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# Attitude toward Habitat worries chief

The senior United Nations figures in charge of the Habitat Conference had a look at conference preparations in Vancouver on Thursday and pronounced them generally good.

But they've got some doubts about the attitude of Canadians and other affluent people toward the conference goals.

"Frankly," said Enrique Penalosa, the conference secretary-general, "one of the bottlenecks we have to overcome is that this conference is being held in Canada and Vancouver."

The bottleneck, he said, is the reluctance of many Canadians to recognize that there is anything wrong with their environment and the way they are building their cities, towns and villages, their settlements.

He said he has encountered the attitude that the big United Nations conference on human settlements is being held in Vancouver simply to show the rest of the world what a lovely settlement Vancouver is and what a wonderful habitat is Canada.

"But this conference is also for Canada," he stressed Thursday at a small public meeting at the University of B.C. "Canada can teach some things, but I'll bet you that Canada has a lot to learn too."

Penalosa is from Colombia where he was a newspaper editor and economist. He's now a UN public servant and has headed the UN's Habitat secretariat since 1974.

He is accompanied on his visit here by Father G. K. Muhoho, president of the UN's conference preparatory committee, and six committee members.

They are being guided by James MacNeill, commissioner general of the Canadian Habitat Secretariat, which is organizing the conference for the UN.

On Thursday afternoon, the group toured the Habitat Forum site at Jer-



—George Diack Photo

SECRETARY-GENERAL PENALOSA . . . "conference also for Canada"

Beach. The forum is a conference for organizations outside of the governments which will be participating in the main Habitat conference.

"A magnificent effort," said Muhoho, after Habitat Forum director Al Clapp pointed out the plans for the forum, which include a 160-foot bar; a restaurant offering ethnic foods and a conference meeting hall that will have one wall capable of being opened to reveal the mountains and the sea on sunny days.

The tour included a series of Indian dances by the Alex Caldwell family from Sur-

The dances surprised some of the British Columbians in the group, but Caldwell explained later that his family is originally from Regina and includes Indians from the Cree and Saulteaux tribes.

They danced the Prairie Chicken Dance, Plains War Dance and Hoop Dance.

"We don't know if we're going to be paid or not," said Caldwell. "We got the call to come down and dance in a hurry."

Penalosa and Muhoho led applause for the dances, then were fed a lunch of B.C. Indian coastal fare, mainly smoked salmon. Penalosa was given a carved Haida

serving tray by Justice Minister Ron Basford.

In his speech Penalosa said that the conference has not been jeopardized by the UN's anti-Zionist vote or fear of demonstrations by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

To the contrary, the publicity given the conference when Vancouver city council voted not to play host resulted in many Canadians becoming aware that an extremely important United Nations conference was going to be held in their country, he said.

Council later agreed to allow the conference after the federal government promised to pay additional money for police and security costs.

Penalosa said the conference is going to be a political one and not a forum for technical experts to solve the world's problems.

"The technology in most of the cases is available," he said. "You don't need to convince the experts because the experts are already convinced. What is badly needed are political commitments at the national and international levels."

He said it was a mistake to consider that the human settlements conference will only deal with housing because human settlements and human environment are two faces of the same coin.

It was another mistake to believe that the world's settlements problems would be solved by halting the population explosion.

He said he hoped that the world's population would be stabilized within 100 years, but that within the next 25 to 30 years the number of settlements on earth would double.

The important thing to be discussed at the conference is what the planet is going to do in the immediate future, because steps taken now will set lifestyles for many centuries.