



Through Gender-Sensitive Eyes

Why disaggregation of data by gender is crucial to our understanding of human settlements development

By Catalina Hinchey Trujillo

MYTHS

Many people believe that a woman's place is in the home. But do these people do anything to ensure that women have a home in the first place, with security of tenure, and a voice and vote in where, how and with whom to live?

A widespread belief among policy-makers, as well as the general public, is that the "family" is the "core" nucleus of any society and that as long as "families" benefit from development, then everyone benefits. This is not always true because "development" is often geared to the roles and needs of men only.

Moreover, the "typical" family is no longer composed of husband/father (head of the family) who is responsible for productive activities, wife/mother (subordinate to husband) who is responsible for reproductive activities such as caring for children and the elderly, cooking, fetching water, and so on, and children (dependants). For instance, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, many families are "extended", including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins; in Europe and North America, the phenomenon of one-person households or households including people (female and male) with no direct blood relationship is becoming more common.

Who decides which form of "family" is more conducive to human, equitable growth and development? Who can prove that a policy which focuses on the "family" truly benefits all people: women, men, girls and boys? If the world we know today is

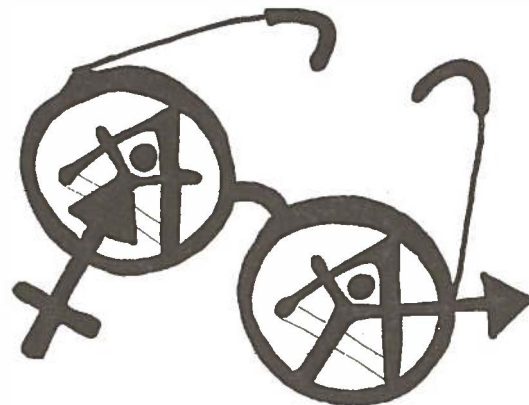


Illustration by M. van Geldermalsen

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Editor-in-Chief:
Christina Engfeldt

Editor:
Rasna Warah

Editorial Assistance:
Lucy Githaiga

**Editorial Board
for this issue:**
Peter Swan
Catalina Trujillo
Wandia Seaforth
Susan Thomson
Ellen Kitonga

Design:
Felicity Yost

Production:
Johan Brunkvist

Published by:
Habitat II secretariat,
UNCHS (Habitat)
P.O. Box 30030,
Nairobi, Kenya;
Fax: 254-2-623080
or 624266/7;
Telex: 22996 UNHAB KE;
Cable: UNHABITAT;
E-mail: Habitat2@unep.no
World Wide Web:
<http://habitat.cedar.univie.ac.at/habitat/>
or
<http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/>

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EDITORIAL

Imagine a city without fear, a city whose streets can be walked freely by all, young and old, a city in which day-care centres are an integral part of the basic infrastructure along with schools and hospitals, a city in which child-care and care of the elderly are responsibilities shared by women and men alike, a city in which a woman's voice is as loud as a man's in all aspects of municipal government and life.

Unfortunately, all too few human settlements — cities, towns, villages — are as "gendered" as this. Indeed, the reverse is commonplace the world over.

As a contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing, we at UNCHS (Habitat) have devoted this issue to the theme "Moving Towards a Gendered City". Contributors representing local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, the scientific community, youth and United Nations agencies discuss the importance of gender-sensitive planning in human settlements development. Their contributions clearly point to the fact that women all over the world are beginning to question the way cities are planned and managed.

Overall, gender relations affect urban policies in a number of areas. For example, with changing lifestyles in which two-parent families are more and more the exception than the rule, there is a growing realization that traditional urban structures separating the private from the public are no longer conducive to modern-day

living. The idea that the public world of work and government belongs to men and that the private world of home and family is the province of women is no longer valid; yet today's urban structures still do not reflect this new reality.

The fact is that urban planning remains gender-biased both because women are still grossly under-represented in this field and because most urban planners do not have data that shows who does what and who benefits most. Accordingly, the Women in Human Settlements Development Programme at UNCHS (Habitat) is advocating the disaggregation of data by gender because, as the Co-ordinator of the Programme points out, "if we know who decides, who benefits, then our policies, programmes, projects and activities will have a much better chance of truly addressing the needs of all people."

None of this should suggest that a "gendered" city would cater to the needs of women only. On the contrary, such a city would be one in which women and men, girls and boys — conscious of their differences and respecting those differences — feel personally responsible both for its building and development and for the quality of life it offers its citizens. That is the kind of city we will recommend that Habitat II endorse, a city of opportunity and equity for all to lead the way when the new Millennium dawns a few years from now.

Dr. Wally N'Dow
Secretary-General, Habitat II

truly to become the world we dream of, then we have to begin to look at reality face-to-face, put our utopian ideas into practice, and support people in their chosen family style. We should support the creation of villages, towns, cities, and countries, where all of us - women, men, girls and boys, conscious of our differences and respecting those differences - can feel a part of, responsible for, and participants in, the building of our common future. This is what moving towards a "gendered" city is all about.

We need to attack the roots of inequity - we need to both think globally and act locally; think locally and act globally. We need to put in concrete, feasible terms, what "development" truly means. Economic development must be subordinate to human and ecologically sustainable development.

Who does what, why, and for whom?

It is time to stop and change our vision of human settlements development. It is time to ask: who does the work and who benefits from that work? We urgently need to know who is who. Who owns land/property, who has access to credit, who has access to infrastructure (i.e. water, sewerage, health centres, schools, etc.), who works in the formal sector of the economy, who works in the informal sector? Who designs the houses, who plans, manages and maintains our villages, towns and cities? How many men and women have been involved in the actual planning of this programme, project, or activity? In what ways? How many men and women are on the implementing team? What is the proportion of women to men, and in what positions? Has there been any change since the beginning of the programme? Are women's needs, as well as men's needs, being taken into consideration? Has this been done during the planning as well as the implementing stages? How? Are women in leadership positions within the community organizations? What kind of organizations? What proportion of women vis-a-vis men? In what positions? Have there been any changes since the beginning? How is the local/national government involved? How many male and female government officials are there, and what positions do they hold? What is their relationship with the community? Have all the government, non-governmental and community-based organization people (men as well as women) been trained in gender-awareness? Have new control procedures

for a more equitable participation of both women and men been put into place? What are these procedures?

Why is this important? Because if we know who does what, who decides, who benefits, then our policies, programmes, projects and activities will have a much better chance of truly addressing the needs of all people and each country will be utilizing all its resources - human, material and financial - more effectively in order to ensure human development.

In most countries, women still bear an inordinate burden as the providers of domestic and community services in human settlements, and they are most affected when services are missing or inadequate. They are thus increasingly playing important roles as community organizers. However, this is seldom reflected by the inclusion of women, or even women's concerns, in the official decision-making structures that affect the development of human settlements. The government authorities often ignore the many important roles and responsibilities of women in the human settlements process, based on the assumption that it is men who provide for their families and take care of community affairs. Policy-makers often talk only with men about such things as housing loans or improving homes and services. Consequently, government decisions about housing and neighbourhood services often do not suit the conditions of women. In order to change this situation, women's voices need to be heard. Women need to be aware of their situation and become actively involved in changing that situation.

Disaggregation

A gender-sensitive approach to human settlements development would take into account the different activities, roles, access to and control over resources, of men and women, in varying national and local contexts, at particular points in time. This approach helps to ensure that targeting is appropriate to the needs of men and women respectively, and facilitates the active involvement of women and men in the development process. While making interventions more effective and efficient, this approach can promote equity between men and women by promoting equal benefits from development.

A crucial element of this gender-sensitive approach is disaggregation of data by gender. For example, one of the "Best Practices" (see also box on p. 4) for Habitat II talks of waste collection by "low-income

families" which is exchanged for bus tickets which "alleviate the poor" from the financial burden of transport costs and saves the city money in waste collection. It would clearly be useful to know if both women and men are involved in waste collection and who benefits from the bus tickets. In this way, problems which have occurred in some community projects can be avoided, in this case, the exacerbation of low-income women's workload without resultant benefits for them.

Empowerment

There is a tendency among men, and some women, to feel threatened by the use of expressions such as the "empowerment of women". The fear seems to be that empowering women means giving them control over others (men). Implicit are two assumptions: first, that power equals control and second, that power is finite and, therefore, if there is more power for women there will be less power for men. Both these assumptions are questionable.

Power can be conceived differently: increasing personal power to act effectively, but not at the expense or control of others. DAWN, an advocacy group of Third World women, puts it this way: "...a development process that shrinks and poisons the pie available to poor people, and then leaves women scrabbling for a larger relative share, is not in women's interest...Our vision...has at its core a process of economic and social development geared to human needs through wider control over and access to economic and political power."

The aim of all development intervention is not to impose change but to encourage the development of a situation in which people can make real choices. If this is done in a gender-sensitive way, it means choices for women as well as for men.

