

# **Toward Establishing Canadian Objectives for Habitat II**

*Report on*

*Canadian Stakeholder Meeting January 26, 1995*

Produced by Focus Consulting for the International Relations Division, CMHC  
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**NOTE:       DISPONIBLE AUSSI EN FRANÇAIS SOUS LE TITRE:**

**VERS L'ÉTABLISSEMENT D'OBJECTIFS CANADIENS POUR HABITAT II**

## TOWARD ESTABLISHING CANADIAN OBJECTIVES FOR HABITAT II

Report on the Canadian Stakeholder Meeting , January 26, 1995

Introduction	1
Background	1
Habitat Objectives	1
Overview of Stakeholder Meeting	3
Canadian Domestic Objectives	3
Canadian Objectives Internationally	3
Toward establishing Canadian Objectives.	5
Stakeholder Response	5
Recasting the Canadian Objectives.	7
Preparing a National Report	9
Consultation Process	10

Appendix A: Background Paper Canada and Habitat II

Appendix B Feedback on Telephone Consultation and List of Organizations Consulted

Appendix C Participants at January 26 Meeting

## ***The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements***

### ***Habitat II***

*Habitat II is intended to set priorities for tackling urban issues and problems and to galvanize national and international resources to face challenges confronting the world's cities. The emphasis will be on a cooperative approach involving Governments, non-governmental organizations, and urban inhabitants. A major aim of Habitat II will be to prepare a Global Plan of Action whose intent is to make urban regions sustainable, safe, healthy, humane and environmentally sound.*

*Five expectations of the Conference:*

- 1. a greater awareness of the urban revolution and associated problems;*
- 2. capacity building at all levels, particularly at the local government level;*
- 3. new partnerships forged between all levels of government, NGOs, private sector, and communities;*
- 4. identification of new strategies and policies to reduce the level of urban poverty, including the effective implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter; and*
- 5. innovative strategies and policies to mitigate the environmental impact of urban growth and, thus, contribute to an accelerated implementation of Agenda 21 and its goals of sustainable development.*

*From Remarks made by Dr. N'Dow, Secretary General of Habitat II at the first PrepCom April 1994 (Extracted from Earth News Bulletin Vol 11, No 1 May 1994)*

## ***Report on the Canadian Stakeholder Meeting , January 26, 1995***

### ***Introduction***

The purpose of this paper is to report on a meeting and consultation of Canadian stakeholders and partners interested in Canada's position at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to be held in Turkey, June 1996. The principle focus of a preceding telephone consultation and the meeting, held January 26, 1995 was to seek input on Canada's objectives for this world conference as well as to develop a process to facilitate ongoing consultation through the preparatory period. In addition, an update was provided by CMHC on preparations to date for Habitat II. Participants also shared information on the activities and plans of their own organizations.

The agenda for the day covered an introduction of participating organizations and their interests in Habitat II; an update on Habitat II and related matters; feedback on the telephone consultation and discussion on:

- Canadian objectives for Habitat II
- the consultation organization and structure
- plans for producing the Canadian National Report
- general timetable

This report does not present minutes of the meeting but rather a synthesis of the issues discussed with particular emphasis on the discussion of objectives and associated activities. The report includes redrafted objectives for consideration by stakeholders and the lead agency, CMHC..

### ***Background***

Prior to reviewing the deliberations of the Canadian Stakeholder Meeting it is useful to establish some context, specifically the objectives and expectations identified by the UN General Assembly and the Commission on Human Settlements (also known as Habitat).

The approval to undertake a world conference on human settlements was established by Resolution 47/180 of the United Nations General Assembly, December 22, 1992. Subsequently, at the First Preparatory Meeting (PrepCom 1) held in April the two central themes of Habitat II were adopted as:

- sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world; and
- adequate shelter for all

### **Habitat Objectives**

As further background, Habitat II has also identified the following expectations:

International Objectives: The preparatory process should present a State of Human Settlements report; produce a Statement of Principles and Commitments based on a new international consensus on policies and goals for shelter; produce a Global Plan of Action to mobilize international resources and create institutional arrangements to assist countries to implement and monitor the goals of sustainable human settlements and shelter for all and to protect the

environment against unwarranted and undesirable impacts of urbanization; and make available the broadest range of information concerning shelter strategies, technologies, resources, experience, expertise and sources of support.

National Objectives: Each participating country should design, adopt and implement a national plan of action, which will address the issue of human settlements in both urban and rural areas, taking into consideration environmental issues, and which will involve the full participation and support of the public and private sectors, and of non-governmental and community-based organizations. Countries should also strengthen the capacity of institutions at all levels to monitor shelter conditions and urbanization processes using a minimum set of substantially uniform and consistent indicators.

Participation: Governments of each participating State should establish national committees with broad participation from all levels of government, civic leaders, the academic and scientific community, grassroots leaders; non-governmental and community-based organizations, the private sector and human settlements professions. These committees should formulate, adopt and implement a work program including the production of a national report, discussion on priority issues, organize local and country consultations and forums, and prepare and present audio-visual documentaries of examples of best practice in human settlement development

Draft Statement of Principles and Commitments: The Statement should reaffirm and be framed within the general goals of the UN, contain a reference to the Principles adopted by Habitat I as well as reference to the Rio Declaration; and introduce the rationale for the new principles and commitments that will guide national and international action on human settlements for the next 20 years.

