infrastructure networks and systems required to link activities on the basis of economy, safety, convenience and environmental impact".

Suggesting that existing settlements "must be continuously improved", the next recommendation states that the process of renewal and rehabilitation "must respect the rights and aspirations of inhabitants, especially the least advantaged, and preserve the cultural and social values embodied in the existing fabric" (B.8).

On urban expansion, the Conference recommends that it be "planned within a regional framework and co-ordinated with urban renewal to achieve comparable living conditions in old and new areas" (B.9). Special provision should be made for such things as the active participation of the public, the protection of ecosystems, and access to places of work.

Concerning new settlements, Habitat recommends that they be "planned within a regional framework to achieve national settlement strategies and development objectives" (B.10). Among other things, special attention should be paid to relating new settlement programmes to the renewal and expansion of existing settlements.

It further recommends that "planning for the improvement of individual rural settlements should take into account the present and expected structure of rural occupations and of appropriate distribution of employment opportunities, services and facilities" (B.11). Respect should be paid to local customs as well as to new needs, and local resources and traditional techniques of construction should be used.

The Conference recommends that "neighbourhood planning should give special attention to the social qualities and provision of facilities, services and amenities", with particular emphasis on the needs of children and their parents, the elderly and the handicapped (B.12). The need for community involvement and ready access to facilities and services is also stressed.

"Planning for temporary settlements", another recommendation states, "should provide for community needs" -- such as suitable shelter and services -- "and the integration of such settlements, where appropriate, into the permanent network of settlements" (B.13).

Habitat also recommends that "planning for human settlements should avoid known hazards which could lead to natural disaster" (B.14). "The planning of reconstruction after natural or man-made disasters should be used as an opportunity to improve the quality of the whole settlement, its functional and spatial patterns and environment".

Noting that important groups of people have a traditional culture based on frequent or regular movement, the next recommendation states that "the spatial, social, economic and cultural needs of mobile groups must receive special planning attention" including training and counselling, facilities for health and education services, and assistance with shelter, food and water (B.15).

There is also a call for planning to be "a continuing process requiring co-ordination, monitoring evaluation and review" (B.16). Planning should be "comprehensive, timely and action-oriented", and "be backed by firm political commitment to action".

Shelter, infrastructure and services (recommendations C.1-18): On this topic -- the anatomy and physiology of human settlements -- the Conference approved 18 recommendations dealing with such questions as national housing policies, waste management and prevention of pollution, energy, water supply and social services. "Infrastructure" was defined as the networks designed to deliver or remove people, goods, energy or information, including transport and communications. This is distinguished from "services" such as education, health, culture, welfare, recreation and nutrition.

The introduction to these recommendations states that the overriding objectives of settlement policies should be to make the facilities available to those who need them, "in the sequence in which they are needed and at a monetary or social cost they can afford". It adds: "Social justice depends on the way in which these facilities are distributed among the population and the extent to which they are made accessible."

Proposing a comprehensive approach to shelter, infrastructure and services, the first of the recommendations suggests that these elements of human settlements should be "planned in an integrated way and provided in the sequence appropriate to circumstances" (C.1).

Emphasizing the importance of gearing the provision of shelter, infrastructure and services to the achievement of the over-all objectives of national development, another recommendation suggests that attention be paid to "massive and effective mobilization of financial, material and human resources, including the encouragement of voluntary activity" (C.2).

As regards standards for shelter, infrastructure and services, Habitat recommends that such standards should be "compatible with local resources, be evolutionary, realistic, and sufficiently adaptable to local culture and conditions, and be established by appropriate government bodies" (C.3). Efforts should also be made to reduce "dependence on foreign technologies, resources and materials".

Another recommendation suggests that use be made of available local materials and resources as well as locally existing know-how in such a way as to generate employment and income (C.4). The needs of the handicapped should also be taken into account in designing shelter, infrastructure and services.

On energy needs of human settlements, the Conference recommended the identification and development of "new sources of energy" as well as conservation of currently available energy (C.5). Emphasis should be placed on "the use of renewable over non-renewable energy sources and the rationalization of technologies which are currently known to be hazardous to the environment".

A recommendation on long-term cost suggests that in choosing alternatives for shelter, infrastructure and services, due consideration should be given to their "social, environmental and economic costs and benefits" (C.6).

As to the national construction industry, Habitat recommended that "political, financial and technical support" be given to the industry to achieve "national objectives and the production targets required for human settlements" (C.7).

Taking note of the role of the informal ("self-help") sector in meeting the housing needs of the less advantaged, the Conference recommended that action should be taken to ensure "security of land tenure for unplanned settlements where appropriate or if necessary providing for relocation and resettlement with opportunity for employment" (C.8).