Catalina Hinchey Trujillo is Co-ordinator of the Women in Human Settlements Development Programme at UNCHS

GENDER-AWARENESS BUILDING WITHIN THE HABITAT II PREPARATORY PROCESS

A gender perspective is being encouraged within the entire preparatory process for Habitat II, with particular attention to the following three areas of national preparations:

Best practices

Best Practices are actions which have resulted in tangible and measurable improvements in the quality of life and in the living environments of people - including women and men, girls and boys - in a sustainable way. In the identification and selection of Best Practices, a cross-cutting issue is gender. This means Best Practices should include disaggregated information on how women and men are involved in, and benefit from, the interventions described. This ensures that the overall objective of improving people's lives is truly met.

Shelter and urban indicators

A set of shelter and urban indicators has been prepared to provide a quantitative tool to assist in the preparation of reports for the Habitat II process. In keeping with a gender-sensitive approach to assessing shelter situations and living conditions in cities, it is recommended that indicators be disaggregated by sex, whenever relevant or possible. This is particularly important for indicators related to poverty, employment and productivity -- as well as those related to social development (health, education and social integration).

National committees

In the constitution of national committees, it is recommended that in line with the principle of equity within the draft Global Plan of Action, both women and men be included. It is also suggested that organizations dealing with gender issues be represented on the national committees.



A non-gendered city

Illustration by Joseph Sanna



A gendered city

Illustration by Joseph Sanna

FORUM

WOMEN AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT Why women's needs should be at the core of urban planning

By Arza Churchman, Ronit Davidovici-Marton and Tovi Fester

The basic and ultimate goal of all urban and regional planning is to provide the kind of environment that allows each and every individual in the population to achieve as high a level as possible of quality of life. The term "quality of life" relates to the subjective needs and expectations of individuals and the degree to which these needs and expectations are met. They include self-actualization, health, family life, work, shelter, social relations, income level, safety, environmental quality, social justice and equality.

Planning cannot relate specifically to the particular needs and expectations of every individual. However, the opposite policy - of planning for a population that consists of an "average" person - is equally unattainable. One cannot talk of the quality of life; one must talk of qualities of lives, differentiating between groupings of individuals who share common characteristics that have significance for their environmental and settlement needs. This differentiation is particularly necessary between men and women because of the gender-linked social and cultural differences in roles, norms and expectations, and the interaction between these and the environment.

A gender-friendly environment would provide the components a household needs to ensure an optimum level of living. The definition of optimum obviously differs in each society, but there are some universally-accepted components which are recognized as basic human needs: food, shelter, clean water and air, safety, education and economic security. Since a large part of the burden of responsibility for family needs continues to fall on women, a gender-friendly environ-

ment turns out to be a woman-friendly environment.

Multiple role

Women's lives are particularly contextual, embedded in a variety of social and cultural relationships and characterized by the inter-relationship of women's activities with many physical settings. Women's multiple roles includes productive, reproductive and community management roles - the particular nature of which again varies in different societies depending on, for example, cultural norms, ethnic and racial origin, religion and economic status.

The environmental components that women need in order to fulfill their multiple role are housing, employment opportunities, an education system, health and welfare services, commerce and transportation. However, it is not only the actual existence of the various components which is important, but their location - the distance of services from the home, their scope, quality and variety, their accessibility and the knowledge of their existence.

The main characteristics of the urban environment are its diversity, comprehensiveness and intensity. It is expected to provide everything, all of the time, to everyone. However, women experience many problems when trying to respond to these opportunities. For instance, even though the employment rate among women is constantly increasing, they still work in low-paid jobs and often base their decisions about which job to take on how close it is to home. Although women are more active in their communities than men, they tend to be involved only at the local level, very rarely at the national level. Even when they are actively involved in commercial activities, they tend to engage in them not for personal gain but to improve the quality of life of their families.

Time and Space

Some of the main constraints for women in an urban environment are those of time and space, two inter-related dimensions of the environment. Most modern cities use a zoning system to separate residential areas from commercial and industrial areas. It creates small-scale sub-regions which are highly dependent on urban macro-scale land uses and a transportation system which is supposed to integrate all these zones. For women, who are locally-oriented, this kind of system imposes special difficulties. For instance, they need better transportation

links between their place of work and child-care facilities. (Ideally, workplaces should provide child-care.) They need easy access to shops and supermarkets which are often centrally located and therefore difficult to reach quickly for women who work at or near home.

In everyday life, women are busier than men because of their responsibilities both within and outside the home. Time is, therefore, a major constraint. Inflexible space demands more time. Urban planning and technology should be geared towards shortening distances for women so they can make better use of their time.

Integration between the neighbourhood and the city centre should also be established in organizational and political terms. Organizational decentralization will enable cities to take better advantage of the local community involvement of women, as well as give more opportunities to this half of the population to influence and take more responsibility for their own lives rather than just the lives of their family members.

Decision-making

In order to enhance women's urban environment, it is important to make changes in the decision-making process itself. These changes include:

- * Participation of residents as a basic part of the planning process;
- * Integrated and comprehensive planning so that the links between housing-services-employment are recognized in a gender-sensitive way;
- * Disaggregated data on human settlements;
- * Studies on social impact addressing gender needs; and
- * On-going monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and implementation.

Arza Churchman is an environmental psychologist on the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. Ronit Davidovici-Marton is an urban regional planner in private practice. Tovi Fester is a geographer in the Department of Geography at Tel Aviv University.

WOMEN'S LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS IN AFRICA

By Diana Lee-Smith and Josephine Mwasi

In many parts of Africa, when a man dies his widow suffers a double tragedy: she not only loses her partner but also loses all material wealth he ever owned. Her male in-laws claim all the property and land. She is left with nothing of whatever wealth she may have helped to create through her efforts.

If the widow has children, and particularly sons, she is fortunate. She could continue staying on the land because her sons will inherit it. But if she is childless or has no sons, she may be evicted from the land and forced to return to her parents. This cruel practice of stripping widows of property, particularly land, is common in many African communities. A study by the Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD) on the experiences of widows of the Zambian national football team members who died in an air crash in Gabon in April 1993, found that 24 of the 27 widows lost property to which they were entitled.

The study entitled *Gabon Aftermath: the mistreatment of the football widows*, published in 1994, is the depressing tale of six of the widows.

In Africa, deeply entrenched patriarchal traditions and values dictate that productive resources - wealth, property and particularly land - belong to men. In such social systems, women do not inherit or own land or property because customarily these belong to husbands or fathers and it is the sons who inherit. A woman is perceived as a "temporary resident" in her parent's home until she gets married, and in her husband's home so long as he is alive and satisfied with her.

Ironically, the law does not discriminate against women in land and property ownership. Indeed, national laws in most African countries give women equal rights with men to own land or property. But the reality is very different because of traditions, customs and attitudes which have been there for years.

A study on Women and Shelter in Kenya, published by Mazingira Institute, a Kenya-based non-governmental organ-

ization, found that women continue to have limited access to land because of these traditional customs which only allow men to inherit or own land. The 1993 study, which examines the shelter situation of poor rural and urban women in Kenya, shows that many women have to leave the land they have lived on for many years when their husbands die, or if they develop any conflict with their husbands or members of his family. These women often migrate to urban areas or plantations in search of work and a place to live, very often accompanied by their children.

Since land in the rural areas is

than co-owner with his wives. When the sons are old enough to marry, the husband permanently allocates a plot to them, with full rights over its use and control. Daughters usually do not get a share of the land as they are expected to get married and leave the home.

While the married woman can get access to land as a wife, patrilineal property and land inheritance deny widows, unmarried and divorced women any right to own land. Unmarried daughters are sometimes allowed to stay in their father's home and continue to work with their mothers until they get



The practice of stripping widows of property is common in many African communities

Illustration: J. Sanna

considered "community" or "clan" land, it is always allocated to the head of the family, who must be male. The father then subdivides the family land among his sons.

In a few rare cases, a generous father may allocate a small plot to his daughters, but this practice is discouraged by the community.

A woman's marital status, therefore, determines whether or not she gets access to land. As a wife she can farm the land as an agent of her husband and sons. In a polygamous marriage where a man has many wives, each wife is allocated her own farm plot. However, the husband remains the owner of all the plots rather

married. If they never do marry, a generous father can give them a small parcel to farm. They could, however, be evicted from the land when their fathers die and their brothers reclaim the land for themselves.

If a woman separates from her husband and returns to her parent's home she loses all rights to the land, irrespective of her contributions to its development. Widowed, divorced and unmarried mothers in the rural areas have few options other than to move away from their homes to look for work and a place to live. Since the majority are poorly educated and unskilled, they may end up in

slums eking out a living in informal employment.

