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**Can U.N. Conferences  
Promote Poverty  
Reduction?  
A Review of the  
Istanbul Declaration  
and the Habitat Agenda**

*David Satterthwaite*

**Woodrow Wilson International  
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Washington, D.C.**

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**Can U.N. Conferences Promote Poverty Reduction?  
A Review of the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda in Relation to Their  
Consideration of Poverty and the Priority They Give to Poverty Reduction**

by David Satterthwaite

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**I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

In considering how the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda, the two key documents agreed upon at the Habitat II Conference, deal with poverty (and with other important issues, such as sustainable development<sup>1</sup>), it is easy to point to a lack of precision in some of the language used, the repetition, and the tendency toward long lists of "problems" with little consideration of their linkages (and often their underlying causes). But this might also be an inevitable result of any document that had to be endorsed by representatives of so many different governments. Where the wording on some controversial issue appears unclear or imprecise, this may be because any greater clarity or precision prevented agreement by some representative of a government or some group of countries, such as the Group of 77 or the European Union.

The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda should not be assessed as if they were the "reports of experts" but rather as political documents on which agreement among some 150 governments was negotiated with constant pressure for changes also coming from diverse external groups (including the Catholic Church and feminist and human rights coalitions). When judged from this viewpoint, both documents are impressive for the constant reference given to the problem of poverty and the need to make poverty reduction a priority, the acknowledgment that poverty is increasing in scale, the acceptance of poverty's multiple manifestations (for instance, in terms of poor health, poor quality housing and the abuse of human rights), the demand for greater equality among and within countries and between women and men, and the identification of groups with special needs (including women, children, and those with physical disabilities).

This means a more explicit and more detailed coverage of poverty in the documents than might have been expected, given the now long-standing disenchantment of some governments in the North with the United Nations system, the large ideological differences between governments in terms of how they view and measure poverty, the North-South divisions that were evident at the Conference and its Preparatory Committees, and the explicit opposition of some governments to the very notion of people's right to adequate housing. In their coverage of poverty, the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda proved more impressive than what might have been feared, given the disagreements that were still not resolved by the third and final Preparatory Committee in New York.

However, although the commitment to tackle poverty and its various manifestations is clearly stated, the documents do not set out realistic means to do so--or to address poverty's underlying causes. This is a weakness they share with most other international UN conferences, which also achieved little in setting up effective international mechanisms to promote progress toward the commitments made. This is a weakness that Habitat II also shares with its predecessor, the first UN Conference on Human Settlements, as there was little attempt to evaluate the performance of governments in regard to the Recommendations for National Action that they had formally endorsed at that earlier Conference in 1976. As will be discussed in more detail later, there is an obvious contradiction in expecting UN agencies that are governed by government representatives to have the independence to evaluate the performance of (member) governments in light of the recommendations the governments have endorsed. The UN specialized agencies are also much constrained in their capacity to be critical of development assistance agencies working in their field since they also generally depend on these same agencies for much of their funding.

Both Habitat II documents also have some statements that are pro "the poor"--but to a level that is far beyond what any government will act on; for instance, in several places, the text states or implies that everyone should have equal access to economic resources and land. As the concluding section discusses in more detail below, the value of publicly made commitments of governments is greatly diminished if they include many that governments are certainly not going to act on.

The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda are reviewed here in terms of their coverage of the following points:

- (1) the scale of poverty and recent trends;
- (2) the nature of poverty, including a recognition of the many kinds of deprivation that are part of or associated with poverty--for instance not only inadequate income and/or consumption but poor quality housing, lack of basic services, poor health, and abuse of human rights that are caused by or linked to low income;
- (3) the extent to which consideration was given to the discrimination that women face in obtaining access to income, housing, and basic services and to the needs and priorities of "disadvantaged and vulnerable groups";
- (4) the extent to which poverty is linked to the abuse of human rights and to the understanding that reducing poverty also means ensuring that "the poor" have the political space to participate in settlements, and have channels through which to make demands on their governments and hold them accountable;
- (5) the recognition of the underlying causes and the extent to which poverty is viewed in relative as well as absolute terms (with a special interest in how the issue of inequality is covered);

- (6) the priority given in the recommendations for poverty reduction and the extent to which the measures proposed are realistic in terms of addressing the scale and nature of poverty;
- (7) the role of international agencies; and
- (8) the measures proposed to monitor whether governments act on the recommendations they endorsed.

## II. THE SCALE OF POVERTY

There is a clear recognition that the problem of poverty affects large numbers of people in both the Istanbul Declaration ("We make these commitments with particular reference to the more than one billion people living in absolute poverty"<sup>2</sup>) and in the Habitat Agenda ("more than one billion people without decent living conditions"<sup>3</sup> ; "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"<sup>4</sup>). There is also a recognition that this is a growing problem; see, for instance: "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."<sup>5</sup>

However, the numbers given for people living in poverty or without decent living conditions are on the low side, and much lower than those in *An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 1996*, the official UN background report for the Conference.<sup>6</sup> This report drew on a study of rural poverty in 114 countries in the South that found close to one billion people with incomes and consumption levels that fell below nationally defined poverty lines.<sup>7</sup> It also suggested that there were at least 600 million people living in absolute poverty in urban areas of the South. If to these are added the people living in absolute poverty in the North, the total becomes much more than "at least one billion."

In addition, neither the Istanbul Declaration nor the Habitat Agenda makes any reference to the scale of urban poverty and the extent to which it is so often underestimated, or the ways in which it generally differs from rural poverty, or to the fact that it had increased rapidly during the 1980s in many countries--again, something documented in *An Urbanizing World*. There is also little explicit mention of poverty in wealthy countries, and anyone reading the text might assume that there is little need for a strong emphasis on poverty reduction in such countries.

