

in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 [YUN 1997, p. 792] at the local level; promoting information exchange and the transfer of expertise regarding sustainable human-settlements development; and building capacity and mobilizing support to strengthen the means of implementation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. He was asked to report in 2001.

On the same date [res. 17/19], the Commission decided to include in the agenda of its session in 2001 the item "Role of youth in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21".

UN Centre for Human Settlements

Activities

UNCHS operational activities in 1999 were focused on supporting Governments in developing policies and strategies to create and strengthen a self-reliant management capacity at the national and local levels. Technical and managerial expertise was provided to assess human settlements development, constraints and opportunities; identify and analyse policy options; design and implement housing and urban development projects; and mobilize national resources, as well as external support to improve human settlements conditions. The national capacity-building process involved not only central government institutions but also other stakeholders, such as community-based and non-governmental organizations, universities and research institutions, as well as local governments and municipalities. Emphasis was also placed on strengthening the monitoring capacities of Governments in human settlements management.

In accordance with the 1998-1999 work programme, UNCHS focused on promoting housing for all, improving urban governance, reducing urban poverty, improving the living environment and managing disaster mitigation and post-conflict rehabilitation. Acting as a catalyst in the mobilization of technical cooperation, the Centre supported the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at local, national and regional levels.

As at the fourth quarter of 1999 [HS/C/18/INF/3], UNCHS had 217 technical programmes and projects under execution in 80 countries, of which 62 were in the least developed countries. Approximately 59 per cent of the financing for those projects came from funds-in-trust with UNCHS, 25 per cent from UNDP and 14 per cent from government and third-party cost-sharing.

Cooperation with UNEP

A joint progress report of the UNEP and UNCHS Executive Directors [HS/C/17/10] high-

lighted cooperation between the two entities in the assessment of environmental conditions in human settlements; the environmental aspects of policies, planning and management of rural and urban human settlements; environmentally sound and appropriate human settlements technology; and research, training and information dissemination on environmentally sound human settlements planning and management. The report outlined future prospects for cooperation.

Welcoming the Secretary-General's 1998 report on environment and human settlements [YUN1998,p.981],theCommissiononHumanSettlements, on 14 May [res. 17/6], supported his proposal to establish an environmental management group to coordinate the environmental and human settlements activities of the UN system. It also supported proposals to strengthen the Nairobi location and welcomed the proposal that the Centre should strengthen its normative core activities consistent with the new strategic vision (see below), which would allow it to develop into a centre of excellence on adequate shelter for all and sustainable urban development. The Commission recommended that the Centre maintain its operational support within the framework of the Habitat Agenda and the Centre's strategic vision, agreed with the proposal that the Commission should devote particular attention to its own role in monitoring the Agenda's implementation, and welcomed the recommendations concerning the need to engage constructively NGOs and civil society in UN work.

Also on 14 May [res. 17/23], the Commission asked the Executive Director to explore and possibly enter into an inter-agency agreement for UNEP to extend the services of its Ombudsman Unit to UNCHS until the Commission's eighteenth (2001) session. It decided to review in 2001 the Ombudsman services and the financial implications to the Centre of continuing the services.

On the same date [res. 17/22], the Commission requested the Executive Director to expand cooperation between UNCHS and UNEP, particularly in the Sustainable Cities Programme, the project on managing water for Africa cities and the Urban Environment Forum. He was also asked to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in media outreach on public information and awareness-building activities.

Revitalization

The Commission on Human Settlements considered reports of the Executive Director on the revitalization of UNCHS. The revitalization team, which was appointed in 1998 to assist him with UNCHS reform, established two working groups—one on a strategic vision for the Centre [HS/C/