National housing policies, says the next recommendation, "must aim at providing adequate shelter and services to the lower income groups, distributing available resources on the basis of greatest needs" (C.9). Measures proposed to achieve this include low-interest loans, rent subsidies based on family needs and incomes, and improved availability of housing alternatives such as low cost rentals near job opportunities.

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In a related recommendation, it is suggested that a major part of housing policy efforts should consist of "programmes and instruments which actively assist people in continuing to provide better quality housing for themselves, individually or co-operatively" (C.10).

The first of four recommendations on infrastructure suggests that infrastructure policy should be geared to achieving "greater equity in the provision of services and utilities, access to places of work and recreational areas, as well as to minimize adverse environmental impact" (C.11).

On water supply, it is recommended that efforts be made to achieve "measurable qualitative and quantitative targets serving all the population by a certain date" (C.12). Specifically, it is suggested that programmes be adopted "with realistic standards for quality and quantity to provide water for urban and rural areas by 1990, if possible".

A related recommendation on waste management suggests that pollution of the environment may be prevented through such measures as innovative use of unavoidable waste as a by-product, better use of technology to reduce the volume of waste material, and the creation of a special fund, with the participation of industries, for establishing recycling mechanisms (C.13).

On transportation and communication, the Conference recommended that policies should "promote desired patterns of development to satisfy the needs of the majority of the population and the distribution of activities to favour mass transportation, and reduce congestion and pollution by motor vehicles" (C.14).

As regards services essential for the environmental quality of settlements, a recommendation on social services suggests that the provision of health, nutrition, education, security, and recreation and similar services should be geared to the needs of the community and should receive "an effective priority" in national and development planning and resource allocation (C.15).

Provision of services in rural areas will help to reduce migration to urban areas, says another recommendation (C.16). It suggests that "new criteria for integrated rural planning" be developed to ensure the enjoyment of basic services by the greatest number of scattered and dispersed rural settlements.

A recommendation on the reorganization of "spontaneous settlements" such as those composed of squatters, urged Governments to concentrate on the provision of services and reorganization of such settlements in ways that encourage community initiative and link marginal groups to the national development process (C.17).

In recognition of the "increasingly important basic human need" for recreation in today's world, the final recommendation in this section suggests that Governments co-ordinate and co-operate with local bodies in the planning, development and implementation of leisure and recreational facilities and programmes "for the physical, mental and spiritual benefit of the people" (C.18).

Land (recommendations D.1-7): The eight recommendations dealing with land as a basic component of human settlements include suggestions on land ownership, conservation and reclamation of land as well as other aspects of effective land management.

Noting that land, with its crucial role in human settlements, cannot be treated as "an ordinary asset", the introduction to these recommendations states that the pattern of land use should be determined by the long-term interests of the community, especially since decisions on location of activities have a long-lasting effect on the pattern and structure of human settlements.

The first of these recommendations describes land as "a scarce resource whose management should be subject to public surveillance or control in the interest of the nation". It says that "Public ownership or effective control of land in the public interest is the single most important means of ... achieving a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development while assuring that environmental impacts are considered" (D.1).

On its final day the Conference adopted two additions to this recommendation:

-- A 20-nation amendment (document A/CONF.70/L.4) by which the Conference stated: "In all occupied territories, changes in the demographic composition, or the transfer or uprooting of the native population, and the destruction of existing human settlements in these lands and/or the establishment of new settlements for intruders, is inadmissible." This was adopted by a roll-call vote of 69 in favour to 8 against, with 26 abstentions.

-- A Panamanian amendment (document A/CONF.70/L.5) declaring that "Governments must maintain full jurisdiction and exercise complete sovereignty" over land, and that land must not be subject to "restrictions imposed by foreign nations which enjoy the benefits while preventing its rational use". This was adopted by consensus.

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The next recommendation, noting that agricultural land is a "prey to speculation and urban encroachment", states that change in the use of land, particularly from agricultural to urban, should be subject to public control and regulation (D.2). Measures to that end might include direct intervention, legal and fiscal controls, as well as zoning and land-use plans.

In relation to the economic value of land, Habitat recommends that "the unearned increment resulting from the rise in land values resulting from the change in use of land, from public investment or decision or due to the general growth of the community must be subject to appropriate recapture by public bodies (the community), unless the situation calls for other additional measures such as new patterns of ownership or the general acquisition of land by public bodies" (D.3).

A recommendation on public ownership of land declares that public ownership should be used to control "areas of urban expansion and protection", to implement land reform, and to supply serviced land "at price levels which can secure socially acceptable patterns of development" (D.4).

As regards patterns of ownership, it is recommended that "past patterns of ownership rights should be transformed to match the changing needs of society" (D.5). Special attention should be given to redefinition of legal ownership, separation of land ownership and development rights, and the land rights of indigenous peoples.

