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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA IN AFRICA

UNCHS (Habitat)

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Working paper prepared for the Istanbul + 5 Africa Regional Meeting of 6-8 November 2000¹

Summary

The current report has been produced as part of the preparation of the Global Report on Human Settlements due to be issued by UNCHS (Habitat) in June 2001. It follows the structure of the Global Report on Human Settlements which will ultimately synthesize the regional working papers and the feedback they will generate from the regional meetings organized by the UN Economic Regional Commissions and UNCHS (Habitat) between September and November 2000. The report has the following structure:

1. Introduction
 - A. Emerging alarming trends
 - B. Emerging countervailing trends
2. The state of African cities
 - A. The economy of the city
 - B. The urban environment
 - C. Infrastructure and services
 - D. Governance and decentralization
3. The state of Africa region's shelter
 - A. Housing conditions
 - B. Housing provision
 - C. Security of tenure
4. Prospects and policy implications
 - A. Urban and shelter prospects
 - B. Policy implications

The current working paper is by no means a comprehensive analysis of major Africa region accomplishments and challenges since Habitat II. However, it does point to global and regional issues and trends with significant impacts on human settlements and their populations. It also highlights areas where African countries have gained valuable experience and expertise and where they have made noteworthy progress with potential for replication in other regions. The findings are based on information from a wide range of sources, substantiated by UNCHS (Habitat)'s Urban Indicators, Statistics, and Best Practices Programmes, and include sources emanating from within the Africa region. The report also makes use of the Preliminary Synthesis of the National reports submitted by African countries, which has been prepared by UNCHS (Habitat) for the Istanbul + 5 Africa regional meeting.

The regional preparatory meeting of 6-8 November 2000 is an opportunity for the Africa region to further consolidate its position on sub-regional and regional priority issues. It may also provide an opportunity for the ECA members to supply guidance and additional information which could be useful to the *Global Report on Human Settlements*. As a major player in international development efforts to promote socially and environmentally sustainable urban development, the Africa region is well-positioned to take the lead in post-Istanbul+5 initiatives world wide.

¹ This document has not been formally edited and is presented by UNCHS (Habitat) as a work in progress.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.A EMERGING MACRO-ECONOMIC AND GOVERNANCE TRENDS

1.A.1 Stalled Economies

1. Africa has brought into the 21st century many of the world's poorest countries. Some 80 percent of Low Human Development Countries -- countries with high population growth rates, low income, low literacy, and low life expectancy -- are in Africa. Four of every ten Africans live in conditions of absolute poverty, and recent evidence suggests that poverty on the continent is increasing. Despite gains made in the second half of the 1990's, average income per capita is lower than at the end of the 1960's. Incomes, assets, and access to essential services are unequally distributed. And the region contains a growing share of the world's absolute poor, who have little power to influence the allocation of resources.
2. At independence, most African countries inherited economies that limited their policy choices. Exports were mostly of raw materials and agricultural products; most economies depended on fewer than three products for over three-quarters of their export earnings, rendering economies vulnerable to fluctuations in world commodity prices. In 1965 trade was mainly with the colonial powers, and manufacturing in sub-Saharan Africa amounted to just 9 percent of the GDP. Given the heavy reliance on imported manufactures, the logical development strategy was import substitution. But with inadequate infrastructure, absence of an industrial workforce, small domestic markets and dearth of indigenous capital, high levels of protection, state intervention and external assistance were inevitable.
3. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa grew in the 1960's and 1970's. By 1975, however, over half of all FDI stock in Africa was invested in the primary sector (compared with about one-quarter for all developing regions). Despite increasing insistence on local public or private sector participation, import substitution did not live up to its promise. It proved to be import intensive (because capital equipment, components and spare parts had to be imported), quasi-monopolistic and inefficient, resistant to reduced protectionism, costly and thus burdensome to other sectors dependent upon it for inputs.
4. The 1970's and 1980's were marked by a series of setbacks, not all of which were outside the control of African governments. Oil price increases and deteriorating terms of trade for primary commodities and periodic drought were major factors. The failure to industrialize can partly be explained by external factors, but a variety of domestic factors must also be taken into account, including economic policies, the effects of personal rule, historical and social structure, the role of the state and low levels of literacy and skills.

Box 1: Botswana Stands Out

Botswana is virtually the only African country that has sustained rapid economic growth over an extended period. Over the past three decades, its real per capita income grew by more than 7 percent per annum, comparable to rates achieved by Korea and Thailand. Facilitated mainly by mineral wealth, the growth did not lead to profligate spending or increased income disparities. Per capita income now is about US\$3,600. Primary school enrollment has gone from 66,100 in 1966 to 319,000 in 1995 with more females than males in school. All urban residents and 83 percent of rural residents live within 15 km of a primary health care facility. Growth in formal sector employment has kept up with GDP growth and well ahead of population growth. There is no single explanation for this success, but a whole range of policies contributed, including a minerals policy that generated the rents which initiated the growth, long-term government planning that channeled funds into investments that promoted both growth and human development, fiscal discipline that allowed the central bank to accumulate substantial foreign exchange reserves and pursue a conservative monetary policy, a trade policy that kept the economy open and exchange rate policy that encouraged emergence of non-traditional exports and import-competing production. Still, there are shortcomings in the current labor market policies, slow reform of state-owned enterprises, large, unstable and growing government, poverty, youth under-employment and HIV/AIDS, which may impede further progress toward higher productivity.

5. Throughout Africa, the extended decline of average income for most of the last 15 years means that the rate of GDP growth must be accelerated to regain the loss of income and to arrest and reverse the spread of deep poverty. Aggregate per capita income, which has fallen continuously since the mid-1980's now stands at just US\$665 -- three-quarters of that attained in 1980. Forty to forty-five percent of the continent's 784 million people are living in absolute poverty, with the vast majority being women. Some 160 million adults are illiterate, while about half the children of school-going age are not enrolled in schools.

Box 2: Conflict and Refugees

Africa has become the theater of some of the world's worst ethno-national and religious conflicts. From Congo through Rwanda and Burundi, to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan and the Horn of Africa, two million people died and six million were disabled by civil war in the past decade. The principle that coercive force is the only effective means of acquiring and maintaining power has dominated much of African politics. Conflict has fueled the growth of the world's refugee population, which has mushroomed from two million people in the mid-1960's to 15 million people today. As a result of the conflict in Sierra Leone, about 400,000 Sierra Leonians were internally displaced, 280,000 more have fled to neighboring Guinea and another 100,000 have fled to Liberia, even as 400,000 Liberians have fled to Sierra Leone. The third largest city in Sierra Leone, Gondama, is a displaced person camp. With an additional 600,000 Liberians in Guinea and 250,000 in Cote d'Ivoire the borders dividing these four countries have become largely meaningless. Much of the worst of these conflicts has been fueled by globalized trade in commodities like diamonds.

6. Although some aspects of reforms advocated in recent years were desirable to counteract previous biases against export industry, these have not necessarily enabled countries to gain access to markets, while value-adding industry has been adversely affected. The main thrust of structural adjustment programmes has been to encourage increased primary commodity exports to earn foreign exchange and repay debt. This has flooded world markets with increased volumes of certain commodities, exacerbated the problem of declining terms of trade and re-emphasized colonial trade patterns. Meanwhile the increased flow of FDI in manufacturing which was anticipated following liberalization has not materialized and it is now recognized that its volume is unlikely to grow in most African countries

7. In 1998, despite some recent bright spots, export revenue in Africa declined by 17 percent. For the first time in the decade of the 1990's, the trade balance turned negative, boosting the current account deficit to a high of US\$16 billion. The perennial imbalance in the services sector, driven by external debt payments and the cost of transport and financial services, continues to put pressure on the current account balance and to claim an inordinate share of foreign revenue from merchandise exports.

8. Globalization processes have stalled in sub-Saharan Africa with severe consequences for its urban areas. Because large foreign corporations have mostly shunned the continent since 1980, the major sources for outside investment derive from international development agencies rather than private capital investment. Africa is the only region of the world without a true newly industrializing economy.

1.A.2 Governance Problems

9. With the achievement of political independence, the bureaucratic colonial administration was, in many African countries, transformed into a bureaucratic administration that emphasized the sovereignty of politics rather than the impartiality of administration. This was effected in particular through the stressing of political values over bureaucratic values, which, in some countries, resulted in a politicized style of administration based on patronage and self interest.

