

## **International Agreements on Housing and Gender**

compiled by UNED Forum

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Art. 25

Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Art.11

Habitat II Conference, Istanbul 1996

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## **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

### **Article 25**

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

## **Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

### **Article 11**

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

(b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

## **Habitat II, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements**

7. As human beings are at the centre of our concern for sustainable development, they are the basis for our actions as in implementing the Habitat Agenda. We recognize the particular needs of women, children and youth for safe, healthy and secure living conditions. We shall intensify our efforts to eradicate poverty and discrimination, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and to provide for basic needs, such as education, nutrition and life-span health care services, and, especially, adequate shelter for all. To this end, we commit ourselves to improving the living conditions in human settlements in ways that are consonant with local needs and realities, and we acknowledge the need to address the global, economic, social and environmental trends to ensure the creation of better living environments for all people. We shall also ensure the full and equal participation of all women and men, and the effective participation of youth, in political, economic and social life. We shall promote full accessibility for people with disabilities, as well as gender equality in policies, programmes and projects for shelter and sustainable human settlements development. We make these commitments with particular reference to the more than one billion people living in absolute poverty and to the members of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups identified in the Habitat Agenda.

## **Habitat Agenda**

### **III Commitments**

#### **D. Gender equality (1)**

46. We commit ourselves to the goal of gender equality in human settlements development. We further commit ourselves to:

- (a) Integrating gender perspectives in human settlements related legislation, policies, programmes and projects through the application of gender-sensitive analysis;
- (b) Developing conceptual and practical methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives in human settlements planning, development and evaluation, including the development of indicators;
- (c) Collecting, analysing and disseminating gender-disaggregated data and information on human settlements issues, including statistical means that recognize and make visible the unremunerated work of women, for use in policy and programme planning and implementation;
- (d) Integrating a gender perspective in the design and implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable resource management mechanisms, production techniques and infrastructure development in rural and urban areas;
- (e) Formulating and strengthening policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision-making.

#### Notes

(1) The statement on the commonly understood meaning of the term "gender", presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women by the President of the Conference, is reproduced in Annex V to the present report (The Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.)

## Habitat II

### I - Preamble

1. We recognize the imperative need to improve the quality of human settlements, which profoundly affects the daily lives and well-being of our peoples. There is a sense of great opportunity and hope that a new world can be built, in which economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development can be realized through solidarity and cooperation within and between countries and through effective partnerships at all levels. International cooperation and universal solidarity, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and in a spirit of partnership, are crucial to improving the quality of life of the peoples of the world.

2. The purpose of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) is to address two themes of equal global importance: "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world". Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, including adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements, and they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

3. As to the first theme, a large segment of the world's population lacks shelter and sanitation, particularly in developing countries. We recognize that access to safe and healthy shelter and basic services is essential to a person's physical, psychological, social and economic well-being and should be a fundamental part of our urgent actions for the more than one billion people without decent living conditions. Our objective is to achieve adequate shelter for all, especially the deprived urban and rural poor, through an enabling approach to the development and improvement of shelter that is environmentally sound.

4. As to the second theme, sustainable development of human settlements combines economic development, social development and environmental protection, with full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and offers a means of achieving a world of greater stability and peace, built on ethical and spiritual vision. Democracy, respect for human rights, transparent, representative and accountable government and administration in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are indispensable foundations for the realization of sustainable development. The lack of development and the existence of widespread absolute poverty can inhibit the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and undermine fragile democracy and popular participation. Neither of them, however, can be invoked to justify violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

5. Recognizing the global nature of these issues, the international community, in convening Habitat II, has decided that a concerted global approach could greatly enhance progress towards achieving these goals. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized

countries, environmental degradation, demographic changes, widespread and persistent poverty, and social and economic inequality can have local, cross-national and global impacts. The sooner communities, local governments and partnerships among the public, private and community sectors join efforts to create comprehensive, bold and innovative strategies for shelter and human settlements, the better the prospects will be for the safety, health and well-being of people and the brighter the outlook for solutions to global environment and social problems.

6. Having considered the experience since the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, Habitat II reaffirms the results from relevant recent world conferences and has developed them into an agenda for human settlements: the Habitat Agenda. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - the Earth Summit - held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, produced Agenda 21. At that Conference, the international community agreed on a framework for the sustainable development of human settlements. Each of the other conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994), the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Yokohama, 1994) and the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), as well as the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990) and the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), also addressed important social, economic and environmental issues, including components of the sustainable development agenda, for which successful implementation requires action at the local, national and international levels. The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted in 1988, which emphasizes the need for improved production and delivery of shelter, revised national housing policies and an enabling strategy, offers useful guidelines for the realization of adequate shelter for all in the next century.

7. During the course of history, urbanization has been associated with economic and social progress, the promotion of literacy and education, the improvement of the general state of health, greater access to social services, and cultural, political and religious participation. Democratization has enhanced such access and meaningful participation and involvement for civil society actors, for public-private partnerships, and for decentralized, participatory planning and management, which are important features of a successful urban future. Cities and towns have been engines of growth and incubators of civilization and have facilitated the evolution of knowledge, culture and tradition, as well as of industry and commerce. Urban settlements, properly planned and managed, hold the promise for human development and the protection of the world's natural resources through their ability to support large numbers of people while limiting their impact on the natural environment. The growth of cities and towns causes social, economic and environmental changes that go beyond city boundaries. Habitat II deals with all settlements - large, medium and small - and reaffirms the need for universal improvements in living and working conditions.

8. To overcome current problems and to ensure future progress in the improvement of economic, social and environmental conditions in human settlements, we must begin with a recognition of the challenges facing cities and towns. According to current projections, by the turn of the century, more than three billion people - one half of the world's population - will live and work in urban areas. The most serious problems confronting cities and towns and their inhabitants include inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, spreading homelessness and expansion of squatter settlements, increased poverty and a widening gap between rich and poor, growing insecurity and rising crime rates, inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure, lack of health and educational facilities, improper land use, insecure land tenure, rising traffic congestion, increasing pollution, lack of green spaces, inadequate water supply and sanitation, uncoordinated urban development and an increasing vulnerability to disaster. All of these have seriously challenged the capacities of Governments, particularly those of developing countries, at all levels to realize economic development, social development and environmental protection, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development - the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Rapid rates of international and internal migration, as well as population growth in cities and towns, and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption raise these problems in especially acute forms. In these cities and towns, large sections of the world's urban population live in inadequate conditions and are confronted with serious

problems, including environmental problems, that are exacerbated by inadequate planning and managerial capacities, lack of investment and technology, and insufficient mobilization and inappropriate allocation of financial resources, as well as by a lack of social and economic opportunities. In the case of international migration, migrants have needs for housing and basic services, education, employment and social integration without a loss of cultural identity, and they are to be given adequate protection and attention within host countries.

9. In the process of globalization and growing interdependence, rural settlements represent a great challenge and opportunity for renewed developmental initiatives at all levels and in all fields. Many rural settlements, however, are facing a lack or an inadequacy of economic opportunities, especially employment, and of infrastructure and services, particularly those related to water, sanitation, health, education, communication, transportation and energy. Appropriate efforts and technologies for rural development can help to reduce, inter alia, imbalances, unsustainable practices, poverty, isolation, environmental pollution and insecure land tenure. Such efforts can contribute to improving the linkage of rural settlements with the mainstream of economic, social and cultural life, to assuring sustainable communities and safe environments, and to reducing pressures on urban growth.

10. Cities, towns and rural settlements are linked through the movements of goods, resources and people. Urban-rural linkages are of crucial importance for the sustainability of human settlements. As rural population growth has outpaced the generation of employment and economic opportunities, rural-to-urban migration has steadily increased, particularly in developing countries, which has put enormous pressure on urban infrastructure and services already under serious stress. It is urgent to eradicate rural poverty and to improve the quality of living conditions, as well as to create employment and educational opportunities in rural settlements, regional centres and secondary cities. Full advantage must be taken of the complementary contributions and linkages of rural and urban areas by balancing their different economic, social and environmental requirements.

11. More people than ever are living in absolute poverty and without adequate shelter. Inadequate shelter and homelessness are growing plights in many countries, threatening standards of health, security and even life itself. Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

12. The rapidly increasing number of displaced persons, including refugees, other displaced persons in need of international protection and internally displaced persons, as a result of natural and human-made disasters in many regions of the world, is aggravating the shelter crisis, highlighting the need for a speedy solution to the problem on a durable basis.

13. The needs of children and youth, particularly with regard to their living environment, have to be taken fully into account. Special attention needs to be paid to the participatory processes dealing with the shaping of cities, towns and neighbourhoods; this is in order to secure the living conditions of children and of youth and to make use of their insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment. Special attention must be paid to the shelter needs of vulnerable children, such as street children, refugee children and children who are victims of sexual exploitation. Parents and other persons legally responsible for children have responsibilities, rights and duties, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to address these needs.

14. In shelter and urban development and management policies, particular attention should be given to the needs and participation of indigenous people. These policies should fully respect their identity and culture and provide an appropriate environment that enables them to participate in political, social and economic life.

15. Women have an important role to play in the attainment of sustainable human settlements. Nevertheless, as a result of a number of factors, including the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women and discrimination against women, women face particular constraints in obtaining adequate shelter and in fully participating in decision-making related to sustainable human settlements. The empowerment of women and their full and equal participation in political, social and economic life, the improvement of health and the eradication of poverty are essential to achieving sustainable human settlements.

