



On the Road to

# Istanbul



Signpost no:1

THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II), ISTANBUL, TURKEY 3-14 JUNE 1996



Urbanization is bringing about one of the most significant transformations in the human habitat in history. By the year 2000, half of humanity will be living in urban areas. By the year 2030, urban populations will be twice the size of rural populations; the opposite is true today.

Cities are a testimonial to human civilization and a well-spring of opportunities. Most of these opportunities are made possible through the integration of economic activities and by a concentration of human and technological resources. However, cities are also at the centre of today's environmental drama. Patterns of consumption among dense city populations, intense economic and industrial processes, heavy demands on natural resources and the generation of massive -- often toxic -- waste all point to the city as the source of the earth's major environmental problems of the future.

The city will also be the place, as it already is, where compelling social issues such as

poverty, homelessness, crime and unemployment will take on a dimension far bigger and more complex than ever seen before; where most of the world's population will live and work; where most economic activity will take place; where the most pollution will be generated; where most natural resources will be consumed. Sustainable urban development will thus be the most pressing challenge facing humanity in the twenty-first century.

*It was for these compelling reasons that the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its forty-seventh session in 1992, decided to convene the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, twenty years after the first Human Settlements Conference was held in Vancouver, Canada.*

Dubbed the "City Summit" by United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Conference will confront the critical urban situation and initiate worldwide action

*The twenty-first century is only a few years away. By then, the overwhelming majority of every country will be living in cities. . . States . . . bear the primary and the ultimate responsibility for the development of their peoples. . . As we start down the road to Istanbul in 1996, the international community must travel together. . . The Global Plan of Action of the City Summit will draw strength from a decade of United Nations Conferences. Its effects will be felt well into the twenty-first century. . . Much needs to be done. Every passing day increases the urgency of our task. . ."*

DR. BOUTROS BOUTROS-  
GHALI  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS  
APRIL 1994

DECEMBER  
1994



### What the GA wants to achieve from the Conference

There are two main objectives of the Conference:

- a) To arrest the deterioration of global human settlements conditions and ultimately create conditions for achieving improvements in the living environment of all people on a sustainable basis, with special attention to the needs and contributions of women and vulnerable social groups whose quality of life and participation in development have been hampered by exclusion and inequality, which affect the poor in particular:
- b) To adopt a general statement of principles and commitments and formulate a related global plan of action suitable for guiding national and international efforts through the first two decades of the next century.

*We will be building on the work of this conference two years from now in Istanbul, at Habitat II. President Clinton has asked me to lead United States preparations for this meeting, and I look forward to working closely with Secretary General N'Dow. . . Habitat II will further spur new thinking about urban policy, which is so critical to realizing the environmental goals set out at the Rio Earth Summit. . . We must, and we are, changing the way we think about urban policy and environmental issues.*

THE HONOURABLE HENRY  
G. CISNEROS  
SECRETARY  
HOUSING AND URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA  
19 SEPTEMBER 1994

In order to improve urban policy by strengthening participatory processes and partnerships for decision-making, the Secretariat for Habitat II is supporting activities that will motivate a multiplicity of actors to participate and lead the preparatory process at different levels. Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will be some of the key players in this process. **The Preparatory Committee granted accreditation to several NGOs; other NGOs are in various stages of being granted accreditation.** Numerous other NGOs and CBOs have expressed an interest in Habitat II, and many have initiated Habitat II preparations in their cities, countries and regions. Often this has meant establishing partnerships with the private sector, with local authorities, with national governments and with other NGOs and community groups.

Habitat has also been actively promoting meetings among civic leaders and municipalities in order to obtain the commitment of mayors and city governments to cooperate regionally and globally in improving city management. For instance, in August this year, it supported a **Mayors' Colloquium** organized together with UNDP at the United Nations in New York. The meeting was attended by more than 100 mayors, city associations and government officials responsible for local government from 36 countries who endorsed the importance of active participation of local

At the first session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II held in Geneva last April, it was decided that focal points, or national agencies in each country, would be encouraged to establish national steering committees with membership drawn from a broad base of interested groups and representative organizations. **Currently, 51 countries have already formed national committees or are in the process of doing so.** Several countries have also shown keen interest in participating in, and perhaps hosting, the many UNCHS-organized regional seminars, technical workshops, colloquia and regional national committee meetings that will take place in 1995.

### What the GA has asked of the Conference

The GA has asked that the Conference:

- ☒ Review trends in policies and programmes undertaken by countries to implement the recommendations of the first Habitat Conference;
- ☒ Conduct a midterm review of the implementation of the Global Strategy for shelter to the year 2000;
- ☐ Review the contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21 of national and international action in the area of human settlements;
- ☐ Review current global trends in economic and social development as they affect the planning, development and management of human settlements, and make recommendations for future action at the national and international levels.
- ☐ Conduct a broad-based preparatory process involving the scientific community, industry, trade unions and non-governmental organizations.



governments in the Habitat II preparatory process. UNDP is firmly behind the Conference, with emphasis on in-country preparations for which it is leveraging financial, technical and human resources to promote national action as well as to support initiatives by mayors, NGOs and all local actors.

