REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME, UN-HABITAT, DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

Note by the secretariat

Background

1. The Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) was established in 1984 as an informal body of Permanent Representatives who were accredited to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Its meetings were essentially "consultative" and primarily meant to be a forum for keeping Governments informed of the activities of the Centre between sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements. The Executive Director attended its meetings on an ad hoc basis, whenever he or she was invited by its Chairperson.

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* In its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly transformed the Commission on Human Settlements into the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. This session has been designated as the nineteenth instead of the first session of the Governing Council to signify the continuity and relationship between the Governing Council and the Commission on Human Settlements.

** HSP/GC/19/1.
2. The positive results which were being achieved by these informal and ad hoc meetings between the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Executive Director were subsequently recognized by the Commission on Human Settlements which, in its resolutions 13/3 of 8 May 1991 and 14/10 of 5 May 1993, decided to "request the Executive Director to meet regularly, and at least four times in a year, with the Committee to: review progress in the implementation of the work programmes of the Centre; monitor the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the Commission; and consult on any other human settlements issues proposed by either the Committee or by the Executive Director.

I. FORMALIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

3. In its resolution 18/1 of 16 February 2001, the Governing Council welcomed the role performed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional periods and recommended to the Economic and Social Council the establishment of the Committee of Permanent Representatives "as an intersessional subsidiary body" of the Governing Council and, in operative paragraph 7 of the same resolution, authorized the Bureau of the Governing Council, upon receipt of this approval by the Economic and Social Council, to establish the intersessional subsidiary body.

4. The approval requested by the Governing Council was given by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/48 of 24 October 2001. Thereafter, the Bureau of the Governing Council, at its meeting of 31 October 2001, and pursuant to operative paragraph 7 of the above-mentioned resolution of the Governing Council established, "with immediate effect", the Committee of Permanent Representatives as an intersessional subsidiary body of the Governing Council.

5. These decisions of the Economic and Social Council and of the Bureau of the Governing Council were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001 which, after upgrading the Commission on Human Settlements into the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, “further decided that the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-HABITAT shall serve as the Governing Council’s intersessional body”.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

6. The terms of reference of the Committee are contained in paragraph 2 of resolution 18/1 of the Governing Council and are as follows:

   (a) To review and monitor, within the policy and budgetary framework provided by the Governing Council, the implementation of the work programme of UN-HABITAT, as well as the implementation of decisions of the Governing Council;

   (b) To review the draft work programme and budget of UN-HABITAT during their preparation by UN-HABITAT;

   (c) To prepare draft decisions and resolutions for consideration by the Governing Council;

   (d) To meet at least four times in a year with the participation of the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.
III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

7. In operative paragraph 8 of its above-mentioned resolution 18/1, the Governing Council requested the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to report to the Governing Council on the work of the Committee. In pursuance of that request, the report of the Chair on the work of the Committee during the period between the eighteenth session (12-16 February 2001) and the nineteenth session of the Governing Council (5 - 9 May 2003) is annexed hereto.

8. Two other related reports entitled "Draft resolutions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-HABITAT" (HSP/GC/19/3/Add.1) and "Preparation of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council" (HSP/GC/19/3/Add.2) are also submitted to the session, for consideration, as supplements to this main report on the work of the Committee Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period.
Annex

REPORT OF THE CHAIR ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO UN-HABITAT DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

I. MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

1. During the reporting period (February 2001 to May 2003) the Members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-HABITAT were as follows:

   (a) February 2001 to December 2001

   Chair: Mr. M. Chraibi (Morocco)
   Vice-Chairs: Mr. S. K. Bhattacharya (Bangladesh)
                Mr. L. Kangas (Finland)
                Mr. A. Olszowka (Poland)
   Rapporteur: Mr. A. B. Gonzalez (Chile)

   (b) January 2002 - May 2003

   Chair: Mr. S. K. Bhattacharya (Bangladesh)
   Vice-Chairs: Mr. L.M. Makhubela (South Africa)
                Mr. J. L. Casal (Argentina)
                Mr. A. Olszowka (Poland)
   Rapporteur: Mr. O.M. Büyükdavras (Turkey)

2. Ms. Rosalinda Valenton Tirona, the Permanent Representative of the Philippines was elected as the Chair when Mr. S. K. Bhattacharya, the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh completed his tour of duty in Kenya on 20 February 2003. During the interim, Mr. Jose Luis Casal served as Chair of the Committee and its Bureau. Mr. W. Jasinski, the Permanent Representative of Poland was elected as the Vice-Chair when Mr. A. Olszowka the Permanent Representative of Poland completed his tour of duty in Kenya on 31 October 2002. Mr. Varol Ozkocak, the Permanent Representative of Turkey, was elected as the Rapporteur when Mr. O.M. Büyükdavras the Permanent Representative of Turkey completed his tour of duty in Kenya on 16 December 2002.

II. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

3. During the period between the eighteenth session (12-16 February 2001) and the nineteenth session of the Governing Council (5-9 May 2003) the Committee of Permanent Representatives held a total of 14 meetings which took place on the following dates:

   (a) Meetings during 2001

   - 29 March 2001;
   - 24 May 2001;
   - 24 September 2001;
   - 14 November 2001; and
   - 14 December 2001
(b) Meetings during 2002
- 23 January 2002;
- 7 February 2002;
- 12 March 2002;
- 23 May 2002;
- 21 June 2002;
- 13 September 2002; and
- 4 December 2002

(c) Meetings during 2003
- 20 February 2003
- 3 April 2003
- 29 April 2003.

4. A summary of the issues that were addressed and the decisions that were taken by the Committee during the above-mentioned meetings is indicated here below.

(a) Summary of the meetings of 2001

Meeting of 29 March 2001

5. At its meeting of 29 March 2002, the Committee of Permanent Representatives discussed the presentation of experiences which were to be submitted by Governments, local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners to the Thematic Committee of the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

Meeting of 24 May 2001

6. Deliberations on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly were continued at its meeting of 25 May, 2001, at which it was established that the speakers selected for the Thematic Committee reflected the broad spectrum of themes, partners and constituencies. Also at this meeting the Committee of Permanent Representatives deliberated on the progress report on the implementation of the work programme and financial situation of UNCHS (Habitat) and considered the main inputs to the work programme of each of the main branches of UN-HABITAT – Shelter Branch, Urban Development Branch, Urban Secretariat and the Urban Economy and Finance Branch.

Meeting of 21 June 2001

7. At its extraordinary meeting of 21 June 2001, the Committee of Permanent Representatives deliberated on the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Committee noted that all presentations made at the plenary reconfirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and emphasized the importance of keeping the momentum of the commitments made in Istanbul. The Committee further noted that the most significant outcome of the Committee of the Whole was the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, which was adopted unanimously, the thematic exhibition on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda by UN-HABITAT and the partners, and the launching of several flagship publications, including the *State of the World Cities Report 2001* and *The Global Report on Human Settlements by UN-HABITAT*. 
Meeting of 24 September 2001

8. The main deliberations of the Committee of Permanent Representatives meeting of 24 September 2001 centered on the progress report on the implementation of the Global Campaigns on Secure Tenure and Urban Governance and preparations for the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The main outcome of the discussions on the implementation of the campaigns was the decision to ensure that poverty alleviation comprised a key component of the global campaigns. The members of the Committee represented at the meeting appreciated the preparations undertaken by the secretariat and recommended that members of the Committee should contribute their views to the finalization of the Secretary-General’s report.

Meeting of 14 November 2001

9. The second extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was held on 14 November 2001 and deliberated on the report of the Secretary-General on options for reviewing and strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). All the members of the Committee represented at the meeting supported the main thrust of the report and many reiterated their Government’s support for the revitalization process. There was also substantial support for the strengthening of the status of the Commission on Human Settlements.

10. A minor deliberation at this meeting centered on the proposed regional office for Istanbul. One representative raised the question of whether a consensus had been arrived at in the Commission or in the Committee of Permanent Representatives in regard to the establishment of a regional office in Istanbul. The Chair recalled that the Working Group on Budget, Finance and Administrative Matters set up to discuss the issue of regionalization and the relationship between UNCHS (Habitat) and the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), which had deliberated on the issue and had taken into account some initial objections, had resolved to recommend the establishment of the office, on the basis that in the other two cases (Fukuoka and Rio de Janeiro), a decision similar to Commission resolution 17/4 of 14 May 1999 had been considered as sufficient authority for the negotiation and establishment of regional offices.

Meeting of 14 December 2001

11. At its final meeting of 2001, which was held on 14 December 2001, the Committee of Permanent Representatives deliberated on the report of its Bureau and its Working Groups. The Committee adopted, without amendments, the report of the Working Group on Budget, Finance and Administrative Matters and the report of the Working Group on Programme and Policy Matters.

12. Developments at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly were also deliberated upon at this meeting. The Committee, through the Chair, congratulated the secretariat on the outcome of the deliberations at the fifty-sixth session with regard to the status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), which were transformed by General Assembly resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001 into the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, and the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, respectively, effective from 1 January 2002.