16. Encountering disabilities is a part of normal life. Persons with disabilities have not always had the opportunity to participate fully and equally in human settlements development and management,

including decision-making, often owing to social, economic, attitudinal and physical barriers, and discrimination. Such barriers should be removed and the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities should be fully integrated into shelter and sustainable human settlement plans and policies to create access for all.

17. Older persons are entitled to lead fulfilling and productive lives and should have opportunities for full participation in their communities and society, and in all decision-making regarding their well-being, especially their shelter needs. Their many contributions to the political, social and economic processes of human settlements should be recognized and valued. Special attention should be given to meeting the evolving housing and mobility needs in order to enable them to continue to lead rewarding lives in their communities.

18. Although many countries, particularly developing countries, lack the legal, institutional, financial, technological and human resources to respond adequately to rapid urbanization, many local authorities are taking on these challenges with open, accountable and effective leadership and are eager to bring people into the sustainable development process. Enabling structures that facilitate independent initiative and creativity, and that encourage a wide range of partnerships, including partnership with the private sector, and within and between countries, should be promoted. Furthermore, empowering all people, especially those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, in particular people living in poverty, to participate equally and effectively in all activities related to human settlements is the basis for civic engagement and should be facilitated by national authorities. Indeed, the Habitat Agenda provides a framework to enable people to take responsibility for the promotion and creation of sustainable human settlements.

19. Human settlements problems are of a multidimensional nature. It is recognized that adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development are not isolated from the broader social and economic development of countries and that they cannot be set apart from the need for favourable national and international frameworks for economic development, social development and environmental protection, which are indispensable and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

20. There are critical differences regarding human settlements in different regions and countries and within countries. The differences, specific situations and varying capacities of each community and country need to be taken into account in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In this context, international, regional, subregional, national and local cooperation and partnerships, institutions such as the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), as well as resources, are central to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

21. The Habitat Agenda is a global call to action at all levels. It offers, within a framework of goals and principles and commitments, a positive vision of sustainable human settlements - where all have adequate shelter, a healthy and safe environment, basic services, and productive and freely chosen employment. The Habitat Agenda will guide all efforts to turn this vision into reality.

## **II - Goals and Principles**

22. The objectives of the Habitat Agenda are in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

23. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

24. Implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including implementation through national laws and development priorities, programmes and policies, is the sovereign right and responsibility of each State in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and taking into account the significance of and with full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds, and philosophical convictions of individuals and their communities, contributing to the full enjoyment by all of their human rights in order to achieve the objectives of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development.

25. We, the States participating in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), are committed to a political, economic, environmental, ethical and spiritual vision of human

settlements based on the principles of equality, solidarity, partnership, human dignity, respect and cooperation. We adopt the goals and principles of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. We believe that attaining these goals will promote a more stable and equitable world that is free from injustice and conflict and will contribute to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. Civil, ethnic and religious strife, violations of human rights, alien and colonial domination, foreign occupation, economic imbalances, poverty, organized crime, terrorism in all its forms, and corruption are destructive to human settlements and should therefore be denounced and discouraged by all States, which should cooperate to achieve the elimination of such practices and all unilateral measures impeding social and economic development. At the national level we will reinforce peace by promoting tolerance, non-violence and respect for diversity and by settling disputes by peaceful means. At the local level, the prevention of crime and the promotion of sustainable communities are essential to the attainment of safe and secure societies. Crime prevention through social development is one crucial key to these goals. At the international level, we will promote international peace and security and make and support all efforts to settle international disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

26. We reaffirm and are guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring the full realization of the human rights set out in international instruments and in particular, in this context, the right to adequate housing as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and provided for in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, taking into account that the right to adequate housing, as included in the above-mentioned international instruments, shall be realized progressively. We reaffirm that all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. We subscribe to the principles and goals set out below to guide us in our actions.

I

27. Equitable human settlements are those in which all people, without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, have equal access to housing, infrastructure, health services, adequate food and water, education and open spaces. In addition, such human settlements provide equal opportunity for a productive and freely chosen livelihood; equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance, the ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies; equal opportunity for personal, spiritual, religious, cultural and social development; equal opportunity for participation in public decision-making; equal rights and obligations with regard to the conservation and use of natural and cultural resources; and equal access to mechanisms to ensure that rights are not violated. The empowerment of women and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, whether rural or urban, are fundamental to sustainable human settlements development.

II

28. The eradication of poverty is essential for sustainable human settlements. The principle of poverty eradication is based on the framework adopted by the World Summit for Social Development and on the relevant outcomes of other major United Nations conferences, including the objective of meeting the basic needs of all people, especially those living in poverty and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, particularly in the developing countries where poverty is acute, as well as the objective of enabling all women and men to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen and productive employment and work.

III

29. Sustainable development is essential for human settlements development, and gives full consideration to the needs and necessities of achieving economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Special consideration should be given to the specific situation and needs of developing countries and, as appropriate, of countries with economies in transition. Human settlements shall be planned, developed and improved in a manner that takes full account of sustainable development principles and all their components, as set out in Agenda 21 and related

outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Sustainable human settlements development ensures economic development, employment opportunities and social progress, in harmony with the environment. It incorporates, together with the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which are equally important, and other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the principles of the precautionary approach, pollution prevention, respect for the carrying capacity of ecosystems, and preservation of opportunities for future generations. Production, consumption and transport should be managed in ways that protect and conserve the stock of resources while drawing upon them. Science and technology have a crucial role in shaping sustainable human settlements and sustaining the ecosystems they depend upon. Sustainability of human settlements entails their balanced geographical distribution or other appropriate distribution in keeping with national conditions, promotion of economic and social development, human health and education, and the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components, and maintenance of cultural diversity as well as air, water, forest, vegetation and soil qualities at standards sufficient to sustain human life and well-being for future generations.

#### IV

30. The quality of life of all people depends, among other economic, social, environmental and cultural factors, on the physical conditions and spatial characteristics of our villages, towns and cities. City layout and aesthetics, land-use patterns, population and building densities, transportation and ease of access for all to basic goods, services and public amenities have a crucial bearing on the liveability of settlements. This is particularly important to vulnerable and disadvantaged persons, many of whom face barriers in access to shelter and in participating in shaping the future of their settlements. People's need for community and their aspirations for more liveable neighbourhoods and settlements should guide the process of design, management and maintenance of human settlements. Objectives of this endeavour include protecting public health, providing for safety and security, education and social integration, promoting equality and respect for diversity and cultural identities, increased accessibility for persons with disabilities, and preservation of historic, spiritual, religious and culturally significant buildings and districts, respecting local landscapes and treating the local environment with respect and care. The preservation of the natural heritage and historical human settlements, including sites, monuments and buildings, particularly those protected under the UNESCO Convention on World Heritage Sites, should be assisted, including through international cooperation. It is also of crucial importance that spatial diversification and mixed use of housing and services be promoted at the local level in order to meet the diversity of needs and expectations.

#### V

31. The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and husband and wife should be equal partners. The rights, capabilities and responsibilities of family members must be respected. Human settlements planning should take into account the constructive role of the family in the design, development and management of such settlements. Society should facilitate, as appropriate, all necessary conditions for its integration, reunification, preservation, improvement, and protection within adequate shelter and with access to basic services and a sustainable livelihood.

#### VI

32. All people have rights and must also accept their responsibility to respect and protect the rights of others - including future generations - and to contribute actively to the common good. Sustainable human settlements are those that, inter alia, generate a sense of citizenship and identity, cooperation and dialogue for the common good, and a spirit of voluntarism and civic engagement, where all people are encouraged and have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making and development. Governments at all appropriate levels, including local authorities, have a responsibility to ensure access to education and to protect their population's health, safety and general welfare. This requires, as appropriate, establishing policies, laws and regulations for both public and private activities, encouraging responsible private activities in all fields, facilitating community groups' participation, adopting transparent procedures, encouraging public-spirited leadership and public-

private partnerships, and helping people to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities through open and effective participatory processes, universal education and information dissemination.

#### VII

33. Partnerships among countries and among all actors within countries from public, private, voluntary and community-based organizations, the cooperative sector, non-governmental organizations and individuals are essential to the achievement of sustainable human settlements development and the provision of adequate shelter for all and basic services. Partnerships can integrate and mutually support objectives of broad-based participation through, inter alia, forming alliances, pooling resources, sharing knowledge, contributing skills and capitalizing on the comparative advantages of collective actions. The processes can be made more effective by strengthening civil organizations at all levels. Every effort must be made to encourage the collaboration and partnership of all sectors of society and among all actors in decision-making processes, as appropriate.

#### VIII

34. Solidarity with those belonging to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including people living in poverty, as well as tolerance, non-discrimination and cooperation among all people, families and communities are foundations for social cohesion. Solidarity, cooperation and assistance should be enhanced by the international community as well as by States and all other relevant actors in response to the challenges of human settlements development. The international community and Governments at all appropriate levels are called upon to promote sound and effective policies and instruments, thereby strengthening cooperation among Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as to mobilize complementary resources to meet these challenges.