Recognizing that land is a "limited resource", another recommendation stresses the need to conserve and reclaim land for agriculture and settlements without upsetting the ecological balance (D.6). It recommends that special attention be paid, among other things, to land fill, control of soil erosion, and control and reversal of desertification and salinization.

On information needs, Habitat suggests that effective land use planning and control measures could not be implemented unless the public and all levels of government had access to adequate information (D.7).

Public participation (recommendations E.1-6): The introduction to six recommendations on public participation in activities relating to settlements states that a co-operative effort of the people and their Governments is a "prerequisite for effective action on human settlements". As the "magnitude and intractability" of the problems are too great for Governments to act alone, citizens must be provided opportunities for direct involvement in the decisions that profoundly affect their lives, it adds.

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The first of the recommendations states that public participation should be "an indispensable element" in "planning strategies, formulation, implementation and management". It adds that it should be instrumental in furthering the political, social and economic growth of human settlements (E.1).

In a related recommendation, Habitat suggests that the human settlements planning process must be designed to allow for maximum public participation (E.2).

Noting that participation requires listening and response in both directions between people and government, the Conference recommends that public participation should therefore involve the "free flow of information among all parties concerned" and should be based on "mutual understanding, trust and education" (E.3).

A further recommendation, asserting that public participation is a right to be accorded to all segments of the population, states that efforts should be made to integrate the various sectors of the community including "those that traditionally have not participated either in the planning or in the decision-making processes" (E.4).

As regards new forms of participation in the changing world, Habitat recommends that the people and their Governments should establish "mechanisms for participation that contribute to developing awareness of people's role in transforming society" (E.5). In this regard recognition should be given to the changing role of women in society.

The last of the six recommendations on public participation characterizes this as "a human right, a political duty and an instrument essential for national development" (E.6). It suggests that public participation should influence all decisions concerning management of human settlements, adding that it should also focus on the "application of resources to improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life".

Institutions and management (recommendations F.1-10):  
Institutions -- the political, administrative and technical instruments which formulate or implement settlement plans and policies -- and the management of settlements are dealt with in 10 recommendations covering such questions as adaptation to changing circumstances, the use of human resources, financial arrangements, and settlement laws and regulations.

New institutions, the preamble states, must be designed to promote new concepts and provide leadership in unfamiliar areas. All institutions must be responsive to change, and must be given access to and control over the resources they need to operate.

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The first of these recommendations, concerning settlement institutions, states that such institutions must exist at the levels of government which are "responsible for the formulation and implementation of settlement policies and strategies for national, regional and local development" (F.1). It adds that they should have a distinct identity as well as leadership capacity and executive responsibility for settlement programmes.

Habitat recommends that such institutions "should be co-ordinated with those responsible for national economic and social development and environmental plans and policies, and interrelated on a multidisciplinary basis" (F.2). They should ensure, among other things, adequate representation of inhabitants on principal policy-making bodies.

Noting that many settlement institutions have outlived their original purpose, a further recommendation states that "institutions dealing with human settlements should adapt to changing circumstances", and that they should be continuously reviewed and reorganized as necessary (F.3).

Concerning special institutions, the Conference recommends that those "established to solve short-term settlement problems should not outlive their original purpose". Among the measures suggested in this connexion are the preplanned transfer of functions to permanent bodies and the appropriation of additional funds only after careful review (F.4).

"Institutions should be designed to encourage and facilitate public participation in the decision-making process at all levels"; another recommendation states (F.5). Suggestions for incentives to such participation include decentralization of administration and management as well as public accountability.

A further recommendation declares that "settlements must be improved by responsive and imaginative management of all resources" (F.6). It stresses the need to establish the management responsibilities of government and to prevent speculation over the basic needs of people and calls for efforts by government and inhabitants to maintain, restore and improve settlements.

In regard to human resources, Habitat recommends that "the development of research capabilities, and the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and information on settlements, should receive high priority as an integral part of the settlement development process" (F.7).

A recommendation dealing with financial arrangements states that "separate financial institutions and adequate means are necessary to meet the requirements of human settlements" (F.8). It proposes that investors and purchasers, especially the least advantaged, be protected against inflation "through monetary and other means".

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In addition, there is a call for the streamlining of institutions and procedures "to ensure that intended beneficiaries receive the largest possible share of resources and benefits" (F.9). This recommendation emphasizes open decision-making and public accountability for use of funds, greater local control in management and administration, and "removing the role of intermediaries in citizen involvement".

Finally, noting that existing laws and regulations "are often complex, rigid and dominated by vested interests", the Conference recommends that "any framework for settlements legislation must establish clear and realistic direction and means for implementation of policies" (F.10). It adds that special emphasis should be placed on special legislation and on periodic revision of laws and regulations.