10. Many African countries, still comprise various ethnic entities tied together by cultural and psychological bonds. However, these relations tend to be more and more loose based on convenience. Given the scarcity of resources, and especially given the state in Africa as the main provider, there is obvious competition for political positions. Therefore, the lack of clear and widely accepted constitutional reforms open doors for rebellions and coups d'etat that Africa has experienced. By bending the rules, a leader can surround himself with associates of unquestionable loyalty.

11. In several countries, the decline in real wages has, unfortunately, negatively affected the role of the state as a custodian of the public interest. The present trends in the erosion and decay of ethical standards and attendant lack of accountability in the civil service of many African countries is to a great degree attributable to economic factors.

12. Analysts have shown that state employees in many African countries have formed a class of property owners who have used the state to expand their own private property holdings but also to increase public property, which they indirectly control through the state apparatus, leading to a general crisis of governance.

13. In many African countries, the current wage scale is far too low to finance an average basket of daily necessities. For the majority of public employees, the balance is provided by the use of public office for private gain. The inefficiency of public institutions is a reflection of this process. A real wage and pension should enable an employee who leaves public service to sustain the kind of standard of living so far attained. To the extent that the real wage falls short of that requirement, public officials can be expected to use public office to raise the necessary resources.

14. Many African countries now face an acute dilemma. In the stalled economies, financial resources are not available to restore real wages and to prevent impoverishment of the civil service. To restore probity and effectiveness, public sector reform, however, requires more than additional funding of the civil service. It will also require political systems that can thrive on open policy debate, provide an institutional safety net for members of losing parties, tolerate neutral professionalism, adhere to new and more extensive codes of ethical conduct, guarantee the separation of judicial and administrative power, engage in open strategic planning and budgeting and facilitate the free flow of information to all citizens. A number of African Countries have recognised the importance of this and have, in recent years, taken firm steps towards reform of their governance systems.

1.A.3 Ineffective Aid

15. It is clear that Official Development Assistance -- foreign aid -- has been far less effective in Africa than it would be reasonable to expect, with both high rates of failure of aid-funded activities and low rates of long term sustainability even where such activities were successful in the short run. This is surprising and concerning where aid flows have consistently reached 10 percent or more of GNP.

16. It has been shown that aid can have a positive affect on growth in countries where the policy environment is supportive. Even so, aid involving complex interventions has the greatest failure rate because it overtaxes local capacities. Weak institutions are at the heart of the development problem in Africa. But, also, the types of projects funded by donors have as much to do with aid effectiveness as does the policy environment in recipient countries.

17. Two factors are often involved. One is the extent to which aid agencies have the freedom to make decisions on developmental grounds as opposed to commercial, foreign policy or cultural grounds. Many find their autonomy circumscribed by other government agencies, by legislatures, by political parties, by private interest groups and, at times, by public opinion. Multilateral aid agencies typically have their autonomy proscribed by their member countries. A consequence of the end of the Cold War, in addition to increased involvement of non-governmental organizations, is that some aid agencies are under less pressure to allocate general aid to governments but under increasing pressures to allocate aid for particular purposes that have influential constituencies within donor countries (e.g., environment, resource development, family planning, child survival, etc.).

18. The second factor is that aid agencies, themselves, lack capacity to manage the types and numbers of complex interventions in African countries. This includes lack of local knowledge that might help influence change. The paradox is that in a weak institutional environment, with a large number of projects, aid can weaken capacity and undermine accountability.

19. One difficulty in approaching aid in a more holistic way lies in combining technical and social projects. Many technical cooperation project managers end up abandoning the idea of, for example, incorporating small-business enterprises into a low-cost housing scheme or into an historic city centre rehabilitation. The reason they invoke is that such integration would dilute clear-cut objectives and would require spending time to coordinate and negotiate not only between the agency and local actors, but also within the agency itself.

20. Notwithstanding the general failure of aid to induce social development, aid agencies in Africa are becoming involved in many successful grass-roots projects, building on community resources and people's participation.

Box 3: Anti-Urban Bias in ODA

At a time when the structures of cooperation and the internal organization of cooperation agencies themselves have been called into question, urban development has become just one more priority to include in their agendas. Several bilateral and multilateral agencies, including the African Development Bank still have neither department nor section which is specifically in charge of urban development. The fact that these agencies have no specialized urban departments reflects the low priority given to urban development and most importantly the difficulty in capitalizing on the lessons learned and the experience gained in the urban sector. Basic documentation on urban intervention in some agencies is lacking, and hardly anyone may have a conceptual and synthetic view of activities in the urban sector. In several agencies, the ruralist lobby is still so strong that urban poverty is hardly recognized as such and "urban development has to walk in disguise behind the imperatives of health, education, gender, family planning, micro-enterprise promotion, environment...." Aid organizations tend to ignore the city as a governance mechanism that can optimize the national goals of various sectors and contribute to sustainable rural development..

1.B EMERGING COUNTERVAILING TRENDS

1.B.1 Enablement and Participation

21. To increase the involvement of disadvantaged groups in economic, social and political decision making processes, countries in Africa have revised constitutions and passed legislation that supports the participation of excluded and disadvantaged groups, especially women. The challenge remains how to translate legislative reforms into actions that actually change the status of these groups. In order to implement comprehensive programmes that support vulnerable groups, human resources and expertise must be deployed, and financial and material resources are needed that can be directed towards lower income communities.

22. Some countries have set in motion comprehensive programmes aimed at bringing about the necessary changes. Structures and mechanisms, as in Rwanda, are being established which provide a long-range multi-dimensional perspective necessary for poverty reduction.

23. In other countries there are specific measures targeted towards disadvantaged groups. Housing loans for pensioners, disabled and destitute persons, for example, are being given at reduced rates of interest, remaining economically viable through cross subsidization systems. Early childhood development centres have been established in countries where this need has been identified, and women have earned income by running the centers. Care and support for children, especially orphans, have also been undertaken. In some countries youth forums have been established in conjunction with regional and district administrations in order to provide a platform for youth to air their views.

24. Despite such examples, there is acknowledgement that wide spread ignorance prevails about the rights of marginalized groups. This is identified as a major factor contributing to the lack of capacity to implement programmes that address their needs. As a result, international support for increasing awareness about the rights of vulnerable groups, as well as their needs, is identified as a priority for publicity and education at all levels.

25. Africa has also spawned an "associative" sector built on local solidarity movements. Many of these have been supported by external aid in developing and testing innovative bottom-up approaches to service delivery in both rural and urban areas.

26. Africa has much experience with rural community participation that is now being transferred to urban development. Lessons learned in about 6,000 villages in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali and Uganda, point to the community participation process as a tool to implement priority development actions through better use of existing resources in urban areas. It helps identify what incremental resources are needed and how they should be mobilized. The process also provides information to establish district development programmes as a response to local demands and needs. Through strengthened organization, communities acquire a stronger voice to hold local authorities and services providers accountable.

27. Local development processes activated in Benin involve community participation in diagnosis, identification of priority problems, solution analysis, elaboration of action plans and strengthening of community organizations. Zambia's Social Recovery Project supports small, simple and locally-generated community-based projects that improve infrastructure and service delivery to the capacitated poor. It is demand-led and involves government facilitation of interactive and active community participation, where people participate in joint analysis and planning as well as take collective action.

Box 4: Anti-Corruption Action Research --Testing by the World Bank

Action research promotes change through a cycle of participatory evaluation, action and further evaluation. In the pursuit of good governance, consultative processes involving all stakeholders draw out shared goals and objectives. Goal formation may be guided by diagnostic, service delivery and integrity surveys, national integrity systems workshops, action plans and anti-corruption strategies. Broad-based participation maximizes local ownership of anti-corruption initiatives throughout a country's population and increases objectivity and relevance of reform. It also raises expectations of service providers and service users, increasing the likelihood of successful reform through heightened awareness of responsibilities and means of recourse. African countries taking part in the World Bank Institutes' action research pilot demonstrations include Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Benin, Mali and Mauritius. The two basic tools in these demonstrations are action-oriented data collection and action planning workshops. Lessons learned: dissemination of information relating to the government's responsibilities and to its actual performance has raised awareness of the public's right to services without charge, informed the public of its own role in fighting corruption, enabled the public to monitor government initiatives and provided a place to register complaints and solutions. As transparency increases so does the accountability of public servants. Information on public perceptions of actual services delivery and levels of corruption provides a basis for a more practical discussion among stakeholders.