The situation is a little better in the urban areas where women can buy and own land. But because of their economically disadvantaged position, most women cannot afford to buy land which is often very expensive. Even when women have an income, it is usually inadequate as they often hold poorly-paid jobs. Besides, the procedures for urban land acquisition are cumbersome, time consuming and difficult to understand. Both women and men have problems in getting access, but it is worse for women, because they have less education, skills and time than men.

Women's limited access to, use of and control over land resources has far-reaching repercussions. Agricultural production is affected as women who develop and work on the so-called "family land" have no control over the crops they produce. The husband may sell the crops and use the money the way he pleases. Women also lack security of tenure and they risk losing everything in the event that the matrimonial relationship breaks.

Women in sub-Saharan Africa work on land over which they have no right or control. Their poverty cannot change unless they gain something out of the work they do. Women cannot get bankloans because they lack permanent employment and title deeds to immovable property (land or housing) which they can offer as security.

Without land, widows, divorced and unmarried women are forced to abandon their traditional roles as farmers and processors of food to become suppliers of cheap labour in cash-crop farms in the rural areas. Others are forced to move to urban centres where they form the bulk of the poor.

Changing attitudes and customs is an uphill task, but the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) Women and Shelter Network has started the process by sensitizing and creating awareness among men and women, at the community and national levels on the right of women to own and inherit what is thought of now as their husbands' and sons' land. At the regional and international levels, the Network has been pushing hard to ensure women's fundamental human right to equitable access to, and control over, land and property, on an equal basis with men, regardless of customs, laws and traditions relating to inheritance and marriage which deny such equity. At the African Regional Preparatory Conference and NGO Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1994,

as part of the Beijing Women's Conference process, the Women and Shelter Network presented the following issues as priorities to be included in the African platform for Action and NGO Plan of Action:

- * Customary laws that discriminate against women should either be abolished or amended to include the right of women to own land;
- * Women should have the right to control the crops they produce on their so-called "familyland";
- * Women should be encouraged to own their own plots of land so that even after divorce they have some sort of property; and
- * Women should have the right to inherit clan land which they have been working on before the death of their husbands.

And in New York, at the NGO Consultation held in March 1995, the Network lobbied hard to get clauses on women's land and housing rights into the official Draft Global Platform for Action, which will be the final output from Beijing.

A lot more needs to be done to remove African women from their disadvantaged position. A long-term strategy would be to provide public education, legal support and advice at the village level on women's rights. Such education should, hopefully, make women realize that male dominance and privilege are not natural, but socially created.

Diana Lee-Smith is Secretary of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) Women & Shelter Network. Josephine Mwasi is Programme Officer dealing with gender and urban issues at Mazingira Institute, Nairobi.

HABITAT II & THE INTERNET

Habitat II Secretariat
email: <Habitat2@unep.no>

The Habitat II secretariat has placed many documents and informational materials on the Internet. These are freely accessible to anyone with Internet access. The Secretariat has also established an electronic list to allow a world-wide discussion of relevant issues. Gopher users will find Habitat II information on the "gopher.un.org" host under the "Conferences" directory. World Wide Web (the Web) users will find this site by using the following URL:

<http://habitat.cedar.univie.ac.at/habitat/>
or
<http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/>

gopher:

<gopher://gopher.un.org:70/11/Conferences/>

and

<gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:70/11/orgs/habitat/habitat2>

Information on urban issues is also available on World Wide Web on the following Internet address:

<http://www.oneworld.org/>

This Internet service, which focuses on all aspects of sustainable development, is being provided by a recently-established non-profit organization based in Oxford, U.K., called One World On-line. The information on urbanization is written by Herbert Girardet, acclaimed author of *Gaia Atlas of Cities*, published by Gaia Books Limited (1992).

URBAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN KENYA: UNIFEM'S RESPONSE

By Dr. Laketch Dirasse

Three-quarters of the world's 18 million refugees are found in Africa where armed conflicts, economic deterioration and environmental degradation - including floods and droughts - systematic human rights abuses and ethnic and religious strife, have all contributed to increasing uprootedness among the population; almost 80 per cent of these refugees are women and their children.

- UNIFEM

Displacement is one of the most daunting problems in Africa of the 1990s, and the majority of these refugee and internally-displaced populations are women and their dependents. In response to the growing needs of these women, the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), at its 32nd Session, approved a framework to protect and empower African women who have been displaced by crises from their home communities. The mission of UNIFEM's African Women in Crisis Umbrella Programme (UNIFEM-AFWIC) is to promote a development-oriented strategy to the process of disaster mitigation which ensures that women are viewed as both crucial resources and full participants in all efforts to alleviate crisis situations.

While most of UNIFEM-AFWIC's assistance focuses on the needs of refugees and internally-displaced women in camp situations, it has also attempted to focus on the special needs of women refugees in urban areas by building on their own initiatives. One important example is the effort of Sudanese women refugees in Nairobi to help themselves and their families. Over the past two years, UNIFEM-AFWIC has had a unique opportunity to build on their initiative by providing catalytic, technical and financial support.

The Case of Sudanese Women Refugees in Nairobi

Sudan has been involved in war for the last 28 years, resulting in dramatic displacement of the population. The war, including inter-factional fighting, has further exacerbated the suffering caused by recurring droughts and floods. Thousands of people have fled to neighbouring countries: Central African

Republic, Kenya, Zaire, Uganda and Ethiopia. Thousands more have been internally displaced.

The crisis has left miserable images of serious loss of human lives and property, family separations, the destruction of the social and economic fabric of society, and mental and physical disabilities.

Women have often watched helplessly as the different warring parties ravage their homes and force them into camps within Sudan or into exile in neighbouring countries. Trailing along with them are the young and the elderly. Women bear the greatest brunt of the war, drought and famine. They carry out all other chores of the home while their men go to war. While in exile, they continue their household and community management responsibilities in new and traumatic situations.

In Nairobi, the Sudanese women refugees are not homogenous; they represent different linguistic, ethnic, religious, cultural and ideological groups. They live as single-heads-of-households (with their children) in small, overcrowded apartments. The majority are married, but due to the war, most are living without their husbands. In general, they make decisions concerning their welfare and that of their children without the input of other adult members of the family. Often they are responsible for the old, sick and disabled members of the family who are brought to Nairobi. The majority are illiterate and do not speak English or Kiswahili (the two most commonly spoken languages in Kenya).

There is a small group of high-school and university graduates. This group is highly dependent on hand-outs from governments and NGOs. Yet many are skilled in various areas that have the potential to generate income. Their health condition is generally poor due to war-related traumas, depression, stress and little or no access to medical care.

UNIFEM-AFWIC assistance

In order to empower women to cope with their new urban environment, the women formed an association known as SWAN (Sudanese Women Association). UNIFEM-AFWIC support enabled SWAN to set up the Sudanese Women's Centre as

a facility for training and counselling traumatised and war-affected Sudanese women refugees. At the Centre, women receive training in various socio-economic skills which can be meaningfully utilized in rehabilitation, development and enhancing the quality of their lives.

A series of activities to address women's survival and development needs are organized through the Centre's co-ordinator and the executive committee of SWAN. These activities are complementary in that they deal with a group of women who are experiencing change through a process which they are consciously developing and documenting and which may greatly influence future living styles. For example, a small-enterprise development expert has been recruited to manage a small revolving loan scheme and to advise SWAN members on the revolving loan facility. She assesses the women's capacity to repay the loans and trains identified members on how to run the loan scheme independently.

Members are empowered through participation in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of the various project activities. The project, therefore, identifies skills that support the restoration of women's dignity while increasing their economic independence.

Dr. Laketch Dirasse is Senior Manager at UNIFEM-AFWIC headquarters in Nairobi.

THE BATTLE FOR THE PAVEMENTS

By Sheela Patel

The city of Bombay has many problems that defy solution along routine lines. One of these is the approximately 1.5 to 2 million people who inhabit the sidewalks, living in tent-like or makeshift structures. Studies show that most pavement dwellers are migrants to the city: former landless agricultural workers and rural artisans whose inability to earn a living in their villages has forced them into the city. In the city they are able to find a wage to feed themselves. They live near their work and pay to use public toilets, buying water from nearby tenements. Most dwellers live in continuous fear that their makeshift homes and communities will be broken up by the municipal authorities.

It is ironic that pavement dweller and sidewalk vendors, who should be the focus of development projects, are denied assistance due to their battle for the pavements. Vendors on the street in both business and residential districts of the city are entrepreneurs who provide consumers with cheap doorstep service, such as food, clothing, equipment, stationery and other items. For the poor person, such activities are the first step toward self-employment using a small amount of capital.

The sustainability of their enterprises, despite repeated confiscations by authorities, attests to consumers' support.

Demolitions continue. Homes are demolished and stalls or carts with goods are confiscated and destroyed - only to be rebuilt again and broken again. Within this vicious circle, people find the strength to rebuild houses, to restart their vending and other jobs, as life goes on. Pavement dwellers, however, through this process never get a chance to build on their "assets".