Draft Global Plan of Action: The Global Plan of Action should be structured around the following two main themes of the Conference: adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. The following multi-sectoral issues should be considered: settlements management; poverty reduction; environmental management; and disaster mitigation, relief and reconstruction. Cross-sectoral issues that should be considered include: women, the urban economy and employment; social and economic dimensions of urbanization and shelter development; education and capacity building; and equity and vulnerable social groups.

As final background it is worth noting, and sharing with others who may not be aware, the guiding principles that were identified as part of Canada's position at the 1st PrepCom in April 1994:

- a) Sustainable development must be firmly embedded within all work on human settlements, both nationally and internationally;
- b) sustainability denotes concern for the environment as well as for social cultural and political aspects that permeate all development in a free and civil society;
- c) sustainable development requires the full support and protection of all groups in a society, including the disadvantaged and those left out of the mainstream of development activities;
- d) the perspective of women must be taken into account in all human settlement and development activities;
- e) development activities are sustainable when they involve partnership efforts of all stakeholders which include government agencies, non governmental organization, the private sector, community based associations local authorities and all those concerned with achieving societal goals.

### ***Overview of Stakeholder Meeting***

With the preceding objectives and outputs identified by UNCHS as context, Canada must establish its own objectives and preparatory process. In preparation for the Canadian Stakeholder meeting CMHC issued a background discussion paper (November 21, 1994, attached as Appendix A) identifying possible objectives from both a domestic and international perspective as well as options for a consultation process. Feedback on the suggestions offered in the discussion paper was sought from fourteen organizations, mainly from NGO's, prior to the meeting (a list of the organizations contacted and a report on the feedback as presented during the meeting is attached as Appendix B)

As presented in the discussion paper, the following proposed objectives were identified prior to the meeting:

#### **Canadian Domestic Objectives**

- i. Canadian National Report: To produce a national report that reflects on progress that Canada has made toward making our own urban settlements more sustainable, on best practices that may be useful to the rest of the world, on issues of particular interest to Canada and on the challenges facing Canada and how they might be addressed.
- ii. Network Building: The process of Habitat II preparations could be used to build a network within Canada of all stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, who are interested in human settlements and sustainable development. This network should be established in such a way that it can survive, both cost-effectively and efficiently, after Habitat II.
- iii. Consultations: Support a participatory process of discussion with Canadians in Canada about Human Settlements.

#### **Canadian Objectives Internationally**

- i. acceptance of the importance of the role of NGO's and local authorities in Habitat II;
- ii. adoption of a realistic and concrete plan of action;
- iii. acceptance of the importance of indicators, their development and central place within the Habitat II process and program;
- iv. ensuring that Canada's developmental priorities are understood, supported and adopted in a meaningful way by the Principles and Actions of the [Habitat II] Conference.

The telephone consultation had revealed a degree of ambivalence about these objectives: respondents did not object to them but felt they were too general. A number of respondents had indicated a preference to refine these to a more practical level and to link them more directly to an action plan. Questions were also raised as to who would prepare the national report, the process under which input and feedback would be solicited and the timeframe for this report.

At the commencement of the meeting participants were each asked to introduce themselves and identify the objectives of their organization in relation to Habitat II. It should be noted that the participants represented a diverse range of governmental and non government organizations including professional/member associations, some with an explicit focus on international development, others with a more domestic focus. Some participants were already actively involved in Habitat II preparations while others had less familiarity with Habitat II but saw the event as a vehicle to focus attention and lever action on related domestic agendas pertaining to sustainable

development and shelter issues. Accordingly, the motivations and expectations of participants varied.

The objectives of each participating organization were reported in conjunction with introductory comments so were not always articulated as specific objectives for Habitat II. At a general level, a number of organizations noted that they simply wished to be involved in order to ensure that issues of concern to their constituencies were incorporated. Others however had more specific objectives, reflecting their ongoing involvement in international development. The following statements reflect the type of stated objectives. These are not attributed as they were made during brief introductory comments and may not completely reflect the position of each organization.

[to:]

- facilitate involvement at the grass roots level;
- complete the circle from Habitat I through concrete objectives and outcomes;
- promote a more integrated approach to planning, urban management, shelter and environmental issues;
- ensure involvement of aboriginal peoples;
- ensure that Habitat II builds on other related world conferences - e.g. population, social summit, women's summit;
- support the voice of developing countries;
- promote sustainable development in developing countries through responsive programs that reflect stated needs of recipients;
- improve quality of life through sustainable development;
- raise awareness and aid public understanding of UN processes, issues and objectives;
- encourage recipients of assistance to express their views on a range of critical urban management issues;
- promote improved living conditions for aboriginal peoples;
- pursue opportunity to engage cities in intergovernmental processes and to gain a voice in the UN process;
- seek integrated and holistic approaches to settlement issues
- learn from developing countries about possible self help and enabling strategies that might be applied in Canada.

Like the tentative objectives presented in the CMHC paper, these statements similarly do not articulate precise and concrete objectives with clearly associated action plans. Even an objective to pursue a concrete plan of action is not itself a precise objective, although it does suggest a strong commitment to achievement of results. This illustrates the difficulty in moving beyond general statements toward practical objectives.