Source: www.worldbank.org/afr/findings/english/find156.htm

28. In a sectoral programme aimed at improving the quality of education, Nigeria's Primary Education Project engages stakeholders at all levels to assess expectations and levels of satisfaction with primary education; investigates perceived constraints to the improvement of service provision; identifies and describes existing innovative approaches to improve performance; and develops recommendations for development of pilot initiatives.

29. In South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Mozambique various projects have considered the micro-conditions of the poor in improving delivery of financial services. In one approach, participatory action research was used to develop a sense of ownership and to promote peer learning. Stakeholder workshops document current practices of financial service providers and assess the effectiveness of innovative techniques. In another, user-friendly community branch banks were established to match the locational constraints of low-income people. In other projects paperwork required for credit has been reduced and micro-lenders also provide non-financial services such as training in business development, entrepreneurship development, skills development and welfare services like family planning.

1.B.2 Decentralization and capacity building

30. Effective national governance begins in the communities of Africa. Strong local governance and systems of community-level decision making can create more open, responsive and effective means for enhancing representation. In recent years, national governments across Africa are recognizing decentralization, often to the community level, as one of their primary strategies for development.

31. In Uganda, national policy on decentralization transfers real power to the 39 districts, brings political and administrative control over services to the point where they are actually delivered, frees local managers from central constraints, establishes clear links between payment of taxes and the provision of services they finance and improves the capacity of local councils to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents. In the decentralization process, central government personnel were transferred to the district level. Financial management and administration followed, after ensuring accountability and transparency at lower levels.

32. A succession of laws in Mali establish the governing bodies for municipalities, counties and regions and sets out the responsibilities of each. Through greater citizen involvement, there has been much innovation at the local level and a remarkable degree of public awareness and understanding of the decentralization programme. The most significant problem has been the scarcity of resources and bureaucratic resistance among central government ministries.

33. In Burkina Faso, a National Commission for Decentralization was set up to strengthen democratic and participatory institutions at the local level, promote grassroots development and facilitate resource mobilization. Although challenging, the task is made easier because there is a political will to succeed; the process is not being implemented hastily; and there is a strong tradition of public participation in the country.

34. Zambia, following a government decentralization policy, has established a District Development Fund (DDF) to provide extra budgetary resources for implementation of bottom-up micro-projects intended to develop the social and economic infrastructure of impoverished areas, initiate decentralized participatory

planning processes and build capacity. Benefiting communities will contribute at least 25 percent of the project costs in cash or kind.

35. In Cote d'Ivoire, a series of laws over nearly two decades has established the communes of Abidjan and Bouake and set the framework of municipal responsibility and authority. The establishment of a continuous training and capacity building process has been supported by the international donor community. The programme includes a funding facility for local governments. Now, more explicit transfer of powers needs to be made between the central and local authorities and more resources need to be given to the communes in the form of personnel and taxation power for them to manage their own affairs.

36. In Zimbabwe, the division of powers between the national and local level, set by an Act of 1985, varies according to the categories of services, activities and functions. Central government focuses on guidelines, national policy, standards enforcement, national planning financing, and the development of infrastructure of national importance. Central government has a supervisory role over local authorities and a facilitating role in negotiating loans for capital development on behalf of a local government; and sometimes in controlling prices charged for services and leases. Mandatory local functions include such services as provision of water and roads, health services, refuse removal, sanitation and drainage services, provision of housing and service stands and planning.

37. Upon full independence, the government of Eritrea conducted a seminar among all stakeholders to help gain acceptance of a new, decentralized system of government. The system aimed at achieving balanced development, ensuring popular participation in deciding local affairs, and encouraging local initiatives. Experience, so far, indicates that incentives should be instituted to encourage competent line department staff to work at the lower level units; more attention needs to be paid to drawing of district boundaries; the shortage of material, financial and human resources needs to be addressed; and Councils need to fully understand central government department policies.

38. In South Africa, central government shares revenue with the local level using a specific formula. For local government, the formula is based on household per capita income and for provinces on household per capita income augmented by a measure of the extent of the rural economy in the region. The system has eliminated ad hoc and inequitable fiscal transfers. Central government has created a mechanism of grant funding for municipalities to expand their ability to buy capacity for projects involving the private sector in the delivery and financing of municipal services.

1.B.3 Gender Equality

39. Since the Habitat II conference and other major UN conferences, countries in the region have demonstrated political will and commitment to create an environment conducive to addressing gender issues and enhancing the status of women. Efforts have been made towards the formulation of policies and programmes that promote equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision making, as well as strengthening of existing measures.

40. The local government statute put in place in Uganda in 1987 offers an opportunity for women's representation on local councils that does not exist in many other countries. This legislation laid a foundation for women's inclusion in government's decision-making structures by mandating that women councilors must form one-third of all local government councils.

41. More recently, legislation that supports the participation of women in decision-making and representation in high-level positions of government has been revised or enacted in a number of countries. Likewise, measures affecting women's equal access to and control of land and housing have been recently enacted in numerous countries in the region. The different pieces of legislation and frameworks in place include constitutions, gender policies, and gender plans of action.

42. Namibia is revising its succession laws and married equality act. In Chad the government is developing what is called a family code, aimed at improving the economic condition of women as well as their legal status, while the National Housing Strategy guarantees a quota of 50 percent of serviced plots for women headed households. Similarly, Botswana has made efforts to increase home ownership by female-headed households. Burkina Faso's Presidential Decree of 1997 recognizes equal access to land and property without any discrimination based on sex and matrimonial status.

43. Mozambique's new land law of 1997 establishes the right of occupation for all peasant farmers, regardless of gender, as having the same force as a land title. According to Eritrea's Land Proclamation of the same year, women have the legal rights to own and inherit land, and both partners in the marriage have the same rights within the family. In 1999, Rwanda enacted a Law of Succession, establishing equal access to land and property

for both men and women, while a Land Bill is under preparation that will also address current gender inequalities.

44. In 1998 Uganda enacted a new land law to operationalize the 1995 constitutional reforms. Article 31 (1) of the Constitution provides that men and women are entitled to equal rights in marriage, during marriage and on its dissolution. The new Land Act aims at ensuring gender equality in access to land, as well as the protection of the rights of disadvantaged groups in general. However, it falls short of making specific provision for the co-ownership of family home and land by both spouses.

45. In South Africa on the other hand, although legal provisions for gender equality are less advanced, the Land Redistribution Program provides for the removal of restrictions on women's access to land. It also establishes procedures to promote women's active participation in decision making and the registration of land assets in the name of the beneficiary household members, not solely in the name of the household head.

46. Probably the most comprehensive gender treatment of land reform is that of Tanzania. The Land Act of 1998 recognizes the right of every adult woman to acquire, hold, use, deal with, and transmit land to the same extent and subject to the same restrictions as every adult man. Any customary law which is against women's rights to own and to use land is declared null and void, while it is stipulated that in Village Land Law, women have equal rights to own, manage, transfer, use or to receive land as a gift.

47. Gender responsive programmes have been promoted within the national strategies for poverty reduction, particularly by components that direct support towards women entrepreneurs. These measures are aimed at enhancing women's economic opportunities through the provision of financial assistance, and also by improving women's access to affordable housing, economic resources and social services. As a result of such targeted policy implementation strategies, the gender gaps are beginning to reduce. For example, in Ethiopia's cooperative credit schemes, women form 67 percent of total beneficiaries.

48. As part of the data collection activities for Istanbul +5, countries have made efforts to collect gender-disaggregated data and have created data banks that reflect this. Thus there have been considerable advances in institutionalizing gender equality. Yet despite the existence of legislation and regulatory frameworks, most countries have not yet translated them into concrete actions for implementation at the national and local government levels. Inadequate financial and human resources continue to plague the national and local machineries for gender equality. Capacity building in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming, which is seen to be essential, is still lacking.