#### IX

35. To safeguard the interests of present and future generations in human settlements is one of the fundamental goals of the international community. The formulation and implementation of strategies for human settlements development are primarily the responsibility of each country at the national and local levels within the legal framework of each country, inter alia, by creating an enabling environment for human settlements development, and should take into account the economic, social and environmental diversity of conditions in each country. New and additional financial resources from various sources are necessary to achieve the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. The existing resources available to developing countries - public, private, multilateral, bilateral, domestic and external - need to be enhanced through appropriate and flexible mechanisms and economic instruments to support adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. These should be accompanied by concrete measures for international technical cooperation and information exchange.

#### X

36. Human health and quality of life are at the centre of the effort to develop sustainable human settlements. We therefore commit ourselves to promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equal access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical, mental and environmental health, and the equal access of all to primary health care, making particular efforts to rectify inequalities relating to social and economic conditions, including housing, without distinction as to race, national origin, gender, age, or disability, respecting and promoting our common and particular cultures. Good health throughout the life-span of every man and woman, good health for every child, and quality education for all are fundamental to ensuring that people of all ages are able to develop their full capacities in health and dignity and to participate fully in the social, economic and political processes of human settlements, thus contributing, inter alia, to the eradication of poverty. Sustainable human settlements depend on the interactive development of policies and concrete actions to provide access to food and nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, and universal access to the widest range of primary health-care services, consistent with the report of the International Conference on Population and Development; to eradicate major diseases that take a heavy toll of human lives, particularly childhood diseases; to create safe places to work and live; and to protect the environment.

### **III Commitments**

#### **A. Adequate shelter for all**

39. We reaffirm our commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, as provided for in international instruments. In this context, we recognize an obligation by Governments to enable people to obtain shelter and to protect and improve dwellings and neighbourhoods. We commit ourselves to the goal of improving living and working conditions on an equitable and sustainable basis, so that everyone will have adequate shelter that is healthy, safe, secure, accessible and affordable and that includes basic services, facilities and amenities, and will enjoy freedom from discrimination in housing and legal security of tenure. We shall implement and promote this objective in a manner fully consistent with human rights standards.

40. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

- (a) Ensuring consistency and coordination of macroeconomic and shelter policies and strategies as a social priority within the framework of national development programmes and urban policies in order to support resource mobilization, employment generation, poverty eradication and social integration;
- (b) Providing legal security of tenure and equal access to land to all people, including women and those living in poverty; and undertaking legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies;
- (c) Promoting access for all people to safe drinking water, sanitation and other basic services, facilities and amenities, especially for people living in poverty, women and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
- (d) Ensuring transparent, comprehensive and accessible systems in transferring land rights and legal security of tenure;
- (e) Promoting broad, non-discriminatory access to open, efficient, effective and appropriate housing financing for all people, including mobilizing innovative financial and other resources - public and private - for community development;
- (f) Promoting locally available, appropriate, affordable, safe, efficient and environmentally sound construction methods and technologies in all countries, particularly in developing countries, at the local, national, regional and subregional levels that emphasize optimal use of local human resources and encourage energy-saving methods and are protective of human health;
- (g) Designing and implementing standards that provide accessibility also to persons with disabilities in accordance with the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities;
- (h) Increasing the supply of affordable housing, including through encouraging and promoting affordable home ownership and increasing the supply of affordable rental, communal, cooperative and other housing through partnerships among public, private and community initiatives, creating and promoting market-based incentives while giving due respect to the rights and obligations of both tenants and owners;
- (i) Promoting the upgrading of existing housing stock through rehabilitation and maintenance and the adequate supply of basic services, facilities and amenities;
- (j) Eradicating and ensuring legal protection from discrimination in access to shelter and basic services, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status; similar protection should be ensured against discrimination on the grounds of disability or age;
- (k) Helping the family, in its supporting, educating and nurturing roles, to recognize its important contribution to social integration, and encouraging social and economic policies that are designed to meet the housing needs of families and their individual members, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members, with particular attention to the care of children;
- (l) Promoting shelter and supporting basic services and facilities for education and health for the homeless, displaced persons, indigenous people, women and children who are survivors of family violence, persons with disabilities, older persons, victims of natural and man-made disasters and people belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including temporary shelter and basic services for refugees;

(m) Protecting, within the national context, the legal traditional rights of indigenous people to land and other resources, as well as strengthening of land management;

(n) Protecting all people from and providing legal protection and redress for forced evictions that are contrary to the law, taking human rights into consideration; when evictions are unavoidable, ensuring, as appropriate, that alternative suitable solutions are provided.

41. Providing continued international support to refugees in order to meet their needs and to assist in assuring them a just, durable solution in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and international law.

## **B. Sustainable human settlements**

42. We commit ourselves to the goal of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world by developing societies that will make efficient use of resources within the carrying capacity of ecosystems and take into account the precautionary principle approach, and by providing all people, in particular those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, with equal opportunities for a healthy, safe and productive life in harmony with nature and their cultural heritage and spiritual and cultural values, and which ensures economic and social development and environmental protection, thereby contributing to the achievement of national sustainable development goals.

43. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

(a) Promoting, as appropriate, socially integrated and accessible human settlements, including appropriate facilities for health and education, combating segregation and discriminatory and other exclusionary policies and practices, and recognizing and respecting the rights of all, especially of women, children, persons with disabilities, people living in poverty and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

(b) Creating an enabling international and domestic environment for economic development, social development and environmental protection, as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, that will attract investments, generate employment, contribute to the eradication of poverty and provide revenues for sustainable human settlements development;

(c) Integrating urban planning and management in relation to housing, transport, employment opportunities, environmental conditions and community facilities;

(d) Providing adequate and integrated environmental infrastructure facilities in all settlements as soon as possible with a view to improving health by ensuring access for all people to sufficient, continuous and safe freshwater supplies, sanitation, drainage and waste disposal services, with a special emphasis on providing facilities to segments of the population living in poverty;

(e) Promoting integrated water use planning with a view to identifying effective and cost-efficient alternatives for mobilizing a sustainable supply of water for communities and other uses;

(f) Implementing the social and development goals already agreed to by the international community in the areas of basic education, primary health care and gender equality;

(g) Acknowledging, harnessing and enhancing the efforts and potential of productive informal and private sectors, where appropriate, in creating sustainable livelihoods and jobs and increasing incomes, while providing housing and services for people living in poverty;

(h) Promoting, where appropriate, the upgrading of informal settlements and urban slums as an expedient measure and pragmatic solution to the urban shelter deficit;

(i) Promoting the development of more balanced and sustainable human settlements by encouraging productive investments, job creation and social infrastructure development in small and medium-sized cities, towns and villages;

(j) Promoting changes in unsustainable production and consumption patterns, particularly in industrialized countries, population policies and settlement structures that are more sustainable, reduce environmental stress, promote the efficient and rational use of natural resources - including water, air, biodiversity, forests, energy sources and land - and meet basic needs, thereby providing a healthy living and working environment for all and reducing the ecological footprint of human settlements;

- (k) Promoting, where appropriate, the creation of a geographically balanced settlement structure;
- (l) Giving priority attention to human settlements programmes and policies to reduce urban pollution resulting especially from inadequate water supply, sanitation and drainage, poor industrial and domestic waste management, including solid waste management, and air pollution;
- (m) Encouraging dialogue among public, private and non-governmental interested parties to develop an expanded concept of the "balance-sheet", which recognizes that the economic, environmental, social and civic consequences for directly and indirectly affected parties, including future generations, should be taken into account in making decisions on the allocation of resources;
- (n) Improving access to work, goods, services and amenities, inter alia, by promoting effective and environmentally sound, accessible, quieter and more energy-efficient transportation systems and by promoting spatial development patterns and communications policies that reduce transport demand, promoting measures, as appropriate, so that the polluter bears the cost of pollution, taking into account special needs and requirements of developing countries;
- (o) Promoting more energy-efficient technology and alternative/renewable energy for human settlements, and reducing the negative impacts of energy production and use on human health and on the environment;
- (p) Promoting optimal use of productive land in urban and rural areas and protecting fragile ecosystems and environmentally vulnerable areas from the negative impacts of human settlements, inter alia, through developing and supporting the implementation of improved land management practices that deal comprehensively with potentially competing land requirements for agriculture, industry, transport, urban development, green space, protected areas and other vital needs;
- (q) Addressing population issues affecting human settlements and fully integrating demographic concerns into human settlements policies;
- (r) Protecting and maintaining the historical, cultural and natural heritage, including traditional shelter and settlement patterns, as appropriate, of indigenous and other people, as well as landscapes and urban flora and fauna in open and green spaces;
- (s) Protecting holy places and places of cultural and historic significance;
- (t) Promoting the redevelopment and reuse of already serviced but poorly utilized commercial and residential land in urban centres in order to revitalize them and reduce development pressures on productive agricultural lands on the periphery;
- (u) Promoting education about, and training on, environmentally sound technologies, materials and products;
- (v) Promoting equal access and full participation of persons with disabilities in all spheres of human settlements and providing adequate policies and legal protection against discrimination on grounds of disabilities;
- (w) Developing and evaluating policies and programmes to reduce the undesired adverse effects and improve the positive impact of structural adjustment and economic transition on sustainable human settlements development, especially on those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and women, inter alia, through reviewing the impact of structural adjustment on social development by means of gender-sensitive social impact assessments and other relevant methods;
- (x) Formulating and implementing programmes that contribute to maintaining and strengthening the vitality of rural areas;
- (y) Ensuring that the importance of coastal areas is recognized in the national development effort and that all efforts are made to ensure their sustainable use;
- (z) Preventing man-made disasters, including major technological disasters, by ensuring adequate regulatory and other measures to avoid their occurrence, and reducing the impacts of natural disasters and other emergencies on human settlements, inter alia, through appropriate planning mechanisms and resources for rapid, people-centred responses that promote a smooth transition from relief, through rehabilitation, to reconstruction and development, taking into account cultural and sustainable dimensions; and rebuilding disaster-affected settlements in a manner that reduces future disaster-related risks and makes the rebuilt settlements accessible to all;

- (aa) Taking appropriate action to manage the use of heavy metals, particularly lead, safely and effectively and, where possible, eliminating uncontrolled exposure in order to protect human health and the environment;
- (bb) Eliminating as soon as possible the use of lead in gasoline;
- (cc) Developing housing that can serve as a functional workplace for women and men.