13. At this meeting the Committee took note, with appreciation, of the secretariat’s progress report on the financial situation and on the revitalization of UNCHS (Habitat). Two important outcomes of this meeting were the election of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the year 2002 and the adoption of the work programme of the Committee for the year 2002. The Committee decided at this meeting to create a special working group to discuss preparations for the World Urban Forum.
(b) Summary of the Meetings of 2002

Meeting of 7 February 2002

14. The Committee of Permanent Representatives held its first meeting of 2002 on 7 February. The main deliberations at this meeting centred on the relevant decisions of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, including a progress report on the revitalization of UN-HABITAT, and UN-HABITAT’s priorities for the period 1 January 2002 to 5 May 2003.

15. The relevant decisions included General Assembly resolution 56/206 which changed the status of the organization from a Centre to a Programme and of the Commission to a Governing Council, and the General Assembly’s confirmation of the UN-HABITAT Executive Director’s responsibility for the management of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, with due regard to the terms of reference of the Foundation as set out in General Assembly resolution 3327 (XXIX) of 16 December 1974.

16. The Committee of Permanent Representatives noted that the required changes to the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT would be in conformity with existing rules and agreed to deliberate on this issue at a future meeting of the Committee. The Committee agreed to continue to work under the rules of procedure of the former Commission on Human Settlements, as would the Governing Council at its nineteenth session, and proposed the establishment of a working group to draft rules of procedure consistent with those of the General Assembly, which would be presented to the Governing Council at its nineteenth session in 2003 and thereafter to the General Assembly for approval.

17. The main priorities of UN-HABITAT for the period 1 January to September 2002 included launchings of the global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, poverty alleviation, the first session of the World Urban Forum, participation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and preparations for the nineteenth session of the Governing Council. It was agreed that the theme of UN-HABITAT at the World Summit would be sustainable urbanization.

Meeting of 12 March 2002

18. The CPR continued its deliberations on preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development at its meeting of 12 March 2002. The discussion centered mainly on a background paper on the preparations. The Chair of the Working Group on Preparations for the World Urban Forum also reported on the outcome of the preparatory meetings.

Meeting of 23 May 2002

19. At its meeting of 23 May 2002, the Committee of Permanent Representatives continued its discussions on the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the financial and staffing situation of UN-HABITAT.

20. The main deliberations at this meeting centered on the follow-up to the recommendations of the World Urban Forum (Nairobi, 29 April to 3 May 2002) and the proposed revisions of the UN-HABITAT medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

21. The members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives represented at the meeting expressed their satisfaction and congratulated the secretariat on the success of the Forum. It was noted that the initial general assessment of the Forum was positive, that the participation had been large, both in terms of quantity and expertise and in terms of distribution, and that in terms of organizational arrangement, the Advisory Group had been a successful innovation. It was established that the main follow-up comprised the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the nineteenth session of the Governing Council and the second session of the Forum itself, to be held in Barcelona, in September 2004.
22. The Committee of Permanent Representatives was presented by the Secretariat with a text on the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan to be submitted for approval to the Committee on Programme and Coordination, according to United Nations regulations, which require such revision every two years. A major change to the medium-term plan was the introduction of a new subprogramme on financing of human settlements, the merging of subprogrammes 1 and 2 (adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development) into a new subprogramme 1, entitled “shelter and sustainable human settlements development”; and the creation of three subprogrammes entitled “monitoring the Habitat Agenda”, “regional and technical cooperation”, and “financing human settlements.”

23. The members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives decided to establish an open-ended working group, to be chaired by the Permanent Representative of Turkey, to debate the proposed revisions.

Meeting of 13 September 2002

24. The main deliberations of the Committee’s meeting of 13 September 2002 centered on the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August to 4 September 2002), the implementation of the work programme of UN-HABITAT, including the global campaigns for secure tenure and urban governance, and strengthening the United Nations Human Settlements Foundation.

25. The members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives present at this meeting expressed their appreciation for the active and successful role that UN-HABITAT had played at the World Summit and for the decision of the secretariat to upgrade the Infrastructure Section of UN-HABITAT to the Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch under the Global Division, as a direct outcome of the World Summit and in response to the growing expectations attached to the millennium development goals.

26. The Committee of Permanent Representatives deliberated on the report on the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Foundation that had been prepared and distributed by the secretariat in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that pending responses from the respective Governments to the proposals on strengthening the United Nations Human Settlements Foundation, a working group would be established to discuss the proposals, particularly with regard to the funding of the Foundation.

Meeting of 4 December 2002

27. At its final regular meeting for the year 2002, the Committee of Permanent Representatives deliberated on the report of the Executive Director on the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In the view of UN-HABITAT one of the most successful outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development was the inclusion of "adequate shelter" to the list of priorities in the Johannesburg Declaration. The report of the Executive Director noted that the main contribution by UN-HABITAT was delivering the message of sustainable urbanization which was reflected in the partnership implementation commitments between UN-HABITAT, the Department of International Development and the Coalition for Sustainable Urbanization.

