1. The *Global report on human settlements* is a flagship report of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). The 2003 edition of the report focuses on issues of urban slums and poverty within human settlements development and will target a wide range of readers dealing with shelter policy and slum upgrading, from public policy makers to urban planners and researchers. The report will be beneficial to all those involved in the implementation of the millennium development goals, and especially target 11, on slum upgrading. It will be a useful source book for Governments, local authorities, libraries, non-governmental organizations and university students.

2. The preparation of a global report on human settlements was a mandate given to UN-HABITAT by the General Assembly (resolution 34/114 of 14 December 1979). Reaffirming this commitment, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) requested UN-HABITAT “to analyse and monitor major trends in urbanization and the impact of policies for urban and rural settlements, to track progress in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and to continue its publication programmes, including, inter alia, publication of the Global State of Human Settlements report”.

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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.

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3. The General Assembly further reaffirmed this mandate through its resolution 55/194 of 20 December 2000 (section VI, para. 1), by which it encouraged Member States and Habitat Agenda partners “to provide support for the preparation of the *Global report on human settlements* and the *State of the world’s cities* report on a biennial basis so as to raise awareness of human settlements and to provide information on urban conditions and trends around the world”.

4. The 2003 report (attached hereto) is distributed to the Governing Council in draft form. It will be published in book form in August 2003 and its global dissemination will begin in September. The 2003 report will be officially launched on the occasion of the celebration of World Habitat Day on 6 October 2003.

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1 Habitat Agenda, para. 228 (m).