During this roundtable discussion, it was evident that there are numerous ongoing activities both related to Habitat II itself and independent of Habitat II but substantively related. The Global Forum on Cities and Sustainable Development, convened in Manchester in June 1994 was cited as an example which could have direct bearing on Habitat II in terms of a process to integrate the participation of local government officials in the international and UN processes. The need for a strategy (ideally at the Habitat secretariat) was noted. It was further observed that any strategy or objective must distinguish between basic information exchange and a more substantive process involving the application of that information.



### ***Toward establishing Canadian Objectives.***

Given the response to the telephone consultation, generating a more refined set of objectives was an important part of the January 26 Stakeholder meeting. Accordingly, CMHC developed and tabled a set of objectives for discussion. The objective for this specific meeting was to seek feedback and take this input into a discussion at the interdepartmental committee.

#### **POSSIBLE CANADIAN OBJECTIVES FOR HABITAT II**

(Tabled by CMHC at Meeting January 26, 1995)

1. To raise the Canadian public's awareness of issues of sustainable human settlements (economic, social and environmental).
2. To learn, from the experiences of other countries, lessons which may be useful in the development of settlement policies and programs in Canada.
3. To use the conference as a catalyst to forge new partnerships among governments, NGOs, and the private sector required for the achievement of sustainable human settlements in Canada.
4. To promote the development of urban indicators which will allow governments to assess urban conditions and track progress toward the achievement of sustainable settlement objectives.
5. To inform the world of Canadian successes related to the achievement of sustainable settlements for the benefit of countries which can learn from our experiences and with a view to exporting those products and services which made the Canadian successes possible.
6. To ensure that any international agreements emerging from the conference are acceptable to Canada.

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### **Stakeholder Response**

It was suggested that the objectives might better reflect Canada's two areas of expertise: that relating to the global shelter strategy and the vast field of urban and metropolitan governance. Reinforcing this, it was noted that adequate shelter for all was not explicit in these six objectives. As one of the two themes of the conference and the topic of a major report to be produced at the conference - an examination of the implementation of the Global Shelter Strategy - this topic should be acknowledged in the Canadian objectives. Similarly, an objective articulated by the UNCHS, the development of a national action plan, was noted as missing from the Canadian objectives.

It was suggested that objectives (2) and (6) are not necessary. To learn from others and to ensure acceptability international agreements are givens. At the same time others noted that is useful to remind ourselves that this is not a unidirectional process. In particular, it was observed that in the context of recent budget cuts in the area of social housing there may be a critical need to examine practices of local self help and enabling strategies in developing countries and to assess their potential to address ongoing shelter issues here in Canada.

Objective (4) pertaining to indicators raised some questions as not all participants were aware of ongoing projects relating to indicators work, particularly of the World Bank and UNCHS. The World Bank contributes approximately 1% of the annual investment in housing and related residential infrastructure. There is limited understanding of how effectively this or more importantly the remaining 99% of investment is spent and how the institutional arrangements relating to these expenditures effect shelter outcomes. Work in this area is now moving beyond measurement of physical outcomes to encompass the social, environmental and quality of life impacts. It was cautioned that while indicators are important and seem to have strong support at the World Bank and UNCHS level, the key is in how indicators are used at the local decision making level. Will the research and development of indicators take into account the type of information that individuals at the local level factor into their own decision making process? Accordingly, how should any Canadian objective in this area seek to influence this ongoing process?.

Objectives related to influencing the Habitat II process and outputs were suggested. These might include issues such as the process by which NGO's participate in Habitat II and the integration of the outputs of other parallel world conferences (Rio, Cairo, Vienna Copenhagen and Beijing). It was suggested that this support could be encompassed in the Statements of Principle that Canada adopts and articulates at the conference.

Areas where Canada can directly provide expertise and assistance is in the democratization of the local urban management process; and in the development of expertise and capacity in urban administration and engineering. If the intent of Habitat II, is to get beyond unattainable statements of principle to concrete action it may be useful to focus objectives at this level in the first instance.

Participants were reminded that a key challenge facing Canada is to remedy the poor living conditions of aboriginal peoples. With the focus of Habitat II on urbanization the ongoing process of aboriginal urbanization here in Canada is notable. Current efforts to move beyond the traditional sectoral approaches to addressing the needs of aboriginal peoples both on, and increasingly off reserve, through self government and integrated social development approaches - including day care, education, employment and the process of self governance itself were noted as examples of Canadian best practice (even though this process is still ongoing and may also provide useful lessons on less successful efforts). Explicit recognition of an objective relating to aboriginal peoples was requested.

A key part of a concrete set of objectives is raising consciousness of the process of urbanization, the linkages between urban development and human behavior that can lead to social and environmental dysfunction. While many NGO's and aid agencies may appreciate the notion of sustainable development the fact remains that the general public does not understand this concept. He/she may be very concerned about global environmental issues like ozone depletion, and global warming and may even have a vague notion that these climatic changes may affect agricultural production in the sub-Sahara, but it is unlikely that they will appreciate that the individual decisions they make about the size and location of their own shelter may be related to these global environmental issues. Developing an active and effective Canadian network is one step toward an action plan on raising broad public awareness about human settlement issues. In this regard, it was noted by a number of participants that the international conference provides a focus and leverage for domestic action and education.