SPARC (the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres) began its work with the pavement dwellers in 1984, and over the last seven years has designed and executed many training programs that help pavement dwellers form cooperatives to design houses and settlements which they are able to afford.

SPARC has two partners, Manila Milan and The National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), that work in a dozen Indian cities and are linked up with organizations in other Asian countries.

Manila Milan was formed in 1987 to



A homeless Indian mother and her child

Photo: M. Edwards

organize women who live on pavements and, with SPARC, to help them lobby for their rights (among which is access to shelter). The organization works to ensure that women are supported by the entire community; they are encouraged to work both within their communities and with women from other communities on innovative income-earning activities. The NSDF has created an information base for mobilizing pavement dwellers, which it uses in conjunction with its work with SPARC. NSDF has member federations in Bombay and other cities in India.

SPARC began its work with women from families living in hovels on the pavements of Bombay. By starting with what it saw as the most vulnerable group, it hoped to develop a methodology that, although it seems to show little in terms of concrete gains, has set in motion a process which over the long-term will improve the position of the city's most marginalized groups.

Sheela Patel is founding member and Director of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) based in Bombay.

This article first appeared in The Urban Age (Volume 1, Number 2, 1993). It is reproduced here with permission.

Seminar on Megacities Management in Asia and the Pacific

The Asian Development Bank, in association with the Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific (UMPAP), is hosting a high-level Regional Seminar on Megacities Management from 24-30 October in Manila, Philippines. The Seminar intends to review and discuss major urban issues confronting megacities' policy-makers in the Bank's developing member countries (DMCs), and help DMCs to prepare for Habitat II.

The focus of the Seminar will be on land management, transportation management, environmental management, and institutional development, including private-sector participation. In addition to the theme papers, city overview papers of eight megacities from the Bank's DMCs will be prepared and presented.

For more information, contact :

**Mr. Asad Ali Shah
Manager**

**Water Supply, Urban Development and
Housing Division (East)**

P.O. Box 789

1099 Manila

Philippines

Fax: 63-2-711-3851

VIEWPOINT

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO THE CITY

By Lady Mayor Beate Weber

Urban planning is done by men, and the participation of the odd woman planner or the membership of one or two women on a planning committee does nothing to change this fact. Despite the statutory right to equal opportunity, both private planning firms and public planning offices essentially employ men, and women are not represented in sufficient numbers in the relevant political bodies.

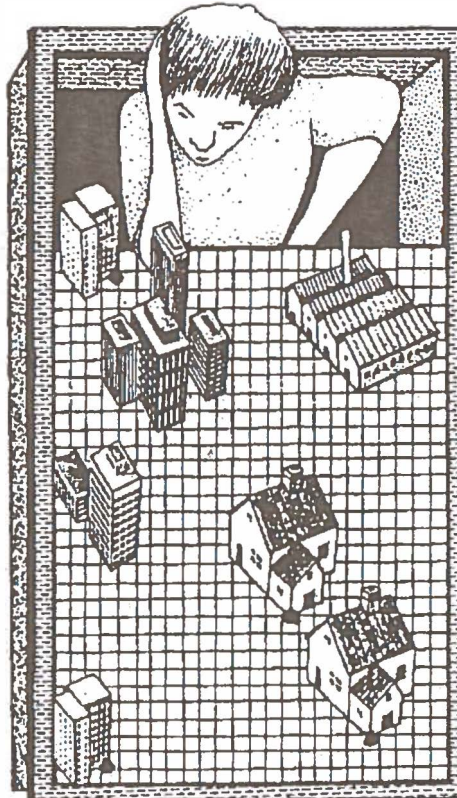
Where "citizen participation" takes place, it is mainly men who get invited to voice their opinions at meetings. All this contradicts our basic constitutional understanding of democracy and equal opportunity.

The cities of tomorrow must ensure the ecological basis of their existence and find a sustainable balance between the conservation of natural resources and the needs for urban development. They must be able to ensure social stability by means of an intelligent, efficient economic policy for all and a firm commitment to social justice.

Planning today is faced with a scarcity of resources and a wealth of restrictions; it moves between compromises and unavoidable conflicts. Its success depends more and more on involving the persons whom it really affects and on developing solutions capable of gaining majority support or of achieving a consensus. Above all, it must meet the real day-to-day needs of those who live in our society.

This shifts the focus of all planning work to complex everyday concerns, particularly those of women, which are usually considered trivial and are therefore neglected. When we take a closer look we can see that women, especially, can contribute much that is constructive and indispensable towards sustainable urban development.

Women's contribution to urban development can set the course towards the humanization of the working world, towards more democracy and social justice, towards making our towns and cities more hospitable and ecologically sound.



Source: *Women and Environment*

The effective representation of women's interests in local government depends on many factors. It depends on the opportunities and motivation of citizens (both female and male) to express women's interests and to make use of instruments of control and cooperation; it depends on the political will and control of their elected representatives (both female and male); it depends on the willingness of private institutions and of industry to actively implement women's interests, and, of course, on the will of the local, provincial and federal administrations to do justice to these interests. Local governments too, should not relinquish the responsibility of ensuring that these goals are achieved.

Lady Mayor Beate Weber is Mayor of the city of Heidelberg in Germany.

Which are the crucial elements and factors in a city/town that particularly affect women's everyday lives?

Safety or insecurity in town

The number and the quality of neighbourhood services and community services

Day-nursery facilities

Transport facilities, both public and private

The quality of the environment
Access to culture, leisure activities and town decision-making centres

Job distribution and access to employment

How can women's interests be expressed?

Involving women and updating the decision-making processes

Increasing the exchange of information about innovative projects

Determining the town's main social, economic and cultural indicators from women's point of view

Making men aware of, and accustomed to, the thinking process which fully embraces gender, i.e. both sexes

Source: *Network "Women in the City": City & Shelter*

WHAT WOMEN DEMAND

Women demand urban structures which permit and support the freedom of choice of those living therein to organize their lives irrespective of their gender. They judge towns and cities according to how accommodating they are to the roles and responsibilities of women. Their chief concern is to create better conditions for what is often ignored by the public as being "private", to create conditions which also make men responsible for everyday chores.

* Women demand democracy. They are searching for forms of direct participation and decision-making. They are concerned not only about the lack of equal participation of women in all spheres of life, but also about a political culture which ignores everyday life, with its social and family obligations, and which, owing to unsuitable procedures, fails to accommodate those affected by planning.

* Women want urban development based on an equal distribution of paid work between women and men. Women are asking for a work culture which does not ignore the so-called private circumstances of life, but which links them intelligently with the demands

of effective management of day-to-day working life.

* Women demand towns and cities whose form and facilities show clearly that children and young people are a part of them. The more everyday life provides space for growing children, the easier it will be to bring children up and, for instance, to combine a family and a career. This also presupposes an adequate number of day-care centers with opening times and locations that meet the everyday needs of the adults bringing up these children.

* Women demand towns and cities which effectively accommodate those who need special care, such as the handicapped and the elderly. They want to be relieved of their traditional responsibility for unpaid work such as nursing the sick and the elderly and devote themselves to their own economic security and their own interests.

* Women express a desire for towns and cities in which social relations and networks can develop, in which there are sufficient places for lively social relations and spontaneous encounters. These places include not only cultural and educational institutions and leisure facilities, but also infrastructure which offers support to women, such as women's advice centres, women's health centres, battered wives' refuges, etc.

* Women want safe towns and cities. For this to happen, both women and men need to discuss the roots of violence in society and the circumstances which force women into material and emotional dependence on men.

* In view of their generally poorer income situation, women are interested in securing reasonably-priced housing. But this housing must fulfil the needs of women. Women today are formulating specific demands as to housing and living surroundings which accommodate housework and child-care, shared by members of the household, neighbourhood and community.

* Women want ecologically sustainable means of transport. Urban public transport must become a flexible, safe, comfortable, rapid and reliable system of mobility, and remain affordable. Women are particularly interested in better use of street space with more attention paid to pedestrian crossings and pavements, which are often neglected in favour of roads for motorized means of transport.

* Urban development must ensure that places of work, services and recreation remain accessible to women in terms of distance and time, taking into consideration the multiple roles of women.

- Lady Mayor Beate Weber

CREATING SPACE FOR WOMEN: The 1995 European Charter for Women in the City

By Roland Mayerl

The question of citizenship and the city is on the agenda of all current democratic debates. There have been numerous studies on this subject, and assumptions of certain "miracle" ideological or technical solutions, are being brought into question. All categories of persons excluded from society are expressing a desire to be integrated into society without compromising their own customs and traditions. An increasing number of city residents, particularly women, want to be involved in decisions that affect their daily lives. (see also box on p. 10)

Although women comprise more than 50 per cent of the world's population,

they are conspicuously absent from public debate about the development and planning of cities. In order to ensure that in-depth change will be successful, an approach which takes gender-based socio-cultural relationships into account is necessary. In fact, applying the dimensions of gender to cities gives rise to a new kind of debate which not only "upsets the apple cart" but which shows that there are other ways of planning and managing cities. Moreover, analyzing the framework of daily life through "feminine eyes" has the added advantage of applying qualitative rather than quantitative approaches to the main concerns of all citizens.

