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DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The drafting group designated by the Preparatory Committee prepared the attached revised draft of the Declaration of Principles. To expedite the submission of this paper to the Committee, the secretariat, in consultation with interested delegations, prepared the English, French and Spanish versions simultaneously.

DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

HABITAT: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements,

Having met at Vancouver from 31 May to 11 June 1976,

Aware that the Conference on Human Settlements has been convened as a result of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 and the subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly when the nations of the world expressed their concern over the serious problems of human settlements considered as the environment in which people live,

Noting that the quality of life is greatly influenced by the quality of human settlements,

Being deeply concerned with the serious problems facing the world in providing for the basic needs and improving the level of satisfaction consistent with human dignity for all peoples,

Realizing the necessity of finding general principles that will inspire Governments and the world community to solve problems of human settlements,

Being convinced that the solutions to the problems of human settlements must be seen and conceived as an integral part of the development process of individual nations and the world community at large,

Recalling the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) the World Population Conference (Bucharest, 1974), the United Nations World Food Conference (Rome, 1974), the World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico City, 1975) and the results of the seventh special session of the General Assembly as well as the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and reaffirming the growing bonds of international co-operation and the will of the nations to improve the quality of life for mankind as a whole,

I

Recognizes that:

1. The circumstances of life for vast numbers of mankind in human settlements are unacceptable. Great disparities in the quality of life exist among and within nations and resources have not yet been adequately mobilized to meet these problems.

2. Unless positive and concrete action is taken, these problems, already grave, will persist. Indeed, they are likely to be further aggravated by the continuation of:

Rapid population growth which, if present trends continue, will nearly double in the next 25 years thereby doubling the need for food, shelter and all other requirements for life and human dignity;

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Rapid unplanned urbanization, producing urban growth which leads to overcrowding, pollution, deterioration and disorganization, and psychological tensions in existing and new metropolitan regions;

Rural dispersion as evidenced by small scattered settlements which inhibit the provision of infrastructure and services;

The deterioration of social, ecological and environmental conditions exemplified by social segregation, the breakdown of traditional social relationships and cultural values and the progressively more severe degradation of the natural environment, as life-supporting resources of air, water and land become contaminated;

Unbalanced economic development, which is reflected in the wide disparities in wealth which now exist between different sections of mankind and which condemn millions of people to a life of poverty, often without even satisfying the basic necessities of food and shelter.

3. These problems pose a formidable challenge to our understanding, imagination, ingenuity and resolve; a challenge to set new priorities to add a qualitative dimension to economic development and to provide the leadership and political commitment which will mobilize the resources of mankind. (But we must not be daunted by the task. The dimensions of the challenge to human settlements policy have been defined: during the next quarter of a century man must plan and build again as much as now exists.)*

4. The challenge provides the opportunities for changing the living conditions of the majority of mankind by:

- (i) Adopting a bold, meaningful and effective human settlements policy strategy, realistically adapted to the indigenous conditions of the locality to which it is applied;
- (ii) Creating more livable, aesthetically attractive and resource efficient settlements of human scale with social justice for every individual human being;
- (iii) Creating possibilities for effective participation by all people in the planning and building of human settlements;
- (iv) Developing innovative approaches in planning and building human settlements by applying and making available appropriate technology;
- (v) Exploiting the unprecedented means of communications among and within countries for facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of human settlements;
- (vi) Expanding the strong and growing bonds of international co-operation, both regionally and globally.

* Idea could be incorporated either in para. 3 or in para. 4.

5. If we are to succeed in seizing these opportunities, human settlements must be seen as an instrument of development. The goals of settlement policies are linked inseparably to the goals of every sector of social and economic life. The solutions to the problems of human settlements must therefore be seen and conceived as an integral part of the development process of individual nations and the world community.

6. With these opportunities and considerations in mind, and being agreed on the necessity of finding common principles that will inspire Governments and the world community to solve the problems of human settlements, the Conference recommends the following general principles and guidelines for action:

II

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Human beings are the most important element in the universe. The primary objective of public policy is to achieve a progressive improvement in the quality of life beginning with the most basic needs of all people - food, shelter, employment, health, freedom and dignity and opportunity for personal fulfilment - without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth, or other status.

2. In striving to improve the quality of life, priority must be given to the needs of the least advantaged people as defined by the people themselves.

3. Economic development should contribute to the satisfaction of human needs and is a necessary means toward achieving a better quality of life provided that it contributes to a more equitable distribution of the benefits to improve human welfare and social justice.

4. Human dignity and the exercise of free choice consistent with over-all public welfare are basic rights which must be assured in every society. It is therefore the duty of all people to join in the struggle against any form of colonialism, foreign aggression and occupation, domination, apartheid and any other discrimination.

5. Every nation has the right to choose its economic, political and social system in accordance with the freely expressed will of its people

(and to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and economic activities.) 1/

(and to exercise authority over all its resources and the activities within its borders, subject to international law and those treaties and contracts to which it has subscribed.) 1/

1/ Alternative formulations for consideration.

6. The environment is the common property of all mankind. Nations should seek to avoid major and undesirable disturbances of the biosphere. The necessity to live in productive harmony with nature must be recognized by all peoples. All human acts must therefore be guided by a deep respect for the protection of the natural environment upon which depends the survival of life itself.