The challenge remains to scope out an appropriate and effective action plan. An important focus here, and one that is ongoing, is how Canada applies its expertise, reputation and leadership in

urban governance to promote democratization and decentralization of the decision making process in urban development and management in developing countries. As a City Summit the issue of metropolitan management should be central to any Canadian objectives. Accordingly, greater representation in the Habitat Network of both metropolitan and provincial officials was suggested.

Finally it was suggested that there may be a need to examine Canada's efforts in international development to date. What has Canada attempted to achieve?. How well has it done this, and how is this evaluated by recipients?.

### **Recasting the Canadian Objectives.**

It is clear both from the telephone consultation and the discussion at the January 26th meeting that there is a need to rethink the Canadian objectives. While these will ultimately be finalized and approved by the federal government, the input received to date provides an opportunity to revise and recommend objectives for consideration. The pervading sentiment of participants in the discussion were that objectives should respect the higher level objectives established by the UN General Assembly and the UNCHS, but focus the Canadian objectives at a practical level that readily links to action.

A critical element in framing objectives is recognizing the unique context of a world conference on human settlements. While other U.N. conferences highlight the critical issues of population growth, human rights, social justice and wealth distribution, and the persistence of gender inequality, each of these issues is abstract in the sense that these issues are not physically defined. It is through our human settlements that these problems are put into context. Traditional approaches to these broad problems, both in the developed and the developing world, have typically emphasized the individual or group with limited recognition of their physical or community context. Yet it is the physical manifestation of these problems and issues that helps to focus our attention. It is also at the community level that the physical interaction of individuals and organizations develops motivation and capacity to remedy, or at least attack these problems.

Because human settlements provide this focal point, it would be remiss not to take the opportunity to position Habitat II to carry forward and implement actions emerging from associated events and programs, including the Global Shelter Strategy, Agenda 21, the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen) and the 4th U.N. Conference on Women (Beijing).

While Habitat II is very much concerned with living conditions in developing countries, participants in the meeting emphasized that problems continue to persist in Canada. We are not yet able to submit a report claiming to have achieved the goal of adequate shelter for all. Canada has the technical capability and wealth to ensure that all Canadians are adequately housed. Yet living conditions in some communities, notably those in rural and remote locations, as well as aboriginal communities, remain far from adequate. A strong political commitment is required to provide the resources and develop the capacity of these communities to address their inadequate housing conditions.

Participants noted that shelter objectives must be stated more broadly. Persistent problems of inadequate housing cannot be addressed in the traditional sectoral way. This must be replaced by a more comprehensive strategy one premised on a sustainable housing system that builds a strong sense of community, creates employment and develops skills while minimizing impacts on the

natural environment - an approach outlined during the meeting by representatives of the National Aboriginal Housing Association.

It may be appropriate to structure objectives on a national and international level as well as in reference to the two themes of the conference - adequate shelter for all; and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. It may also be desirable to distinguish between objectives, or more important action plans, focused on the conference itself, and those relating to an ongoing process oriented toward effecting change in the management of civil society, particularly in developing nations. Achieving sustainable development is as much about changing human behavior as it is about effective urban planning and management. In the developed world where urban growth persists, albeit at a slower rate, it is questionable whether the predominant pattern of growth, focused on the suburban and the exurban fringe of our larger metropolitan areas is sustainable - either in economic (cost of infrastructure), social (sense of community), or environmental terms (development of greenfield sites; extensive commuting distances). Accordingly, education and dialogue must be a critical part of the process. This should include an examination of what do we mean by sustainable/unsustainable human settlements - what are the defining characteristics of such settlements. How have practices and programs in Canada contributed to such (un)sustainable human settlements).

Based on the tabled objectives and the feedback reported above the following revised Canadian Objectives for Habitat II are proposed:

1. To use the conference as a catalyst to forge new partnerships among governments, NGOs, and the private sector to develop a strategy for the achievement of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in Canada and globally.
2. To encourage an increased role for local authorities and NGO's in Habitat II and the U.N. system.
3. To promote and assist in the development of urban indicators both as a local decision making tool and as a way to assess urban conditions and track progress toward the achievement of sustainable settlement objectives.
4. To inform the world of Canadian successes and best practices being implemented to improve the sustainability of Canadian cities, both for the benefit of countries which can learn from our experiences and with a view to exporting the associated Canadian products, services and expertise.
5. To encourage Habitat II to develop an effective process building on the work of other [past] international conferences and to adopt a realistic and realizable program that will promote improvements in living conditions after the Conference
6. To raise (public) awareness and understanding about how the conditions and process of urbanization and urban development impacts on economic, social and environmental sustainability

Each of these objectives, if accepted can be linked to specific actions, a critical step in this process. During the meeting the limitations on financial resources was stressed. Limited resources might therefore be used to lever and build on existing activities relating to each of these objectives. While it is premature to develop an action plan until the objectives are clarified, it is possible to outline possible opportunities and partnerships on a tentative basis. (In addition, these suggestions are limited by the authors knowledge of existing activities and should be expanded).