An overview paper for Habitat II (1994) prepared by Jo Beall and Caren Levy of the Development Planning Unit, University College London, says:

"Women and men experience the city in different ways according to their roles and responsibilities in the gender division of labour. The gender division of labour is characterized not only by different tasks but also by their differential access to and control over resources, and the different value which is accorded to the respective activities of women and men. Gender relations in urban areas are reflected in the spatial and other aspects of the city. This has important implications for urban policy frameworks and the ways in which cities are planned and managed."

The European Charter for Women in the City must be envisaged in this spirit, as a tool, an ongoing and open process which makes concrete proposals for action that can be implemented in order to promote more active involvement - of women in particular, but men as well - in the areas of

Countdown to Istanbul

town and country planning.

The ultimate goal is to tap knowledge and to identify and eliminate the stereotypes which still hinder the evolution and emancipation of our societies. Hence, a gender-sensitive approach becomes the tool of choice for lending new dynamism to the usual working methods.

Contents of the Charter

The essential components of the Charter are as follows: an evaluation of the current situation, a 12-point declaration, an analysis of five priority topics (urban planning and sustainable development, safety, mobility, habitat and local facilities, and strategies), a computerized database of resource persons and bibliographical references and, finally, a list of positive actions (Best Practices) in the form of 66 files presenting a wide variety of initiatives by women in Europe and the countries of the South.

The original Charter is in French but there is now an English version; partial translations in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish should be available in the near future.

Actors and Actions 1995-96

The research and action which led to the drafting of the European Charter for Women in the City was subsidized in 1994 by the Unit on Equal Opportunities of the Commission of the European Union.

In 1995, the Charter was disseminated in Europe and to international bodies by several associations: Eurocultures, City & Shelter, the Groupe Cadre de Vie, the European Women's Lobby and the European urban network "Quartiers en Crise".

The Charter is also meant to be a European contribution to the debate on citizenship and cities on the occasion of two important events sponsored by the UN: the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September this year and the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to be held in Istanbul next year.

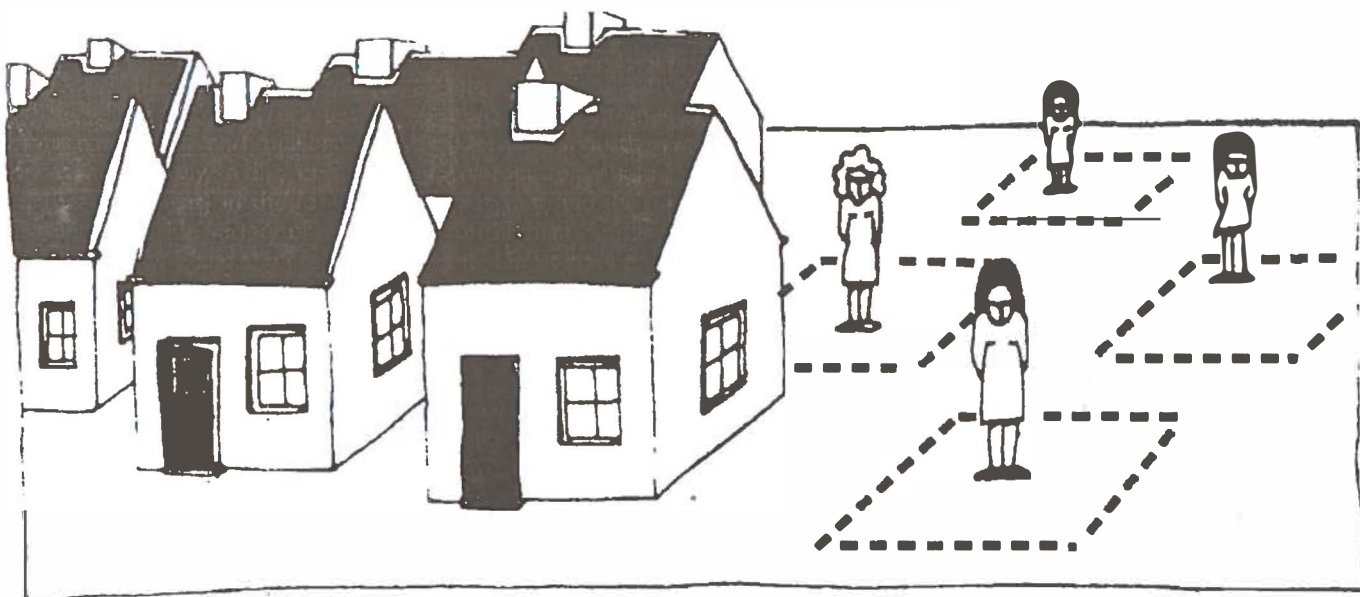
Objective: to create a European network in 1996

The purpose of disseminating the Charter in Europe and to international institutions is to set up a European network whose mission will be to highlight

gender as a specialized area, to change attitudes and promote the application of the proposed process in all town and country planning and in the organizing of rural communities. This network is also meant as a link with networks and NGOs in other continents which have a similar philosophy.

Roland Mayerl is coordinator of the Action-Oriented Research Project sponsored by the Commission of the European Communities Equal Opportunities Unit.

*For further information and copies of the 1995 European Charter for Women in the City, contact:
EUROCULTURES/CITY & SHELTER
(Roland Mayerl) 92 rue d'Espagne
B-1060 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: (32-2) 534 5966
Fax: (32-2) 534 7735*



Source: Mujer/ FemPress

CASE STUDY**THE IMPACT OF GENDER-AWARE PUBLIC POLICIES ON WOMEN'S LIVES IN SWEDEN***By Barbara Hobson and Michelle White*

Sweden has been described by feminist researchers as a woman-friendly society, which is reflected in the legislation and policy that allows women to participate in all spheres of life: family, labour market, and politics. Swedish women have one of the highest labour-force participation rates in the world, lowest levels of economic dependence in the family, and one of the smallest wage gaps between men and women. In the 1994 election a record-breaking proportion of women gained seats in Parliament. There are currently 141 women (40.4 per cent) in parliament, and half of the 22 cabinet ministers are women. The numbers are similar for municipal and county governments, in which women hold 41 per cent and 48 per cent of the seats respectively. Moreover, the Vice Prime Minister, Mona Sahlin, is also the Minister of Gender Equality.

More than ever before Swedish feminists feel that it is crucial to capture discursive arenas, place new issues on the policy agenda and represent women's claims and entitlement in a period of transition within the European Community. A recent publication providing statistics on gender issues includes the National Plan of Action and a list of measures to achieve these goals. The objectives include increasing the percentage of women holding management and other indirectly-elected positions, encouraging men to take a greater share of parental leave, studying women's and men's financial resources and power, reducing pay differences between men and women, increasing knowledge of women's health, and improving conditions for handicapped women. In order to achieve these goals, the Government plans to focus on research and gender research projects funded by the Work Environment Fund. These include the Mentor Project, the Network of Female Police in Ostersund Project and a proposal for a Comparable Worth and Equal Pay project.

Participation has been a popular topic in development aid for the past

decade but could equally be utilized in planning in industrialized countries. Although the details may differ, the essential problem is the same: male norms determine the priorities, and women's experiences, knowledge, and needs are not taken into account. All too often projects are organized around the assumption that the household is a unit of shared interests. The norm is a male headed nuclear family. This construction does not take into consideration power arrangements and the differential access to resources of men and women have. Though women still have fewer resources than men in Sweden -- in terms of money, time and decision-making nevertheless in the Swedish welfare state, the male breadwinner model has been weakened. Entitlement are given to the individual citizen rather than household head. Thus married and cohabiting couples are taxed and receive benefits on an individual basis.

There is also a recognition of non-traditional families. For example, single mothers are given priority in housing queues. This is increasingly important as the number of households headed by single women is steadily growing both in Sweden and in the rest of the world. The income in single-parent households is lower than in families with two wage earners. Though single mothers in Sweden do not have the same high levels of poverty that they do in most industrialized countries, they are still over-represented in the low-income groups. Unlike single mothers in many societies, they are not discriminated against, nor are they labeled deviant. When project participation is based on the nuclear-family head-of-household norm, single mothers may not qualify due to low income or part-time employment.