#### Future United Nations Activities

The resolution of Habitat regarding programmes for international co-operation in regard to human settlements, as worked out in Committee I (document A/CONF.70/9) and adopted on the final day of the Conference, calls for the creation of an "intergovernmental body for human settlements", composed of not more than 58 States. Among the objectives of this body would be to help countries increase and improve their own efforts to solve settlement problems, to promote greater international co-operation for increasing the resources available to developing countries, and to strengthen co-operation among developing countries.

The intergovernmental body would have among its main functions the development and promotion of policy objectives and priorities for United Nations programmes in this field, the monitoring of activities of the United Nations system, and the study of new issues, problems and solutions relating to settlements. The body would also "exercise over-all policy guidance and supervision" of the operations of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (which now functions under the United Nations Environment Programme).

The proposed body would report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council or to the General Assembly through the Council. The existing organ in this field is the Committee for Housing, Building and Planning, which reports to the Council.

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The recommendation of Habitat also calls for the establishment of a secretariat "to serve as a focal point for human settlements action and co-ordination within the United Nations system". The secretariat would "comprise the posts and budgetary resources" of:

-- The Centre for Housing, Building and Planning of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs;

-- The section of UNEP's Division of Economic and Social Programmes directly concerned with human settlements, "with the exception of the posts required by UNEP to exercise its responsibilities for the environmental aspects and consequences of human settlements planning";

-- The United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation;  
and

-- "As appropriate", selected posts and associated resources from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

In a section of the resolution on regional organizations, the Conference recommended that the United Nations regional commissions -- of which there are five -- should consider the establishment "as soon as possible" of intergovernmental regional committees on human settlements. Also, "responsibility for implementing regional and subregional programmes should be gradually shifted to the regional organizations".

Further, the Conference recommended that the United Nations secretariats dealing with human settlements "establish close links with the principal financial institutions at the regional and global levels", especially with the regional development banks and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Washington, D.C., as well as with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

As to the kinds of settlement programmes to which the United Nations should give priority, Habitat proposed that specific priorities be established by the new intergovernmental body dealing with settlements, in consultation with the regional committees and Governments. However, Habitat would recommend that the following functions "be considered on a priority basis": identification of problems and possible solutions, formulation and implementation of policies, education and training, identification and development of appropriate technology, information exchange and implementation machinery.

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The Conference also recommended that, at both global and regional levels, "co-operation should be sought with universities, research and scientific institutes, non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups, etc., in order to make full use of their knowledge and experience in the field of human settlements".

The resolution adopted by Habitat on this subject consists of the first nine parts of a 10-part text prepared by a working group of Committee I. The Conference recommended that a decision on the tenth part be left for the General Assembly at its next session in September/December 1976 in New York. The part on which the Conference did not act deals with how the proposed new human settlements unit would be located in respect to the two United Nations units now active in this area -- the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi.

The Conference adopted two related resolutions without objection. The first of these recommends the convening of regional United Nations meetings, if possible before September, to establish guidelines for co-ordinating within each region the action to be taken in order to deal with settlements problems. The second requests a report this year to the General Assembly by the United Nations Secretary-General on the potential costs of the various organizational arrangements proposed for future United Nations activities concerned with settlements.

In a separate resolution on the establishment of "an audio-visual information centre on human settlements", Habitat recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to ~~conclude an agreement~~ with the University of British Columbia in Vancouver for the custody, reproduction, use and augmentation of the audio-visual materials prepared for the Conference. These consist of well over 200 film and slide presentations submitted by about 120 countries, many of them produced with the financial and technical help of Habitat officials. The agreement would be "for a period of no more than five years".

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The final resolution adopted by the Conference relating to future United Nations activities (document A/CONF.70/L.6) contains a recommendation that the General Assembly request the United Nations Secretary-General to submit a report to next year's session of the Assembly on "the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories". The resolution, sponsored by Algeria and Egypt, was adopted on the last day of the Conference by a roll-call vote of 73 in favour to 3 against (Israel, Paraguay, United States), with 42 abstentions.

#### Officers of Conference

Barney Danson, Canadian Minister of Urban Affairs, was elected President of the Conference by acclamation on its opening day. The Committee Chairmen were: Father George K. Muhoho (Kenya), Committee I; Hamahoun Jaber Ansari (Iran), Committee II; and Diego Arria (Venezuela), Committee III. The Rapporteur of the Conference was Adolf Ciborowski (Poland).

The Conference had 33 Vice-Presidents. Together with the President and the three Chairmen of the main committees, they made up the General (steering) Committee. There was also a nine-nation Credentials Committee.

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