1.B.4 Internet Connectivity

49. In the context of Africa, the adoption of new information and communication technology (ICT) can be seen as a positive trend opening new channels for the exchange of information, learning and networking, much of it aimed at community based development. It is estimated that there are now over one million subscribers in Africa. Of these, North Africa is responsible for about 200,000 and South Africa for 650,000, leaving about 150,000 for the remaining countries. In Africa each computer with an Internet or email connection supports an average of three users. There are now local Internet Society chapters in all of the African regions and in most of the countries with large Internet user populations.

50. There is a rapidly growing interest in kiosks, cybercafes and other forms of public Internet access, such as adding PCs to community phone-shops, schools, police stations and clinics which can share the cost of equipment and access among a larger number of users. Many existing 'phone shops' are now adding Internet access to their services, even in remote towns where it is a long-distance call to the nearest dialup access point. In addition a growing number of hotels and business centres provide a PC with Internet access.

51. On a sub-regional basis, Southern and North Africa are the most advanced regions, in terms of their use of ICTs, followed by East and West Africa with Central Africa lagging furthest behind.

52. Regional collaboration between countries is increasingly seen as an important means of addressing the need for improved ICT infrastructure. A framework document entitled the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), was adopted by all of Africa's planning ministers in May 1996. AISI calls for the formulation and development of a national information and communication infrastructure (NICI) plan in every African country, driven by national development priorities, and proposes cooperation among African countries to share the success of experiences. The countries that have so far begun the process for developing in-depth national information infrastructure and communication development plans are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. The experience developed by these countries in trying to formulate new policies will be of considerable interest to others.

53. Since then, communications ministers from over 40 African countries have provided high-level endorsement for telecommunications development policies encapsulated in their common vision document called the African Connection. The next stage is to open an African Connection Telecentre in every African state. There are now over 20 pilot Telecentres scattered through the continent (with the majority in Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda, as well as in Benin, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) set up to test different models, means of implementation and mechanisms for sustainability.

54. One factor driving the growth of the Internet in Africa is the assistance provided by various foreign organizations including UNDP, the World Bank, bi-lateral donors and NGOs. These are usually development oriented interventions like the fifteen country Internet Initiative for Africa, which aims to establish national information infrastructure as a major means for obtaining reliable and up-to-date information for decision making on national policy and to build a national information society that will aggressively use information technology to promote development in all sectors.

1.B.5 Dealing with AIDS

Box 5: The Development Costs of HIV/AIDS

Twenty-two million Africans are already infected with HIV virus. New infections are occurring at a rate of about 4 million per year. HIV/AIDS targets people in the prime of their working and parenting lives, killing most of those who are infected before their 35th birthday. Nelson Mandela has warned that "AIDS kills those on whom society relies to grow the crops, work in the mines and the factories, run the schools and govern nations and countries." Because of AIDS, life expectancy in Africa has stopped rising and is in decline. Life expectancy at birth in Botswana, the hardest hit country, is anticipated to fall from 61 years in 1990-1995 to 41 years by 2000-2005. By 2005, AIDS treatment costs are expected to account for more than a third of all government health spending in Ethiopia, more than half in Kenya and nearly two-thirds in Zimbabwe. AIDS will kill almost 15,000 teachers in Tanzania by 2010. Expenditures on health in families with AIDS sufferers have quadrupled in Cote d'Ivoire and spending on education is cut in half. Food consumption drops by two-fifths. By the end of 2000 AIDS will orphan 10 million children under the age of 15 in Africa.

55. Because of the shame and irrational fear, HIV/AIDS in Africa has been shrouded in silence. Without discussion of the problem, there is no way for communities to become aware of, or take seriously, the threat of a virus that can be spread, unknowingly, by people who feel and look perfectly healthy. Until recently many politicians have remained unwilling to talk about AIDS. Now, however, African leaders are speaking out in public acknowledgement of the epidemic and encouraging safer forms of sexual behavior. Successes in Uganda and Senegal have shown that breaking the silence is a first step – public acknowledgement combined with frank information campaigns, sexual health education, condom promotion, and efforts to decrease AIDS stigma and help HIV-infected persons to live positively.

56. Because AIDS is not just a disease, but a development challenge, many different sectors in addition to the health sector must take responsibility. In Botswana, a nationwide plan for combating AIDS was launched in 1998 with 80 percent of the funding coming from within the country. In Lesotho, the AIDS budget has been doubled. In Swaziland, the government has declared war on AIDS. Namibia's Cabinet approved a new national AIDS programme, and in South Africa a new partnership, engaging all sectors of government and civil society, was initiated. Malawi is launching a multi-sectoral strategic plan for combating AIDS, the outcome of a bottom-up consultative process starting with communities. UNAIDS and its seven cosponsors have joined forces with African governments, donor countries, and pan-African and other international organizations to create an International Partnership against AIDS in Africa. The goal is to have in place, in all African countries, a comprehensive national AIDS programs that focuses on national solutions implemented locally.

2 THE STATE OF THE AFRICAN REGION'S CITIES

57. Africa's urban population will approach 550 million, or nearly 50 percent of its projected total of 1,187 million, by 2020. Today, urban areas account for 38 percent of the total population of 784 million and are credited with 60 percent of the continent's GDP. Municipalities, however, capture only 1 percent of the urban GDP, or US\$6 to 8 per capita, as revenue. There is a similar disparity between the technical needs for municipal governance and staffing of municipalities.

58. Definitions of 'urban' and 'rural' differs widely across Africa. Many African countries use a population figure of 2000 to make a distinction between rural and urban settlements. However, the figure varies from 100 in Uganda to 20,000 in Nigeria and Mauritius. Almost half the countries in Africa use an enumerative definition to indicate the areas that qualify as urban. The pattern of urbanization in West Africa differs somewhat from that in East Africa. In many West African countries there are few secondary cities, so the population is concentrated in one or a few large cities. Population growth in East Africa is more evenly distributed over

secondary and tertiary cities. This does not alter the fact that there, also, primary cities are going through a period of rapid growth. By 2015 it is expected that two cities in Africa will have populations of more than 10 million inhabitants and 70 cities will have populations of more than 1 million. The most important contributory factor to urbanization in West and East Africa is migration from rural areas to the cities. In South Africa the natural increase in the population is the most important cause of urbanization.

2.A THE ECONOMY OF THE CITY

59. The stalled process of globalization in Africa underpins the feeble nature of the formal economy in the majority of the continent's cities. In most countries of sub-Saharan Africa, regular urban wage employment opportunities constitute only a small fraction of total employment, typically between 5 and 10 percent. Regular urban employment has fallen in many countries and elsewhere has failed to match the growth of the non-agricultural labour force. The slow-down in modern sector employment in recent years is linked to the fact that the public sector -- as the engine of employment growth -- has become increasingly unable to sustain the high rates of labour absorption from the 1970's and 1980's.

60. The impact of structural adjustment, which created shortages of imported materials, reduced investment, retrenched the public sector and led to declining effective demand, has meant that urban-based manufacturing has suffered particularly badly. Large-scale manufacturing, which created an impressive volume of jobs in Asia and Latin America, has generated only a small number of employment opportunities in urban Africa.

61. In Tanzania, public employment is the most important source of formal employment, especially in cities. In Luanda, employment in public service and state enterprises absorbs almost half of the working population. In Kenya, the public sector also accounts for about 50 percent of employment. Under structural adjustment programmes, public sector reform in several African countries has precipitated substantial layoffs. The current wave of public sector retrenchments in Africa is effecting a downturn in urban jobs in particular. Women appear to have been most affected by the retrenchments and restructuring of the civil service.

62. Accompanying the faltering of public-sector-driven economy in Africa, there has been a sharp fall in modern sector wages in urban areas, especially, again, among civil servants. In Mozambique, for example, probably no family in an urban context is able to survive on the income derived from one of the 400,000 formal sector jobs.

Box 6: Shrinking Families

Urbanization, improved education among women, and stronger government programmes have helped reduce fertility rates in numerous African countries in recent years. Economic pressures have become at least as important as health issues in persuading Africans to have fewer children. "A big family used to be respected. Now, if you have a lot of children and can't take care of them, what you get is blame." Economics has played a key role in such countries as Kenya, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Ghana and parts of Nigeria -- all nations burdened by stagnant or shrinking per capita income, high inflation and increased costs of basic services, such as education. In Zimbabwe fertility rates fell from 7.1 children per woman of child-bearing age to 4.4 between 1985 and 1996 while gross domestic product dropped from US\$640 per capita in 1985 to US\$540 in 1995. In Kenya the fertility rate dropped from 8.0 to 5.4 in the same period. Zambia's dropped from 7.4 to 6.5. Two-thirds of those polled in Nigeria cited economic hardship as the primary reason for using contraception and delaying marriage. This indicates a reversal of theories on lowering fertility rates, usually associated with long-term economic success.

