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To the United Nations**

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**50TH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE

ITEM 95 :

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

(b) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

**(c) UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE FOR HUMAN
SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)**

NEW YORK, 14 NOVEMBER 1995

Mr. Chairman,

I would first like to express my Delegation's appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General and Secretary-General of Habitat II Conference Dr. N'Dow for his illuminating introductory statement, as well as for the report of the II. Preparatory Committee and the report on regional preparations.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Istanbul Conference approaches, the world is witnessing many events and developments which point to the urgency of the different problems to be tackled by Habitat II.

Only last week in my own country in two big cities, torrential rain and floods caused loss of life and damaged homes and property, mainly due to wrong built settlements, which in turn is a direct result of rapid, uncontrolled urban migration and urbanization. As is known, similar disasters occurred on a larger scale in other countries recently, leaving thousands homeless. Wars waged in our region as well as in other parts of the world have destroyed cities, leaving people homeless, causing migrations that create settlement pressures.

Problems to be covered by the Istanbul Conference are wide ranging and are not confined merely to developing countries. As we approach the 21st century, all nations face similar problems of urbanization caused by explosive population growth. The relentless drive towards urban centers takes place in almost every country. At the end of our century, half of our planet's population will be city dwellers. Thus, the City Summit, as it was rightly named by the Secretary-General, aims to increase global and national awareness of the human settlement problems to highlight their potential role in fostering social progress and economic growth and to encourage world leaders to make commitments towards making the world cities, towns and villages healthy, safe, just, sustainable and liveable.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the Earth Summit, we have witnessed a number of Global Conferences on subjects of crucial importance that were highlighted in Agenda 21, as well as in a series of Conventions, all aimed at bringing into life the objectives that we jointly formulated in Rio.

In this process, Habitat-II is destined to become the last major global Conference of our century.

In Chapter 7 of Agenda 21, to which we all pledged our full support and commitment at the highest level, it is stated that the overall human settlement objective is to improve the social, economic and environmental quality of human settlements and the living and working environments of all people, in particular the urban and rural poor.

Therefore, with the participation of all interest groups such as women, indigenous people, the youth, the elderly, the disabled, local authorities, NGO's, private sector, in short representatives of all strata of the civil society, in decision-making, we have to develop strategies and set priorities in accordance with our national plans and objectives.

The overall objectives in Agenda 21 are:

- Provide adequate shelter for all,**
- Improve human settlement management,**
- Promote sustainable land-use planning and management,**
- Promote the integrated provision of environmental infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage and solid-waste management,**
- Promote sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements,**
- Promote human settlement planning and management in disaster-prone areas,**
- Promote sustainable construction industry activities,**
- Promote human resource development and capacity-building for human settlements development.**

We have to concentrate our efforts and cooperate in achieving these objectives as the 21st century ushers in.

Mr. Chairman,

In this context, the Istanbul Conference should be a Conference of Commitments translating the decisions and resolutions of the previous conferences, into concrete action in support of sustainable development. Therefore, participation at the highest level is very important if these goals are to be achieved.

As we recognize Habitat II as a conference of partnerships, we hope that a broad based participation including all relevant parties will be possible.

The success of Habitat II is closely related to the global plan of action. As was earlier stated by Dr. N'Dow, the global plan of action should provide a new orientation and set up new targets. These should be translated into commitments and action by all the parties concerned. Considerable progress has already been achieved on the draft text by the informal drafting group, at its Paris Meeting. Yet too many brackets still exist in the text. We hope that the documents resulting from the Paris Meeting will be circulated as soon as possible and the third Prepcom in February 1996 will be in a position to produce a satisfactory document with as few brackets as possible to be considered and adopted at the Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a great pleasure as well as a challenge to have been entrusted with the task of organizing the Habitat II. Istanbul, with its unique heritage of three empires as well as its location at the junction of two continents is a good choice as the venue of the Conference. With a population growth rate of 5% per year Istanbul is one of the mega cities of the world. By supplying 40% of overall Turkish economic activity, it is considered to be the backbone of the Turkish economy. As such Istanbul has been a target of mass migration from rural areas, and has been occupied by investors over the last 25 years. Thus it will serve as a laboratory for bringing solutions to the very problems the Conference will focus on. It offers a good example of "best practices", by showing the results of efforts aimed at reviving its natural beauty and historic splendor.

Regarding the preparations for the Conference, I am happy to report that in accordance with the decisions and recommendations adopted by Prepcom I, a broad based national Committee with the participation of all the relevant organizations has been

functioning with 140 representatives from the Government, local authorities, the academic and scientific community, trade unions, private sector and non-governmental institutions.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that we have organized a successful regional preparatory meeting in Ankara on 26-28 October on the preparation of National Reports and Plans of Action with the participation of Albania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

At the second PrepCom held in Nairobi, an International Facilitating Group (IFG) was 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. Following consultations with the NGOs present at the PrepCom II, a professional NGO Secretariat was established and the Host Committee composed of about 20 Turkish NGOs was set up. At the end of September 1995, a joint workshop of the Host Committee and the IFG was held in Istanbul to discuss various issues related to Habitat II, and the details of the NGO Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

May I turn now to the preparations underway in my country. As indicated in the "Road Map to Istanbul" prepared by the Habitat Secretariat, the Conference, the associated fora, and most of the other parallel activities, will be held in, what we call, the "Conference Valley", containing several facilities, among them a congress center, a concert hall, a cultural center, an open air amphitheater, a convention hall, and the meeting halls and the classrooms of Taşkışla building of Istanbul Technical University. 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 to each other and to most of the major hotels. In fact, the number of beds available in hotels of 3+ stars in the close vicinity of the Conference Valley is more than 17 thousand.

The NGO Forum is planned to be held at Taşkışla building of Istanbul Technical University which is about 400 meters from the main Conference venues. With meeting halls and classrooms of various sizes, which can seat from 30 to 300 persons and a large lobby, as well as a spacious inner garden, Taşkışla is perfectly suited for that purpose.

There will be closed circuit TV coverage of events taking place at different premises, so that the participants will be at all times informed about them. Furthermore, one TV and one Radio Channel of the Turkish Radio-Television Authority will be allocated to the UNTV, whose broadcast will also be piped into all the major hotels.

Mr. Chairman,

Following the decision of the PrepCom 1, an International Trade Fair is being organized by my country in conjunction with Habitat II, which will be a self-financing, commercial event. The main themes of the Trade Fair will be innovative, low-cost, appropriate, and environmentally sound products, services and technologies in the fields of housing, construction, and human settlements.

Participation is open to public and private firms and institutions that are engaged in activities related to housing and construction industries, and human settlements. Participants' profile will range from financial institutions to architectural and engineering services, and from building products and system manufacturers to construction companies. Of the exhibition space, 15% is allocated to the Habitat Secretariat to be made available free of charge for use of firms from the least developed countries.

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Up to the present, member States have received information kits concerning the trade fair through their diplomatic missions in Turkey, as well as their national committees and relevant trade associations. To this date, more than 10 thousand square meters of exhibition space has already been reserved by a number of countries.

There will be various exhibitions, colorful cultural activities throughout the day as well as in the evening during the Conference. I should make special mention of the celebration of the World Environment Day in Istanbul during the Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

May I extend my governments invitation to all delegates and interested parties to this historic event.

Thank you.