



**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**  
**MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Statement by H.E. Amb. Wang Xuexian,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the UN  
on Human Settlements and Habitat II  
at the Second Committee of the 50th UNGA**

*14 November 1995*

Mr. Chairman,

Human Settlement is the most fundamental need for the survival of mankind and the enjoyment of adequate shelter by all is the most fundamental right of human beings. This represents a consensus arrived at by the international community. It's true that the human settlement situation world-side witnessed some improvement following Habitat I in 1976, but fundamental solutions are, nevertheless, yet to be worked out. At present, there are still over one billion people without adequate shelter, among which 100 million homeless. The human settlement situation in developing countries is especially acute.

The Global Strategy on Shelter for the Year 2000 has set forth the goal of "the enjoyment of adequate housing by all". This, we believe, is not only a formidable task, but also the main purpose of Habitat II.

The Chinese delegation wishes to set out the following view and proposition:

First of all, efforts are called for to first eradicate poverty in promotion of economic development. Poverty and economic under-development stand out as the main root causes for the deterioration of human settlement situation in developing countries. Only by a complete eradication of poverty in promotion of

sustained and steady economic growth can foundation be laid for a fundamental solution to the problem of human settlements.

Secondly, efforts are called for to check excessive population growth and reinforce environmental protection. While priority accorded to the adequate solution of the problem of urban human settlements, the housing condition and living environment of rural areas should also be improved accordingly.

Thirdly, efforts are called for to mobilize the whole society and resources from all sectors. Resources, whether from governmental or non-governmental organizations, domestic or foreign sources, should all be explored and mobilized. This, we believe, represents an effective way in addressing the housing problem.

Fourthly, efforts are called for on the part of the international community to enter into vigorous and intensified cooperation. It's true that it is the main responsibility of developing countries to solve their own housing problems, but given the global nature of the problem of human settlements, the international community, especially developed countries also have the obligation to create favorable international environment for developing countries in solving their housing problem. In addition, developed countries should provide new and additional resources to developing countries and promote the transfer of technology on favourable terms.

Fifthly, it is important that women, as a vulnerable group, be enabled to participate effectively and their interests be adequately considered and accommodated where possible. They represent an important force with great potential in solving the problem of human settlements. This is a force that cannot be neglected.

Sixthly, it is essential that solutions be worked out in the light of the specific conditions of the various countries. Countries differ from one another in terms of level of economic development, geographical condition, cultural tradition and human habitation, so there cannot be a uniform model. The only viable way is for each country to map out and formulate its own strategy, plan and relevant policies in the light of its specific conditions while taking into account the UN instruments on human settlements.

Seventhly, it is essential that the UN Centre for Human Settlements should play a greater role. As the only organ within the UN system entrusted with the overall responsibility for human settlements, the Centre, we believe, should intensify its cooperation and coordination with other relevant organs in promotion of international cooperation in the field of human settlements and strengthen the

capacity-building in developing countries on this front so as to contribute to the attainment of the goals set forth in the "Global Strategy on Shelter for the Year 2000" and the effective implementation of the relevant chapters of Agenda 21. Furthermore, the Centre should also play a leading role in the preparatory process for Habitat II.

Mr. Chairman, we've noted with appreciation the progress registered at the Second Session of the PrepCom held in April this year and the Meeting of the Drafting Panel on the Global Plan of Action held not long ago. We are of the view that both the Declaration of Principles and the Global Plan of Action for Habitat II are important instruments that will go beyond this century and guide our work in the field of human settlements in the next twenty years to come. The draft texts of the above instruments have basically reflected the principles and contents of the "Global Strategy on Shelter for the Year 2000" and Agenda 21, as well as those of the relevant instruments adopted at ICPD and the Social Summit. However, the above instruments should further highlight international cooperation in the field of human settlements and clearly identify the responsibilities and obligations of states, especially those of developed countries. And we hope that the final documents submitted to Habitat II will be pragmatic documents, capable of genuinely contributing to a solution to the global human settlements.

Mr. Chairman,

China has all along attached importance to housing and urban development. It has formulated a series of housing and urban development policies attuned to its actual conditions. Last year witnessed the ratification of China's Agenda 21, which sets out basic principles, objectives and measures on population, environment and development, as a result, positive results have now been yielded.

On urban development policies, China has adopted an overall strategy for the sustainable development of human settlements, covering such measures as strict control over the size of major cities, rational development of medium-and-small sized cities, active development of small towns in rural areas, and further improvement of the living conditions in villages.

However, China still faces immense challenges and difficulties, and will continue to make unremitting efforts to improve its urban environment, control the overgrowth of urban population, improve the conditions for human settlements and increase employment opportunities.

Mr. Chairman,

China has undertaken a close and earnest study on the preparations for Habitat II. It has set up its National Preparatory Committee, with officials from the Central People's Government and local governments, and from national

commission or agency dealing with population and environmental issues and the media. It has mapped out plans for its preparatory work. It has transmitted, through the media, informations to arouse the interest of the people in Habitat II, and organize various seminars to increase their sense of participation, encouraging them to come up with constructive proposals. It has organized and encouraged housing agencies and civil societies to engage in various activities in the field, and has collected and sorted out informations on human settlements that can be provided to the public. It has also been working on the drafting of its national report and programme of action. In addition, our Construction Ministry and National Preparatory Committee for Habitat II have jointly sponsored the "Exhibition on China's Achievements in Improving Living Environment" during the World Woman's Conference as part of the preparatory work for Habitat II. Through preparation for Habitat II. China will further promote the sustained development of urban areas and the environment for human settlements.

In conclusion, the Chinese Degration also wishes to touch upon the question concerning the post for Chinese translators. The UN Centre for Human Settlement, as we understand, does have an annual budget for such posts, but still no Chinese translators have ever been hired so far due to the fact there are no such posts in the Centre. We hope the Secretariat will immediately take necessary measures so as to ensure that the Chinese language be treated in a fair manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.