63. Due to public sector retrenchments and a declining absorptive capacity of the formal private sector, levels of open unemployment have escalated across urban Africa. Unemployment has been projected to reach 30 percent in most cities by this year and is creeping up the education ladder as university graduates are being affected

64. The worst levels of unemployment, however, are among the urban youth, who are said to constitute 60 to 75 percent of the unemployed although they account for only one-third of the labour force. In Kenya, those aged 20 to 29 represent 65 percent of all unemployed persons. In Lagos State, Nigeria, 70 percent of unemployed persons are between 15 and 29.

65. As security of regular wage employment has declined, the distinctions between employment conditions in the formal and informal economies of cities have become progressively blurred. Large numbers of people have moved into either self-employment or casual wage employment or have to supplement formal sector wages with income generated from informal sector activity. This has produced the widely noted phenomenon of the informalization of the urban economy in Africa.

66. Informal economic enterprises -- those defined as small-scale, mostly family-operated or individual activities that are not legally registered and usually do not provide their workers with social security or legal protection -- absorb over 60 percent of the workforce in urban Africa. It is the one sector that continues to show absorptive capacity and is the most rapidly expanding employment segment of the contemporary African urban economy. It is estimated that in the next decade, more than 90% of additional jobs in the urban areas in Africa will have to come from micro-and small -scale enterprises in the informal sector. Sixty to seventy percent of the informal sector activities are trade related. Growth of the informal sector, however, is taking place mainly through replication rather than through capital/skill/technology upgrading.

67. Women play a prominent role in the urban informal sector, where there is a marked gender division of labour. In Lesotho, women cluster in businesses that are an extension of domestic and traditional chores such as selling food and brewing beer. In Zambia and Angola, women predominate in petty trade, whereas men are mostly found in manufacturing, construction or repair services. Women tend to be relegated to the lower end of the informal economy in terms of profitability and long-term development potential. This means that women earn less than men in the informal economy and often do not have acceptable collateral to enable them access substantial credit facilities. Several Governments have formulated and are implementing micro-enterprise support policies for women. Kenya has reported a revamped policy and strategic framework for small and medium enterprise development, creating a conducive environment for women in industrial development. Other countries are putting in place, legislative and regulatory provisions that are more friendly and conducive to the informal economy.

68. International experience has shown that the potential for encouraging dynamic urban economic growth is based on cooperative networks of small firms and micro-enterprises. In realizing sectoral agglomerations, an important role falls to local urban authorities who can help foster small-firm industrial districts and furnish an appropriate environment for the operations of survivalist informal enterprise.

69. In policy circles, a re-thinking of the role of peri-urban agriculture in Africa and its potential contribution to feeding the cities is taking place. Urban farming has become a critical variable in sustainability. With the impact of economic recession, the effects of structural adjustment programmes and the crises of the 1980's and 1990's, the cultivation of food crops in public and private open spaces is now both more widespread and economically significant in many African urban areas. In Kenya, Egypt, Mali and Tanzania, poor urban households will spend 60 percent or more of their incomes on food. City dwellers pay 10 to 30 percent more for their food than do rural inhabitants. Worsening food security underpins much of the burgeoning of agricultural micro-enterprises on the African cityscape. Two out of three urban families in Kenya and Tanzania may engage in farming, where every open space, utility service reserve, road, valley or garden in the towns has been taken up for planting of all sorts of seasonal and permanent crops, ranging from vegetables, maize, bananas, to fruit trees. In Harare, cultivation in the urban periphery has been at the expense of the destruction of woodlots used for fuel wood. In West African cities, the same patterns emerge, even as many public servants moonlight as part-time urban cultivators.

Box 7: The Food Chain

In the past twenty years, Africa's agricultural exports have declined while imports have risen sharply. Food shortages and increasing prices have generated strong political protests, especially in heavily urbanized countries like Cote d'Ivoire and Zambia. The link between farm and city market is not direct: distribution systems are frequently obtuse and inefficient, held together by personal relationships, private marketing networks and unregulated transactions. The food chain illustrates better than any other function the interlinkages between urban and rural areas, one that is often beset with antagonism and transactional grievances. Mechanisms for institutional bonding between farm and market include farm cooperatives that allow farmers to move above the limits of self-marketing, wholesale food markets that clearly delineate ownership and quality of products and regulatory systems that add a predictability and fairness to the process. These, however, must consider local concerns and traditions if they are to function as intended.

70. This process of "ruralization" of African cities is not a consequence of mass rural-urban migration. But an innovative response from below to the formal fluctuations that currently beset the economies of developing countries' cities. Urban cultivation is not practiced exclusively or even primarily by recent migrants. The majority of farmers originate from poor households that are fully entrenched in the urban economy. More than 60 percent of Lusaka's farmers had been in the city for more than five years before embarking on plot gardens, and nearly 45 percent for more than 10 years.

71. Women play a vital role in urban agriculture many of whom engage in cultivation as a survivalist strategy.

72. Countries have undertaken specific activities and programmes to improve the urban economy, employment and income. These include partnerships with the private sector and provision of micro-credit to small local associations, cooperatives and women groups. Informal sector development is being promoted in several countries (e.g., Kenya, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana) and is being supported through micro-credit schemes.

73. The trend for most governments has been to encourage self-employment, as job opportunities in the formal sector are very limited. Informal sector and small scale-entrepreneurship is already providing employment for a significant proportion of the urban labour force.

74. Lack of planning and management capacity however, within the small and micro-enterprises has been identified as a weakness. Extremely poor infrastructure and utility services has greatly constrained general economic development and productivity.

75. It has also been cited that while governments try to realize the employment and support for women and disabled people, social consciousness has not matured sufficiently hence there has been limited success.

76. Priority action in this regard should focus on the provision and improvement of basic economic and social infrastructures and services – namely roads, electric power supplies, water supplies etc. Given adequate availability of these, the private and other non-governmental sectors, including the community sector would be enabled to generate a lot more economic activities and improved incomes.

2.B THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

77. African countries are facing problems of urban pollution, including mounting urban waste problems and deteriorating air and water conditions, particularly in overcrowded urban areas. A number of countries have formulated strategies or are in the process of modifying legislation concerning environmental protection and resource management.

78. Environmental progress has been made in a number of countries undertaking national settlement policies. National urban and regional planning acts have been passed in some cases. Comprehensive water resources management plans have been prepared in some sub-regions with the aim of securing water resources and maintaining quality. Some governments are trying to improve the water supply systems through modernization.

79. Countries report that actions for addressing the issues of water resource management are isolated and have low impact. Weak management capacity, misuse of water and pollution have been cited as major problems. Other obstacles include weak technical capacity and the high cost and scarcity of resources required for upgrading water systems to cope with rapid urban growth. Trends indicate that rapid population growth has continued to create a very large demand for water, fuel for cooking and waste disposal. Many solid waste management projects have been implemented that include new initiatives for landfill sites, waste segregation and recycling and composting projects to effect plans for environmentally acceptable disposal of solid waste.

80. More progress has been noted where local authorities and communities have been involved together. In the field of environmental management countries recognize the value of involving a wide range of actors in analyzing information and developing strategies for decision making and implementation. Local development plans and *Local Agenda 21* initiatives offer an opportunity to engage in such participatory processes and are an efficient way to improve performances towards sustainable development and a better living environment.

81. Specific environmental planning and management programmes aimed at improving access by the urban poor to shelter; to basic infrastructure and to services through the implementation of broad-based participatory environmental improvement plans have been undertaken in a number of countries, notably Tanzania, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia. In Kenya for instance strategic plans developed by some municipalities together with community-based initiatives have directly benefited the residents of low-income settlements. Typical income generating projects initiated by women groups are improvements in solid waste collection, and protection of water sources.

82. Increasingly countries have undertaken studies to identify and assess the various problems related to rapid urbanization. Programmes that address air and water pollution and improved solid waste management have been intensified since Habitat II. Increasingly countries have required environmental impact assessments.