### III. THE NATURE OF POVERTY

One encouraging aspect of the Habitat II documents is the recognition that poor quality housing and inadequate or no basic services are an important component of "poverty." The general literature on poverty in the South tends to concentrate on its economic aspects (that is, on levels of income or consumption) and not on the housing and health implications of having an inadequate income or the deprivations suffered when there is no provision of basic services or where there is no respect for human rights.

The Habitat Agenda states that everyone has a right to adequate shelter and describes in some detail what this implies. "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."<sup>8</sup> This builds on the concepts developed and promoted during the UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987 and serves as a basis to question the adequacy of most governments' housing statistics, which certainly do not provide detailed information on the proportion of people with "adequate shelter" as defined above.

Here and elsewhere there is recognition of the importance of good health (and the need for universal access to health care) as well as good quality education as part of poverty eradication.<sup>9</sup> The Habitat Agenda commits those who endorsed it to (among other things) "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."<sup>10</sup> The Habitat Agenda also recognizes the importance of accessible, safe, affordable, and efficient public transport for people with low incomes as well as the different needs and priorities of those who are deemed "poor"--for instance, it states that in implementing the commitments it contains, "special attention should be given to the circumstances and needs of people living in poverty, people who are homeless, women, older people, indigenous people, refugees, displaced persons, persons with disabilities and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Special consideration should also be given to the needs of migrants. Furthermore, special attention should be given to the specific needs and circumstances of children, particularly street children."<sup>11</sup>

However, this paragraph shares a weakness with other parts of the document in that what it means by poverty is not very clear. Poverty is usually listed as one among many "serious problems," including many kinds of deprivation that are either manifestations of poverty or often associated with poverty. This can be seen in paragraph 8 (Habitat Agenda): "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." By implication, "poverty" is something distinct from, for instance, inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, and spreading homelessness or from inadequate and deteriorating services and infrastructure and a lack of health and educational facilities. A later paragraph talks of poverty having various manifestations including homelessness and inadequate housing.<sup>12</sup>

This imprecision as to what poverty is can also be seen in paragraph 4 of the Istanbul Declaration where, by implication, poverty does not include social exclusion, inadequate resources, lack of basic infrastructure and services, and increased vulnerability to disasters as these are included on a list with "increasing poverty" as things that have to be combated.

Similarly, homelessness is often mentioned as a problem, with a demand that special attention be given to the homeless; but again, the homeless are usually part of a list of other groups requiring special attention--for instance, in a paragraph about promoting gender-sensitive planning and management, governments are urged to work with women's groups and other interested parties in enhancing community awareness of issues facing women living in poverty, *the homeless*, migrants, refugees, other displaced women in need of international protection, and internally displaced women.<sup>13</sup>

The two documents are in general mercifully free of what might be termed the "exploding cities" view of poverty, in which inaccurate generalizations are made both about the scale and nature of urban change ("exploding cities," "migration out of control") and about their causal links with poverty and environmental degradation. But this is not entirely so. For instance, paragraph 8 of the Istanbul Declaration states that "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," where "these problems" include "inadequate financial resources, lack of employment . . . increased poverty . . . inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and



infrastructure, lack of health and educational facilities . . . inadequate water supply and sanitation." But as *An Urbanizing World* and other analyses have shown, there is no obvious association between the speed with which a city is growing and the scale of the problems stated above.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it is in many of the smaller and slower growing urban centers that the proportion of the population suffering "inadequate financial resources, lack of employment . . . increased poverty . . . inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure, lack of health and educational facilities . . . inadequate water supply and sanitation" is generally higher than in the larger and/or more rapidly growing cities.

#### IV. THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO GENDER ISSUES AND TO VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Both the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda make constant reference to the needs of women and vulnerable groups. This first appears very early on in the documentation; see, for instance, paragraph 7 of the Istanbul Declaration: "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." There is also a special section in the Global Plan of Action within the Habitat Agenda on "Social development: eradication of poverty, creation of productive employment and social integration," which includes detailed recommendations for action on "gender-sensitive planning and management of human settlements,"<sup>15</sup> on the special needs and priorities of young people,<sup>16</sup> and on the need for disability-sensitive planning and management.<sup>17</sup>

The Habitat II documents generally avoid subsuming "women's needs and priorities" in "addressing the needs of vulnerable groups" largely, I suspect, from well-organized and clear lobbying from women's groups and those who support them who were not part of government delegations. But there is still a tendency to include "the needs of women" within a list of the needs of "poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups." It would be more appropriate to stress the discrimination that women (and girls) face in relation to their access to income, credit, services, and shelter, which is not about "vulnerability" but about inequality. However, the Habitat II documents also give considerable attention to promoting greater equality between men and women, and this obviously has considerable importance for reducing the poverty that arises from gender inequality in intrahousehold resource allocations, in women's unequal access to (among other things) land, housing finance, and income, and in the allocation of resources to those services that are so central to women's health (for instance, primary health care, including the needed focus on reproductive health).

For instance, the Habitat Agenda recognizes that "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."<sup>18</sup> It also recognizes the need for legislative and administrative reforms to remove gender inequality: "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."<sup>19</sup> Later in the Habitat Agenda, there is a subsection on "gender equality" in which the government representatives commit themselves to measures to achieve gender equality in human settlements development.<sup>20</sup> There is less clarity in regard to "vulnerable groups" or "vulnerable and disadvantaged groups."

