

**PLAN OF ACTION AND PARTICIPATION
FOR YOUTH IN THE HABITAT II CONFERENCE**

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

BUILDING OUR GLOBAL HOME is the overarching motto for youth involvement in the HABITAT II Conference. This message conveys the local and international dimensions that must be considered when discussing the broader implications of creating sustainable communities of the 21st century. Recognizing that youth are among the most affected by problems of rapid urbanization, homelessness, unemployment, crime and violence, drug abuse, and environmental contamination, they also have an active role to play in the preparation and implementation of such activities.

Youth and children constitute over 50% of the total population in the world. In developing countries, over 60% of the population is under the age of 30 years with about 30% between the ages of 14-25 years. Today over 84% of young people are concentrated in developing countries where the fastest urbanization will occur. These urban centres are often looked to as opportunities for employment, shelter and development. But too often the stress of unsustainable growth and mismanagement of these communities turns the visions of hope into the realization of disappointment and despair.

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) -- dubbed the "City Summit" -- provides an excellent opportunity for the world to review the urbanization question with particular focus on the role and contribution of specific social groups to the development and management of human settlements. In this process the involvement of youth in the conference and its preparatory process will provide a means of empowering young people to take greater responsibility in decision making and action towards improving urban life and environment.

"Youth for HABITAT II" is a partnership of youth and youth organizations around the world that aims to increase the awareness and involvement of young people in the process before, during, and after HABITAT II. It also hopes to bring to the fore many of the "best practices" that youth and youth organizations have and are initiating in their local communities.

[Note: The suggestions of this document reflect consultations held by members of the youth caucus (at the Social Summit, HABITAT II Prep Comm II, and informally); the HABITAT II Secretariat youth focal point; and Youth for HABITAT II, an umbrella group of youth and youth organizations working for youth involvement in the HABITAT II process. The recommendations in this document are in draft version and are being constantly revised and updated in order to incorporate comments and by a wide range of youth organizations, and NGOs worldwide. The suggested activities in this document form a "backbone" of proposed activities for youth involvement in the HABITAT II process.]

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Focal points identified in each region and in HABITAT II offices (Nairobi, New York) will act as the main contact points for the initial dissemination of information and materials. Each regional focal point will be responsible for developing the appropriate communication/information strategy for the region; encouraging regional activities; linking local, regional and international activities in preparation for HABITAT II.

The widest network of youth organizations will be sought to increase awareness, education, and involvement in HABITAT II. A decentralized approach to spreading information will be applied by transmitting information by the contact points to a variety of databases and through a number of umbrella youth organizations. Identified contact points for the regions and offices are:

HABITAT II Turkey	Ms. Sibel Sezer, HABITAT II Project Coordination Unit
HABITAT II Nairobi	Mr. Selman Erguden, HABITAT II Secretariat, UNCHS
HABITAT II New York	Ms. Maria Figueroa
Europe	Mr. Davide Canavesio
Latin America	Mr. Rendell Frederik Brooks
Africa	Ms. Kauna Nghinaunye
Asia	Mr. Kamal Othman
Turkey	Ms. Senem Denktas

ACTIVITIES

The following form some of the "backbone" activities that Youth for HABITAT II and the Secretariat are suggesting to be organized in preparation for the Istanbul Conference. The support of governments, NGOs, private enterprise, and the UN system is critical if effective partnerships and successful activities are to be promoted. To this end, governments, UN system partners, NGOs, and private enterprise are encouraged to support youth groups in their countries to fully participate in the activities of Youth for HABITAT II including endorsements, secretarial assistance, financial contributions, and participation of "experts" in youth initiatives.

Governments, national preparatory committees for HABITAT II, national youth ministries, and government delegations to HABITAT II are strongly encouraged to include the view and participation of youth in their deliberations and action plans (especially in light of the recommendations made in Agenda 21 and other accepted UN documentations supporting the participation of youth in the UN process).

Certainly these activities do not exhaust the many activities that will be planned by youth organizations and others throughout the preparatory process. Our hope is that this information structure will encourage the diversity and creativity of ideas and activities that may be planned for Istanbul.

We encourage interested groups and organizations to be in contact with the identified youth contact points for further information and details.

ANNOTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Before HABITAT II 1. *Airline Outreach Program and Youth Volunteers* (See Annex I and Campaign Istanbul Annotation)

Airline companies in support of promoting travel as a means for increasing multicultural awareness and understanding, and strengthening youth volunteerism world-wide would consider donating travel tickets or reduced rates for youth to participate in volunteer activities arranged within "Campaign Istanbul."

2. *Promotional and Public Relations Materials*

Private corporations, especially, may be interested in sponsoring T-shirts, posters, and stickers for "Youth for HABITAT II." This promotional campaign would publicize the conference as well as be a mark of identification for youth around the world who are working towards HABITAT II. Promotional material could be given free as a gift or sold for fundraising purposes.