28. The secretariat presented a progress report on preparations for the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, which established that all the pre-session documents and organizational arrangements were on schedule.

29. The secretariat briefed the Committee of Permanent Representatives on developments at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and distributed to the members three documents: Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements; a report on the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme; and a report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
30. The Committee of Permanent Representatives reviewed a report on the successful outcome of the first session of the World Urban Forum. The second and third sessions of the World Urban Forum would be held in Barcelona, Spain, from 13 to 17 September 2003 and Vancouver, Canada, in 2006, respectively.

(c) **Summary of the meetings of year 2003**

Meeting of 20 February 2003

31. At its first meeting of 2003 the Committee of Permanent Representatives bade farewell to the Chair, Mr. Subir Kumar Bhattacharya, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN-HABITAT, who was leaving on retirement; Mr. José Luis Casal, Permanent Representative of Argentina was elected acting Chair.

32. During the substantive session the Committee of Permanent Representatives deliberated on the salient features of UN-HABITAT priorities for 2003. The secretariat informed the Committee that the priorities were derived essentially from the resolutions adopted at the eighteenth session of the Governing Council and had three main objectives: the adoption of appropriate tenure systems, the adoption of appropriate urban governance systems and the enhancement of international cooperation in shelter and sustainable human settlements development.

33. With regard to the financial update report that was presented by the secretariat, it was established that UN-HABITAT had a major increment in special purpose contributions of over $30 million as compared to $12.5 million in year 2001. These contributions were four times higher than the general contributions. It was however noted that such a relatively low level of general-purpose contributions made it difficult for UN-HABITAT to plan its financial commitments and implement a focussed work programme.

34. At that meeting the secretariat also updated the Committee of Permanent Representatives on preparations for the nineteenth session of the Governing Council. The secretariat informed the Committee that both the organizational and substantive preparations were on schedule; that advance and unedited versions of most of the pre-sessional documents had been distributed to all the members of the Committee and had been posted on the Committee’s intra-net; and that the final versions would be posted on the UN-HABITAT Internet site as soon as they were edited and cleared. The chairs of Working Group I on preparations of draft resolutions and Working Group II on the draft rules of procedure reported on the progress of the work of their respective Working Groups.

Meeting of 3 April 2003

35. At its second meeting of year 2003 the acting Chair invited the Asian group to nominate a replacement for the post of Chair of the Committee, for the unexpired term of that office, left vacant by the departure of Mr. Subir Kumar Bhattacharya, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh. The chair of the Asian group nominated Ms. Rosalinda Valentino-Tirona, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines, who was then elected Chair by acclamation. Ms. Valentino-Tirona then took the chair and joined in the expression of appreciation by members of the Committee of the work of the acting Chair, Mr. José Luis Casal (Argentina), who had served in that capacity for the previous two months.
36. During the substantive session the Executive Director briefed the Committee on the status of preparations for the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT. She informed the Committee that all the Member States of the United Nations had been invited to the session, and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/180 of 15 December 1998, representatives of local authorities, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and the private sector from all over the world had also been invited. She highlighted the key issues that would be considered by the Governing Council, which included the actions to be taken by the international community as a follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, held in New York from 6 to 8 June 2001, as well as two special themes, namely, urban development and shelter strategies favouring the poor and the rural dimension of sustainable urban development.

37. Mr. José Luis Casal (Argentina), the Chair of Working Group I on preparations for the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, informed the Committee that the Working Group had held a total of 16 meetings since it had started its work in November 2002. He then detailed the status of the total of 13 draft resolutions that had been submitted to the Working Group for review; one had been withdrawn by the secretariat, while another two had been merged into one. Therefore 11 draft resolutions had been reviewed by the Working Group; of these, draft resolution 1 (Work programme and budget of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the biennium 2004-2005) had not yet been finalized, but the Working Group would finalize it before the Governing Council session. A complete consensus had not been reached on some of the other 10 draft resolutions, so the Governing Council would have to take a decision on bracketed words.

38. Mr. Wojciech Jasinski (Poland), the Chair of Working Group II on the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, reported that the group had held six meetings to consider the draft rules of procedure, and had reviewed all the proposed draft rules, namely, numbers 1 to 69. The secretariat had noted all the amendments that the Working Group had agreed upon, and had incorporated them into the revised text for submission to the Governing Council; only rules 64 and 65 were bracketed. The Working Group hoped to finish its work at its next meeting when it would finalize its consideration of the following two draft resolutions: L.8/Rev.2 (Arrangements regarding the accreditation of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners) and L.15. (Rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT).

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