## PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
Resumed first session
New York, 25-29 August 1975

## PROGRESS REPORT
Report of the Secretary-General

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PROGRESS REPORT

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Background

1. The purpose of this report is to review the progress of the preparatory work for Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, to be held from 31 May to 11 June 1976 at Vancouver, Canada. The report supplements and brings up to date information provided in previous progress reports to the General Assembly, 1/ to the Preparatory Committee of Habitat, 2/ and to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). 3/

2. First session of the Preparatory Committee

2. At its first formal session the Preparatory Committee endorsed the work programme of the secretariat for the preparatory activities leading to the Conference, including the convening of the regional preparatory conferences, the establishment of ad hoc intergovernmental working groups of experts, the decision to seek additional funding for the audio-visual programme from the United Nations Environment Programme, and the scheduling of the future meetings of the Committee.

3. The Committee also made substantial contributions to the elaboration of the conceptual framework for the Conference. An ad hoc working group drew up a list of themes and issues which it felt should be taken up at the Conference and considered for the provisional agenda. The Committee then asked the secretariat to refine this list and prepare a new framework taking into account the suggestions of the working group. 4/

4. The Preparatory Committee also endorsed the idea that interim national reports would be provided by Governments before the regional preparatory conferences and final versions later in the year. In order to enable the Committee to consider the results of the regional preparatory conferences prior to the formulation of the provisional agenda for the Conference, it was decided that the first session of the Committee would be resumed in August 1975 for this purpose and also for the consideration of draft rules of procedure. The draft provisional agenda would then be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.

4/ See the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session (A/CONF.70/PC/11), annex II.
5. The Committee took note of the special importance of the audio-visual component of the Conference and the need for the broadest possible participation by Member States. It also approved the establishment of an advisory panel to advise the secretariat on the audio-visual programme.

3. Contacts with Member States

6. As of 15 July 1975, 107 Member States had designated an individual or organization specifically responsible for co-ordinating their national preparations for the Conference and for ensuring all future contacts with the host Government.

7. Field visits to selected Member States by members of the secretariat have continued to assist Governments in the preparation of national reports, the identification and preparation of audio-visual projects, the designation of national demonstration projects in situ, and generally to provide information and assistance to facilitate the participation of the countries concerned in the preparatory work and in the Conference itself.

8. The Secretary-General of the Conference and his Deputy had made official visits to 69 Member States as of 15 July 1975. Secretariat officers had visited a total of 89 countries as of that date, including 34 in Africa, 25 in Asia and 21 in Latin America. The Secretary-General has also made official visits to the host Government of Canada, and has addressed the regular sessions of the regional economic commissions for Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America.

9. As of 15 July 1975, a total of 78 interim national reports had been received and distributed to the countries of the appropriate regions in the language in which they were provided. As indicated in sections 5 and 7 of this report, there has been an encouraging response as regards the participation by Governments in the regional preparatory conferences and in the audio-visual programme. However, work in certain other areas of the preparatory process, e.g., organization of national preparatory meetings and designation of projects in situ, needs to be intensified.

4. Interagency co-operation

10. The support and collaboration of the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system is considered vital throughout the preparatory process.

11. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Centre for Housing, Building and Planning (CHBP) and other divisions, and the specialized agencies concerned continued work on the preparation of the report on the world situation of human settlements. The Department was represented at the three regional preparatory conferences and contributed a report prepared by CHBP on urban slums and squatter settlements in developing countries.
12. The World Bank and the regional development banks contributed background documents for the regional preparatory conferences. Other intergovernmental organizations also actively contributed to the preparatory process.

13. In addition to the United Nations regional commissions, which acted as co-sponsors of the regional conferences and contributed substantive papers to them, various specialized agencies and other interested bodies of the United Nations were also represented at these conferences (see section 5 below).