The Habitat II documents' frequent use of the term "vulnerable groups" reflects the growing interest in the literature on poverty to better understand the processes that generate poverty or put people at risk from poverty.<sup>21</sup> This literature highlights how many low-income households have sufficient income to avoid deprivation until they have to cope with a shock--for instance a sudden increase in the price of staple foods or in school fees, or a serious injury or illness to an income earner, or a fall in wages or loss of job. The growing volume of literature on evictions and their underlying causes also highlights the link between low income and legal vulnerability: it is more common for low-income urban households to have to break the law to meet their needs because the possibilities for finding an income and obtaining housing and basic services legally are so limited.<sup>22</sup> There is also the vulnerability of low-income groups to illness or premature death from environmental hazards in their homes and neighborhoods because these have the least provision for water supply, sanitation, and drainage and usually have high levels of overcrowding, high levels of risk from accidental fires, and little provision for health care to allow rapid treatment of disease.<sup>23</sup> But some care is needed in examining the poor's vulnerability to environmental hazards, since factors such as age and nutritional status are also important. All infants, young children, and others with weak body defenses are particularly vulnerable to many infectious and parasitic diseases, although those in most low-income households are more at risk because of higher exposure to such diseases, worse nutritional status (which also weakens the immune system and inhibits recovery), and less possibility of health care when infected. Children are generally more vulnerable than adults to chemical pollutants, while those with limited mobility, strength, and balance--including infants, young children, and many elderly people--are particularly vulnerable to many physical hazards.

Within the Habitat II documents, in general, "vulnerable" is equated with "poor" or some aspect of deprivation; in some instances, the term "vulnerable groups" seems to be used as a substitute for poor groups—as in the text in a special section on "vulnerable groups and people with special needs," which states that "vulnerability and disadvantage are often caused by marginalization in and exclusion from the socioeconomic mainstream and decision-making processes and the lack of access on an equal basis to resources and opportunities."<sup>24</sup> This same section also recognizes that vulnerability can derive from a lack of legal protection or legal guarantee of a right to resources and opportunities. In reference to settlements: "Those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are especially at risk when they have no security of tenure or where they lack basic services or face disproportionately adverse environmental and health impacts, or because they may be excluded, either inadvertently or deliberately, from the housing market and services."<sup>25</sup>

Elsewhere in the documents, the term "vulnerable and disadvantaged groups" has usually been used as part of a long list in which groups that are particularly vulnerable to economic crises (those with inadequate incomes or assets) or to certain environmental hazards (as infants and children) are mentioned separately; for instance: "In implementing these commitments, special attention should be given to the circumstances and needs of people living in poverty, people who are homeless, women, older people, indigenous people, refugees, displaced persons, persons with disabilities and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups."<sup>26</sup> By implication, "vulnerable groups" are something distinct from those who are living in poverty or are homeless or displaced.

## V. POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

As Edward Torgbor comments, the final documents contain a stronger formulation on housing rights than was expected after the final preparatory meeting for Habitat II in New York failed to agree on the status of the right to adequate housing as an item on the agenda.<sup>27</sup> Both the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda state a commitment to the realization of all human rights, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as set forth and provided by international instruments.<sup>28</sup> For instance, in paragraph 11 of the Habitat Agenda, "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." A later paragraph links the recognition of the right to adequate housing as an important component of the right to an adequate standard of living with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>29</sup>

From the text of the Habitat Agenda, government actions should include: providing legal protection against discrimination in housing; providing legal security of tenure and equal access to land for all, as well as "effective protection from forced evictions that are contrary to the law";<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> Although this formulation may be less clear and less pro-poor than that promoted by many human rights activists, it is certainly stronger than was feared after the end of the third Preparatory Committee.

The Habitat Agenda also implicitly accepts the concept of people's social and economic rights; see, for instance, in paragraph 4: "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."

## VI. RECOGNIZING RELATIVE POVERTY/INEQUALITY

Given the ideological and political battles over whether there is any link between poverty and inequality--and, leading from this, whether the definition and measurement of poverty is only in absolute terms or in relative terms--there is a special interest in seeing whether the concept of relative poverty was accepted in the Habitat II documentation and how, in general, the issue of inequality is treated. In short, the documentation recognizes the growing inequality between countries and people and the high level of inequality in most societies between men and women and includes a general commitment to greater equality in all these, including equal access to land and economic resources. However, it contains little specific mention of the means to be employed to achieve it.

The problem of "increased poverty and a widening gap between rich and poor" is mentioned more than once<sup>32</sup> -- including the fact that the widening gap is between countries as well as people.<sup>33</sup> The text is explicit in saying that the states taking part in the Conference are committed to equality.<sup>34</sup> In several places, people's "equal access to" affordable, adequate housing<sup>35</sup> or land<sup>36</sup> or economic resources<sup>37</sup> is mentioned.