### **C. Enablement and participation**

44. We commit ourselves to the strategy of enabling all key actors in the public, private and community sectors to play an effective role - at the national, state/provincial, metropolitan and local levels - in human settlements and shelter development.

45. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

- (a) Enabling local leadership, promoting democratic rule, exercising public authority and using public resources in all public institutions at all levels in a manner that is conducive to ensuring transparent, responsible, accountable, just, effective and efficient governance of towns, cities and metropolitan areas;
- (b) Establishing, where appropriate, favourable conditions for the organization and development of the private sector, as well as defining and enhancing its role in sustainable human settlements development, including through training;
- (c) Decentralizing authority and resources, as appropriate, as well as functions and responsibilities to the level most effective in addressing the needs of people in their settlements;
- (d) Supporting progress and security for people and communities, whereby every member of society is enabled to satisfy his or her basic human needs and to realize his or her personal dignity, safety, creativity and life aspirations;
- (e) Working in partnership with youth in order to develop and enhance effective skills and provide education and training to prepare youth for current and future decision-making roles and sustainable livelihoods in human settlements management and development;
- (f) Promoting gender-sensitive institutional and legal frameworks and capacity-building at the national and local levels conducive to civic engagement and broad-based participation in human settlements development;
- (g) Encouraging the establishment of community-based organizations, civil society organizations, and other forms of non-governmental entities that can contribute to the efforts to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in human settlements;
- (h) Institutionalizing a participatory approach to sustainable human settlements development and management, based on a continuing dialogue among all actors involved in urban development (the public sector, the private sector and communities), especially women, persons with disabilities and indigenous people, including the interests of children and youth;
- (i) Fostering capacity-building and training for human settlements planning, management and development at the national and local levels that includes education, training and institutional strengthening, especially for women and persons with disabilities;
- (j) Promoting institutional and legal enabling frameworks at the national, subnational and local levels for mobilizing financial resources for sustainable shelter and human settlements development;
- (k) Promoting equal access to reliable information, at the national, subnational and local levels, utilizing, where appropriate, modern communications technology and networks;
- (l) Ensuring the availability of education for all and supporting research aimed at building local capacity that promotes adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, given that the challenges make it necessary to increase the application of science and technology to problems related to human settlements;
- (m) Facilitating participation by tenants in the management of public and community-based housing and by women and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the planning and implementation of urban and rural development.

## **IV Global Plan of Action**

### **Introduction\***

53. Twenty years ago in Vancouver, at the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, the world community adopted an agenda for human settlements development. Since then, there have been remarkable changes in population and social, political, environmental and economic circumstances that affect the strategic outlook. These changes have led many Governments to adopt and promote enabling policies to facilitate actions by individuals, families, communities and the private sector to improve human settlements conditions. However, it is estimated that at least one billion human beings still lack adequate shelter and are living in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries.

54. While the rate of population growth is on the decline, during the past 20 years world population has increased from about 4.2 billion to about 5.7 billion, with nearly one third under 15 years of age and an increasing number of people living in cities. By the turn of the century, humankind will be crossing a threshold where over 50 per cent of the population lives in urban areas. Meeting the needs of the nearly two billion more people expected in the coming two decades and managing human settlements towards sustainability will be a daunting task. In developing countries, in particular, rapid urbanization and the growth of towns, cities and megacities, where public and private resources tend to concentrate, represent new challenges and at the same time new opportunities: there is a need to address the root causes of these phenomena, including rural to urban migration.

55. In the economic sphere, the increasing globalization of the economy means that people in communities are trading in broader markets, and investment funds are more often available from international sources. As a result, the level of economic development has increased in many countries. At the same time, the gap between poor and rich - countries as well as people - has widened, hence the continuing need for partnerships to create a more favourable international economic environment. New communications technology makes information much more widely accessible and accelerates all processes of change. In many societies, new issues of social cohesion and personal security have emerged and the issue of solidarity has become central. Unemployment, environmental degradation, social disintegration and large-scale populations displacements, as well as intolerance, violence, and violation of human rights, have also emerged as critical factors. We must keep these new conditions in view as we draw up human settlements strategies for the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

56. While Habitat II is a conference of States and there is much that national Governments can do to enable local communities to solve problems, the actors who will determine success or failure in improving the human settlements condition are mostly found at the community level in the public, private and non-profit sectors. It is they, local authorities and other interested parties, who are on the front line in achieving the goals of Habitat II. Although the structural causes of problems have often to be dealt with at the national and sometimes the international level, progress will depend to a large degree on local authorities, civic engagement and the forging of partnerships at all levels of government with the private sector, the cooperative sector, non-governmental and community-based organizations, workers and employers and civil society at large.

57. Habitat II is one in an extraordinary series of world conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations over the past five years. All addressed important issues of people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth and equity, for which successful implementation requires action at all levels, particularly the local level. Strategies on social, economic, environmental, disaster reduction, population, disability and gender issues will have to be implemented in urban and rural areas - in particular, where the problems are acute and generate tension.

58. At Habitat II, Governments at all levels, the community and the private sector have considered how the achievement of the two principal goals of "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world" can be furthered at the local level through an enabling process in which individuals, families and their communities play a central role. This is what is special about the global plan of action of Habitat II and the strategies for its implementation. Implementation of these measures will need to be adapted to the specific situation of each country and community.

59. The strategy of the global plan of action is based on enablement, transparency and participation. Under this strategy, government efforts are based on establishing legislative, institutional and financial frameworks that will enable the private sector, non-governmental organizations and community groups to fully contribute to the achievement of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development and enable all women and men to work with each other and in their communities with Governments at all levels to determine their future collectively, decide on priorities for action, identify and allocate resources fairly and build partnerships to achieve common goals.

Enablement creates:

(a) A situation in which the full potential and resources of all actors in the process of producing and improving shelter are mobilized;

(b) The conditions for women and men to exercise their individual rights and responsibilities equally and to engage their abilities effectively in activities that will improve and sustain their living environments;

(c) The conditions for organizations and institutions to interact and network, building partnerships for the objectives of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development;

(d) The conditions for self-improvement by all;

(e) The conditions for enhancing international cooperation.

\* Whenever the term "Governments" is used, it shall be deemed to include the European Community within its areas of competence.

## **B. Adequate Shelter for All**

### **1. Introduction**

60. Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one's head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water-supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health-related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities: all of which should be available at an affordable cost. Adequacy should be determined together with the people concerned, bearing in mind the prospect for gradual development. Adequacy often varies from country to country, since it depends on specific cultural, social, environmental and economic factors. Gender-specific and age-specific factors, such as the exposure of children and women to toxic substances, should be considered in this context.

61. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the right to adequate housing has been recognized as an important component of the right to an adequate standard of living. All Governments without exception have a responsibility in the shelter sector, as exemplified by their creation of ministries of housing or agencies, by their allocation of funds for the housing sector and by their policies, programmes and projects. The provision of adequate housing for everyone requires action not only by Governments, but by all sectors of society, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, communities and local authorities, as well as by partner organizations and entities of the international community. Within the overall context of an enabling approach, Governments should take appropriate action in order to promote, protect and ensure the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. These actions include, but are not limited to:

(a) Providing, in the matter of housing, that the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;

(b) Providing legal security of tenure and equal access to land for all, including women and those living in poverty, as well as effective protection from forced evictions that are contrary to the law, taking human rights into consideration and bearing in mind that homeless people should not be penalized for their status;

- (c) Adopting policies aimed at making housing habitable, affordable and accessible, including for those who are unable to secure adequate housing through their own means, by, inter alia:
- (i) Expanding the supply of affordable housing through appropriate regulatory measures and market incentives;
  - (ii) Increasing affordability through the provision of subsidies and rental and other forms of housing assistance to people living in poverty;
  - (iii) Supporting community-based, cooperative and non-profit rental and owner-occupied housing programmes;
  - (iv) Promoting supporting services for the homeless and other vulnerable groups;
  - (v) Mobilizing innovative financial and other resources - public and private - for housing and community development;
  - (vi) Creating and promoting market-based incentives to encourage the private sector to meet the need for affordable rental and owner-occupied housing;
  - (vii) Promoting sustainable spatial development patterns and transportation systems that improve accessibility of goods, services, amenities and work;
- (d) Effective monitoring and evaluation of housing conditions, including the extent of homelessness and inadequate housing, and, in consultation with the affected population, formulating and adopting appropriate housing policies and implementing effective strategies and plans to address those problems.