Objective #	Action/Partner
1	Ensuring ongoing exchange on activities is a first step to encouraging working partnerships. A Habitat II newsletter (a basic communications vehicle) could be effective here and is something CMHC might consider as a way to keep all stakeholders and partners informed of the ongoing consultation as well as individual activities of stakeholders. The recent consultations on aboriginal housing policy and on social housing provide a source of inputs for the development of strategies
2	CIDA, IDRC FCM, the Canadian Urban Institute and Rooftops/HIC are already active in this area and may be in a position to provide leadership. FCM have been involved in sending municipal officials and politicians to assist in local elections in developing countries. are active in this area
3	A considerable effort is already focused on development of indicators, including the World Bank, Villes et development, UBC, CMHC work on Quality of Life indicators and the joint CMHC-HUD indicators project. Environment Canada is active in the area of urban indicators as part of their State of the Environment Reporting and IISD is active in this area.
4	FCM already undertaking a project on best practice. Also ICURR and IREE/Global Change Program/CMHC have both completed a compendium on initiatives and best practice.
5	Both DFAIT and CIDA are involved in the other UN conferences and may be in a position to assist here, as might UNAC.
6	Much research has already been undertaken and is readily available to help promote understanding, but requires consolidation in a communications plan. The National Round Table is already active through its constituent round tables in stimulating dialogue on these issues. Local chapters of organizations such as the Canadian Institute of Planners, the UNAC, municipalities and environmental organization might sponsor public workshops and roundtables. A media kit might be developed and made available to local media, as well as being used in schools

Clearly these preliminary linkages require further elaboration. However they do illustrate that coordinating and embracing ongoing activities can provide a core of action from which to begin.

The explicit recognition of a concrete plan of action in these objectives was supported by a number of participants. In response, CMHC officials expressed some concern on this formal approach. It was suggested that while UNCHS have articulated this expectation, their focus is primarily on developing countries. Beyond the fact that Canadians are on the whole well housed, with some obvious exceptions as already noted, the development of a national action plan is complicated by the jurisdiction issues in Canada as well as by severe limitations in financial resources.

Accordingly, establishing the development of a national action plan as an objective is not believed to be realistic or feasible. This does not mean that efforts should not be undertaken to engage key partners, notably provincial officials, in discussion of more integrated and co-ordinated efforts in the area of sustainable development.

### ***Preparing a National Report***

A required input for Habitat II is the preparation of a national report which will document progress made to date in achieving adequate shelter for all and in directing our urban growth in a sustainable manner. While detailed reporting guidelines are provided by the UNCHS, countries are also

encouraged to tailor their reports toward their own countries circumstances. Accordingly, CMHC presented a proposed outline for a national report:

1. progress in human settlements in Canada over the past 20 years;
2. use of indicators to measure our situation;
3. provision of adequate shelter for all;
4. sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world;
5. examples of Canadian "best practices;"
6. Canada's international efforts regarding human settlements;
7. topics of special interest to Canada e.g. Indicators, governance, etc.

The deadline for production and submission of the report is December 1, 1995. In addition, Canada will be required to report on progress to date at the second Prepcorn, to take place April 1995. It was noted that the report should be cognizant of the present environment of fiscal restraint and should not raise unrealistic expectations. It was further emphasized that the report should be useful to stakeholders and partners rather than simply complying with UN guidelines.

In developing a process to produce the report, CMHC noted an openness to various approaches. For example, a chapter on adequate shelter for all might be addressed through a symposium, with the proceedings being used to write the chapter. In the case of best practices FCM is already undertaking work in this area which may provide the core input. The document could be a mechanism to pursue the objective (if adopted) of raising awareness and understanding about urbanization and sustainable development.

Participants were generally supportive of a multi-faceted approach but stressed the need for a process including timeframes to ensure that various activities were both focused and timely.

### ***Consultation Process***

In addition to the production of the national report, and any associated consultation, CMHC indicated a desire to have an ongoing consultation through the preparatory process for Habitat II. This reflects the UN objective to encourage broad based participation including all levels of government, civic leaders, the academic and scientific community, grassroots leaders; non-governmental and community-based organizations, the private sector and human settlements professions.

The expectations regarding consultation focus primarily on seeking input to the Canadian position for each PrepCom and for Habitat II itself. Emphasizing that CMHC wished to make the consultation as inclusive as possible, two options were identified in the background paper. One approach is to convene stakeholder meetings, augmented by telephone consultations, similar to the process used in this meeting; the other envisioned sectoral working groups.

Discussion of the consultation options focused on the need to have a clear set of objectives and a better understanding of the substantive materials on which the consultation would be premised. If the intent is to actively seek broad input, various forms of workshops and round-tables would be required, with significant budgetary implications. The alternative is a more limited consultation with existing organizations, but even here a number of groups expressed concern regarding the cost of reviewing and preparing responses to substantive documents. These groups indicated a need for some financial support to permit their active participation.

It was stressed that the budget, while currently unknown, would be extremely limited. Notwithstanding this discussion during the meeting, feedback received during the pre-meeting telephone consultation suggested a preference to use the consultation as a way to improve communication and strengthen the network of potentially interested organizations. While an individual consultant (including an organization charged with this responsibility) can effectively collect information, prepare a report and seek feedback, such a hub and spoke process does not lend itself to a process of interaction between organizations and does not help to build a stronger network (or netweb, a term introduced during the meeting to symbolize overlapping multidirectional interaction).