A logo for the youth involvement could be designed by Turkish art students, design students, children in consultation with the HABITAT II Secretariat and the UN Department for Public Information.

3. *Youth Video*

A video montage depicting the global situation of youth and HABITAT II issues worldwide could be organized and produced by youth with the support of media organizations and foundations. This video (approx. 15 minutes) would serve as an educational tool for schools and teachers, as a visual promotional aid, as a means of raising awareness of the conference at youth congresses and other meetings, and in the telecommunications programs of broadcasters around the world.

4. *Informational Documents on the World Situation of Youth re: HABITAT issues*

This brief information booklet could present the substantive data of the global youth situation as regards issues of HABITAT II. Current housing situation, population densities, unemployment and crime statistics. This information material would be particularly useful to the information efforts both of the HABITAT II Secretariat, the UNCHS, and the UN Public Information efforts. It would also provide data for the support of substantive and academic research studies and the formulation of national plans.

This information pamphlet could be a highlight of work done in research and surveys carried out by HABITAT II substantive secretariat, UNCHS, DPI, the UN Sub-programme on Youth and other United Nations agencies.

5. *Newsletter*

In order to connect youth and youth organizations to the work being done in the preparatory process for HABITAT II, a newsletter would be launched for the specific purpose of reporting on the work being done by "Youth for HABITAT II" and the HABITAT II Secretariat. It would keep an update on the regional efforts being undertaken, as well as to highlight initiatives at the local, national, and international level. The newsletter would solicit articles from youth around the world and would also provide a bank of information for other industry newsletters, journals, and newspapers to expose the youth and child perspective on these issues.

The newsletter would appear approximately 4 times before the Istanbul conference.

6. *International Youth Consultation*

An internationally representative consultation, bringing together the views of youth from around the world is critical in order to develop an agenda of the youth's priorities and proposals for sustainable human settlements. Recommendations will be submitted for consideration by national governments and preparatory processes and will also influence HABITAT II documents and Prep Comm meetings. The consultations should have two components:

1. National and Regional Consultations
(May 95-February 96 and February 96-June 96)

National and regional consultations would take place, where possible, within the existing calendar of youth meetings planned for the months before HABITAT II. The purposes of the consultations would be to: a) gather the opinions and suggestions of young people regarding the issues of the HABITAT II conference b) submit the recommendations and proposals to the national preparatory processes and the international preparations c) raise awareness among a large and varied constituency of youth interested in the topic d) encourage action oriented projects of youth in this regard d) contribute to the formulation of an international document reflecting the commonalities and diversity of the world situation of youth in relation to HABITAT II.

It is hoped that these national and regional youth consultations would

provide an opportunity for partnerships to be built between youth and the other actors of the preparatory process, government delegations, NGOs, private enterprise, media, and civic groups.

Small delegations of representatives would then be selected by the national and regional processes to attend Prep Comm III in New York, harmonize the recommendations of the various groups that have contributed to the consultation process, and represent this view during the Prep Comm meeting.

National and regional consultations would continue in the period between Prep Comm III and HABITAT II conference for further evaluation at the International Youth Consultation in Istanbul.

2. International Youth Consultation, Istanbul, Turkey (June 1996)

This roundtable event would gather and analyze the concerns of youth in regard to the issues of HABITAT II as gathered by the national and regional consultations and evaluate the progress made by the HABITAT II conference. An important component of the consultation would be a youth implementation plan for the recommendations made by the conference.

The International Youth Consultation would be the substantive "roundtable contribution" to the HABITAT II preparatory conference as envisaged by the conference secretariat and would also provide information to be presented in the Partnership Committee of the conference.

7. *Essay Contests*

Essay Contest may be organized where a certain topic or topics are of interest and pertinence to youth and creating sustainable human settlements. This activity could be encouraged by educators in their classes and winning entries could be exhibited at the HABITAT II forum and through the Internet.

8. *Cultural Project*

A multicultural project (eg: video, cultural show, etc..) which will bring together the diversity of youth in their cultural traditions around the world could be organized as a fundraiser and to promote ideas of international exchange and multicultural understanding.

9. *Voices of Youth*

Interactive electronic mail and bulletin board site may be established with the support of UNICEF and other private funders. The World Wide Web site would allow youth to learn about the objectives of the conference and its relevance to their lives. Comments, articles, opinions, and essays would be solicited from youth and children from around the world on a variety of topics.

The messages from each country could be included in the process of youth consultation, and could also be presented to world leaders on the occasion of the HABITAT II conference. International leaders and youth would be encouraged to maintain a dialogue on the issues.

During HABITAT II 1. *"Campaign Istanbul"*

Youth participating in the HABITAT II conference should leave a demonstrated legacy of civic involvement in their communities, and especially in the city of Istanbul and surrounding areas. Volunteer activities could be identified by Turkish youth organizations in consultation with the host country preparatory committee for HABITAT II that could involve international youth in volunteer activities around the city. These activities could range from environmental clean-up projects, to educational and cultural activities in local schools, to reconstruction or renovation of settlements.