Within the section on strategies for implementation, there is a special section on "Social development: eradication of poverty, creation of productive employment and social integration, "which includes the comment that the "eradication of poverty requires, *inter alia*, sound macroeconomic policies aimed at creating

employment opportunities, equal and universal access to economic opportunities (and special efforts to facilitate such access for the disadvantaged)."<sup>38</sup> Later it states a series of actions that "governments at the appropriate level" should undertake "to promote equal access to and fair and equitable provision of services in human settlements."<sup>39</sup>

Thus, the documents coming out of Habitat II probably include a stronger and more explicit commitment to equity than might have been expected. But here it is worth recalling that the recommendations for national action from Habitat I also had strong statements supporting a more equitable distribution of resources. It is perhaps naïve to think that national governments will willingly promote increased equity, when they generally represent the wealthy groups in that society.<sup>40</sup>

## **VII. THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO POVERTY REDUCTION AND THE MEANS PROPOSED TO ACHIEVE IT**

One feature that distinguishes the Istanbul Declaration and Habitat Agenda from the declaration and recommendations for national action coming out of Habitat I is the recognition that it is not only national governments that have a major role in actually meeting the goals (including those relating to poverty reduction) but also households, community organizations, voluntary sector organizations (including NGOs) and other key components of civil society, and city and municipal authorities. The documents coming out of Habitat II are also clear that national government has a key role in enabling these groups to do so--through providing an appropriate regulatory framework and a range of incentives. This is not surprising, given that the Habitat II Conference and its preparatory process allowed the "new partners" to join in the development of the conference documents. There are many examples of commitments and actions that highlight the role of local authorities, the private sector, foundations, NGOs, community organizations, and research centers in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The idea of involving representatives of local authorities and other relevant actors in civil society in the Intergovernmental Commission that oversees the work of the UN Center for Human Settlements was also discussed. In general, this recognition of the important role of groups other than national ministries and agencies and the continual reference to the need for "good governance," which includes a commitment by government agencies to transparent and accountable structures and policies and to participation, is obviously important for providing an institutional context that should be more favorable to poverty reduction. But the extent to which it does so depends on the extent to which national governments and international agencies actually provide more resources and allow more power to those groups that can effectively reduce or help eliminate poverty. On this, the Habitat II documents are more ambiguous.

Three aspects of the Habitat II documents are reviewed below: the attempt to reconcile market mechanisms with poverty reduction; the stress on "partnerships" as solutions; and the extent to which the structural causes of poverty are addressed.

**(a) Reconciling market mechanisms with poverty reduction**

The documents make many clear statements of their commitment to address poverty. Perhaps the clearest is in paragraph 7 of the Istanbul Declaration:

"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. . . ."

In terms of the means proposed, the documents show a conflict that might be expected between support for market-driven solutions (with market mechanisms seen as the major means by which housing and living conditions will be improved) and statements that require considerable government intervention to ensure that poorer groups can actually enter the markets for housing, land, and housing finance.

There are some contradictions between the goals stated and the means suggested for their implementation. For instance, in regard to housing, markets are seen as the primary housing delivery mechanisms, with governments having the major role of "strengthening regulatory and legal frameworks to enable markets to work, overcome market failure and facilitate independent initiative and creativity, as well as to promote socially and environmentally responsible corporate investment and reinvestment."<sup>41</sup> But governments are also charged with tasks that imply considerable state intervention; for instance the actions of government should include "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."

The contradictions would be lessened if government intervention concentrated on ensuring that all those with low incomes who were living in inadequate quality housing had the incomes or assets to allow them to rent, buy, or build "adequate housing"(paragraph 61, Habitat Agenda). (We should also recall all the aspects noted earlier that an "adequate house" should include.) This is what is implied in paragraph 9 of the Istanbul Declaration: "We shall work to expand the supply of affordable housing by enabling markets to perform efficiently and in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, enhancing access to land and credit and assisting those who are unable to participate in housing markets." But despite this and a few strong but general statements about the need for more equality, the documents do not recommend the kind of redistribution of incomes and assets that would allow low-income groups to "participate in housing markets" and be able to afford adequate housing.

However, there are many recommendations that would benefit low-income groups and reduce poverty, if implemented. For instance, under the section on Shelter Policies, the positive link between improving housing and living conditions and creating jobs is recognized: "Integrate land and shelter policies with policies for reducing poverty and creating jobs, for environmental protection, for preservation of cultural heritage, for education and health, for providing clean water-supply and sanitation facilities, and for empowering those belonging to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, particularly people without shelter."<sup>42</sup>

This subsection also mentions many policies that would benefit low-income groups if implemented. For instance, paragraph 68 includes:

"(a) Employ broad-based participatory and consultative mechanisms that involve representatives from public, private, non-governmental, cooperative and community sectors, including representatives of groups that are considered to be living in poverty, at all levels in the policy development process;"

"(f) Review and adjust, when necessary, the legal, fiscal and regulatory framework to respond to the special needs of people living in poverty and low-income people;"

"(g) Promote the supply of affordable rental houses and the legal rights and obligations of both tenants and owners."

Although a section on "shelter delivery systems" begins with a subsection entitled "enabling markets to work," this includes the suggestion that governments should "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."<sup>43</sup>

This subsection is then followed by one on "facilitating community-based production of housing" and one on "ensuring access to land." The latter begins with the statement that "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." It later states that "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."<sup>44</sup> This subsection has many recommendations linked to allowing those with low incomes to obtain land for housing and to enhancing the security of tenure of those who already have land.

Subsection (d) on "mobilizing sources of finance" stresses the need for credit systems to reach those with low incomes or living in poverty, and subsection (e) stresses that governments should promote the provision of basic infrastructure and services to all people and ensure a more equitable provision and contains many recommendations for action to achieve this.

The main means used to reconcile market mechanisms with poverty reduction is the use of ambiguous language, which tries to avoid stating what governments must provide or must ensure that others provide. For instance, governments are asked to promote the supply of water, sanitation, social services, and community facilities to all people.<sup>45</sup> When charged with ensuring a more equitable provision of infrastructure, they have to "work with," "involve," "support," " or "facilitate" other groups to do this or "establish support mechanisms" to allow them to achieve this.<sup>46</sup>

## **(b) Partnerships**

Partnerships are much recommended as the means to achieve many of the goals in the Habitat Agenda, including those related to poverty reduction. For instance:

"We adopt the enabling strategy and principles of partnership and participation as the most democratic and effective approach for the realization of our commitments" (paragraph 12, Istanbul Declaration).

