



HABITAT CONFERENCE

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

110 w. pender, vancouver, b.c.,
canada. phone 681-5934

Mr. Chairman, Delegates and Visitors; or shall we say Parents,
Brothers, and Sisters,

We are grateful to you for this opportunity of having our voices heard at this Conference which will do so much to determine our future. The world you are now discussing is the one we must live in.

On behalf of the delegates to the Habitat Conference for Children and Youth, I wish to give special thanks to Mr. Enrique Penalosa and Dr. Hugh Keenlyside for their assistance and support; and I would like to thank the Australian delegation for their efforts in making our Conference possible.

Since we comprise at least one third of the world's population, youth should be involved in the decision-making process that directly affects our future. We do not claim to be experts. We merely ask that you accept us for what we are, and involve us in the processes which directly affect our lives. In young people there exists a certain idealism and imagination that is valuable in the planning and administration of human settlements.

What we ask is that you listen to us and recognize us as citizens of today, as well as citizens of tomorrow, and use our abilities to the fullest. We have not had any preparatory meetings, and the suggestions that I will now read to you are the results of ten days of work by a group of young people from different parts of the world.

We must secure basic human needs for every person in the world, such as clean water, food, shelter and living environmental space, basic health care and sanitation, energy, education, jobs, clothing and transportation.

- It is necessary and possible for every human settlement to have its own supply of clean, healthy water. We would like to support the Vancouver Symposium's statement that if one per cent of the world's annual armaments expenditures, were diverted towards the supply of clean water, the world's water problems could be solved within ten years.

- With the every increasing growth in population, and the use of agrarian land for non-agricultural purposes has made the question of food production for all a major concern. This problem could be remedied if all countries are encouraged to develop their own agricultural base, so that they can be self-reliant.

- Every person is entitled to decent shelter. Governments must have a clear policy defining the provision of shelter with adequate living space and a healthy environment. This should take into account the role which can and must be played by the people, both collectively and individually.

- The lack of basic sanitary facilities is a major cause of many diseases today. Therefore Governments and individuals must recognize the need for basic health and sanitary facilities.

- We must conserve our present energy resources by using them more wisely. We could do this by designing appropriate technology to use energy more efficiently..

- We recognize that nuclear power is still unsafe and require further research before its use can be expanded. It is therefore imperative to put greater effort into research for new alternative forms of safe energy, such as solar, geo-thermal, wind and tidal energy, so that in the future, we can be sure that enough energy is produced to satisfy our needs, without neglecting the safety of future generations.

- The importance of education cannot be stressed enough, for it is through education that people are able to acquire the skills and resources with which social and intellectual progress can be made.

- A very serious problem today is the unemployment of youth. Governments must take the initiative to implement major

training schemes to train and mobilize the youth. These schemes could take the form of rural and urban service corps, which through community action would contribute to the improvement of human settlements.

- We suggest a major international effort to recycle clothing to those who are in need.

- We must develop more efficient, non-polluting transportation systems that help to cut-down congestion in the cities, and contribute to greater mobility of people and goods in rural areas.

As youths, we do not speak only for ourselves. We speak for the old, handicapped and disadvantaged as well. These groups must not be isolated from the mainstream of national development - they must be integrated into our society, and their potential developed in order to be contributing members of our communities.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we youth hope that the adults in this Conference will go away convinced that the youth have a vital role to play in the development of human settlements. Chairman Mao, in one of his many writings, had this to say:

"Youth, the world is yours, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours. You, young people, full of vigor and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed in you".

Thank you

10 June 1976