2. *Multimedia Satellite Link-up*

Live telecommunication broadcasting linking youth projects related to the themes of HABITAT II from each of the five continents could be arranged for a specific time on the day of youth activities during HABITAT II. This would be a way to link the local dimension of regional projects initiated and carried out by youth to the international dimension of the urbanization issues being discussed at HABITAT II in Istanbul. The live link-up would reinforce the themes of solidarity among the world's youth who are working for these issues, bring to light the commonality of the problems and the solutions, and show how technology can be used as an effective means of bringing people closer together. Such an interactive link-up may lead to strengthening existing and developing new global youth exchange programmes.

3. *"Youth for HABITAT II" Mural*

A permanent artistic mural could be left as a gift of the youth and children of the world to Istanbul in honour of the HABITAT II conference. This could be an artistic interpretation of young people's vision for better

communities and safer homes. The mural could be coordinated in conjunction with the EcoloArt Global Harmony Mural Project which has already successfully realized murals designed by children and youth including: Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; UNEP, Youth Forums; Capital Children's Museum, Washington, DC, USA.

A contest soliciting drawings from children around the world in relation to HABITAT II is currently being sponsored by Plan International with the support of the government of the Netherlands for HABITAT II. Drawings from this contest could also be incorporated into the mural.

4. *Youth Best Practices Exhibition*

Documentation of best practices on the role and involvement of youth in human settlements planning, development and management would be very useful. Best practices are examples of actions which could serve as applicable models from which others could learn and adopt to their own situations. These are actions, initiatives or projects which have resulted in tangible and measurable improvements in the quality of life and the living environments of people (in this case the youth) in a sustainable way. Best practices may be prepared in written form, with audio/visual materials, slide presentation, posters, photographic or other means. Competitions may be organized at the national and international levels to encourage preparation of these presentations.

A sampling of best practices should be prepared for exhibition at Prep Comm III, New York.

5. *Skill Building Workshops*

In order to benefit from the experience of youth organizations world-wide that have been working on the issues of building sustainable communities, "skill-building" workshops, with the intent on focusing on specific issue and transferring skills that the participants could take back with them to their respective countries and organizations could be shared during several days of the conference. Different from panel presentations, these workshops would focus on practical ways to (ie: writing and submitting grant proposals, working with governmental institutions in a particular country, implementing sustainable technology in community programs, learning practical methods of negotiation and conflict resolution, working with the media and different forms of information dissemination)

6. *Televised Panel Discussion*

Speakers for a panel discussion on the issues affecting youth in human settlements could be invited from the United Nations Secretariat, youth

organizations and groups, related NGOs, central and local governments, national governments, private enterprise, representatives of the host country. The discussion of this panel or roundtable discussion could be broadcast on national and international channels to bring international attention to the situation and activities of youth in the HABITAT II process.

7. *Soccer Game*

A soccer game may be organized between the Turkish National Junior Team and one of the prominent soccer clubs in Turkey who may be interested in promoting the issues of the HABITAT II conference. One or more international soccer celebrities may be invited to play in the youth team which would greatly increase the publicity and attention to this event. The event could raise funds for a human settlements project or youth involvement around the world.

8. *Multicultural Festival and Concert*

International celebrities, youth and children could come together to perform in a musical and multi-cultural festival. This would highlight some of the costumes, music, dances, and practices of young people around the world in celebration of the richness of cultures around the world. The event could be a benefit for human settlements work around the world or for youth participation.

9. *Youth working for HABITAT II*

Young people coming to the Istanbul Conference, could volunteer to run the NGO Forum or provide other logistical support to the conference in return for room and board during the conference process. The group of youth would be drawn mostly from the Turkish population but could also include many young people from abroad, forming an international secretariat.

After HABITAT II Some of the projects mentioned above could be continued beyond HABITAT II (specifically, video and information material, exchange program, best practices projects). Skill building and volunteer events would leave models for civic engagement among youth world-wide and especially among youth in Turkey. The most important follow-up efforts will be made by the youth organizations in partnership with national governments and partners towards the implementation of the principles and commitments agreed to in the Global Plan of Action and in the national reports for HABITAT II. Youth representatives should also be included in the follow up and evaluation sessions foreseen by UNCHS and the UN system.

"Youth for HABITAT II" is a partnership of youth and youth organizations that are preparing for the involvement of young people in the HABITAT II process. Regional contact points have been identified to: 1) facilitate communication and information flows 2) help to coordinate regional and international communication, activities, strategies 3) initiate awareness-building, interest, and activities on the themes of sustainable communities 4) develop a "backbone" of activities to take place before, during and after the Istanbul Conference.

We would appreciate your assistance in passing on these contact names to those people or organizations that are interested in learning more about the involvement of young people in the HABITAT II conference. We welcome learning about their ideas, initiatives and information related to the participation of young people in this process.

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