7. All nations must join in the effort to end irresponsible exploitation of all resources which may become either physically exhausted or lose their capacity to regenerate. All nations also have the responsibility to ensure the national use of such resources in the best interests of future generations. (Special attention should be given to the waste and misuse of resources through war and armaments. All nations should seek to promote general and complete disarmament, under effective international control, with the goal of using the resources thus released to achieve a better quality of life.) 2/

8. (The declaration of the United Nations on the New International Economic Order should be the principle upon which the redistribution of resources among nations should be based.) 3/

(To achieve universal improvement in the quality of life, there should be a more balanced and equitable structure of economic relations among nations. Included is the more equitable distribution of opportunities, goods and services. The achievement of these goals can help lead to a new international economic order.) 3/

9. Women, who constitute more than half the world's population and human resources must be fully involved in efforts to improve the quality of life and should have equal opportunity to participate actively in that process.

III

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

1. National Governments should assume the responsibility for establishing human settlement policies. Such policies must be an essential component of an over-all development strategy, linking and harmonizing it with policies on industrialization, agriculture, social welfare, and environmental and cultural preservation so that each supports the other in the promotion of national development.

2. A human settlement policy must seek to achieve the harmonious integration or co-ordination of a wide variety of components, including, for example, population growth and distribution, employment, shelter, physical and social

2/ Formulation included, but not discussed in the Drafting Committee - for consideration.

3/ Alternative formulations for consideration.

services and infrastructure. Governments should ensure that mechanisms and institutions are created to develop and implement a settlement policy which is comprehensive.

3. The demographic characteristics of the contemporary world make necessary in many countries the adoption by Governments of policies related to the growth and distribution of population in order to orient the rural-urban migration, ensure planned urbanization, and minimize rural dispersion so as to achieve a balanced regional development.

4. Human settlement programmes should establish and progressively extend and raise standards for an acceptable quality of life and at the same time discourage conspicuous consumption with a view to making available scarce resources for a better and more equitable distribution. These standards will vary within and between countries, as well as over periods of time, and therefore must be regularly reviewed. Some standards are most appropriately defined in quantitative terms, thus providing precisely defined targets. Others must be qualitative, with their achievement subject to felt need.

5. Access to adequate shelter and services is a basic human right which places an obligation on Governments to help all people to achieve them, consistent with resources, and beginning with direct assistance to the least advantaged, including guided programmes of self-help. At the same time, Governments should endeavour to remove all impediments, which unnecessarily hinder attainment of these goals. Of special importance is the reduction and ultimate elimination of social segregation.

6. Health is an essential element in the proper development of human settlements. Accordingly, human settlement policies should ensure adequate provision of basic health services to all individuals.

7. Basic to human dignity is the right of people, individually and collectively to participate directly in shaping the policies and programmes that affect their lives. The process of choosing and carrying out a given course of action on human settlement issues should be designed to fulfill that right. Government at all levels has the responsibility to provide channels for continuous interaction so that people can participate widely and effectively. Effective human settlement policies, in short, require a co-operative relationship between a Government and its people.

8. The most effective use possible must be made of all human resources, one of a nation's most important assets. Women must be enlisted equally with men, the unskilled with the skilled. To promote the mobilization of human resources Governments must provide training which should be co-ordinated with a technology that is appropriate to national, regional and local conditions, and provide adequate opportunities for productive employment.

9. Land must be recognized as an essential element in human settlements development, both urban and rural, because of its limited supply. This fact makes

it necessary to recognize that the use and tenure of land should be subject to public control in the interest of social justice for the whole population. Legislation should be enacted to ensure that land is used in the public interest. Land use controls or other government measures should seek to capture for the benefit of society the value added to the land by public decision and investment. Governments should ensure that the invaluable resource of prime agricultural land is not diverted indiscriminately from its vital use in food production.

10. Harmonious development of human settlements requires the reduction of disparities between rural and urban areas, within urban areas themselves and between the regions. Human settlements are characterized by significant disparities of living standards and opportunities. Governments should therefore adopt policies which will tend to equalize the living standards and opportunities between urban and non-urban areas so that people may exercise a freer choice in their selection of habitat and style of life. Towards this end, Governments should attach great importance to adopting appropriate townplanning and architectural and engineering concepts and controls to improve the urban settlements. Governments should also evolve policies for rural development to increase the opportunities for a better, healthier and more comfortable living.

11. Diversity in the characteristics of settlements must be respected and encouraged. The limitless variety of human experience and aspiration is reflected in the forms of human settlements for which no single model can be conceived. It is therefore essential that there be respect for a diversity of settlement forms, whether they arise from historical tradition or from contemporary social experiment.

12. Cultural and aesthetic values embodied in settlements must be respected. A human settlement is not merely a grouping of people, shelters and work places, but also embodies cultural and aesthetic values as in areas of historical, religious or archaeological importance. These values and traditions must be preserved for the benefit of all.

13. The world's knowledge and experience in matters affecting human settlements must be available to all. Governments and the international community should facilitate the transfer of relevant technology and experience and should encourage and assist the creation of endogenous technology, particularly for the benefit of developing countries.

14. International co-operation should contribute to national efforts to improve the quality of life in human settlements by an expanded exchange of knowledge and experience, through co-operation and research, and by more effectively mobilizing resources. Valuable progress has already been achieved in articulating the principles that should govern international co-operation and development assistance. Some principles have been stated in the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States; others in the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order; still others have emerged from previous United Nations conferences: the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) the World Population

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Conference (Bucharest, 1974), the United Nations World Food Conference (Rome, 1974) and the World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico City, 1975). The international community must constantly bear in mind/reaffirm these principles and, at the same time, seek new and more effective ways to support the self-reliant development of those societies that are struggling to meet the human settlement challenges facing them.