83. Several countries like Kenya, Uganda, Namibia and Mozambique are now developing national plans for disaster vulnerability reduction and response. Additional efforts have to be made to translate such plans and strategies into concrete and efficient institutional arrangements and operational capacities. Awareness raising, and emergency preparedness and response are some of the areas where governments in the region are presently focusing their priority.

84. Carefully regulating and limiting the private automobile remains one pressing priority for the region. Viable and realistic alternatives for a variety of travel options for a wide scope of trip purposes and income levels are the keys to sustainable transport developments in the future. As the share of Global greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector in Africa continues to grow exponentially, further steps must be taken to incur reduced demand for automobile transport and clean up the transport required through improved fuel mixes, more efficient engines, alternative means and better public transport systems.

85. Legislation remains one of the major implementation instruments in improving the urban environment. However other instruments such as economic incentives mechanisms, awareness through information campaigns and strategic investments must also be used to address environmental concerns.

86. Efforts have been made in environmental resource management in the context of the development planning process. In Africa, a number of countries such as Tanzania, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia have shown particular interest and concern for better urban environmental management by introducing stakeholder based, bottom-up and cross-sectoral approaches.

87. Policy changes have included setting up of environmental protection councils, drafting of environmental impact assessment guidelines and developing long-term plans for environmental conservation. Policies on the promotion of the use of renewable energy sources and natural gas have also been formulated. This includes the development of national energy strategies aimed at encouraging the introduction of energy saving techniques/utilities in settlements (such as promoting use of solar, wind and biogas energy). Inadequate capacity for effective implementation of EIA policies has been identified as an obstacle (i.e., maintaining databases to enhance monitoring and assessment). Capacity for technology transfer has been another area of concern.

88. In order to implement environmental policies successfully there is need to transfer of some responsibilities to the local level, accompanied by awareness raising and considerable capacity building. Empowering communities, equipping them with information/ capacities and implementation mechanisms increases long term sustainability of the development initiatives undertaken in the area.

89. There is need to establish local environmental standards taking into account social and economic characteristics of each area. For better environmental management, all countries recognize the critical importance of addressing institutional issues, primacy of information for better planning, the crucial role of public information, environmental education and communication, importance of political will, and appropriate role of technology. What is urgently needed is resource prioritization.

2.C INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

90. Lack of access to health care or healthy environment has also been set as a priority problem by many countries. Because good health contributes to an increase in quality of life, it has frequently been targeted by countries in the region as one of the main areas requiring greater resource allocation. A number of health sector reform agendas have been formulated, with a broad approach to providing a healthy, safe and productive life. This has been done through addressing inequalities in access to health services. As a result, access to quality health services, particularly by the poor and marginalized groups, is being expanded.

91. Various mass-based health and nutrition programmes have been undertaken focusing on preventive health. The most vulnerable groups are specifically targeted within such programmes. These efforts have resulted in a slight improvement in peoples' health situation. For example, coverage in terms of access to health care in Ethiopia has grown from 48.5 percent in 1996 to 52.4 percent in 1999.

92. However, in a majority of countries the situation has not changed much. In many cases this is because, although health services may now be there, they are not affordable. In Uganda for instance, household survey data of 1997 indicated that 51 percent of people do not seek medical care when ill. The reasons given are the high cost of health services in terms of the cost of drugs and treatment, distance and time. Other weaknesses identified include lack of capacity causing inadequate delivery of useful health services.

93. A conclusion reached by some analyses is that still more attention and resources need to be put into establishing local health centers, to continuously increase levels of access to health care by reducing walking distances.

94. Many countries have established mechanisms and guidelines for provision of basic services, especially to people living in poverty. A number of programmes and projects related to basic services, social development and eradication of poverty have been undertaken, such as the Market Town Development Programme in Ethiopia.

95. Several countries in the region are promoting improved access to infrastructure through sites and services schemes. In most cases however, these are small projects funded by external donors which cannot be sustainable for implementation at larger scales. Rapidly growing informal settlements make it imperative to search for more sustainable solutions to infrastructure provision.

96. In many countries, standards for infrastructure are identical for all urban areas where different income groups live, even though the poor cannot afford to pay for high standard infrastructure. While low-cost solutions for infrastructure have been well tested within experimental projects, they need to be included in building codes and by-laws to ensure application on a larger scale. In many countries, there appears to exist a need to adjust standards of infrastructure to the level of affordability, as pointed out in one national report.

97. The 'Water for African Cities' Programme within the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, addresses the urgent need for managing the growing urban water crisis and mitigating the impact of urbanization on freshwater resources and aquatic ecosystems. Comprehensive water resource management plans have been prepared in some sub-regions with the aim of securing water resources and maintaining sound quality. Governments are improving the water supply systems through modernization. More progress has also been noted where local authorities and communities have been involved.

98. Overlapping jurisdictional responsibilities and management confusion among the wide variety of public and private entities involved in providing urban transport and regulating it continues to plague the urban transport delivery sector within the region. Compounding this problem is the purely sectoral approach still taken by many planners and engineers when the interactions between land use and transport are not properly and appropriately accounted for in transport programme design.

99. Some countries within the region have recognized the rights of the urban poor to affordable transport by passing legislation protecting ceilings for public transport fares and requiring appropriate transport access for new development. The role of pedestrianism in the overall urban transport fabric has been noted but only a relatively few localities have acted to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access. Viable and realistic alternatives for a variety of travel options for a wide scope of trip purposes and income levels are the keys to sustainable developments in the future. Providing appropriate transport infrastructure for non-motorized modes of transport remain a priority to serve the transport needs of the urban poor.

100. Widespread recognition and understanding of the negative environmental and economic development impacts on the overuse of the private automobile to meet regional travel needs, must receive increased attention. Carefully regulating and limiting the overall amount of the transport demand relegated to the private automobile remains a pressing priority for the region in this crucial development sector.

101. While the scope, scale and overall cost of urban transport infrastructure expansion may dictate national and multi-lateral financial assistance, economic sustainability dictates that urban transport be planned, operated, managed and regulated at the local level. Where national-level action is most necessary is in ensuring the maintenance of urban transport service standards and appropriate levels of environmental quality.

2.D GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALIZATION

102. Several African countries have undertaken constitutional reviews, which have made provision for a decentralized system of governance. In some countries, this has led to local government reforms whose objectives include, promoting good governance, determining appropriate and cost-effective organizational structures for local government and improving the management of finances. In Uganda, a national programme and action plan on democratic governance was prepared in 1997. The Action Plan identifies decentralization, democratization, transparency, accountability and public information as key areas in good governance.

103. In Tanzania, the main principles of the Local Government Reform process have been published in a 1998 Government Policy Paper. These principles include: people's participation in local government at the local level, bringing public services under the control of the people through their local councils, giving power to local councils over financial resources and creating a new central-local relation based on legislation and negotiation.

104. In the context of current pressures to decentralize and democratize many African countries, local governments are in the process of developing innovative approaches to the management of cities. Public-private partnerships in the delivery of urban services such as solid waste management, management of markets, car/bus-parks, public toilets and public housing have been set up in many local authorities. Public-private partnerships are seen to be key instruments for mobilizing public and private skills, and funding of development in an effective manner and reducing the budgetary constraints on the local bodies involved.

105. In most African countries, local authorities have already realized the importance of community participation and civic engagement in the governance of human settlements. However, in most countries, there is no legislation guiding the involvement of communities in human settlement management. Community based organizations respond to urban problems as they arise, but not within a policy framework.

106. In spite of the major efforts to adopt the main tenets of good governance in the management of human settlements, most African countries have continued to experience institutional weaknesses and to encounter some obstacles. The relationship between Central Government and Local Authorities is still hazy even in some countries where decentralization is enshrined in national constitutions. In addition local authorities have low management and administrative capacity and are poorly resourced.