62. Because it leads to the full mobilization of all potential indigenous resources, a shelter strategy that is based on an enabling approach greatly contributes to the sustainable development of human settlements. The management of such resources must be people-centred and must be environmentally, socially and economically sound. This can occur only if policies and actions in the shelter sector are integrated with policies and actions that are intended to promote economic development, social development and environmental protection. A fundamental objective of this chapter, therefore, is to integrate shelter policies with policies that will guide macroeconomic and social development and sound environmental management.

63. A second fundamental objective of this chapter is to enable markets - the primary housing delivery mechanism - to perform their function with efficiency. Actions to achieve this objective and at the same time contribute to social goals, including, where appropriate, market-based incentives and compensatory measures, are recommended. Further objectives and recommended actions address the components of shelter-delivery systems (land, finance, infrastructure and services, construction, building materials, maintenance and rehabilitation) in the private, community and public rental sectors, and ways of making them serve all people better. Finally, special attention is given to all those, including women, who are at considerable risk because they lack security of tenure or are inhibited from participation in shelter markets. Actions are recommended to reduce their vulnerability and enable them to obtain adequate shelter in a just and humane way.

64. International and national cooperation at all levels will be both necessary and beneficial in promoting adequate shelter for all. This is especially needed in areas that are affected by war or by natural, industrial or technological disasters, and in situations in which reconstruction and rehabilitation needs surpass national resources.

## **B. Adequate Shelter for All**

### **3. Shelter delivery systems**

#### **(a) Enabling markets to work**

71. In many countries, markets serve as the primary housing delivery mechanism, hence their effectiveness and efficiency are important to the goal of sustainable development. It is the responsibility of Governments to create an enabling framework for a well-functioning housing market. The housing sector should be viewed as an integrating market in which trends in one segment affect performance in other segments. Government interventions are required to address the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups that are insufficiently served by markets.

## Actions

72. To ensure market efficiency, Governments at the appropriate levels and consistent with their legal authority should:

- (a) Assess housing supply and demand on a gender-disaggregated basis and collect, analyse and disseminate information about housing markets and other delivery mechanisms, and encourage the private and non-profit sectors and the media to do the same, while avoiding duplication of efforts;
  - (b) Avoid inappropriate interventions that stifle supply and distort demand for housing and services, and periodically review and adjust legal, financial and regulatory frameworks, including frameworks for contracts, land use, building codes and standards;
  - (c) Employ mechanisms (for example, a body of law, a cadastre, rules for property valuation and others) for the clear definition of property rights;
  - (d) Permit the exchange of land and housing without undue restriction, and apply procedures that will make property transactions transparent and accountable in order to prevent corrupt practices;
  - (e) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and the ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies;
  - (f) Apply appropriate fiscal measures, including taxation, to promote the adequate supply of housing and land;
  - (g) Periodically assess how best to satisfy the requirement for government intervention to meet the specific needs of people living in poverty and vulnerable groups for whom traditional market mechanisms fail to work;
  - (h) Develop, as appropriate, flexible instruments for the regulation of housing markets, including the rental market, taking into account the special needs of vulnerable groups.
- (b) Facilitating community-based production of housing

73. In many countries, particularly developing countries, more than half the existing housing stock has been built by the owner-occupiers themselves, serving mainly the lower-income population. Self-built housing will continue to play a major role in the provision of housing into the distant future. Many countries are supporting self-built housing by regularizing and upgrading programmes.

## Actions

74. To support the efforts of people, individually or collectively, to produce shelter, Governments at the appropriate levels should, where appropriate:

- (a) Promote self-built housing within the context of a comprehensive land-use policy;
  - (b) Integrate and regularize self-built housing, especially through appropriate land registration programmes, as a holistic part of the overall housing and infrastructure system in urban and rural areas, subject to a comprehensive land-use policy;
  - (c) Encourage efforts to improve existing self-built housing through better access to housing resources, including land, finance and building materials;
  - (d) Develop the means and methods to improve the standards of self-built housing;
  - (e) Encourage community-based and non-governmental organizations in their role of assisting and facilitating the production of self-built housing;
  - (f) Facilitate regular dialogue and gender-sensitive participation of the various actors involved in housing production at all levels and stages of decision-making;
  - (g) Mitigate the problems related to spontaneous human settlements through programmes and policies that anticipate unplanned settlements.
- (c) Ensuring access to land

75. Access to land and legal security of tenure are strategic prerequisites for the provision of adequate shelter for all and for the development of sustainable human settlements affecting both urban and rural areas. It is also one way of breaking the vicious circle of poverty. Every Government must show a commitment to promoting the provision of an adequate supply of land in the context of sustainable land-use policies. While recognizing the existence of different national laws and/or

systems of land tenure, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should nevertheless strive to remove all possible obstacles that may hamper equitable access to land and ensure that equal rights of women and men related to land and property are protected under the law. The failure to adopt, at all levels, appropriate rural and urban land policies and land management practices remains a primary cause of inequity and poverty. It is also the cause of increased living costs, the occupation of hazard-prone land, environmental degradation and the increased vulnerability of urban and rural habitats, affecting all people, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, people living in poverty and low-income people.

#### Actions

76. To ensure an adequate supply of serviceable land, Governments at the appropriate levels and in accordance with their legal framework should:

- (a) Recognize and legitimize the diversity of land delivery mechanisms;
- (b) Decentralize land management responsibilities and provide local capacity-building programmes that recognize the role of key interested parties, where appropriate;
- (c) Prepare comprehensive inventories of publicly held land and, where appropriate, develop programmes for making them available for shelter and human settlements development, including, where appropriate, development by non-governmental and community-based organizations;
- (d) Apply transparent, comprehensive and equitable fiscal incentive mechanisms, as appropriate, to stimulate the efficient, accessible and environmentally sound use of land, and utilize land-based and other forms of taxation in mobilizing financial resources for service provision by local authorities;
- (e) Consider fiscal and other measures, as appropriate, to promote the efficient functioning of the market for vacant land, ensuring the supply of housing and land for shelter development;
- (f) Develop and implement land information systems and practices for managing land, including land value assessment, and seek to ensure that such information is readily available;
- (g) Make full use of existing infrastructure in urban areas, encouraging optimal density of the occupation of available serviced land in accordance with its carrying capacity, at the same time ensuring the adequate provision of parks, play areas, common spaces and facilities, and plots of land for home gardening, as appropriate;
- (h) Consider the adoption of innovative instruments that capture gains in land value and recover public investments;
- (i) Consider the adoption of innovative instruments for the efficient and sustainable assembly and development of land, including, where appropriate, land readjustment and consolidation;
- (j) Develop appropriate cadastral systems and streamline land registration procedures in order to facilitate the regularization of informal settlements, where appropriate, and simplify land transactions;
- (k) Develop land codes and legal frameworks that define the nature of land and real property and the rights that are formally recognized;
- (l) Mobilize local and regional expertise to promote research, the transfer of technology and education programmes to support land administration systems;
- (m) Promote comprehensive rural development through such measures as equal access to land, land improvement, economic diversification, the development of small and medium-scale cities in rural areas and, where appropriate, indigenous land settlements;
- (n) Ensure simple procedures for the transfer of land and conversion of land use within the context of a comprehensive policy framework, including the protection of arable land and the environment.

77. To promote efficient land markets and the environmentally sustainable use of land, Governments at the appropriate levels should:

- (a) Re-evaluate and, if necessary, periodically adjust planning and building regulatory frameworks, taking into consideration their human settlements and economic, social and environmental policies;
- (b) Support the development of land markets by means of effective legal frameworks, and develop flexible and varied mechanisms aimed at mobilizing lands with diverse juridical status;
- (c) Encourage the multiplicity and diversity of interventions by both the public and private sectors and other interested parties, men and women alike, acting within the market system;

(d) Develop a legal framework of land use aimed at balancing the need for construction with the protection of the environment, minimizing risk and diversifying uses;

(e) Review restrictive, exclusionary and costly legal and regulatory processes, planning systems, standards and development regulations.

78. To eradicate legal and social barriers to the equal and equitable access to land, especially the access of women, people with disabilities and those belonging to vulnerable groups, Governments at the appropriate levels, in partnership with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the cooperative sector and community-based organizations, should:

(a) Address the cultural, ethnic, religious, social and disability-based causes that result in the creation of barriers that lead to segregation and exclusion, inter alia, by encouraging education and training for peaceful conflict resolution;

(b) Promote awareness campaigns, education and enabling practices regarding, in particular, legal rights with respect to tenure, land ownership and inheritance for women, so as to overcome existing barriers;

(c) Review legal and regulatory frameworks, adjusting them to the principles and commitments of the Global Plan of Action and ensuring that the equal rights of women and men are clearly specified and enforced;

(d) Develop regularization programmes and formulate and implement such programmes and projects in consultation with the concerned population and organized groups, ensuring the full and equal participation of women and taking into account the needs differentiated by gender, age, disability and vulnerability;

(e) Support, inter alia, community projects, policies and programmes that aim to remove all barriers to women's access to affordable housing, land and property ownership, economic resources, infrastructure and social services, and ensure the full participation of women in all decision-making processes, with particular regard to women in poverty, especially female heads of households and women who are sole providers for their families;

(f) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and the ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies;

(g) Promote mechanisms for the protection of women who risk losing their homes and properties when their husbands die.