5. Regional preparatory meetings

14. Three regional preparatory conferences were organized jointly by the regional economic commissions concerned and the Habitat secretariat. The first, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Western Asia, was held in Teheran from 14-19 June 1975; the second, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, was held in Cairo from 21-26 June; and the third, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America, was held in Caracas from 30 June to 4 July 1975. In addition, a regional consultation was held in Geneva under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Europe on 30 June and 1 July 1975. The reports adopted at the regional meetings are circulated as background information to participants in the resumed session of the Preparatory Committee. 5/

15. The regional meetings were attended by representatives of over 100 member and associate member States of the different regional commissions (28 in Teheran, 27 in Cairo, 24 in Geneva and 27 in Caracas). Most delegations were headed by high officials of the respective Governments and included representatives with a high level of technical competence. A total of 83 specific recommendations were made at the three conferences (29 in Teheran, 25 in Cairo and 29 in Caracas) for consideration by Governments and the world community before, during and after the Conference at Vancouver.

16. Each of the regional meetings revealed a high degree of consensus on the importance of the Habitat Conference and on themes and issues of particular regional urgency and relevance. In each case, the need for concerted action at the national, regional and international levels was recognized. The need to place the Habitat Conference within the over-all context of development and the creation of a new economic order to include all Governments of the world were also stressed.

17. There was also a general conformity of views on major themes and issues among the main regional groupings. At the same time, some differences in emphasis and action priority could be deduced from the discussions, conclusions and recommendations at the various conferences. The chief focus at the Teheran meeting was the relationship between urban and rural problems. At Cairo, greater emphasis was placed on possibilities of regional and international co-operation. At the


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Caracas conference, special importance was given to political action to improve the lot of the more deprived strata of each population, mainly in the urban centres, and to policies governing use and ownership of land. The consultation in Geneva emphasized the need for a more equitable distribution of resources and for firm political commitments regarding new approaches to development to be reflected in human settlement policies.

6. Special meetings

18. An ad hoc meeting of international consultants was organized in London on 10–12 February 1975 to review long-range proposals for human settlements research and thus contribute to the substantive documentation to be submitted to the Conference. A list of priority topics for research was drawn up at the meeting.

19. A meeting of international consultants was held at Dubrovnik from 20–23 May 1975 to seek an intellectual basis for a new interdisciplinary science of human settlements and to assist the secretariat in evolving an ideological framework to guide the next stages of the preparatory process.

7. The audio-visual programme

20. The purpose of the demonstration project presentations at Vancouver is to illustrate what has been done in each country to solve human settlement problems under a wide range of economic, political, cultural and physical conditions.

21. An illustrated pamphlet, Guidelines for Audio-Visual Presentations, has been distributed to the Governments of Member States and to the professionals concerned. Supplementary technical information was issued in May 1975.

22. In April and May of 1975, the secretariat organized three audio-visual workshops for film producers designated by Member States. The workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Mexico City from 27 April to 3 May and was attended by 25 participants from 22 countries. The workshop for Africa, financed by bilateral funds from Sweden, was held in Addis Ababa from 4–10 May and was attended by 38 participants from 25 countries. The workshop for Asia and the Middle East was held at Bangkok from 11–17 May and was attended by 26 participants from 14 countries.

23. Sixty-one countries were represented at the workshops. Some 110 projects, which had either been officially submitted or were still in the planning stage, were discussed. As a result of the workshops, 40 more Governments agreed to participate in the audio-visual programme, thus bringing the total number of Governments to nearly 100 and the total number of projects to over 200.

24. At present it seems likely that over 50 Governments will request financial assistance for their demonstration projects. As of 15 July 1975, the secretariat had received 15 requests, all of which have been met up to a maximum of $10,000 per country. Since this amount would not be sufficient in many cases, in view of...
the number and scope of the presentations that Governments are planning, it is expected that some countries will apply for additional assistance from bilateral sources.

25. The secretariat has explored with the authorities of several European countries the possibilities for financial or technical assistance for the audio-visual programme. A few countries have indicated their willingness to provide such assistance. The secretariat is continuing to seek additional bilateral assistance, as recommended by the panel of audio-visual experts at its meeting in Stockholm in June 1975 (see annex).