"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" (paragraph 5, Habitat Agenda).



"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" (paragraph 18, Habitat Agenda).

"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" (paragraph 33, Habitat Agenda).

"We further commit ourselves to . . . promote socially and environmentally responsible corporate investment and reinvestment in, and in partnership with, local communities and to encourage a wide range of other partnerships to finance shelter and human settlements development" (paragraph 48 d, Habitat Agenda).

Without diminishing the achievements in many cities where partnerships have successfully brought diverse groups to work together--groups that might be assumed to have opposing interests--this assumption that partnerships can help resolve the forces that generate and perpetuate poverty is unrealistic. Partnerships may be more common and more easily formed where there are strong and well-enforced laws that protect the poor (including their civil and political rights and strong occupational health and safety laws) and the public good (for instance through controls on air and water pollution and solid waste generation). But here, it is the strong and well-enforced laws that are the key to reducing poverty and to providing a basis in which partnerships can be more effective. It is also difficult to envisage voluntary partnerships as the means to resolve or even significantly reduce poverty in the more polarized and unequal societies.

What is certainly more important for poverty reduction than partnerships is the support of the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda for respect for human rights and the stress on the need for government that is more democratic, accountable, and participatory. The first provides some check on the frequent abuse of the rights of the poor (and others) by governments and private-sector interests and allows the poor a stronger basis for negotiation. The second also allows the poor a stronger basis for negotiation. This requirement that low-income groups or groups facing discrimination or having some particular disadvantage acquire the

political space to have some power in all negotiations with public sector agencies and recourse to the law when their human rights are threatened might be seen as a necessary condition for partnerships to work among government, the private sector, and low-income groups. Where such groups have no political space and their human rights are not protected, why should powerful vested interests form partnerships with them? And if they do, are powerful groups likely to give equal power to groups with very little power when negotiating compromises?

### (c) Addressing structural causes of poverty

It would be unrealistic to require documents primarily intended to address housing and settlement problems to deal adequately with the structural causes of poverty. But there is some recognition within the Habitat II documents of the structural causes, both within nations and internationally. Within nations, there is the demand that macroeconomic policies be revised to reduce their adverse effects on low-income and "vulnerable and disadvantaged groups" and on shelter delivery systems.<sup>47</sup> Internationally, in a section on an enabling international context, the text states that "Achievement of the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development at the global level would be facilitated by, *inter alia*, positive actions on the issues of finance, external debt, international trade and transfer of technology."<sup>48</sup>

However, the Habitat Agenda has a tendency to dump responsibility for most of the actions it recommends on local actors. "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."<sup>49</sup> Thus, there is little consideration of the means by which the lowest income neighborhoods, the least-resourced municipal authorities, and the lowest income nations receive the resources to allow poverty to be reduced--or the power to negotiate a better deal from higher levels of government or the global market.

## VIII. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

### (a) The extent of their role

International agencies are not seen as having a major role in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. As noted earlier, the stress is on "enablement" by national governments and actions by local authorities and other local actors. For instance, although "international and national cooperation at all levels will be both necessary and beneficial in promoting adequate shelter for all," the text goes on to say that 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,"<sup>50</sup> implying that the main role for international agencies is in exceptional circumstances. This is puzzling, in that the illness, injury, and premature death directly linked to poverty far outweighs that linked to disasters, and addressing some of the most serious aspects of poverty (for instance lack of drains in low-income settlements, low-income groups' settlement on hazardous sites because no other land is available, housing that lacks the structural reinforcement that limits risks during storms, floods or earthquakes) also reduces the number of people at risk from many disasters.<sup>51</sup>

However, bilateral aid programs are meant to increase the overall scale of their aid programs while both multilateral and bilateral donors and UN agencies are meant to increase the priority they give to "adequate shelter for all."<sup>52</sup>

### (b) Increasing the scale of aid

In terms of increasing the scale of aid, the commitment by OECD nations to strive to fulfill the agreed target of 0.7 percent of their gross national product for official development assistance as soon as possible simply repeats previous commitments, and "to increase, as necessary, the share of funding for adequate shelter and human settlements development programmes, commensurate with the scope and scale of activities required to achieve the objectives and goals of the Habitat Agenda"<sup>53</sup> is not very specific. Nor is an earlier paragraph:

"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."<sup>54</sup>

As Alberto Colella notes, "the text ultimately adopted [in Sections E and F which dealt with implementing and financing the commitments] uses the language agreed at previous major United Nations Conferences--a classic United Nations compromise--particularly for the most controversial issue: the challenge of globalized economies, official development assistance and agreed targets, innovative approaches to cooperation using new forms of partnership, and international migration."<sup>55</sup>

### **(c) Increasing the priority of "adequate shelter"**

The Habitat Agenda recognizes that new and additional financial resources are needed to achieve the goal of adequate shelter for all (and other goals), especially in Africa and the "least developed countries" and that this will require, among other things, "Raising the priority of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development among multilateral and bilateral donors and mobilizing their support for the national, subregional and regional plans of action of developing countries."<sup>56</sup> Among a long list of other measures, this is also said to require "Agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 percent of official development assistance and 20 percent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes."<sup>57</sup>