It is not surprising that as early as 1989 a gender-awareness program was instituted by Carolyn Hannon-Andersson, head of the Gender Office at the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). The central idea behind gender awareness is that women and men have different experiences, knowledge and needs. For this reason all project planning must take into consideration the needs of

the relationship between the men and women of the target group. SIDA's program maintains that gender insensitivity is a significant factor behind project failure.

Examples of problems caused by gender-insensitive planning abound in development projects. SIDA's experience provides examples of how projects were changed when gender awareness was applied to the planning process. For example, in India eucalyptus trees were chosen for a village reforestation project because their fast growth rate would quickly provide the lumber used by the men. Women's role was limited to that of planting and tending the trees. However, when the women were consulted as to their interests it was found that the eucalyptus did not provide the fodder and medicinal products needed by them. The project was then redesigned to increase the variety of trees, thus meeting both men's and women's needs.

The difficulty in gender-awareness lies in information gathering. How can planners get the information they need? Some may come from statistics, but while statistics may consider age and class differences, gender is often neglected. Target-group participation is a more reliable method of information gathering but it may also be more difficult if the target-group is not clearly defined. Narrow target-group definitions may also neglect to include people who are not directly involved but are still affected by the project.

In the 1994/95 budget proposition, the Swedish Government proposed a review of the goals of development assistance policy to consider whether a specific gender-equality goal was needed. This proposition was supported by several motions in the Foreign Affairs Committee and a study is currently underway, the results of which are due by 30 October 1995. It is interesting to note that when the same idea was proposed by the Gender office at SIDA a decade ago it was met with raised eyebrows, and discussion on this matter stalled. Today, women in politics have begun to set new policy agendas and are actively promoting gender awareness in both domestic and international policy goals.

Barbara Hobson is Director of the Advanced Research School in Comparative Gender Studies at Stockholm University. Michelle White is a Ph.D. candidate at Stockholm University.

YOUTH

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN CONFERENCE AND COMMUNITY

By Maria C. Figueroa

I know a young woman who is a typical teenager. She likes to spend time with her friends and hang around her neighbourhood block. Like many people her own age, she faces the confusion that comes with growing from childhood into maturity - taking on responsibility, developing skills that will provide a stable future, becoming an active part of her family and community.

She also faces the challenges of being a young woman in an increasingly demanding urban environment.

Some of her classmates have gone to jobs or community college. Others, like her, are struggling to finish secondary school education, studies that have been interrupted several times due to family obligations, health problems, or other circumstances. Her desire for a college degree is strong. Yet her motivation to rigorously apply herself to understanding the impact of industrialization or the workings of democratic governance are weak. To her, these seem impractical and far removed from the reality she lives each day. Her reality is rooted in her neighbourhood and is symbolized by the people and houses on her city block. This is the place where she lives and works, where her family unites. All that happens in this location forms the core of her daily interactions, her role models and socialization.

Neighbourhood pressures, however, are rampant and profound. Poverty, joblessness, drug use, illiteracy, weapons and violence are obvious, pervasive and constant concerns. Familiarity with welfare systems and visits from the social worker seem natural, along with the game of evading the law and the thrill of "not getting caught". The way she describes these conditions - in a flippant, almost normal, manner - are a testament to the fact that in order to cope with her surroundings she must rationalize the dysfunctional qualities of her community and her society. Being in control of her own living situation, she believed, was the way to create an alternative.

Once out on her own, however, she found the "real world" demanding. An

apartment was too difficult to afford on the salary of a minimum-wage job.

Forced back to her old neighbourhood, the experience reinforced her will to continue pursuing her education. But what of the education that she receives, daily, from the example of her community?

The importance of the role of community and habitat as one of the critical forces in an individual's personal growth cannot be over-estimated. The community must set and reinforce social norms that encourage access to basic needs such as adequate, good quality housing, health care and functional education. It must provide models of equity, democracy, and accountability. Only a safe and productive living environment will instil in its citizens the value of contributing to a group and to a community. It provides the basis for personal development and a role model for the family structure.

This story is familiar in many parts of the world. The commonality of the problems requires the sharing of ideas and a concerted approach to solutions.

The secretariat of the Fourth World Conference on Women serves as a model in its efforts to encourage dialogue on the challenges facing young women. Through a process of regional consultations, involving both young men and women, the concerns that are specific to a regional area and those that are shared internationally have become discernible and have provided a clear blueprint for follow-up actions. The secretariat has compiled the concerns of youth in a document entitled "The Voices of Youth for Beijing: Regional Youth Consultations for the Fourth World Conference on Women." This outlines comprehensively the critical areas of concern that should be addressed by governments in the Platform for Action. They include the following:

"The persistent and growing burden of poverty on women; inequality in educational opportunities; inequalities in health and access to appropriate health-care services; violence against women; effects of armed or other conflicts on women; inequality in

women's access to, and participation in, the definition of economic structures and policies; inequality between women and men in power-sharing and decision-making at all levels; insufficient mechanisms to promote the advancement of women; lack of awareness and commitment to internationally and nationally recognized women's human rights; insufficient use of mass media to promote women's positive contributions to society; lack of adequate recognition and support for women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment."

The document specifically highlights issues of providing "appropriate housing with related infrastructure, social and health services which may include long-term housing mortgages at very competitive rates for youth..." and of placing "special emphasis on the plight of rural youth who are forced to migrate to urban centres to improve their standard of living and who face problems such as overcrowding, high crime rates, health hazards and marginalization..."

If Habitat II is to have relevance for young women, like the one I know, it must let them speak and give them a channel for their contribution. The process must set a standard which the actors involved in the process need to focus their efforts on reaching out to those young people who feel marginalized. They should be the ones to set the agendas that are discussed in the halls of global decision-making. The support of the secretariat and the participation of youth in this regard has been encouraging, but it is the governments which must play the pivotal role of involving young people in decision-making and in implementing their projects. The Fourth World Conference on Women has set a precedent by successfully encouraging official delegations to include youth as representatives. This is a foundation to build on.

The views of young people, and especially young women, must be recognized as they are the pulse of hope and fear in our communities.

Maria C. Figueroa is the North American representative of Youth for HABITAT II, a network of organizations working for youth participation in the "City Summit".

PARTNERS UPDATE

LOCAL AUTHORITIES JOIN FORCES TO SET AGENDA FOR HABITAT II

By *Andrea Connell*

The Local Government Habitat II Steering Group, also known as G4+, is a consortium of local government associations representing the interests of local authorities from all corners of the world. It was set up in 1994 in order to highlight and win recognition for the major role local governments play in the planning, management and "governance" of human settlements. At the same time, it is campaigning to ensure that the Global and National Plans of Action of Habitat II reflect local needs and priorities and that adequate resources are transferred to the local level to enable the successful implementation of the agreements reached.

The under-representation of women in elected bodies and decision-making

positions at all levels of government across the world is well-known and has serious implications for the future of human settlements; it severely limits the ability of local authorities, for example, to provide services and "governance" which are truly democratic and which meet the real needs of the local population.

The members of the G4+ recognize these problems. Some have set up training programmes and networks via their member associations to provide training aimed at increasing the participation of women in local politics and decision-making processes. The programmes also focus on raising awareness within municipalities about the importance of gender-equality within local authority programmes, policies and structures. Successful projects have, for example, been run in Latin America and India, and women's lobbying groups and committees are now active in member associations in Africa, North America and Europe.

The role of women in local decision-making, sustainable urban and economic development and issues of citizenship will be addressed at the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, a meeting bringing together mayors and key local government figures from all over the world. The Assembly will meet in Istanbul immediately before the "City Summit" in order to present the local government Habitat II agenda, to approve the Global

Plan of Action and to prepare a local authority Declaration on sustainable human settlements. The latter will be delivered and distributed at a special "hearing" during the Conference. It is hoped that it will mark the start of a new era of greater partnership between the local government and the United Nations system, which recognizes and reflects the important role that women have to play in the governance of human settlements.

The members of the G4+ are:

The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)

The World Association of Major Metropolises (METROPOLIS)

The Summit of the World's Major Cities (SUMMIT)

The United Towns Organization (UTO)

Regional Representatives are:

CITYNET (Asia)

EUROCITIES

The Arab Towns Organization (ATO)

The Network of Local Government

Associations of Latin America

Major Local Government Associations of North America

Union of African Towns

Andrea Connell is co-ordinator of the Local Government Habitat II Steering Group (G4+) whose technical secretariat is based in the Hague, the Netherlands.