Some concerns were expressed about the use of the information highway as a vehicle to gather feedback. It was noted that the way information is provided is an important part of the consultation process. Electronic bulletin boards may not stimulate an effective response. Nonetheless, posting discussion papers and requests for feedback on bulletin boards is a low cost initiative that might generate a response and is therefore worth attempting.

A key concern was the timetable and substantive content of any consultation. Participants expressed a strong desire for advanced notice and also stressed the need for adequate time to respond. CMHC indicated a willingness to co-operate to the extent possible, although the receipt of documentation from UNCHS is the key variable.

A timetable and process will be developed and distributed for the preparation of the national report. The next preparatory process will be undertaken in conjunction with PrepCom 2, to be held in Nairobi April 24-May 5, 1995. Advanced documentation is expected approximately 4-6 weeks prior to the event (i.e. mid March). In the meantime CMHC and other federal agencies will meet to refine the objectives and identify a preliminary action plan.

## **Appendix**

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A: Background Paper Canada and Habitat II**

**Appendix B Feedback on Telephone Consultation and List of Organizations Consulted**

**Appendix C Participants at January 26 Meeting**



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## ***DISCUSSION PAPER FOR DECEMBER 14, 1994 MEETING***

### ***CANADA AND HABITAT II***

**IMPORTANT NOTE: THE VIEWS AND IDEAS DISCUSSED IN THIS PAPER DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR ANY DEPARTMENT INVOLVED WITH HABITAT II.**

#### **A) INTRODUCTION**

A meeting of stakeholders and partners for the Canadian Habitat II process will be held on December 14, 1994, in Ottawa. Habitat II is a major world conference planned by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to take place in June 1996. For more information on Habitat II, please see the attached materials from Habitat II.

A committee of federal departments has been meeting to discuss international human settlements work in general, and Habitat II specifically. This discussion paper has been produced in order to help focus feedback for the meeting. A consultant has also been engaged to help organize and consolidate the feedback from stakeholders.

The topics for this meeting will include:

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Update on Habitat II and related matters
- 3) Discussion on:
  - Canadian objectives for Habitat II
  - the consultation process
  - public outreach plans
  - general timetable
  - plans for producing the Canadian National Report
- 4) Other matters

Groups will be encouraged to make short presentations on their organizations' plans, preparations to date and expectations for Habitat II, both domestically and internationally. Input will also be sought on the proposed Canadian objectives and on the alternate approaches to undertaking what will be an ongoing domestic a consultation process.

The two central themes for Habitat II are

- (i)adequate shelter for all;
- (ii) sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world

#### **B) Canadian Objectives Domestically**

- i. Canadian National Report: To produce a national report that reflects on progress that Canada has made toward making our own urban settlements more sustainable, on best practices that

may be useful to the rest of the world, on issues of particular interest to Canada and on the challenges facing Canada and how they might be addressed.

- ii. Network Building: The process of Habitat II preparations could be used to build a network within Canada of all stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, who are interested in human settlements and sustainable development. This network should be established in such a way that it can survive, both cost-effectively and efficiently, after Habitat II.
- iii. Consultations: Support a participatory process of discussion with Canadians in Canada about Human Settlements.

### **C) Canadian Objectives Internationally**

#### **Process**

In contributing to the goals of Habitat II Canada will provide three specific inputs:

- Global Status Report: Canada's national report will provide information for this document.
- The Global Statement of Principles: what is it that we, as Canadians, wish to subscribe to in order to make cities and human settlements generally better places to live for all of humanity? All stakeholders' will have a say in what Canada believes these principles are.
- The Global Plan of Action: what are the "best practices" that we, as Canadians, believe should be pursued by all countries (as appropriate) to make our "principles" a reality. This is where Canadian experience nationally and internationally matters.

#### **The International Objectives:**

The major objectives for Canada could include:

- 1) acceptance of the importance of the role of NGO's and local authorities in Habitat II;
- 2) adoption of a realistic and concrete plan of action;
- 3) acceptance of the importance of indicators, their development and central place within the Habitat II process and program;
- 4) ensuring that Canada's developmental priorities are understood, supported and adopted in a meaningful way by the Principles and Actions of the Conference.

### **D) Habitat II Consultations**

The objectives of the domestic consultation process are:

- To facilitate and strengthen Canadian representation in the global Habitat II process.
- To engage a wide range of key Canadian governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the Habitat II process.
- To facilitate Canadian country-level preparatory processes for Habitat II in order to promote better understanding of the key themes of Habitat II and to prepare reports to the preparatory and the final conferences.
- To build an effective network of Canadian organizations interested in human settlements, and provide a base for further cooperation after Habitat II.

### Components of Consultation

There will be several major components of the domestic consultation process, which should complement an ongoing preparatory process at the international level: These should include:

- 1) arrange consultations of stakeholders, prior to each major event
  - e.g. pre-PrepCom 2: March/95
  - pre-PrepCom 3: December/95
  - pre-Conference: May/96
- 2) support representative Canadian delegates in attending the PrepComs and Habitat II;
- 3) receiving documents, summarizing them, sending them out to stakeholders, receiving feedback, and preparing recommended Canadian positions;
- 4) setting up and maintaining a consultation channel through the most appropriate means.

