

ISTANBUL, HOST OF HABITAT II

“ As early as the 16th century, Istanbul, capital of the Ottoman Empire, had learned and was trying to teach the rest of the world a lesson that we are only now recognizing as vital to the continued health and development of the world's cities: That human beings should be treated well regardless of race, ethnicity or religion. ”

Dr. Wally N'Dow



UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

**HABITAT II
CITY SUMMIT**

ISTANBUL 3-14 JUNE 1996



FROM VANCOUVER TO ISTANBUL

The first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat I, was held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. At that time there was still the belief that rapid urbanization could be mitigated or even diffused. But this has not happened. In the twenty years that have gone by, urbanization and large city growth have continued relentlessly. Recognition of the urgency of the problem led participants of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio to request the organization of a second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, to address the persisting problems of housing, settlement and urbanization. In an attempt to formulate solutions to these problems, the United Nations General Assembly decided in December 1992 that a new UN Conference on Human Settlements be convened in Istanbul, between June 3-14, 1996.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF HABITAT II

The overall objectives of Habitat II are to increase global and national awareness of the problems facing human settlements; to highlight their potential role in fostering social progress and economic growth, and to encourage the world's leaders to make commitments towards making the world's cities, towns, and villages, healthy, safe, just and sustainable. The success of Habitat II will depend on concrete proposals and action plans developed during the conference, as well as the popular support these plans will receive.

The 21st Century is only a few years away. By then the overwhelming majority of the world's population will be living in cities. Urban settlements will become the primary place for the struggle for development. The challenge of sustainable development is a challenge of urban settlements.

Habitat II will be the last building block of the efforts of the international community to shape the global agenda of the 21st Century. Drawing its strength from a decade of UN Conferences, Habitat II will provide a tangible way of carrying out their goals. It is for this reason that Habitat II has been renamed as the "Summit of the Summits" by Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary General of the United Nations.



In addition, a one day joint meeting is planned to bring together different groups participating in these forums. The forums will start on May 30, 1996 and will generally last two to three days.

ROUND TABLES:

Between June 3, Monday and June 8, Saturday there will be thematic round table meetings evolving around the concept of cities of tomorrow.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

As the host country, Turkey is organizing an international trade fair to highlight and promote the very best practices of the private sector in fields such as decent and affordable housing, sustainable sanitation systems, safe and clean transportation and energy, construction technologies, dependable telecommunications, and environmental technologies. The event itself will be a truly unique opportunity for the business people to meet the professionals and decision makers from 185 countries at a single venue.

- National pavillions
- More than 500 companies
- 30.000+ sq. m. covered exhibition space
- 60.000 sq. m. open exhibition space
- Part of the total exhibition space will be allocated free of charge to the Habitat II Secretariat, for the use of firms from the least developed countries.



EXHIBITIONS:

Exhibitions to be held in Istanbul during Habitat II Conference will include, among others:

- Istanbul-World City
- Housing and Settlement in Anatolia-A Historical Perspective. These two exhibitions will take place in the old Mint Building (Darphane) adjacent to Topkapı Palace. This historical building is being restored for Habitat II and will serve as the Istanbul City Museum after the Conference.
- An exhibition of all the winners of the coveted Agha Khan Prize for Architecture.
- Best Practices for Improving Living Environments. The Habitat II Secretariat will organize exhibits of the best housing and settlement practices from around the world.
- The International Union of Architects (IUA) is also preparing several exhibits within the framework of Habitat II.

SOME OF THE OTHER ACTIVITIES

- One minute video festival on cities
- Film and music festivals organized jointly with the Istanbul Foundation of Culture and Art.
- The World Environment Day will be celebrated on June 9, 1996.
- An "International Symposium on Settlement and Housing in Anatolia Through the Ages" organized jointly with the Institute of Archeology.
- An opening event will be held on June 2, Sunday evening. The Conference will end with a closing event on June 14, 1996.

THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ASSOCIATIONS

The 1976 Vancouver Conference operated under the premise that the problems of housing, human settlements and urbanization could be solved mainly through policies and programs pursued by states. In other words, the primary role in establishing housing and settlement policies was assigned to the state. In contrast, Habitat II will emphasize the role of civil society in finding and implementing solutions. Through broad-based participation, enabling strategy, and a new conception of governance, Habitat II will seek to empower those directly involved in human settlements.

At the second Preparatory Committee Meeting held in Nairobi in April 1995, it was recommended that in addition to the Plenary and the Main Committee, a new committee should be established. In this new Partnership Committee, the representatives of local administrations, NGOs, academics, professionals in the areas of housing and human settlements, trade unions and the private sector will present the views, evaluations, proposals and commitments generated in their forums to the delegates of the participating nations, who, in turn will convey them to the Plenary of the Conference.