This is hardly very specific, given the low priority that most multilateral agencies and bilateral aid programs allocate to programs that do contribute directly to "adequate shelter for all": most international agencies allocate less than 5 percent of their funding commitments to projects or programs that improve or extend provision for water and/or sanitation to rural and urban settlements; many international agencies give no support at all to the measures mentioned in the Habitat II documents in regard to supporting self-help housing and community-, NGO-, or cooperative-based programs that support self-help or mutual aid housing or the kinds of housing finance programs that seek to enhance the capacity of low-income households to buy, build, or develop their own homes; very few international agencies allocate more than 3 percent of their funding commitments to such activities.<sup>58</sup>

The Habitat Agenda documents recognize the great importance of a good health care system to support improved housing and basic services in improving health and controlling disease, but most international agencies allocate only 1 or 2 percent of their funding to supporting primary health care (other than water and sanitation). Ironically, most donor agencies are more likely to fail to meet the 20:20 commitment than are most governments.<sup>59</sup>

#### (d) New means

In the subsection on International Cooperation and Coordination,<sup>60</sup> the need for innovation, new forms of partnership, and better coordination among international agencies is stressed.<sup>61</sup> The concept of decentralized development assistance is also promoted.<sup>62</sup> So, too, is the need for governments to facilitate increased access by all levels of governments and the private sector to international financial resources and global capital markets.

Some reservations should be raised about the enthusiasm for some forms of decentralized development assistance; for instance, the enthusiasm for more support for city authority-to-city authority North-South links. Such links have both great potential and great dangers. The great potential centers on (at least) three aspects: the "donor" having far more knowledge and practical experience in addressing city problems, with the capacity to call on specialists from many different sectors; the "recipient" having more influence in determining priorities than has been the case with conventional aid programs that are almost always negotiated by national government; and the potential for long-term development programs between the two cities from which both sides learn. The danger centers on the absence of knowledge by the "donor" and the institution managing the North-South cooperation of the social, economic, and political context in the "recipient" and the tendency to assume that the problems in the "recipient" city are best addressed by technical solutions that have proved effective in the "donor" city.

### IX. MONITORING

The Habitat Agenda contains a strong commitment to monitoring progress toward the goals it specifies and sets out the kind of indicators that will need to be developed and constantly measured to allow programs to be assessed. But, as in previous international conferences, there is no provision for the kind of independent assessment and monitoring that will hold governments accountable if they fail to implement the recommendations they have endorsed. It is the General Assembly and UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that is meant to review and appraise progress--with the Commission on Human Settlements having a major role in promoting, reviewing, monitoring, and assessing progress--and in monitoring what UN agencies do to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.<sup>63</sup> The UN Center for Human Settlements is to help states implement the Habitat Agenda and help the Commission on Human Settlements fulfill its role. But all these institutions have structural limitations on their capacity to take governments and international agencies to task if they (and the donor agencies that

help fund them) fail to respond to the commitments they have endorsed. In this, I disagree with the positive assessment of a senior UNCHS staff member that the Habitat Agenda took the issue of follow-up seriously because the delegations at Istanbul "designed mechanisms which should allow the United Nations system, including the Commission on Human Settlements and its secretariat, to promote, monitor and evaluate adequately the implementation of the Habitat Agenda."<sup>64</sup>

Here one sees a central contradiction of multilateral international development assistance and technical cooperation agencies that are promoting changes in government policy but are also governed by government representatives. These international agencies cannot hold these same governments to account if the governments fail to meet commitments they have made because the governments are also the international agencies' "governing boards." Will the Commission on Human Settlements, made up of government representatives, really provide the basis for detailed and critical evaluations of governments' performance in relation to the Habitat Agenda to which they agreed? There is no evidence of such detailed and critical evaluations of governments supported by the Commission and UNCHS for the commitments the governments endorsed in 1976.

One important example of this failure to monitor government performance is in regard to water and sanitation. Virtually all governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America made a commitment at Habitat I in 1976 to increase the priority they gave to water and sanitation, which was further endorsed at a special UN Conference on Water the next year in Mar del Plata. The 1980s were then designated by the UN General Assembly as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, and 1990 was meant to be the year by which virtually all rural and urban dwellers were to have adequate provision for water and sanitation. But according to official UN statistics, at least 280 million urban and more than 800 million rural dwellers still lacked safe and sufficient water supplies in 1994.<sup>65</sup> For sanitation, at least 590 million of the urban population and more than 2 billion of the rural population lacked adequate provision.<sup>66</sup> This hardly inspires confidence in government promises made at UN conferences. What is even more depressing is that these official statistics are known to considerably understate the problem, as governments exaggerate their achievements and also apply questionable criteria in defining how to assess who has "adequate" water and sanitation.<sup>67</sup> The international agencies with a strong commitment to the goals of this decade, such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF, could at best provide rather muted criticism of governments and the international agencies that gave such low priority to water and sanitation. We have just completed "The International Year for the Eradication of Poverty" and are in the "International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty." But most international agencies, including those that are most prominent in promoting this year and decade, give low priority to those projects and programs that directly reach low-income groups and what the Habitat Agenda calls "vulnerable and disadvantaged groups" with improved incomes, adequate housing,

and basic services. They have also given low priority to the kinds of legal advice and financial support that allows the poor more possibility to negotiate a better deal from public authorities and agencies within their own country. Most have little capacity to help strengthen the organizations formed by low-income groups. As an increasing number of UN agencies and multilateral banks become more explicit about their commitments to "reducing" or "eradicating" poverty, so does their limited capacity to do so become more evident--at least without major changes in these agencies.