### Stakeholders

The target constituencies for these activities will be large national and regional non-governmental organizations or networks which in turn can consult with their local member groups or individuals. These could be divided into various constituencies, including:

- 1) NGO's: Including those with either a domestic and/or international focus
  - domestic groups e.g. Canadian social housing sector stakeholders particularly large national or regional groups such as CHFC, CHRA, ONPHA, CHAO and native peoples organizations.
  - international NGO's: those involved in international human settlements work e.g. Rooftops Canada, CCIC, Oxfam, etc.
- 2) Municipal Organizations: - interested local authorities, which could be consulted through FCM
- 3) Research Institutions or Professional Organizations:
  - Canadian professional associations such as the CIP and RAIC.
  - academics institutions, such as UBC-Centre for Human Settlements, Villes et Developpement (Montreal), U. of T., etc.
- 4) Native Groups:
- 5) Private Sector: - e.g. CREA, CHBA
- 6) Provincial Governments: - could be done through ICURR
- 7) Federal Government Departments: - interdepartmental committee
- 8) Misc: - individuals and others not fitting into above categories

### Networking and Information Exchange

A major effort could be undertaken to use the electronic medium for the consultations, The components could include:

- **Data Base:** A data base of basic Habitat information could be established, updated and maintained for the project period.
- **Electronic Conferencing:** All stakeholders would be encouraged to participate in an electronic conference specifically established for the project. This will use the existing Web Network innCanada which is already widely used by NGO's and other organizations as a platform for UN related fora and documentation. This would therefore be an appropriate vehicle to facilitate electronic communication in Canada. They will also be guided to access other relevant international e-mail conferences. To the greatest extent possible, information will be exchanged through the use of e-mail.
- **Information Exchange:** Summaries of the inputs and outputs to the Habitat II PrepComs and the Habitat II conference could be prepared and distributed to all target groups. This will include papers prepared by UNCHS and the Canadian national progress reports and plan of action. Full documentation in "hard copy" could be distributed to groups wishing this option.

### Committee Structure

The domestic consultation process requires a structure, through which feedback and information will flow. The primary purposes of this effort are to prepare the Canadian National Report and to arrive at Canadian positions to be taken at the PrepComs and the Conference. Two major alternatives are:

1. **Direct Consultations:** Each individual stakeholder would have an equal voice. Before each major event, a stakeholder's meeting would be convened to which all interested parties would be invited. In plenary, input would be sought on Canadian positions. Based on these meetings and by consultations held outside the meeting (e.g. those unable to attend would be polled by phone, fax, e-network, etc.), positions would be recommended.
2. **Working Group:** Each of the seven identified sectors would be asked to select a representative to sit on a Working Group. This Working Group would meet before each of the major events, and after the sectoral consultations, to discuss Canadian positions, and make recommendations.

### Method of Consultation

In considering alternatives as to how the consultation should be organized, several factors should be considered:

- 1) the federal government does not have sufficient internal human resources to undertake all of the work on its own;
- 2) financial resources will be limited.

### Alternatives

Alternative 1: **One Consultant** In this alternative, one consultant will be engaged to undertake all of the consultations with all of the different sectors. They would provide all of the feedback required, and act as a single channel for information. They would undertake all of the contemplated consultant activities, including contact with all stakeholders, summarizing and reporting inputs and providing feedback to stakeholders. Feedback could be organized by sector.

Alternative 2: **Several Consultants/Reps.** In this case, a consultant would be retained or a representative chosen for each of the major constituencies, who comes from that sector. For example, an NGO would organize NGO participation, FCM the municipalities, etc.

## **Canada and Habitat II**

### **Feedback from Stakeholders: Pre Meeting Consultation.**

In preparation for the Canadian Stakeholder Meeting 14 of the participating organizations were contacted to seek feedback on the background paper distributed by CMHC (dated Nov 21/94). Nine of the 14 were interviewed by phone.

The consultation sought information about the organizations ongoing or planned activities related to Habitat II, their reaction to the objectives and suggested consultation process identified in the background paper and the communications capabilities of the organization (i.e. newsletters, magazines and connections to electronic mail networks).

#### **1. Ongoing Activities**

A number of groups indicated that their current priorities are very much at the domestic level. While sympathetic to Canada's role in the UN they will likely have limited time to participate in the process.

Those that already have an international focus were already active in some way, or intend to be actively involved. A number of organizations are already active in ongoing NGO processes being coordinated by Habitat International Coalition (Rooftops Canada). At the municipal level, representatives are involved in the International Union of Local Authorities preparations for Habitat II. The academic research institutes contacted have ongoing research relating to governance and indicators. Three NGO's indicated plans or interest in hosting workshops either as part of larger conferences or standalone to provide fora for exchange on Habitat issues within their own membership. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women expressed a strong interest on hosting a conference on women and shelter - linking the issues arising from the related two UN events.

#### **2. Objectives**

Much of the discussion focused on the objectives and proposed consultation process. There was a strong view that the objectives were quite general, and therefore difficult to argue against. There appeared to be a desire for something more specific, particularly at the international level. Much time could, and hopefully will, be dedicated to fleshing out Canadian objectives both at the domestic and international level.