Box 8: Africa Supports World Charter of Local Self Government

In a significant move towards internationally shared principles of local democracy and self-government, representatives of national and municipal governments from Anglophone and Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa, as well as representatives of municipal associations from the regions, gave their strong support to the World Charter of Local Self Government at meetings in Accra, Ghana, and Agadir, Morocco. In doing so, they underlined the importance of decentralization in harnessing the creative energy of people for economic growth and development on the continent and to the process of democratization in Africa. Welcoming senior delegates to the Accra consultation in March 2000, the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, Professor John Atta-Mills pointed out that "long gone are the days when central governments could decide for all citizens. With the growing population, local governments should be enabled to manage all local affairs. The Charter should constitute a blueprint for local government development in Africa." At the Agadir regional meeting, held in June 1999, the Moroccan Minister of Regional Planning, Environment, Reconstruction and Housing, Mr. Mohammed El-Iasighi, said that his country's strategy was to "strengthen the decentralization process and to be nearer to the citizens within the framework of partnership with all stakeholders." A generally shared opinion at the meetings was that decentralization, local autonomy and financial self-reliance were necessary for anchoring democracy in national political life. However, for such policies to be successful it is necessary to design practical measures for effective co-operation between national and local authorities. It was noted, however, that these measures would need to be sensitive to the particular historical, social and economic circumstances of the African region.

3 THE STATE OF THE AFRICA REGION'S SHELTER

3.A HOUSING CONDITIONS

107. Current estimates indicate that there will be a need to construct over 60 million new dwellings in the coming ten years just to accommodate the new households in Africa. It must be noted that this is an underestimation of the need for housing, as it does not account for the replacement of dilapidated housing units and construction of additional units to relieve overcrowding.

108. Many unplanned housing areas that have been built in the last twenty years have virtually no services. Even squatter upgrading programmes in a number of countries are too much for many governments' current austerity programmes. Thus there may be not much difference between the service environment of unplanned areas and that of rural villages. In some cities one-half of the poor households may not have services of any kind, and water, for example, may be supplied by vendors at up to five times the unit prices paid by those with connections.

109. While many governments have facilitated comprehensive shelter policies and revised their housing development strategies, few have succeeded to be sufficiently effective in implementation. The main reason for this "policy-implementation" gap seems to lie in the lack of capacity at the local level. Given the complex tasks that the municipalities have to face related to promoting security of tenure, provision of adequate supply of land, construction of infrastructure and provision of services, there is a considerable need for strengthening the capacities of local authorities and other actors at this level.

3.B HOUSING PROVISION

110. Housing has become more and more an instrument for economic empowerment and poverty alleviation policies. This is evident from the number of countries addressing the issue of shelter within the framework of poverty reduction programmes. Some countries embarked on building housing units and rehabilitation of neighbourhoods through public/private partnerships in addressing urban poverty.

111. Many countries have addressed policy changes on issues such as creation of national strategies that rely on reduction of urban poverty, the setting up of housing funds that can promote access of the poor to housing finance. Housing institutions have been set up or strengthened to monitor and oversee the national process of implementing the Habitat Agenda.

112. Recognition of housing rights in the region is strongly linked to provision of security of tenure for people living in informal settlements, to the prevention of forced evictions, and to the promotion of access to information and to other elements of housing development process including affordable building materials, practical building technologies and sources of finance.

113. In Namibia, the constitution provides a framework for legislation and policies to safeguard the Namibians' equal right to shelter. Although the right to adequate housing *per se* has not been addressed in most African countries through specific legislation or other related measures, it has been addressed in many countries within the framework of general legislation related to areas such as right to own land and property.

114. Ethiopia, for instance, reports that there exists no impediments to women or any other particular group for owning or renting land, or taking mortgages in their own name. Botswana notes that because past housing programmes often tended to exclude the poor households, the government is now implementing integrated poverty alleviation and housing schemes to assist the urban poor to generate income, earn a living and build houses through organized self-help. Assisted with a loan and technical assistance, the poor can produce building materials, earn income from the sales and use the same materials to build their houses.

115. In many African countries ravaged by wars, famine and political unrest, governments have put in place legislation that enables the reintegration of returnees and displaced persons. In Rwanda, for instance, the government has established a Housing Fund, and is currently preparing a land bill. With a view to promoting gender equality, a law on succession and matrimonial rights was recently passed.

116. The Republic of Djibouti reports that it has elaborated a legislative framework to facilitate provision of housing for all income groups. This framework focuses on ensuring funds for the maintenance of basic infrastructure; reducing construction costs through low-cost techniques and use of locally produced building materials; promotion of housing finance systems for all income groups; implementing pro-poor land pricing systems; increasing provision of serviced plots and promoting the private construction sector. In Namibia, the Build Together Programme assists the poor to gain access to land and build their own housing through self-help and by utilizing the potential of the informal sector.

117. Coordination among institutions responsible for the shelter sector has often been mentioned in the national reports as a difficulty in shelter delivery. Lack of capacity of local authorities and community builders have been identified as another institutional weakness.

118. Increase of prices in the construction sector, unavailability of local building materials and the high cost of foreign components in housing construction have been major obstacles for the housing development process which has increasingly hindered the process towards realization of housing rights.

119. According to the national reports, several governments are in the process of revising national strategies and reviewing institutional and legislative frameworks related to shelter development. A number of countries are addressing the issue of shelter in the context of the broader framework of economic development based on the notion that housing can be used as a major tool to create economic wealth and employment. The reports also indicate that in many countries the role of government is gradually changing from a provider to a facilitator of public-private partnerships, and a supporter of community-based initiatives in the housing sector.

120. In most countries in the region, shortages of affordable land for housing has resulted in overcrowding of existing neighborhoods and in growth of informal settlements on marginal lands unsuitable for housing. This is to a great extent caused by the slow and inadequate implementation of land-related recommendations of the *Habitat Agenda*. Municipal land development policies are often irrelevant, as most of the land development takes place outside the formally regulated sector. Few countries however have succeeded in establishing well-articulated land markets that can deliver land at reasonable prices.

121. There are numerous factors that seem to constrain the supply of land in African countries. These include customary land rights, land speculation, lack of up-to-date cadastral and land data systems, inappropriate regulations affecting land use, lack of effective land adjudication processes, and inappropriate valuation and tax systems. In some countries, the concentration of supply of land in the hands of central government has furthermore imposed a firm bottleneck on the land markets.

122. Yet, many countries are in the process of setting up processes to increase delivery of land. In some countries, nationalized land is returned to former landowners or land is sold to the highest bidder through

auctions. Some countries are in the process of reviewing the roles of the government and the municipalities in land management.

123. In Lesotho, an innovative project addresses the issue of customary land tenure through a multi-stakeholder approach that recognizes the legitimate interests of customary community chiefs. The aim is to create added value to parts of a site through planning, so that the surplus can be used for the provision of serviced plots, and the remainder can be used to reduce the costs of infrastructure that can be provided to the poor.

124. In Uganda and Tanzania, land policies have been formulated aiming at increasing access of women to land. Specific programmes, such as South Africa's land reform programme, have enabled those previously denied the opportunity to own land. Institutional and financial support has been put into land delivery process for the poor communities through innovative approaches such as the dual development approach in Namibia (in-situ upgrading and new development aimed at resettlement).

125. It is widely recognized that the problems created by the growth of informal settlements cannot be solved unless adequate amounts of affordable land are made available for housing the poor. Yet, much remains to be done to establish well-functioning land markets, which can deliver land at reasonable prices. Assessing the constraints in land supply and putting in place coherent land development strategies that increase the supply of land are urgent tasks for the governments in the region. The present processes of land development must be reformed with the objective of enhancing the land development capability of municipalities.

126. Housing finance institutions in the region are typically small and provide a very small proportion of total housing finance. This is a result of national fiscal policies and economic conditions such as the high interest rates; restricted development of domestic financial instruments; restricted investment selection directed to other sources than housing; and limited access of households to credit. Most financial resources for housing development come through the informal sector. Particularly low-income households depend to a large extent on informal credit sources, which are expensive and short-term. The beneficiaries of such loans lack the collateral, the guarantee of a regular and recorded household income, the ability to save and have limited access to formal financial institutions. Restrictions on women's access to land and inheritance rights have often prevented their access to credit.

127. Since the adoption of the *Habitat Agenda*, many countries have made efforts to address the above issues. Some countries have special provisions for the support of cooperatives for land and housing, and a number of countries have extended credit to these cooperatives. In Namibia for example, the Building Together Programme provides loans to low-income households who wish to buy land, construct or repair their homes. In South Africa, the National Housing Finance Corporation is developing new loan schemes and risk-sharing mechanisms. Zimbabwe has initiated measures to involve building societies in lending to housing cooperatives. The active presence of a technical support NGO is deemed as crucial in linking the cooperatives and building societies.