Other partners have already expressed their interest in participating: **The International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI)**, the worldwide association of realtors and developers, is on board. The **Global Parliamentarians** will also be in Istanbul. Several major foundations have been approached and are establishing a format for their participation. **Fanny Mae**, an important housing financing agency in the United States of America, and the **World Resources Institute**, both based in Washington D.C., are also getting on the road to Istanbul. An important meeting with the **International Union of Architects** sealed an agreement for its participation, and **National Academies of Sciences** in several countries are studying the best way of participating in the City Summit.

In August this year, **Dr. Wally N'Dow**, the **Secretary-General of Habitat II**, met with the **President of Turkey**, **H.E. Süleyman Demirel**, and other high-level Turkish government officials to set up a task-force to prepare for the Conference. Dr. N'Dow also discussed arrangements for the core Conference meetings that will pave the way for organizing a range of related roundtables, a **Cities' Assembly** and a **World's Fair on "Good Ideas for Cities"**. At the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II, which will take place from 24 April to 5 May 1995, the Habitat II Secretary-General will present a progress report on national preparations for the Conference that are being made worldwide and in the city of Istanbul.

Several countries have already pledged their financial support specifically to the Habitat II preparatory process. Their support, among others, will go a long way in helping the Habitat II Secretariat carry out and facilitate many preparatory activities at the local, national, regional and international level.

## Funding Requirements

The international community has only recently become aware that it stands on the threshold of a new urban world. The critical challenges posed by this historic change not only cut across every aspect of urban life, they reach out globally, affecting the world's economic, social and political well-being. Cities are the economic engines that drive national progress. An average of 50 percent GDP in developing countries is generated by towns and cities, and this figure is expected to rise to two-thirds by the end of the century. Urban areas are also the hub of social and political solidarity. They have much to gain from and contribute to decentralization and democratization; but they are also potential sources of upheaval if their resources are left to stagnate. And it is in urban areas that two of the most pressing problems of the international community come together: poverty and environmental decline.

Between now and June 1996 will be the time for the international community to:

- (a) *assess the status of urban areas;*
- (b) *formulate local and national reports; and*
- (c) *start work on national plans of action for sustainable human settlements, taking into account the interdependent nature of many of the issues between urban and rural areas, and the recent advances made in understanding and developing solutions to human settlements problems.*

Overall, funding for Habitat II is required in four main areas:

**Country Preparations:** To assist countries in preparing for Istanbul by supporting efforts aimed at urban policy formulation and programme development. National preparatory processes are broad-based, involving the scientific community, industry, trade unions, women's groups and concerned NGOs. Countries will be assisted in the development of urban policy processes at all levels and in the formulation of national plans of action. A key part of the na-

*We, the Mayors  
assembled at the United  
Nations in New York on  
19 August 1994,  
encourage all our  
colleagues to take part in  
the preparation,  
proceedings and follow-  
up work for Habitat II.*

INTERNATIONAL  
COLLOQUIUM OF MAYORS ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.  
19 AUGUST 1994



*[We are] convinced of the need to reassess and systematically review the multifaceted aspects of human settlement policies and programmes in the light of important changes in the perception of human settlements problems and the solutions . . .*

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(RESOLUTION 47/180)  
22 DECEMBER 1992

tional reports will be the basic set of indicators that will serve as a diagnostic tool for policy-makers and urban managers. With some external support, an indicators' programme has begun; regional meetings have already been held, and others are planned.

**Documentation:** To establish the thematic and intellectual foundation for a global plan of action through documentation and analysis of trends, issues, policy and programme development. As requested by the General Assembly, the documentation will include an analysis of global and national human settlements trends and issues; a review of progress made in implementing the plan developed at Habitat I in 1976; a report on national and local progress in implementation of Agenda 21 and report on the Global Strategy for Shelter; and an analysis of human settlements policies and programmes and a global plan of action.

**Information/Communication:** To raise awareness and facilitate worldwide information exchange during the preparatory process for Habitat II. The same as in other UN Conferences, the preparatory process provides an opportunity for sharing and learning from each other's experiences. Communications networks are being established to support the two-way flow of information among the various participants during the preparations, and information is being assembled and distributed in appropriate formats. A major initiative is the nomination and selection of 'Best Practices' in improving living environments in all parts of the world. Examples of these 'Best Practices' will be made available by the Secretariat both electronically and in hard copy, the aim being to enable all interested parties to share experiences and learn from one another.

**Operations:** To mobilize and manage available resources for the Habitat II preparatory process in the most cost-effective manner. Obviously, much operational support is required both for the preparatory activities and for the Conference itself. Administration and management, conference servicing, awareness building, and the like are just some of the operational tasks that are required. The General Assembly has estab-

lished two Trust Funds for the Conference — a General Fund for the preparatory phase and a Fund for Least Developed Countries to help them participate "fully and effectively." An appeal has been addressed to member governments of the United Nations by both the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to contribute to the Funds.