At the national level the preparation of a national report provides a substantive product but is this the only or the principle output?. The other two objectives (re building a network and consulting) raised the question of the substantive focus: network on what?, consult on what? The implicit response "the role of human settlements in promoting sustainability" remains vague.

It may be useful to table the option of development of a national action plan for sustainable human settlements as a domestic objective. Some saw this as an important and effective way to raise general awareness about the role of cities and human settlements in sustainable development. It was observed that more action oriented items were raised in the meeting in April 1994. These included the idea of a series of public round tables to raise public interest and awareness on the interconnections between our living environments and the natural environment, as well as the critical issues of social equity, especially on a north south basis.

At the international level the objectives are currently written more in the form of principles and will require reorientation into clear objectives. (E.g. accepting the importance of the role of NGO's is more of a principle than an objective. The complementary objective would be to provide (or to seek) NGO's with a meaningful role in Habitat 11 by .....). One respondent observed that Habitat is fundamentally about the south. Accordingly, the Canadian International objectives should reflect this reality. Others raised the issue of a separate NGO forum and questioned whether Canada might take a strong position on advocating for this.

It was suggested that a specific objective be developed on the topic of strengthening the municipal structure in developing countries. Sustainable development will only become a reality if the local residents understand and control their resources. Accordingly, democratization of the processes of municipal governance is an essential principle on which stakeholders might exchange ideas and research.

It was also suggested that the active implementation of declarations which Canada has signed in previous world conferences should be a stated objective in the Canadian position. Active implementation of the Forward Looking Strategy endorsed in previous World Conferences on Women was cited as an example. Another examples is the Global Shelter Strategy, on which Habitat II must report.

In discussing the objectives, and their general nature an issue was raised in terms of the emerging Federal government position on foreign policy and how this might impact any consensus based development of Canadian Objectives for Habitat II. In particular Canada's apparent shift toward trade linked aid may have implications for these objectives and therefore needs to be clarified.

Habitat will provide an opportunity to focus public and media attention on human settlements, and particularly the key themes of adequate shelter for all, and sustainable urban environments. This creates an opportunity to raise the level of public awareness about the problems and potential of human settlements in social progress, economic growth and environmental protection. Accordingly an objective relating to public education and awareness might be considered.

This discussion suggests that establishing clear and meaningful objectives should be a focal point of this meeting. Establishing these will facilitate a more effective consultation process.

### ***3. Comments on the Consultation Alternatives.***

Discussions on the possible consultation approaches raised two main questions. Consult on what, and how. The background paper indicates that the primary purpose of a consultation was seen as inputting into the Canadian position paper at Prepcoms, and Habitat itself; and providing input to the National report. But beyond producing documents the consultation could be an important element in strengthening communication and interaction between the range of stakeholders identified, and hopefully reach beyond these.

From a logistical point of view, a single consultant (including an organization charged with this responsibility) may be effective in producing a report; this will not however advance the sense of a network (notably the current weak interconnections were noted in the 1993 stakeholder meeting. At the same time "participation costs", both in terms of travel and time - many NGO's rely on volunteers who are not paid when they attend meetings. NGO's expressed a need to push the consultation beyond the traditional organizations but to do this would require some financial support.

Some participants favoured a more substantive product to which they could react. This is a very traditional form of "consultation" and usually easier to manage, although it requires more preparatory effort on the organizers part. In such a process, ownership of the document, more often than not, lies with the coordinating agency, in this case CMHC. Lines of communication tend to be linear - a hub and spoke process - rather than cross sectoral.

Others however emphasized the importance of process and, more particularly, a process that would encourage both intersectoral interaction and collective ownership of product, process and action plan (including commitments to implement). There was some hesitation regarding a traditional hub and spoke process involving the solicitation of ideas and consolidation by a co-ordinating agency.

An alternative process in which the participants collectively design the process and their own participation in it may be effective in increasing the meaningful participation of NGO's, a central principle enunciated at the first Precom. It can also be more effective in developing improved cross sectoral understanding. This will however require strong facilitation and a willingness on CMHC's part to defer to a group consensus. On the other hand, given limited CMHC/government resources, the willingness of other agencies to substantively contribute will be increased in they perceive a meaningful and effective role.

An important part of the consensus building process, and a point raised by a number of participants is determining whether all the significant interests are represented. Human settlements in Canada relate directly to urban policy, something that falls under provincial purview. In the list of invitees no provincial municipal affairs representatives are included. Similarly, with a focus on urbanization and governance, metropolitan governments will be important players. While the FCM and ICURR provide a liaison to these two levels of government, a broader representation may be useful.

#### ***4. Communications Capabilities***

Most of the organizations contacted have access to a modem and some form of email, although the specific individuals contacted were not the direct user. Three groups currently have access to the Web. Participants may wish to note that Web carries reports on various UN conference preparations (see for example [un.habitat.gen](#), [unced.doc](#), [dev.humansettl](#), [nrtee.susdev](#) and [en.urban](#))

All organizations distribute a magazine or newsletter on a periodic basis, providing a communications vehicle to inform members about Habitat.

Individuals Consulted:

Ron Doering - NRTEE

Charles Draper - UNAC

Sarah Power - Rooftops

Mario Polese - Villes et Developpement

Jacques Jobin - FCM

Claude Roy CHRA

Bob Sloat/John Kenwood - CHBA

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