## X. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This paper has reviewed the two key documents that governments endorsed at the Habitat II Conference in regard to their consideration of poverty and the priority they give to poverty reduction. It found constant reference in both to the fact that poverty is a serious problem, that it is growing in scale, and that governments and international agencies should do far more to address it. The documents also recognize the multiple deprivations that are generally associated with poverty and the need for governments and international agencies to give greater priority to ensuring that everyone has adequate shelter. There was an explicit recognition that "adequate shelter" includes security of tenure, basic infrastructure and services, a location that is accessible to work and basic facilities--as well as adequate physical size and structural safety--and that all this should be available at a cost low-income groups could afford. The documents also stress the need for greater equality between and within nations and between men and women and constantly demand that the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups be given attention. The documents also recognize that everyone has a right to an adequate shelter.

All this might be taken to be encouraging. But I was also involved in a research program between 1978 and 1983 that examined changes in the housing, land, and settlement policies of a wide range of nations to gauge the extent to which governments and international agencies were responding to the recommendations for national action that 132 governments formally endorsed at Habitat, the first UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1976.<sup>68</sup> There was little evidence that the recommendations or the general approach that the recommendations implied was having a significant influence on policies.

This raises an uncomfortable question: Are government representatives able to agree to international documents such as the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda because they know that they will not be held accountable for the commitments they made by any person, institution or coalition with sufficient power to embarrass them within their own country?

There is a case in defense of these large international government conferences, even if this includes a recognition that the international declarations and action plans they produce rarely have a direct influence on the policies and programs of governments. It centers on the fact that the preparations for these conferences and the drafting process for these international action plans involves many staff from governments and international agencies and this exposes them to new ideas and gives them new contacts. This in turn helps promote new ideas and new and more effective policies. But, historically, the kinds of social change that reduce poverty seem more to be the result of social and political organization by "the poor." This includes holding governments (and international agencies) to account if they fail to deliver on promises or to implement policies or laws they have been pressed to agree to. The question then arises: Did the preparatory process for Habitat II, the conference itself, and the documents it produced strengthen the position of the poor in negotiations with governments and external funders? If it did, for how long? And did it produce lasting benefits in terms of new channels for communication and negotiation? I doubt whether it did in most countries. But if one is seeking an evaluation of the utility of these large government conferences in regard to poverty reduction, it would be revealing to ask the groups directly representing the poor what benefits Habitat II brought if any. But this is not easily done, since in many countries, government control or repression ensures that there are no such groups--for instance, federations of elected community leaders.

In addition, if governments are to be held to account for the commitments they made in the Habitat II documents, is it not time that groups that are independent of the official multilateral (and bilateral) agencies and governments had a much greater role in monitoring and assessing progress--and publicly holding governments and international agencies to account? Or will we, in the year 2016, be listening to another "New Vision of Cities" after Habitat III, fully endorsed by all governments with the elimination of the "billions" living in poverty as a central message, because governments and the international agencies have done so little to follow up the commitments they made at Habitat II?



## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> The author has also undertaken a preliminary analysis of how the Habitat II documents treat the issue of sustainable development and cities; see David Satterthwaite, "Sustainable cities or cities that contribute to sustainable development," *Urban Studies* 34, no.10 (1997):1667-91.
- <sup>2</sup> Paragraph 7, Istanbul Declaration; hereafter, ID.
- <sup>3</sup> Paragraph 3, Habitat Agenda; hereafter, HA.
- <sup>4</sup> Paragraph 53, HA.
- <sup>5</sup> Paragraph 11, HA.
- <sup>6</sup> UNCHS, *An Urbanizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 1996* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- <sup>7</sup> Idriss Jazairy, Mohiuddin Alamgir and Theresa Panuccio, *The State of World Rural Poverty: an Inquiry into its Causes and Consequences* (London: IT Publications, 1992).
- <sup>8</sup> Paragraph 60, HA.
- <sup>9</sup> See paragraphs 36 and 136 of HA.
- <sup>10</sup> Taken from paragraph 40.
- <sup>11</sup> Paragraph 38, HA.
- <sup>12</sup> Paragraph 115, HA.
- <sup>13</sup> Paragraph 119, HA.
- <sup>14</sup> See also David Satterthwaite, *The Scale and Nature of Urban Change in the South* (London: IIED, 1996).
- <sup>15</sup> See paragraph 119.
- <sup>16</sup> Paragraph 120, HA.
- <sup>17</sup> Paragraph 121, HA.
- <sup>18</sup> Paragraph 15, HA.
- <sup>19</sup> Paragraph 40(b), HA.
- <sup>20</sup> See paragraph 46, HA.
- <sup>21</sup> Robert Chambers, "Editorial introduction: vulnerability, coping and policy," *Vulnerability: How the Poor Cope* (*IDS Bulletin* 20, no 2, [April 1989]: 1-7).
- <sup>22</sup> This is explored in more detail in Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite, *Squatter Citizen: Life in the Urban Third World* (London: Earthscan Publications, 1989).
- <sup>23</sup> This is described in more detail in Jorge E. Hardoy, Diana Mitlin, and David Satterthwaite, *Environmental Problems in Third World Cities* (London: Earthscan Publications, 1992 ).
- <sup>24</sup> Paragraph 93, HA. See also paragraph 42, where "vulnerable and disadvantaged groups" seems to be used as a substitute for "poor and disadvantaged groups," and paragraph 18: "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."
- <sup>25</sup> Paragraph 93, HA.
- <sup>26</sup> Paragraph 38, HA.
- <sup>27</sup> Edward Torgbor, "Consensus achieved on housing rights" *Habitat Debate* 2, no.3/4 (1996):11.
- <sup>28</sup> See paragraph 8 of ID and paragraph 39 of HA.
- <sup>29</sup> Paragraph 61.
- <sup>30</sup> Paragraph 61 (b).
- <sup>31</sup> Paragraph 40 (n).