WHAT HABITAT II WILL DO FOR BUSINESS

The Habitat II Conference is the last major United Nations Conference of the Decade, and the last United Nations Conference of the century. It is preceded by the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Social Summit (Copenhagen, 1995) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

The lessons learnt from these conferences are being integrated in the preparations for Habitat II. These lessons include:

* The need to open the Conference to all major groups of actors and stakeholders in development. These include all

levels of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the media and the academic and scientific community;

* The need to focus on workable and practical solutions and the means of expanding their replicability and transfer between countries and communities;

* The need to facilitate effective partnerships between all levels of government and business and industry to harness new technologies and improved management and information systems for the benefit of people and to leverage public and private resources to invest in socially, economically and environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

A World Business Leaders' Forum will be convened in Istanbul at the time of the Habitat II Conference. A special committee of the Conference is being organized so that the intellectual inputs, experiences and commitments by all major

groups of actors can be incorporated in the debate of the Conference, leading to a truly innovative Global Plan of Action to promote and facilitate a more level playing field for private-sector intervention and partnerships in sustainable development.

For more information, please contact:-

The Coordinator

Special Projects and Programmes

Habitat II secretariat

P.O. Box 30030

Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 254-2623029, 623352

Fax: 254-2-623080

E-Mail: habitat2@unep.no

NGOs/CBOs agree upon an organizational structure

Over 75 NGOs were represented by approximately 150 participants at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II. Their participation included sitting on Informal Drafting Groups and Committees, participating in Government delegations, drafting resolutions and statements, and lobbying Government delegations to sponsor these inputs.

NGOs at PrepCom II agreed upon a organizational structure for themselves and their work in the Habitat II process. This includes an NGO International Facilitating Group (IFG), with facilitators drawn from regional and issue-based caucuses, and four co-chairs (with North-South and gender balance). Currently, regions represented include the following: Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa, Latin America, North America, Australia/New Zealand/Pacific, Asia, South Asia, and West Europe. Issue caucuses include: Women, Youth, Children, Values, and Urban Research and Training.

The overall structure of the IFG has been designed in a fluid open-ended manner. As new NGOs and other major groups join this broad-based effort, new caucuses will be added, and new facilitators will be elected to join the IFG. The IFG is expected to grow to include a stronger and more complete base of regional caucuses, and the addition of caucuses around environment, health, and other major issues.

For more information, contact:
Barry Pinsky
IFG Secretariat c/o Rooftops Canada
2 Berkeley Street, Suite 207
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2W3
Tel: 1-416-366-1445
Fax: 1-416-366-3876 Email:
rooftops@web.apc.org

NGO Accreditation:

During PrepCom II, 92 NGOs were granted accreditation to Habitat II. This brings the number of NGOs accredited to Habitat II to a total of 128. In addition, approximately 235 additional NGOs are in the process of being recommended for accreditation. Interested NGOs are encouraged to complete the accreditation

application as soon as possible. Accreditation ensures receipt of all relevant information and documents from now until Istanbul, and is required for attendance at the third session of the Preparatory Committee in New York (February 1996) and the Conference in Istanbul (June 1996).

For more information, contact:
Partners Liaison Team, Habitat II Secretariat
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254-2-623-137
Fax: 254-2-623-080 Email:
habitat2@unep.no

NGOs, Local Authorities and the Global Plan of Action:

The Informal Drafting Group for the Global Plan of Action (GPA), constituted by PrepCom II, includes representatives of NGOs and Local Authorities. The NGO representatives, designated by the NGOs present at PrepCom II, are Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga of Environment Liaison Centre International and Han van Putten of Habitat International Coalition. Their work on this drafting group will be supported by the IFG. Local Authorities, through the Group 4+, are represented by Christine Brookfield of the Local Government International Bureau. These representatives are playing key roles in the development of the new text for the Global Plan of Action. During the Informal Drafting Group meeting in Nairobi this July, youth representatives Juliet Muhoro and Prosper Ogonga, of AIESEC-Kenya, also joined the Group.

The latest draft from the Informal Drafting Group of the GPA is available on line, through web and gopher sites. For more information on how to access these sites, refer to box on p. 7. Any NGOs or CBOs who would like to provide inputs to this draft may contact the NGO representatives listed below. The Habitat II Secretariat requests that all comments be received by 15 September 1995.

Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga
Environment Liaison
Centre International
P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 256 2015
Fax: 254 251 2175
Email: elci@elci.gn.apc.org

Han van Putten
Habitat International Coalition
Frankenslag 313
2582 HM The Hague, Netherlands
Tel: 31-70-355-7361
Fax: 31-70-324-6916
Email: hvputten@antenna.nl

Fora at Istanbul, 1996:

A Secretariat has been established in Turkey to coordinate the NGO Forum. Turkish NGOs and the IFG plan to work closely with the new Turkish secretariat to design this event. Look for details in the next issue of the *Countdown to Istanbul*.

For more information, contact:
Gurel Tuzun
Head of the Habitat II Coordination Unit
Housing Development Administration
7-8 Kisim 17-B, Blok D-12
Atakoy, Istanbul, Turkey
Tel: 90-212-559-3508
Fax: 90-212-559-0509
Email: habit-kd@yunus.mam.tubitak.gov.tr

Local Authorities and Mayors

A Cities Assembly is being coordinated for local authorities and mayors by the Group 4+, a coalition of local authorities associations.

For more information, contact:
IULA, Wassenaarweg 39/2596 CB
The Hague, Netherlands
Tel: 31-70-324-4032
Fax: 31-70-324-6916

Private Sector

Private sector initiatives for Habitat II Fora are being coordinated by the following organisation:

Habitat II Private Sector Forum Foundation
c/o Progressio Foundation
Parklaan 51
3041 RD Doorn, Netherlands
Tel: 31-65-313-2441
Fax: 31-34-302-0030

Academics

Initiatives of academic institutions and associations for Habitat II Fora are being coordinated by the following organisation:

National Academy of Sciences
Foundry Building (2nd floor)
Washington DC, USA
Fax: 1-202-334-3094

Newsletter

The newsletter "People Towards Habitat II" is posted on the apc conference: <un.habitat.gen>. If you do not have access to this conference, you can obtain this free newsletter, in either electronic or hard copy by contacting Rooftops Canada (see address above).

Host Country Preparations

The Housing Development Administration (HDA) of Turkey is the organization responsible for co-ordinating and implementing the preparations for Habitat II, under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this context, HDA's Habitat II Project Co-ordination Unit (HPCU) has been established in Istanbul and equipped with funds and operational capacity to deal with these tasks.

In Istanbul, the Conference, the associated fora and most other parallel activities will be held in what is referred to as the "Conference Valley". This area has several facilities, including a congress centre, a concert hall, a cultural centre, an open air amphitheatre, a theatre, a convention hall, and the meeting halls and classrooms of the Istanbul Technical University. The buildings in the Conference Valley have been selected as the most convenient premises because of their central location and their proximity to most of the major hotels. In fact, there are more than 17,000 beds available in hotels of three-star quality in the vicinity of the Conference Valley.

Under the supervision of HDA, a consortium of firms shall be responsible for the organizational and logistical arrangements for the Conference, including hotel reservations, catering, setting up of an information system and the transportation of participants to and from the airport.



View of Bosphorus Bridge from Dolmabahçe Palace

The official Conference will consist of a plenary and two committees. Committee 1 will deal with the Global Plan of Action and its negotiations, while Committee 2, also referred to as the Partnerships Committee, will deal with the contributions of UN associates and all

settlements will be held in the World Trade Centre, a new, modern facility next to the Istanbul International Airport. The main emphasis of the trade fair will be on low-cost, appropriate, and environmentally sound products, and services for human settlements and shelter.



Ayasofia Museum, Istanbul

partners which are representatives of the "seven partners' fora". These partners' fora, which will be held from May 30 to the end of the Conference will include:

- Local authorities and cities' associations
- Professionals, researchers and academics
- The private sector
- Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations
- Parliamentarians
- Private non-profit foundations
- Trade unions

In addition, seven thematic roundtables will convene daily to debate, through a "panel with audience" format, strategies concerning specific policies related to city life.

In conjunction with Habitat II, an international trade fair on housing and construction technologies and human

As part of Habitat II, several cultural events will also take place. These events, which will be open to the general public, include, among others, an exhibition on Best Practices to be organized by the Habitat II secretariat, an exhibition on the city of Istanbul and an exhibition on housing and settlements in Anatolia. There will also be exhibitions organized by various UN agencies and other cultural activities, including film festivals on cities and city life, concerts, symposia and seminars.

For further information, please contact:
Habitat II Project Co-ordination Unit
 7-8 Kisim I-7-B Blok D 12
 Atakoy 34750
 Istanbul
 Turkey
 Tel: (90-212) 559 9755 or 559 9761
 Fax: (90-212) 559 0509
 Internet: habi-kd@yunus.mam.tubitak.gov.tr

MEETINGS

SETTING THE HABITAT AGENDA: INFORMAL DRAFTING GROUP HAMMERS OUT BASIC TEXT

In July, at UNCHS (Habitat) headquarters in Nairobi, an open-ended Informal Drafting Group completed a draft of the Global Plan of Action (GPA), the document intended to shape the future of human settlements. The meeting made significant progress, reaching consensus on some of the basic text for this global agenda for action. A second meeting of the Informal Drafting Group will be held in mid-October this year. The final text will be negotiated during the third session of the Preparatory Committee in New York, early next year, and will be adopted at the Istanbul Conference in June 1996. The Nairobi meeting brought together over 100 participants representing 45 governments, several United Nations bodies and agencies, local authorities, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations -- backed by a range of technical professionals.