It is in the national interest of all countries -- donor countries and developing countries alike -- that Habitat II succeed. For this, it urgently needs the resources that will make it possible to fulfil its goals.

*We are on the road to Istanbul.  
Are you on it, too ?*



Photo: Shelly Rotner



## IMPORTANT DATES

### December 1994

National Progress Reports due

### February - April 1995

Series of Regional Seminars in host countries, on "Financing Shelter and Urban Development" and "Land and Shelter Tenure".

### April 25 - May 1 1995

Fifteenth Session of the Commission on Human Settlements, Nairobi

### April 24 - May 5 1995

Second Preparatory Committee Meeting, Nairobi

### June - July 1995

Series of Workshops in several host countries that will deal with: Making a Living in the City; Urban Civic Spirit; Physiology of the City; Trends in Urban Form; A Place to Live; Moving People and Ideas; The City and the Future of Democracy.

### July - Dec 1995

Series of Colloquia hosted by UN program-

mes and agencies, including UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNIFEM, ILO, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNU and the World Bank. The Colloquia, which will draw on the support and expertise of the UN system, will address cross-cutting issues such as women and children; solidarity; the urban-rural nexus; employment structure; role of cities in new development; new industries and locations.

### Sept - Oct 1995

Regional meetings of national committees to discuss National Reports.

### December 1995

Final National Reports due.

### January 1996

Third Preparatory Committee Meeting, New York.

### June 3 - 14, 1996

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

*The challenge presented by Human Settlements is enormous, and demands that it be preceded by wide-ranging, profound reflection leading to concrete solutions and the formulation of practical recommendations. It is my sincere wish that these deliberations will provide helpful recommendations responding to our determination to meet the urban challenge in a concrete manner.*

HIS EXCELLENCY MR.  
ABDOU DIQUI  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF SENEGAL  
WORLD HABITAT DAY  
DAKAR  
3 OCTOBER 1994

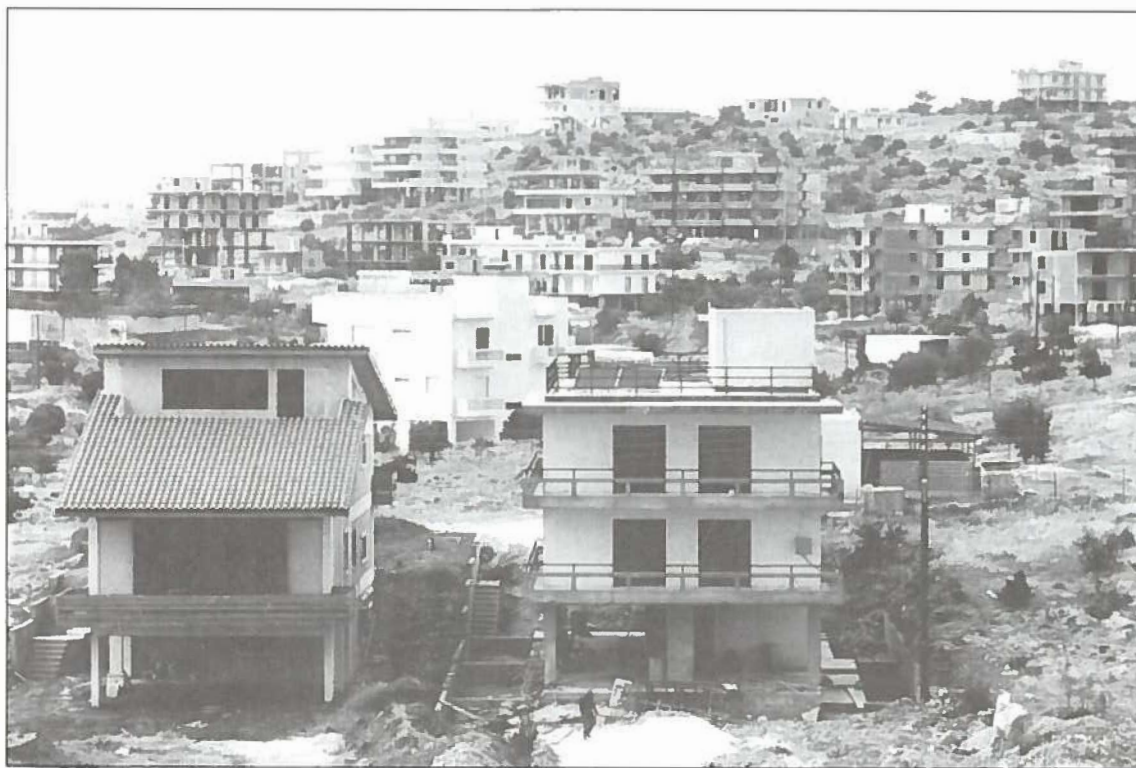


Photo: M. Tzovaras



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Photo: Philip Teuscher



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