79. To facilitate access to land and security of tenure for all socio-economic groups, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

(a) Adopt an enabling legal and regulatory framework based on an enhanced knowledge, understanding and acceptance of existing practices and land delivery mechanisms so as to stimulate partnerships with the private business and community sectors, specifying recognized types of land tenure and prescribing procedures for the regularization of tenure, where needed;

(b) Provide institutional support, accountability and transparency of land management, and accurate information on land ownership, land transactions and current and planned land use;

(c) Explore innovative arrangements to enhance the security of tenure, other than full legalization, which may be too costly and time-consuming in certain situations, including access to credit, as appropriate, in the absence of a conventional title to land;

(d) Promote measures to ensure that women have equal access to credit for buying, leasing or renting land, and equal protection for the legal security of tenure of such land;

(e) Capitalize on the potential contribution of key interested parties in the private formal and informal sectors, and support the engagement of non-governmental organizations, community organizations and the private sector in participatory and collective initiatives and mechanisms appropriate to conflict resolution;

(f) Encourage, in particular, the participation of community and non-governmental organizations by:

- (i) Reviewing and adjusting legal and regulatory frameworks in order to recognize and stimulate the diverse forms of organization of the population engaged in the production and management of land, housing and services;
  - (ii) Considering financial systems that recognize organizations as credit holders, extend credit to collective units backed by collective collateral and introduce financial procedures that are adapted to the needs of housing production by the people themselves and to the modalities through which the population generates income and savings;
  - (iii) Developing and implementing complementary measures designed to enhance their capabilities, including, where appropriate, fiscal support, educational and training programmes, and technical assistance and funds in support of technological innovation;
  - (iv) Supporting the capacity-building and accumulation of experience of non-governmental organizations and peoples' organizations in order to make them efficient and competent partners in the implementation of national housing plans of action;
  - (v) Encouraging lending institutions to recognize that community-based organizations may act as guarantors for those who, because of poverty or discrimination, lack other sources of equity, giving particular attention to the needs of individual women.
- (d) Mobilizing sources of finance

80. Housing finance institutions serve the conventional market but do not always respond adequately to the different needs of large segments of the population, particularly those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, people living in poverty and low-income people. In order to mobilize more domestic and international resources for housing finance and extend credit to more households, it is necessary to integrate housing finance into the broader financial system and to use existing instruments or develop new instruments, as appropriate, to address the financial needs of people having limited or no access to credit.

#### Actions

81. To improve the effectiveness of existing housing finance systems, Governments at the appropriate levels should:

- (a) Adopt policies that increase the mobilization of housing finance and extend more credit to people living in poverty, while maintaining the solvency of credit systems;
- (b) Strengthen the effectiveness of existing housing finance systems;
- (c) Enhance the accessibility of housing finance systems and eradicate all forms of discrimination against borrowers;
- (d) Promote transparency, accountability and ethical practices in financial transactions through support from effective legal and regulatory frameworks;
- (e) Establish, where necessary, a comprehensive and detailed body of property law and property rights, and enforce foreclosure laws to facilitate private-sector participation;
- (f) Encourage the private sector to mobilize resources to meet varying housing demands, including rental housing, maintenance and rehabilitation;
- (g) Support the competitiveness of mortgage markets and, where appropriate, facilitate the development of secondary markets and securitization;
- (h) Decentralize, as appropriate, the lending operations of mortgage markets and encourage the private sector to do the same in order to provide greater physical access to credit, especially in rural areas;
- (i) Encourage all lending institutions to improve their management and the efficiency of their operations;
- (j) Encourage community mortgage programmes that are accessible to people living in poverty, especially women, in order to increase their productive capacity by providing them with access to capital, resources, credit, land, technology and information so that they can raise their income and improve their living conditions and status within the household.

82. To create new housing finance mechanisms, as necessary, Governments at the appropriate levels should:

- (a) Harness the potential of non-traditional financing arrangements by encouraging communities to form housing and multi-purpose community development cooperatives, especially for the provision of low-cost housing;
- (b) Review and strengthen the legal and regulatory framework and institutional base for mobilizing non-traditional lenders;
- (c) Encourage, in particular by removing legal and administrative obstacles, the expansion of savings and credit cooperatives, credit unions, cooperative banks, cooperative insurance enterprises and other non-bank financial institutions, and establish savings mechanisms in the informal sector, particularly for women;
- (d) Support partnerships between such cooperative institutions and public and other financing institutions as an effective means of mobilizing local capital and applying it to local entrepreneurial and community activity for housing and infrastructure development;
- (e) Facilitate the efforts of trade unions, farmers', women's and consumers' organizations, organizations of people with disabilities and other associations of the populations concerned to set up their own cooperatively organized or local financial institutions and mechanisms;
- (f) Promote the exchange of information on innovations in housing finance;
- (g) Support non-governmental organizations and their capacity to foster the development, where appropriate, of small savings cooperatives.

83. To facilitate access to housing for those not served by existing finance mechanisms, Governments should review and rationalize, where appropriate, systems of subsidies through policies that will ensure their viability, equity and transparency, thus allowing many people without access to credit and land to enter the market.

(e) Ensuring access to basic infrastructure and services

84. Basic infrastructure and services at the community level include the delivery of safe water, sanitation, waste management, social welfare, transport and communications facilities, energy, health and emergency services, schools, public safety, and the management of open spaces. The lack of adequate basic services, a key component of shelter, exacts a heavy toll on human health, productivity and the quality of life, particularly for people living in poverty in urban and rural areas. Local and state/provincial authorities, as the case may be, have the primary responsibility to provide or enable delivery of services, regulated by appropriate legislation and standards. Their capacity to manage, operate and maintain infrastructure and basic services must be supported by central Governments. There are, however, a host of other actors, including the private sector, communities and non-governmental organizations, that can participate in service provision and management under the coordination of Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities.

Actions

85. To safeguard the health, safety, welfare and improved living environment of all people and to provide adequate and affordable basic infrastructure and services, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should promote:

- (a) The supply of and access to adequate quantities of safe drinking water;
- (b) Adequate sanitation and environmentally sound waste management;
- (c) Adequate mobility through access to affordable and physically accessible public transport and other communications facilities;
- (d) Access to markets and retail outlets for selling and purchasing basic necessities;
- (e) The provision of social services, especially for underserved groups and communities;
- (f) Access to community facilities, including places of worship;
- (g) Access to sustainable sources of energy;
- (h) Environmentally sound technologies and the planning, provision and maintenance of infrastructure, including roads, streets, parks and open spaces;
- (i) A high level of safety and public security;

(j) The use of a variety of planning mechanisms that provide for meaningful participation to reduce the negative impacts on biological resources, such as prime agricultural land and forests, that may arise from human settlements activities;

(k) Planning and implementation systems that integrate all of the above factors into the design and operation of sustainable human settlements.

86. To ensure more equitable provision of basic infrastructure and service delivery systems, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

(a) Work with all interested parties in providing serviced land and in allocating adequate space for basic services as well as for recreational and open spaces in the development of new schemes and the upgrading of existing ones;

(b) Involve local communities, particularly women, children and persons with disabilities, in decision-making and in setting priorities for the provision of services;

(c) Involve, encourage and assist, as appropriate, local communities, particularly women, children and persons with disabilities, in setting standards for community facilities and in the operation and maintenance of those facilities;

(d) Support the efforts of academic and professional groups in analysing the need for infrastructure and services at the community level;

(e) Facilitate the mobilization of funds from all interested parties, especially the private sector, for increased investment;

(f) Establish support mechanisms to enable people living in poverty and the disadvantaged to have access to basic infrastructure and services;

(g) Remove legal obstacles, including those related to security of tenure and credit, that deny women equal access to basic services;

(h) Promote dialogue among all interested parties to help provide basic services and infrastructure.

87. To ensure the efficiency of infrastructure and the provision of services and their operation and maintenance practices, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

(a) Create mechanisms to promote autonomous, transparent and accountable management of services at the local level;

(b) Create an enabling environment to encourage the private sector to participate in the efficient and competitive management and delivery of basic services;

(c) Promote the application of appropriate and environmentally sound technologies for infrastructure and delivery of services on a cost-effective basis;

(d) Promote partnerships with the private sector and with non-profit organizations for the management and delivery of services; where necessary, improve the regulatory capacity of the public sector; and apply pricing policies that ensure economic sustainability and the efficient use of services as well as equal access to them by all social groups;

(e) Where appropriate and feasible, establish partnerships with community groups for the construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure and services.

(f) Improving planning, design, construction, maintenance and rehabilitation

88. With rapid urbanization, population growth and industrialization, the skills, materials and financing for the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation of housing, infrastructure and other facilities are often not available or are of inferior quality. Public policy and private investment should, together, facilitate an adequate supply of cost-effective building materials, construction technology and bridging finance to avoid the bottlenecks and distortions that inhibit the development of local and national economies. By improving quality and reducing the cost of production, housing and other structures will last longer, be better protected against disasters, and be affordable to low-income populations and accessible to persons with disabilities, which will provide a better living environment. The potential for job creation and other positive external socio-economic impacts of the construction industry should be harnessed; its activity should be brought into harmony with the environment, and its contribution to overall economic growth should be exploited, all to the advantage of society at large. Institutional support should also be provided in the form of industrial standards and

quality control, with particular attention to energy efficiency, health, accessibility, and consumer safety and protection.