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<sup>32</sup> See paragraphs 8 and 55, HA.

<sup>33</sup> Paragraph 55, HA.

<sup>34</sup> See paragraph 25, HA.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, in affirming a commitment "to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as provided for in international instruments," the Declaration includes among the needed measures "equal access to affordable, adequate housing for all persons and their families" (paragraph 8, ID).

<sup>36</sup> See for instance paragraph 40b: "Provide legal security of tenure and equal access to land for all people, including women and those living in poverty..."

<sup>37</sup> Paragraph 27 stresses equal access to economic resources, as well as to rights and opportunities.

<sup>38</sup> See Paragraph 115, HA.

<sup>39</sup> Paragraph 116.

<sup>40</sup> This was a comment in reference to the Habitat I recommendations in Outi Berghäll, "The enabling concept: an unachievable ideal or a practical guide to action." Paper prepared for the UNU/WIDER Conference on "Human Settlements in the Changing Global Political and Economic Processes," Helsinki, 1995.

<sup>41</sup> Paragraph 48 (d), HA.

<sup>42</sup> Paragraph 67 (e), HA.

<sup>43</sup> Paragraph 72 (g), HA.

<sup>44</sup> Paragraph 75, HA.

<sup>45</sup> See paragraph 85, HA.

<sup>46</sup> See paragraph 86, HA.

<sup>47</sup> See, for instance, paragraph 43 (w), HA.

<sup>48</sup> Paragraph 200, HA.

<sup>49</sup> Paragraph 56.

<sup>50</sup> Paragraph 64, HA.

<sup>51</sup> At a very general level, this can be seen by comparing the number of deaths and injuries that arise from disasters--which have been estimated (see, for instance, summary in OECD, *Guidelines for Aid Agencies on Disaster Mitigation*, OECD Development Assistance Committee: Guidelines on Aid and Environment No. 7 [Paris: OECD, 1994]--with the number of deaths, injuries, and serious illnesses that arise from easily preventable causes such as diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, TB, measles, malaria, and so on. For a discussion of this, see International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 1998*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>52</sup> See, for instance, paragraph 236, HA, which states that "UN agencies and Bretton Woods institutions should do more to integrate adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development goals into their work, improve policy dialogue and expand and improve their cooperation in the field of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development."

<sup>53</sup> Paragraph 50, HA.

<sup>54</sup> Paragraph 35, HA.

<sup>55</sup> Alberto Colella, "Sections E and F: a realistic and satisfactory compromise," *Habitat Debate* 2, no.3/4 (1996):13.

<sup>56</sup> Paragraph 204(a), HA.

<sup>57</sup> Paragraph 204 (dd), HA.

<sup>58</sup> The figures in this paragraph come from the IIED Human Settlements Programme's databases on international agencies' commitments to water, sanitation, health, education, housing and housing

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finance, and other interventions, such as support for community development and social funds or support for employment programs for low-income groups that can address poverty or reduce forms of deprivation so often associated with low incomes. This has sought to monitor the sectoral priorities of international agencies over long periods. Some of the data from this program was incorporated into UNCHS, *An Urbanizing World* (see chapter 10). A more detailed examination of this is contained in David Satterthwaite, "The Scale and Nature of International Donor Assistance to Housing, Basic Services and Other Human-Settlements Related Projects," Working Paper No. 129, WIDER, Helsinki, 51 pages; David Satterthwaite and Nicola Crawhall, "Development Assistance to Water and Sanitation: A Partial (draft) Overview," prepared for the January 1997 workshop that is part of the collaborative research project on *Domestic Water Use and Environmental Health in East Africa: Three Decades after Drawers of Water* (London: IIED, 1997), looks in more detail at international agencies' priorities for water, sanitation, and other aspects of primary health care.

<sup>59</sup> Although the proportion of funding allocated to "health" and "education" among many donors appears high enough to make the proportion of their funding to "social projects" come close to or exceed 20 percent, most funding for "health" is for large hospitals and medical equipment that cannot be said to be for the "basic social programs" that the Habitat Agenda stated while much of the funding for "education" is for scholarships for students from the South to attend courses in the universities and colleges of the "donor" so the funding stays within the donor country. In most international agencies, support for health and education, primary health care and primary education or support for literacy programs gets a low priority. For sources, see the preceding note.

<sup>60</sup> Paragraphs 194-211, HA.

<sup>61</sup> See, for instance, paragraphs 194 and 197, HA.

<sup>62</sup> Paragraph 204 (i), HA.

<sup>63</sup> See paragraph 222, HA.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel Biau, "Building consensus on the Habitat Agenda: International cooperation and follow-up," *HabitatDebate* 2, no.3/4 (1996):11-12.

<sup>65</sup> UNCHS, *An Urbanizing World*.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> David Satterthwaite, "The underestimation of poverty and its health consequences," *Third World Planning Review* 17, no.4 (November 1995):iii-xii.

<sup>68</sup> The initial findings from the first seventeen country assessments were published in Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite, *Shelter: Need and Response; Housing, Land and Settlement Policies in 17 Third World Nations* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1981); the findings for the whole program were summarized in Hardoy and Satterthwaite, *Squatter Citizen*, although this concentrated on how housing policies had changed rather than assessing them in relation to the Habitat I Recommendations for National Action.