Broad consensus was reached on the structure of the document which is intended to set forth "The Habitat Agenda" for the first two decades of the 21st century, and on many of the priorities for achieving sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world and adequate shelter for all -- the two goals of the City Summit, as Habitat II has been dubbed by the UN Secretary-General. However, draft language referring to financing drew fire from both the Group of 77 and China, and from the United States of America. Here major divergences in perspectives between developing and developed countries emerged during last week's meeting.

H.E. Shafqat Kakakhel, High Commissioner of Pakistan in Kenya and Permanent Representative to UNCHS, spoke bluntly on this point on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. "We are not asking for charity. It is not only the question of financial transfers that needs to be addressed. What we are calling for is a process of international cooperation in the field of human settlements which will include but not be confined to the transfer of financial resources... a global partnership which would cover the whole spectrum of cooperation." He further noted, "We in G-

77 and China believe that the Istanbul Conference should take stock of the negative trends such as declining official development assistance provided through bilateral and regional mechanisms and multilateral agencies and the ascendancy of isolationist and unilateralist trends in some of the most important countries of the world... The Conference should lament and blunt the ferocious onslaught on the concept of multilateralism and the processes of global interaction which have been painstakingly evolved during the past five decades."

The second issue raised related to the future of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. Again H.E. Shafqat Kakakhel expressed the position eloquently. "We are deeply concerned because the developing countries need international organizations much more than do the rich countries... We believe that the remedy lies in improving rather than crippling international organizations." He reiterated the need to reinforce existing bodies and fora by lending them greater political backing and increased technical, financial and intellectual resources. He called particularly for further strengthening and empowerment of UNCHS (Habitat). "UNCHS has a unique status: it was set up solely for addressing all matters pertaining to human settlements; its location in a developing country enables its personnel to acquire and retain knowledge of the real settlements situation in poor countries and become more sensitive to their needs."

In contrast, Mr. Howard Sumka, Head of the delegation of the United States of America, stated a particular concern over a reference to 'new and additional resources', since "Official development aid levels in many donor countries are declining, including in our own. Resource levels in many international institutions, such as the United Nations Development Programme, are also shrinking. Therefore, we need to address international cooperation with a sense of reality regarding resources." He also voiced a second concern: "Obviously the ability of governments and their private sectors to

respond to the needs for human settlements development is constrained by the conditions in the international economy", which he said must be acknowledged to put the problem in the proper context.

Despite such differences, delegates agreed that progress was made. Dr. Manfred Konukiewicz, representing the European Union, said, "We are in the process of reaching a new consensus -- there is still a lot of work to do," while H.E. Ms. Eness C. Chiyenge, High Commissioner of Zambia to Kenya, stated, "With the secretariat's technical assistance we should be able to come up with a clearly developed and articulate document." The basic structure having been agreed upon, many chapters will still be the source of debate as the draft text is further discussed at a second intersessional meeting before negotiations at the third Preparatory Committee in New York next February, prior to the Conference itself in June 1996.

*For further information, please contact:
Dr. Jay Moor
Coordinator, Programme Development
Habitat II
Box 30030
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone 254 2 623150; Fax 254 2 623080*

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON "ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR AFRICAN CITIES" : DAKAR DECLARATION AGREED

The Dakar Declaration, a new and important development in urban environmental planning and management in African cities, was adopted by representatives from 21 African States on 30th June 1995. The Declaration established a common position for African governments on the urban environment, and its adoption brought to a conclusion an intensive five-day workshop on "Environmental Strategies for African Cities", which was held in Dakar, Senegal, from 26th to 30th June 1995. A second Workshop on "Environmental Strategies for Asian Cities" will be held in Madras, India, in November 1995.

The Workshop, an official UNCHS (Habitat) event organized through its Urban Management Programme (UMP), contributed to "The Learning Year" in the run up to the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in 1996. For four days, more than one hundred city mayors and other local and central government officials, representatives from the private sector, community groups, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), university professors, and technical specialists from all across Africa compared notes on their diverse experiences. They shared their practical experiences in urban environmental management, and in the enormous variety of urban development situations that can be found in Africa, discussing the great contrasts in environmental settings, and the tremendous range of different administrative arrangements and management structures.

On the final day of the Workshop, the development practitioners were joined by high level government representatives from throughout Africa, including twelve Ministers, who transformed the technical recommendations of the Workshop into a political declaration, the "Agenda for Africa on the Urban Environment" : the Dakar Declaration. The Declaration acknowledged the important contributions that African cities could make to social and economic development at local and national levels, but went on to recognize that urban environmental problems in cities often prevent a full realization of these contributions. The signatories of the

Declaration agreed that avoidance and resolution of these problems must rely primarily on local technical and financial resources, and that urban environmental planning and management is of critical importance in mobilizing and effectively applying these local resources.

The Dakar Declaration is a seminal document for African city planning and management. Its adoption signifies a radically new approach to the challenges of our rapidly-urbanizing world, an approach which will encourage development which promises to be economically more efficient, socially more equitable, and environmentally more sustainable.

For further information, please contact:
Mr. Jochen Eigen, Coordinator,
Sustainable Cities Programme,
Technical Cooperation Division,
UNCHS (Habitat),
P.O. Box 30030,
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 254 -2-623225
Fax: 254 -2-624263/4

SINGAPORE WORKSHOP: AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE

A Global Workshop on Transport and Communications for Urban Development was held in Singapore from 3-5 July, 1995. This Workshop, which was jointly organized by the National University of Singapore and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), and sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, was attended by more than 100 city- and national-level policy-makers, eminent experts and industrial leaders in transport and communications, plus representatives of international agencies and NGOs from 30 countries of the industrialized and developing world.

The primary objective of the Workshop was to contribute to the development of the urban agenda, the implementation strategy of the Global Plan of Action for Habitat II, by synthesizing the viewpoints and commitments of the key actors and stakeholders on the urban scene. The Workshop also provided an opportunity to several city managers to present documented Best Practices attempted by these cities to solve road congestion and environmental pollution. Special presentations and active participation by industrial leaders like Volvo and Siemens, and leading researchers from North America, Western Europe and Japan, were of special interest to the participants and the media.

At a concluding press conference, Mr. Jorge Wilhelm, Deputy Secretary-General of Habitat II, described the Workshop as a major step forward and an important milestone in the Habitat II preparatory process; he hoped that the recommendations of the Workshop would be an important contribution to the Global Plan of Action to be adopted in Istanbul next year.

For a full report, please refer to Habitat Debate (No 3, 1995)

For more information, please contact:
Kalyan Ray
Chief, Building, Infrastructure and
Technology Section UNCHS (Habitat) Po
Box 30030 Nairobi, Kenya
Fax 254-2-624265

IMPORTANT DATES

4-15 September 1995

Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China

10-13 September 1995

Habitat Urban Finance Conference, Washington D.C., USA

11-15 September 1995

International Seminar on "Challenges of the Informal Town", Belo Horizonte, Brazil

18-20 September 1995

DPI-NGO Conference On UN at the Turn of the Century: Global Issues, Global Actors and Global Responsibilities, UN Headquarters, New York, USA

25-29 September 1995

XXIII IAHS World Congress, Singapore

27-30 September 1995

Third Arab Preparatory Conference for Habitat II, Rabat, Morocco

27-30 September 1995

Global Workshop on "A Place to Live: Homes and Streets", Curitiba, Brazil

2 October 1995

World Habitat Day, Global Observance, Curitiba, Brazil

9-13 October 1995

Second Intersessional Meeting of the Open-ended Informal Drafting Group for the Global Plan of Action, Paris, France

16-18 October 1995

Regional Meeting of African Ministers, Johannesburg, South Africa

24-27 October 1995

Global Workshop on Urban Governance, Berlin, Germany

26-27 October 1995

Colloquium on "Sustaining Cities: Urban Solutions to Global Problems" Vancouver, Canada

13-18 November 1995

"Towards a City for Life" Conference for the Latin American and Caribbean region, Quito, Ecuador

19-22 November 1995

Dubai International Conference for Habitat II on Best Practices in Improving Living Environments, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

December 1995

Final National Reports due

February 1996

Third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II, New York, USA

3-14 June 1996

Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, Turkey

Countdown to Istanbul is a bi-monthly publication and is available free of charge. If you would like to receive a copy, please fill out the information below and return to: The Editor, Countdown to Istanbul, Habitat II secretariat, UNCHS, P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya; Fax: 254-2-623080.

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