89. Meeting the actual needs of individuals, families and their communities cannot be achieved by looking at shelter in isolation. The provision of adequate social services and facilities, the improvement and rationalization of urban planning and shelter design to cope firmly with the actual needs of communities, and the provision of technical and other relevant assistance to the inhabitants of unplanned settlements are essential for the improvement of living conditions.

#### Actions

90. To respond effectively to the requirements for appropriate planning, design, construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of shelter, infrastructure and other facilities, Governments at the appropriate levels should:

- (a) Encourage and support research and studies to promote and develop indigenous planning and design techniques, norms and standards to match the actual needs of local communities;
- (b) Encourage public participation in assessing real user needs, especially gender needs, as an integrated action of the planning and design process;
- (c) Encourage the exchange of regional and international experience of best practices and facilitate the transfer of planning, design and construction techniques;
- (d) Strengthen the capacities of training institutions and non-governmental organizations to increase and diversify the supply of skilled workers in construction and promote apprenticeship training, particularly for women;
- (e) Make use of contracts with community-based organizations and, where applicable, the informal sector for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of housing and local services, especially in low-income settlements, with an emphasis on enhancing the participation and, thus, short- and long-term gains of local communities;
- (f) Strengthen the capacity of both the public and private sectors for infrastructure delivery through cost-effective, employment-intensive methods, where appropriate, thereby optimizing the impact on the creation of employment;
- (g) Promote research, exchange of information and capacity-building with respect to affordable and technically and environmentally sound building, maintenance and rehabilitation technologies;
- (h) Provide incentives for engineers, architects, planners and contractors and their clients to design and build accessible energy-efficient structures and facilities by using locally available resources and to reduce energy consumption in buildings in use;
- (i) Provide training to professionals and practitioners in the construction and development sector to update their skills and knowledge in order to promote the development of shelter programmes that serve the interests and needs of women, persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups and that ensure their participation at all stages of the shelter development process;
- (j) Adopt and ensure the enforcement of appropriate standards relating to planning, design, construction, maintenance and rehabilitation;
- (k) Support private-sector initiatives to provide bridging loans to builders at reasonable interest rates;
- (l) Support professional groups in offering technical assistance in planning, design, construction, maintenance, rehabilitation and management to community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and others engaged in self-help and community-based development;
- (m) Strengthen and make more transparent government regulatory and inspection systems;
- (n) Join with professional societies to review and revise building codes and regulations based on current standards of engineering, building and planning practices, local conditions and ease of administration, and adopt performance standards, as appropriate;
- (o) Support non-governmental organizations and other groups to ensure full and equal participation of women and persons with disabilities in the planning, design and construction of houses to suit their specific individual and family requirements.

91. To promote and support an adequate supply of locally produced, environmentally sound, affordable and durable basic building materials, Governments at the appropriate levels, in cooperation with all other interested parties, should:

(a) Where appropriate, encourage and support the establishment and expansion of environmentally sound, small-scale, local building materials industries and the expansion of their production and commercialization through, inter alia, legal and fiscal incentives and the provision of credit, research and development, and information;

(b) As required, provide policies and guidelines to facilitate fair market competition for building materials with enhanced participation of local interested parties and establish a public mechanism to enforce them;

(c) Promote information exchange and the flow of appropriate environmentally sound, affordable and accessible building technologies and facilitate the transfer of technology;

(d) With adequate attention to safety needs, reformulate and adopt building standards and by-laws, where appropriate, to promote and permit the use of low-cost building materials in housing schemes, and use such materials in public construction works;

(e) Where appropriate, promote partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to create mechanisms for the commercial production and distribution of basic building materials for self-help construction programmes;

(f) Evaluate on a regular basis the progress made in the pursuit of the above objectives.

92. To enhance the local capacity for environmentally sound production of building materials and construction techniques, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, in cooperation with all interested parties, should:

(a) Intensify and support research efforts to find substitutes for or optimize the use of non-renewable resources and to reduce their polluting effects, paying special attention to recycling, reuse of waste materials and increased reforestation;

(b) Encourage and promote the application of low-energy, environmentally sound and safe manufacturing technologies backed by appropriate norms and effective regulatory measures;

(c) Adopt mining and quarrying policies and practices that ensure minimum damage to the environment

### C. Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world

#### 5. Environmentally sustainable, healthy and liveable human settlements

128. Sustainable human settlements depend on the creation of a better environment for human health and well-being, which will improve the living conditions of people and decrease disparities in the quality of their lives. The health of the population depends at least as much on the control of environmental causes of poor health as on clinical responses to disease. Children are particularly vulnerable to harmful urban environments and must be protected. Measures to prevent ill health and disease are as important as the availability of appropriate medical treatment and care. It is therefore essential to take a holistic approach to health, whereby both prevention and care are placed within the context of environmental policy, supported by effective management systems and plans of action incorporating targets that reflect local needs and capacities.

129. Health problems related to adverse environmental conditions, including a lack of access to safe water and sanitation, inadequate waste management, poor drainage, air pollution, and exposure to excessive noise levels, as well as ineffective and inadequate health services, exact a heavy toll on the quality of life and the overall contribution to society of millions of people. They may also aggravate social tension and inequity and increase the vulnerability of people to the effects of disasters. An integrated approach to the provision of environmentally sound infrastructure in human settlements, particularly for people living in poverty in rural and urban areas, is an investment in sustainable human settlements development that can enhance the quality of life, reduce negative impacts on the environment, improve the overall health of a population, and reduce the burden of investment in curative health and poverty alleviation.

130. Many pollution-related risks to health are particularly high in urban areas, as well as in low-income areas, because of higher concentrations of pollutants from, inter alia, industry, traffic, fumes

from cooking and heating devices, overcrowding and inadequate solid and liquid waste management. Environmental risks in the home and the workplace may have a disproportionate impact on the health of women and children because of their different susceptibilities and rates of exposure to the toxic effects of various chemicals and given the nature of the tasks that women frequently undertake. Environmental risks may also have a disproportionate impact on children.

131. Many environmental contaminants, such as radioactive materials and persistent organic pollutants, work their way into the food chain and eventually into human beings, thus compromising the health of present and future generations.

132. Exposure to heavy metals, including lead and mercury, may have persistent and harmful effects on human health and development and on the environment. Children and people living in poverty are often particularly vulnerable, and it is of special concern that the effects of high lead levels on children's intellectual development are irreversible. Effective and affordable alternatives to many of the uses of these metals are available. Appropriate alternatives should be sought for those products where exposure to lead can be neither controlled nor managed.

133. Unsustainable and wasteful production and consumption patterns also lead to increasing problems in waste management. It is essential to intensify efforts aimed at minimizing the production and discharge of waste, and at recycling and reuse as much as possible and disposing of the remainder in an environmentally sound manner. This will require changes in attitudes and consumption patterns and in the design of buildings and neighbourhoods, as well as innovative, efficient and sustainable modalities for waste management.

134. The design of the built environment is recognized as having an impact on people's well-being and behaviour and, thereby, on people's health. Good design in new housing and in upgrading and rehabilitation is important for the creation of sustainable living conditions. The design of high-rise housing should complement the context of the neighbourhood in which it will be located. In particular, the large-scale development of high-rise housing can bring social and environmental disadvantages; therefore special attention should be paid to the quality of its design, including the scale and height, proper maintenance, regular technical inspection and safety measures.

135. The liveability of the built environment has an important bearing on the quality of life in human settlements. Quality of life implies those attributes catering for the diversified and growing aspirations of citizens that go beyond the satisfaction of basic needs. Liveability refers to those spatial, social and environmental characteristics and qualities that uniquely contribute to people's sense of personal and collective well-being and to their sense of satisfaction in being the residents of that particular settlement. The aspirations for liveability vary from place to place, and evolve and change in time; they also differ among the diverse populations that make up communities. Therefore, conditions for liveable human settlements presuppose a working democracy in which processes of participation, civic engagement and capacity-building mechanisms are institutionalized.

#### Actions

136. To improve the health and well-being of all people throughout their life-span, particularly people living in poverty, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, in partnership with other interested parties, should:

(a) Develop and implement national, subnational and local health plans or strategies and strengthen environmental health services to prevent, mitigate and respond to diseases and ill health resulting from poor conditions in living and working environments and the conditions of people living in poverty, and continue work towards the Agenda 21 objective of achieving a 10 to 40 per cent improvement in health indicators by the year 2000;

(b) Adopt measures to prevent and control air, water and soil pollution and to reduce noise levels, where appropriate, and develop and ensure access to appropriate preventive and curative health-care systems in order to tackle related health problems;

(c) Ensure adequate research to assess how and to what extent women and children are particularly susceptible or exposed to environmental degradation and hazards, including, as necessary, research and data collection on specific groups of women and children, particularly women with low incomes, indigenous women and women belonging to minorities;

- (d) Improve shelter conditions so as to mitigate those health and safety risks, particularly risks to women, older persons, children and people with disabilities, that are associated with activities in the home;
- (e) Build capacity at all levels for effective environmental health management;
- (f) Develop and implement programmes to ensure universal access for women throughout their life-span to a full range of affordable health-care services, including those related to reproductive health care, which includes family planning and sexual health, consistent with the report of the International Conference on Population and Development;
- (g) Develop, where appropriate, criteria for maximum permitted and safe levels of noise exposure and promote noise assessment control as part of environmental health programmes;
- (h) Raise awareness of the interdependencies between the environment and health and develop within communities the knowledge, attitudes and practices needed to improve personal and community health, with special attention to hygiene;
- (i) Promote, where appropriate, planning and good design in human settlements, both in new developments and in upgrading and rehabilitation, while emphasizing aesthetic qualities as well as sound and sustainable technical and functional qualities, enriching and enlightening the overall quality of life of people;
- (j) Establish processes to increase the exchange of information, experience and technical assistance among national, subnational and local Governments, including among Governments at the same level, and across sectors for environmental health improvements;
- (k) Ensure that due priority is given and adequate resources made available from all sources, at the national, regional and international levels, to combat the threat to individuals and public health posed by the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS globally and by the re-emergence of major diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, onchocerciasis (river blindness) and diarrhoeal diseases, in particular cholera;
- (l) Promote safe and healthy workplace conditions for men and women.

