Activities of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme:
progress report

WATER AND SANITATION IN THE WORLD'S CITIES:
LOCAL ACTION FOR GLOBAL GOALS

Note by the secretariat

1. *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities* is the first attempt by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), as the agency for cities and other human settlements of the United Nations, to analyse and report on a major area of the Habitat Agenda, namely: environmentally sustainable, healthy and liveable human settlements.

2. The report responds to the need of concerted action at local and national levels, supported by the international community, to achieve millennium development Goal 7, specifically addressing two targets: to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015; and to achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The report takes note of a similar target for basic sanitation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

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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.
3. The report begins by focusing on current knowledge and information gaps in vital areas that affect decision-making, particularly in the allocation of resources in the urban water and sanitation sector. The report then proceeds to analyse in depth the proximate and underlying courses of deficiencies in service provision and then suggests an array of action priorities within a broad international framework of good urban governance in the urban water and sanitation sector. The report makes a strong case for a differentiated strategy for urban water and sanitation provision to achieve internationally agreed goals.

4. The report is intended for use not only by practitioners and policy makers but also as a reference document for the work of the Millennium Task Force for Water and Sanitation and in the preparation of the Human Development Report and the World Development Report.