At the second PrepCom it was also decided that an International Facilitating Group (IFG) would be set up by the international NGO community in order to assist the Turkish NGOs in organizing the NGO forum to be held during Habitat II. A professional NGO secretariat and the NGO Host Committee composed of about 20 Turkish NGOs were set up after this meeting.

HOST COUNTRY PREPARATIONS

The Housing Development Administration of Turkey (HDA) is the organization responsible for coordinating and implementing the preparations for Habitat II, as well as providing the required funding. In this context, Habitat II Project Coordination Unit has been established in Istanbul, which is equipped with funds and operational capacity for a task of these dimensions.

In August 1994, a Task Force was established to coordinate the activities of the Habitat Secretariat, the PrepCom, and the host country.



In order to secure the necessary public support and to create an atmosphere of coordination and cooperation for the preparatory work to be carried out in Istanbul, the Habitat II Istanbul Organization Committee was established. Chaired by the Governor of Istanbul and having more than forty members, this Committee includes heads of all the relevant branches of central and local governments in Istanbul, as well as the representatives of various professional organizations.

The HDA has also signed a contract with the VIV Habitat II Consortium which will be responsible for arrangements such as hotel reservations, travel arrangements, catering, setting up a centralized information system, transportation and preparations at all the premises.

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Turkish National Committee, established in October 1994, is composed of members of Ministries, parliamentary commissions, universities, local administrations, chambers of commerce and industry, professional organizations, trade unions, housing cooperatives and NGOs. This Committee which has been meeting on a regular basis since its foundation, now has representatives from 90 NGOs, 20 universities, 23 ministries and governmental organizations and 7 local administrations. There is also an Advisory Board composed of academics and urban practitioners, which has been assisting The National Committee in preparing the National Report and Plan of Action. The Advisory Board has also been contributing to the formulation of the Habitat II Agenda.



ISTANBUL, THE HOST OF HABITAT II

Straddling across the Bosphorus, Istanbul is located at the crossroads of East and West, North and South. This megacity with a population exceeding 10 million, is also a center of trade, communications and culture. Heir to diverse imperial traditions, Istanbul presents a kaleidoscope of culture and history and displays a harmony of contrasts. It is the home of the covered hazaar, the world's oldest and largest market, but also Europe's most modern shopping centers. Its nostalgic turn of the century street cars vie with modern luxury cars along streets where the Ottoman Sultan's mounted entourage once passed. The Blue Mosque, St. Sophia and the Topkapı Palace are some of the sites located in the old city, the door to the Orient. Istanbul is also a nocturnal city. Restaurants, night clubs, rock-cafes and discos stay open till the small hours of the day. Home to the youngest urban population in Europe, Istanbul is a city where problems and solutions exist side by side.

This enchanted city is now getting ready to host the last summit of the 20th Century. During Habitat II, Istanbul will host some 20.000 decision-makers, political and social leaders, experts, professionals and NGOs. They will come to Istanbul to make crucial decisions for the improvement of human settlements all around the world. Constituting a unique laboratory in the quest for solutions to urban problems, Istanbul is the ideal site for Habitat II.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN ISTANBUL

THE CONFERENCE:

It is estimated that participants in the official conference, which will include the members of official delegations, along with representatives of UN organizations, local administrations and NGOs, will number around 2.500.

PARTNERS FORUMS:

During Habitat II, in addition to the official conference, separate forums will be organized for:

- * Mayors, members of city councils and associations of cities;
- * Parliamentarians;
- * Researchers, academics and professionals in the fields of housing and settlements;
- * Non-profit organizations and foundations;
- * Private sector;
- * Trade-unions;
- * NGOs and civil society associations.

Work is also underway to organize a Forum on Human Solidarity which will bring together eminent persons from all around the world.



THE CONFERENCE VALLEY

In Istanbul, the Conference, the associated forums and most of other parallel activities will be held in the "Conference Valley". Having a total seating capacity of close to 20.000, the buildings in the Conference Valley have been selected as the most convenient premises because of their central location and their being within walking distance from each other and most of the major hotels. During Habitat II, the Valley will be turned into a pedestrian zone.

VENUES

Official Conference : **5** Lütü Kirdar Congress Center **4** Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall **6** Hilton Convention Center
 Forums and Parallel Activities : **3** Muhsin Ertuğrul Theatre • Atatürk Cultural Center **1** Harbiye Cultural Center **7** Istanbul Technical University-Taşkışla Campus **8** Open-air Theatre
 Conference Offices : **1** Harbiye Cultural Center **6** Hilton Convention Center **2** Media Center and DPI Offices

For accommodation and travel arrangements please contact the official agents of Habitat II Conference:

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 CUMHURİYET CAD. ADLI HAN 270/A, HARBIYE 80230 İSTANBUL/TURKEY
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For further information on Habitat II International Trade Fair:
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 ATATÜRK HAVALIMANI KARŞISI, ÇOBANÇESME KAVSAĞI, YESİLKOY 34830 İSTANBUL/TURKEY
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