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INDIA
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STATEMENT BY
H.E. MR.HASHIM ABDUL HALIM
INDIAN DELEGATE
IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE
OF THE FIFTIETH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNDER AGENDA ITEMS

- 95 (b) : 'HUMAN SETTLEMENTS' &
95 (c) : 'UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE FOR HUMAN
SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)'

14 November 1995

Mr.Chairman,

I would like to thank the Secretariat for the introductions to the reports we are considering today.

2. Ensuring the fulfilment of the right to adequate housing as a basic human right and working to improve the conditions and management of human settlements have to be an integral part of our efforts to meet the Charter commitment to provide a higher quality of life for all.

3. The right to adequate housing as a basic human right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. At the World Summit for Social Development, our leaders had committed themselves to reaffirm, promote and strive to ensure the realisation of this right.

4. The magnitude of the problem can be gauged from the fact that at least one billion people are estimated not to have access to safe and adequate shelter and sanitation. The Global Strategy on Shelter for the year 2000 was adopted by the GA as far back as 1988. In the discussions leading upto the adoption of Agenda 21, the importance of the question of human settlements was recognized. One entire chapter was devoted to this issue and to suggestions for tackling the problem.

5. Our efforts to improve human settlements will have to take into account the needs of both the rural and urban areas. At the same time, we would also need to recognize that almost 2/3rd of the current net population increase globally is occurring in urban areas. It is estimated that, by the year 2000, almost 50% of the world's population will be living in towns and cities. This would impose enormous strains on the capacity of governments at both national and local levels to mobilise the necessary financial, managerial and technical resources and ensure the availability of adequate infrastructure, supply of utilities and other services. In the rural areas, we would benefit from promoting construction technology based on locally available resources and materials as well as the general growth in employment, output and surpluses in these areas.

6. The overall strategy has to comprise a mix of measures including (i) promoting sustainable land use planning and management; (ii) integrated provision of environmental infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management; promoting sustainable energy and transport systems; (iii) human resource development and capacity building; & (iv) improving human settlement management.

7. My delegation looks forward to a successful conference on human settlements next year in Istanbul. The Government of India has contributed a sum of US\$ 100,000/- to the Trust Fund to facilitate the preparatory process. This is in addition to our annual financial contribution to HABITAT. As a part of this process, we are in touch with the HABITAT II Secretariat to finalise details for India hosting a meeting on 'Access to Land and Security of Tenure' in New Delhi from 17-19 January 1996.

8. As part of our own national preparations, we are engaged in the task of finalising the national report through a participatory process involving wide debate and consultations. India has also submitted sixteen 'Past Practices Case Studies' to the HABITAT II Secretariat. We are actively preparing for participation in the World Fair on Building Materials and Technology planned to be held in Istanbul during the conference. We would also be participating in the conference of South Asian Ministers of Housing and Urban Development scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka later this year.

9. Mr.Chairman, I have briefly outlined our preparations for the conference to indicate to you the importance we attach to this event and to the question of Human Settlements. Let me reiterate, in conclusion, that enhanced international cooperation and support, particularly through provision of financial and technological resources, will be necessary to supplement the efforts of the developing countries to meet this challenge.

Thank you.