26. Technical assistance is being provided on behalf of the secretariat by seven audio-visual producers in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. This includes assisting Governments with script writing, planning of production and budgeting.

27. As part of the new UNEP allotment, the secretariat envisages entering into an agreement with the National Film Board of Canada for the provision of technical back-up service for production in the field and for the language versioning of the finished films. The Canadian Host Secretariat has placed a producer at the disposal of the Habitat secretariat to ensure liaison with the back-up service.

28. The Advisory Panel for the Audio-Visual Programme met in Stockholm on 9 and 10 June 1975. Twelve Governments were represented. The report of the Advisory Panel is to be found in the annex to this report.

29. The deadline for the receipt of film or slide presentations by the secretariat has been fixed at 31 December 1975 so as to allow time for dubbing the sound tracks in the official languages of the United Nations before the opening of the Conference. The secretariat is now concluding negotiations for the production of the language versions.

30. The secretariat has continued its inquiry among the non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and other non-governmental organizations which have established relations with UNEP or which are concerned with Habitat issues as to whether or not they are interested in attending the Vancouver Conference in an observer capacity. As of 15 July 1975, more than 150 NGOs had expressed the desire to participate in the Conference.

31. The NGO Committee for Habitat, a group of non-governmental organizations planning the parallel meeting at Vancouver to be called the Habitat Forum, is working closely with the host Government of Canada and has published the first issue of a newsletter called Habitat Forum News.
9. **Host country arrangements**

32. The Conference secretariat has held a series of meetings with host Government officials to co-ordinate plans for the anticipated requirements of the Conference. A draft agreement has been prepared setting forth the respective responsibilities of the United Nations and of the Government of Canada.

33. The Canadian Host Secretariat convened a meeting with United Nations officials at Vancouver to inspect the proposed facilities for the Conference and to discuss the planning under way to equip four conference rooms and related meeting rooms.

34. At the invitation of the Secretary-General of the Conference and the respective host Governments of the regional preparatory conferences, the Government of Canada took the opportunity to present a description of its plans for the Conference at those meetings.

35. The host Government, in addition to assuming the usual responsibilities required by General Assembly resolution 2608 (XXIV) of 16 December 1969, has offered to co-operate in other activities, such as the NGO Forum.

10. **Information programme**

36. Public information mailings of Conference materials in English, French, and Spanish began in November 1974. As of 15 July 1975, these mailings included 45,000 copies of a Conference leaflet, 25,000 Conference posters, 15,000 poster kits dealing with the audio-visual programme, 4,000 audio-visual brochures and 30,000 copies of two newsletters personally signed by the Secretary-General. The first two issues of a bi-monthly Conference newspaper, *Habitat World*, totalling 40,000 copies, have also been distributed.

37. Other information activities have included the organization of a world-wide series of photographic contests on the theme of human settlements in co-operation with the International Federation of Photographic Art, press "encounters" at each of the regional preparatory conferences, organized in co-operation with the Centre for Economic and Social Information of the Office of Public Information (CESI), and a series of television and radio appeals in support of Conference objectives to be made by national leaders in various parts of the world, beginning in September of this year.

38. The secretariat has also taken part in two meetings of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), at which co-operation with other United Nations bodies in the mounting of Conference-related information programmes was discussed. The Office of Public Information has distributed a poster series and a 12-minute film on the human settlements theme. Human settlements was also the theme of the United Nations Environment Programme's World Environment Day activities on 5 June 1975.

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11. Administrative and financial matters

39. An outline of the administrative and financial arrangements for the Conference made by the United Nations General Assembly and by the UNEP Governing Council was presented to the Preparatory Committee at the first part of its session held in January 1975. 6/

40. At its third session, the UNEP Governing Council adopted decision 37 (III) of 23 April 1975 approving an additional allocation of $1.5 million from the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme. This allocation is in addition to the amount of $1.5 million authorized by UNEP for 1974-1975 pursuant to its agreement to participate in the financing of the exposition element of Habitat.