137. To improve environmental conditions and reduce industrial and domestic waste and other forms of health risks in human settlements, Governments at the appropriate levels and in partnership with all interested parties should:

- (a) Develop and implement national and local plans, policies and specific cross-sectoral programmes addressing all relevant chapters of Agenda 21;
- (b) Develop laws and policies that specify appropriate ambient environmental quality levels and set targets for environmental improvements and identify instruments for their achievement appropriate to national and subnational priorities and conditions;
- (c) Establish, equip and build capacity for monitoring and evaluating compliance with environmental regulations and effectiveness of enforcement at all levels;
- (d) Set environmental standards so as to facilitate the selection and development of appropriate technologies and their appropriate use;
- (e) Identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse effects of policies and programmes on the human health or the environment of people living in poverty and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
- (f) Provide incentives and disincentives to promote the use of clean production and energy- and water-saving processes and technologies that, among other things, can increase economic opportunities in the areas of environmental technology, environmental clean-up and environmentally friendly products and can improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of human settlements for economic investments;
- (g) Provide guidelines and training for the application of procedures for the assessment of environmental health impacts;
- (h) Undertake environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments for development plans and projects, respectively, that may significantly affect the quality of the environment;

- (i) Support mechanisms for consultations and partnerships among interested parties to prepare and implement local environmental plans and local Agenda 21 initiatives and specific cross-sectoral environmental health programmes;
- (j) Raise awareness of environmental issues and develop within communities the knowledge, attitudes and practices needed for sustainable human settlements development;
- (k) Take appropriate action to manage the use of heavy metals, particularly lead, safely and effectively and, where possible, to eliminate uncontrolled exposure in order to protect human health and the environment;
- (l) Eliminate as soon as possible the use of lead in gasoline;
- (m) In cooperation with the international community, promote the protection of the living environment and strive to restore contaminated land, air and water to levels acceptable for sustainable human settlements.

138. Recognizing the need for an integrated approach to the provision of those environmental services and policies that are essential for human life, Governments at the appropriate levels, in partnership with other interested parties, should:

- (a) Incorporate the principles and strategies contained in Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in an integrated manner: the precautionary principle approach, the polluter pays principle, the pollution prevention principle, the ecosystem approach, including strategies pertaining to carrying capacity, and environmental and social impact assessments;
- (b) Promote practices and patterns of production and consumption that will conserve and protect freshwater and saltwater resources and topsoil, as well as air and soil quality;
- (c) Ensure that clean water is available and accessible to all human settlements as soon as possible through, inter alia, the adoption and improvement of technology, and ensure that environmental protection and conservation plans are designed and implemented to restore polluted water systems and rebuild damaged watersheds;
- (d) Dispose as soon as possible, within both rural and urban areas, of sewage, waste waters and solid wastes, including hazardous wastes, in a manner that conforms with national or international environmental quality guidelines;
- (e) Promote environmental protection and public health by proper treatment and the recycling and reuse of environmentally compatible sanitation and treatment/disposal of waste water and solid waste;
- (f) Make a concerted effort to reduce the generation of wastes and waste products by, inter alia, setting national and local goals for the reduction of packaging;
- (g) Develop criteria and methodologies for the assessment of environmental impacts and resource requirements at the local level throughout the life cycle of products and processes;
- (h) Develop and implement legal, fiscal and administrative mechanisms to achieve integrated ecosystem management;
- (i) Establish mechanisms to ensure transparent, accountable and cost-effective management and maintenance of infrastructure.

139. In order to promote a healthy environment that will continue to support adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements for current and future generations, Governments at the appropriate levels, in partnership with all relevant interested parties, should:

- (a) Promote the conservation and sustainable use of urban and peri-urban biodiversity, including forests, local habitats and species biodiversity; the protection of biodiversity should be included within local sustainable development planning activities;
- (b) Protect existing forest resources and promote, where possible, afforestation around and within human settlements in order to fulfil basic needs relating to energy, construction, recreation and food security;
- (c) Encourage, where appropriate, the establishment of productive and recreational green belts around urban and rural agglomerations in order to protect their environment and contribute to the provision of food products;

(d) Reduce significantly the degradation of the marine environment emanating from land-based activities, including municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and run-off, which have a pernicious impact on the productive areas of the marine environment and coastal areas;

(e) Ensure that children have access to the natural world on a daily basis through free play outdoors, and establish education programmes to help children investigate their community environments, including natural ecosystems;

(f) Ensure adequate opportunity for public participation by all interested parties at all levels of environmental decision-making.

140. Water resources management in human settlements presents an outstanding challenge for sustainable development. It combines the challenge of securing for all the basic human need for a reliable supply of safe drinking water and meeting the competing demands of industry and agriculture, which are crucial to economic development and food security, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their water needs.

141. Meeting this challenge requires an integrated approach to water resources management that takes cognizance of the links between water, sanitation and health, between the economy and the environment, and between cities and their hinterland, and harmonizes land-use planning and housing policies with water sector policies and ensures a comprehensive and coherent approach to setting and enforcing realistic standards. A strong political commitment, cooperation across disciplines and sectors, and an active partnership of all interested parties is essential to integrated water resources management. To this end, Governments at the appropriate levels, in partnership with other interested parties, should:

(a) Pursue policies for water resources management that are guided by the broader consideration of economic, social and environmental sustainability of human settlements at large, rather than by sectoral considerations alone;

(b) Establish strategies and criteria (biological, physical and chemical water quality) to preserve and restore aquatic ecosystems in a holistic manner, giving consideration to entire drainage basins and the living resources contained therein;

(c) Manage supply and demand for water in an effective manner that provides for the basic requirements of human settlements development, while paying due regard to the carrying capacity of natural ecosystems;

(d) Promote the forging of partnerships between the public and private sectors and between institutions at the national and local levels so as to improve the allocative efficiency of investments in water and sanitation and to increase operational efficiency;

(e) Support responsible agencies in developing their capacity for assessing the demand of communities and incorporating such demand in the planning of environmental infrastructure services;

(f) Implement the institutional and legal reforms necessary to remove unnecessary overlaps and redundancies in the functions and jurisdictions of multiple sectoral institutions and to ensure effective coordination among those institutions in the delivery and management of services;

(g) Introduce economic instruments and regulatory measures to reduce wastage of water and encourage recycling and reuse of waste water;

(h) Develop strategies to reduce the demand for limited water resources by increasing efficiencies in the agricultural and industrial sectors;

(i) Carry out tenure regularization, as appropriate, in informal settlements to achieve the minimum level of legal recognition required for the provision of basic services;

(j) Promote the development and use of efficient and safe sanitary systems, such as dry toilets, for the recycling of sewage and organic components of municipal solid waste into useful products such as fertilizers and biogas;

(k) Take into consideration the needs of women in making technological choices in respect of the level of and access to basic services;

(l) Ensure the full and equal participation of women in all decision-making relating to water resource conservation, management and technological choice.

142. To improve the liveability of human settlements, Governments at the appropriate levels and in partnership with other interested parties should promote:

- (a) The full participation of all interested parties in spatial planning, design and practices that contribute to sustainability, efficiency, convenience, accessibility, safety, security, aesthetics, diversity and social integration in human settlements;
- (b) Interaction between and among different social groups through the development and maintenance of cultural facilities and communications infrastructure;
- (c) An adequate supply of affordable housing for all;
- (d) Legislation to safeguard the rights and interests of workers, to enhance consumer rights and to ensure security of tenure;
- (e) An economic environment capable of generating employment opportunities, as well as offering a diversity of goods and services;
- (f) Capacity-building, institutional development and civic engagement to contribute to integration and an overall productivity increase in human settlements.

143. In a globalizing economy, the increasing occurrence of transboundary pollution and the transfer across national borders and regions of technologies hazardous to the environment can represent a serious threat to the environmental conditions of human settlements and the health of their inhabitants. Governments should therefore cooperate to develop further international legal mechanisms to implement principle 13 of the Rio Declaration regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction. The international community, international organizations and Governments should also seek appropriate preventive measures in cases of clear risk of major environmental accidents with transboundary effects. Furthermore, States should be guided by principle 16 of the Rio Declaration, which encourages the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.

144. In seeking to prevent transboundary pollution and minimize its impact on human settlements when it does occur, Governments should cooperate to develop appropriate mechanisms for assessing the environmental impact of proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment, including an evaluation of relevant comments provided by other potentially affected countries. Governments should also cooperate to develop and implement mechanisms for prior and timely notification, exchange of information and consultation in good faith, and mitigation of the potential adverse effects regarding those activities, taking into account existing international agreements and instruments.