128. In many countries, workers provide considerable amount of capital to financial institutions in the form of contributions to pension and provident funds; yet they often have difficulties in accessing credit for housing. In South Africa, "worker advocacy" has led to the use of provident funds to leverage loans for housing. In Zimbabwe, up to 5 percent of the National Security Authority funds can now be invested in low-income housing through building societies. In Kenya, a part of the National Social Security Funds has been invested in land and housing projects. Outstanding issues in all three countries include charging market interest rates on provident fund linked loans and creating more democratic control over the funds.

129. In several countries in the region, some incremental and complementary forms of low-income housing finance are being developed. These include very hands-on lending in South Africa where good consumer education and provident fund guarantees result in 99 percent repayment. Small loans through housing cooperatives in Kenya are also demonstrating almost 100 percent repayments. A large percentage of households, with very low or no regular income, however can still not gain access to credit even if they were given special conditions, as they would not be able to service a loan from their incomes. This problem can be overcome by integrating poverty alleviation strategies with housing development, as demonstrated by the Botswanan authorities who have provided the poor with a loan to start manufacturing building materials for income generation.

3.C SECURITY OF TENURE

130. Expansion of the informal settlements has been a major concern for the governments and local authorities in the region. Many countries are in efforts to upgrade and regularize these informal settlements, and promote security of tenure to millions of people. Such efforts include recognizing full ownership rights as well as putting into place flexible land tenure arrangements, such as facilitating users' rights (for instance Namibia has

developed a flexible tenure system to run parallel to the formal system). There is common understanding that security of tenure can be promoted also by addressing issues such as access to basic services, credit, employment generation and by assisting people in their own housing initiatives. Addressing gender inequalities in ownership and inheritance rights is deemed as one of the most fundamental steps in this regard. Efforts in Botswana to increase house ownership by female-headed households are a good example for such approaches.

131. Several countries in the region are in the process of implementing informal settlement upgrading programmes. However, only few countries have reported that they have implemented projects which combine upgrading of informal settlements with the provision of security of tenure. This may be due to the fact that implementation of land regularization programmes are often confronted with difficulties, some of them due to the customary land tenure systems found in many countries. Furthermore, the machinery needed to effect a massive land registration/regularization programme requires strong administrative control that may be largely missing. In addition, there are several other difficulties in promoting secure tenure that must be confronted. Lack of incentive on behalf of the residents to pay for the land or for improvements once security has been assured, invasion of legalized areas by speculators and higher income groups, and further squatting as a result of this invasion are some of the most obvious examples.

132. Improvement in security of tenure appears to be an important but not sufficient condition for channeling the people's resources into housing. Other incentives such as loans, technical assistance, and community organization for self-help and mutual-aid construction are often necessary. As pointed out in Burkina Faso's report on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, in order to be an effective tool for housing the poor, security of tenure should be conceived as an indispensable component of an integrated programme aimed to bring improvements by mobilizing people.

133. Some countries have undertaken policy changes that include establishment of decrees to regulate urban and rural settlements (e.g. Rwanda's Ministerial decree of 1997). Some governments have created shelter and housing councils to provide regulatory frameworks for this sector. They have formulated housing policies and reviewed existing ones to match new challenges. Other legislative instruments that have been reviewed by some countries include town and country planning acts.

4 PROSPECTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.A URBAN AND SHELTER PROSPECTS

134. The benefits accruing to Africa from participation in a globalized economy are at the moment difficult to perceive. Poor countries have fallen behind in the globalization age not because globalization has failed them, but because they have failed to put in place the political, economic and legal infrastructure to take advantage of globalization.

135. Evolution of urban Africa will take its course. But there are choices. The current path seems to lead toward the deconstruction of Africa's cities. Weak national performance contributes too little to the formal urban economy. The slack, historically taken up by the public sector, has become too great. The informal private sector steps in to absorb excess labour but cannot innovate enough to add value. It only repeats itself over and over settling into a kind of urban iron age. As infrastructure systems and services break down, individuals and families begin to depend upon themselves, first seeking out available space, which must be defended, and then turning to income redistribution through crime and more corruption.

136. The alternative path is one that builds on Africa's traditional community strengths and values, leading toward reconstruction of African settlements. It means turning systems of governance upside down, allowing people to participate as equal partners in defining problems, exploring solutions and allocating resources. Community-based governance evolves from expressions of self-interest, social relationships and the common wealth toward structures that can help provide what individuals cannot do for themselves. It may not result in a Tokyo, New York or Paris -- a world city -- but the African city will be a culturally vibrant, healthy, safe, stimulating and prosperous place to live and work.

137. Judging from the Istanbul+5 country reports and from other sources around the continent, the path toward urban reconstruction, or even "Renaissance," is the one most desperately desired. Examples of enablement, empowerment, community-based development, participatory decision-making -- decentralization in myriad forms -- testify to a general awakening of a communal spirit that will first seek its own identity, build up its national muscle and then venture out with confidence to participate fully in the global game.

138. There has been a growing consensus that effective national governance begins in the communities of Africa. Strong local governance and systems of community decision making can create more open, responsive

and effective means for enhancing representation. In recent years, national governments across Africa are recognizing decentralization, often to the community level, as one of their primary strategies for development.

139. The main problem appears to be that the process is being defined in terms of winners and losers, with those that currently hold power and resources seeing themselves ending up with less. This need not be the case. Power must certainly be redistributed and shared, but those who are flexible and who genuinely wish for their people a better life will take on even more important leadership roles.

140. The irony is that urban Africa, as it moves toward sustainability, may do so by learning from traditional Africa where communal values and indigenous knowledge determine what is good governance. Examples cited in the present paper, show that urban Africa is already adapting traditional values and knowledge to practical schemes for credit, land distribution, health delivery, education, sanitation, HIV/AIDS and a number of other issues.

141. Because central governments can either fertilize or poison the soil on which local initiatives take root, national leadership must decide to take all measures necessary to reconstruct Africa's settlements and then adopt policy measures to galvanize resources and energies in that direction. The role of the international community will then be to facilitate, encourage, support and learn.

4.B POLICY IMPLICATIONS

142. One of the most urgent tasks facing all African leaders is the formulation of National Urban Policy and related policy instruments that strengthen state effectiveness through both decentralization and regionalization. Policy recommendations include:

- a. Retain and strengthen appropriate national regulatory, oversight, standards setting, capacity building, dispute resolution and policy-making functions
- b. Cooperate with neighbouring countries to identify and strengthen regional service and economic centres
- c. Devolve appropriate service, revenue raising and other governmental functions to local authorities
- d. Provide for the continuous development of local capacity in urban management
- e. Enable and encourage local authorities to:
 - Bring all stakeholders or their representatives into local processes for planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring
 - Identify and protect the commons (i.e., heritage buildings, fragile environments, open space, etc.)
 - Establish, through public consultations, ethical systems to guide leaders and representatives
 - Monitor urban conditions and trends and quickly feed back information to the public
 - Activate mechanisms, including new technology, for expansion of public knowledge of key issues
 - Empower neighbourhoods as effective units of organization for environmental management, public safety and security, among other functions
- f. Institute open, participatory and transparent national planning and budgeting processes that reflect local level priorities for infrastructure and services investment
- g. Integrate physical planning with economic planning at the national and local level and include cities in the infrastructure plans of central government
- h. Shift focus toward policies supporting the informal sector, which is the main source of jobs, income and affordable goods and services for the poor majority
- i. Promote security of tenure and other shelter rights through community-based slum upgrading
- j. Assure equal access to credit and land by the poor through, among other things, opening up supply bottlenecks and pro-active programmes for resources distribution
- k. Equalize *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality in all matters, especially land tenure, and build local capacity in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming

143. Policy change should be reinforced and informed through regular assessments and reports on progress toward the objectives of sustainable development. New analytical tools and methods are also needed, including systems' performance indicators. All key ministries should report annually on the extent to which their activities are contributing to alleviating poverty. These reports should form an integral part of budget submissions and development plans. If any activities have had an adverse impact on the poor, they should include specific proposals for correcting and avoiding such impacts in the future.