12. Summary of time-table for preparatory activities

41. The preparatory activities and steps leading to the Conference after the resumed first session of the Preparatory Committee include the following:

(a) Meetings of two ad hoc intergovernmental working groups of experts to advise the Secretary-General on a draft declaration of principles and on international co-operation.
   (Geneva, 22-26 September 1975)

(b) Progress report on Habitat for submission to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.
   (16 September-18 December 1975)

(c) Deadline for designating demonstration projects in situ.
   (30 September 1975)

(d) Deadline for receipt by the secretariat of the national audio-visual presentations.
   (31 December 1975)

(e) Deadline for receipt by the secretariat of the final versions of the national reports.
   (31 December 1975)

(f) Special background document on the world situation of human settlements to be sent to Governments.
   (15 January 1975)

6/ A/CONF.70/PC/2, paras. 37-42.

/...
(g) Second session of the Preparatory Committee to review the final draft of
the declaration of principles, recommendations for national action and proposals
for international co-operation.

(United Nations Headquarters, 14-23 January 1976)

(h) All documentation, including policy recommendations, to be sent to
Governments.

(1 March 1976)

(i) Third session of the Preparatory Committee to finalize arrangements for
the Conference.

(Vancouver, 26-28 May 1976)

(j) Opening of the Conference.

(31 May 1976)
ANNEX

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE ADVISORY PANEL FOR THE HABITAT AUDIO-VISUAL PROGRAMME HELD IN STOCKHOLM, FROM 9-10 JUNE 1975

1. The Advisory Panel for the Habitat Audio-Visual Programme, meeting in Stockholm on 9 and 10 June 1975, adopted the following recommendation:

Considering that:

(a) It has recognized the enormous practical difficulties related to the realization of the audio-visual programme and is satisfied by the progress achieved by the secretariat,

(b) It is impressed by the initiative and work of the Head of the United Nations-Habitat audio-visual programme in its planning and execution,

(c) The deadline for delivering the audio-visual presentation for the language versioning, 31 December 1975, is fast approaching,

(d) Many countries having asked for financial and/or technical assistance will not be able to complete their presentation in time - if at all,

(1) Urges the Habitat secretariat to find ways of immediately speeding up the procedure for allocating the UNEP funds upon receipt of formal requests;

(2) Urges the secretariat to assess bilateral sources of assistance and provide immediate co-ordination with possible recipients.

2. The Panel recognizes that almost 100 countries are now committed to delivering an audio-visual presentation in Vancouver. In this situation it is vital that the secretariat - in close collaboration with the Canadian Host Secretariat - follow very carefully the development of the audio-visual presentation arrangements in Vancouver and ensure that they are satisfactory. Among other things, the Panel stresses such activities as conference news coverage, the use of video-tape recording (VTR), cable television and other means, the co-ordination between the audio-visual programme and the above activities, as well as the provision of as wide a variety as possible of viewing facilities outside the Conference sites, i.e., including the parallel NGO conference.

3. The Panel finds it necessary to meet again during the last week of February 1976 for the purpose of reviewing the state of play and offering advice on immediate solutions.

4. Countries which cannot submit their projects by 31 December 1975 should therefore send a progress report to reach the Habitat secretariat by that date.
5. The Panel deems it essential that:

   (a) Its members attend the Vancouver Conference to make an on-the-spot assessment of the impact of the audio-visual component of the Conference;

   (b) The national producers are included in the national delegations to Vancouver 1976, because of the importance of the audio-visual programme, which is unique in the history of the United Nations.

The Panel recognizes that assistance cannot solve the production problems and that the work ultimately depends heavily on the national producer.

6. It is generally felt that the secretariat might suggest to the developed countries that they provide all six language versions of their audio-visual presentations.

7. The Panel considers the planned film library to be of utmost importance and urges that it be funded and established prior to the Conference so that it can be operational immediately thereafter.