REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE GOAL OF THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION ON IMPROVING THE
LIVES OF SLUM DWELLERS

1. A comprehensive report was presented to the 20th session of the Governing Council on the implementation of the goal of the Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers. The present report will recall the most important issues included in that report and will complement with activities that have been conducted recently, especially since the previous report made to the Committee of Permanent Representatives in June 2004. The full report to the Governing Council is annexed.

2. The activities of UN-HABITAT related to the goal on improving the lives of slum dwellers have been conducted in line with the four strategic components of the Strategy Paper submitted to the Committee of Permanent Representatives: analysis, advocacy, operational activities and monitoring. In addition UN-HABITAT has reinforced its partnership with other UN agencies as well as other interested partners.

I. ANALYSIS

3. UN-HABITAT’s research priorities address the following issues: Slums and urban poverty, secure tenure, market eviction and gentrification, rental housing within slums and the implications to slum upgrading, housing rights and natural disasters or conflict, as well as gender equality in the access to housing.

4. Building on the last issue of the Global Report, titled “The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003”, which was specifically devoted to the topic of slums, UN-HABITAT has engaged a number of networking activities to deepen further a number of core issues such as alternative tenural options as well as land administration and management in view of offering opportunities of access to land for the urban poor. A land research network is being established that will foster a large debate among professionals and interested stakeholders in view of proposing pro-poor policies and tools and directly contribute to the achievement of the goal on slums.

5. Also, and in conjunction with the second World Urban Forum UN-HABITAT the last issue of the State of the World’s Cities report was dedicated to Globalisation and Urban Culture. The current work in preparation of the Global Report on Human Settlements 2005, is on financing shelter and urban development

II ADVOCACY

6. The two campaigns on Urban Governance and for Secure Tenure are the advocacy arm of UN-HABITAT in its effort to assist countries adopt proactive and pro-poor policies and strategies. During the period the campaigns have put a special focus on the preparatory phase, mobilising partners around the campaigns’ principles, creating awareness, raising consciousness on the core issues and bringing progressively all
partners to adopt, on a consensual basis, a long term action plan. The action plans adopted in Morocco, Senegal and Burkina Faso during the period feature prominently the achievement of the goal of the Millennium Declaration on slums. Significantly Morocco has developed an ambitious “Cities without Slums” programme, under the umbrella of the campaigns, which targets a slum free country by 2010. The Cities Alliance is supporting this programme, with the active contribution of UN-HABITAT, the World Bank, USAID and AFD. Countries where the campaigns are in progress such as Mexico, Cuba, Uganda, Cambodia and Thailand are adopting a similar approach which emphasizes the adoption of action plans directly related to the Millennium goal.

7. The second World urban Forum has been an excellent opportunity to “globalize” the two campaigns through successful dialogues. A rich exchange of experience took place between Ministers that are responsible for urban development and poverty alleviation, mayors of various cities and representatives of community and non-governmental organizations as well as other stakeholders. The issue of modalities of mobilising resources for realizing the MDGs came out in the reflections on the involvement of civil society in local governance through promoting inclusiveness and empowerment.

8. Also during the World Urban Forum a unique debate on Security of Tenure took place in the form of a networking event that brought together central government, local authorities and communities seeking alternatives to forced evictions and documented several country and city cases. As a direct outcome of this event four countries/cities (Brazil/Curitiba, Dominican Republic/Santo Domingo, Italy/Rome and Ghana/Accra) requested the intermediation of the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions. The first report of this Advisory Group was launched recently during the last session of the Governing Council and translates the results of the intermediation missions.

9. It is important to indicate that an evaluation of the two campaigns was conducted during the period upon request of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The conclusions of the evaluation have been also reported separately to the last session of the Governing Council and the report made available. While the evaluation provides a wide range of recommendations, the report highlight the most pertinent ones including the centrality of the Campaigns within the Agency and their role as vehicle for political mobilisation, the need for the elaboration of forward looking Strategic Plan, the pertinence of two distinct but coordinated campaigns. The report made clear recommendations about the need to allocate predictable funds to the campaigns. This issue remains pending. Most of the recommendations have been approved and underscored by a resolution adopted by the Governing Council.

10. In addition to the campaigns, UN-HABITAT has put a special emphasis on a strong media and communication strategy through its different instruments such as Habitat Debate that has consecrated its recent issues on themes related to the goal of the millennium (urban-rural linkages, urban planning, women in cities, evictions, homelessness, street children, housing rights). The June 2005 issue of Habitat Debate will
be totally dedicated to the MDGs. The recent debates around the same topic during the Governing Council and the 13th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development where widely reported by different national, regional and global media.

III GLOBAL PROGRAMMES AND OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

11. The activities conducted by the Global Programmes of UN-HABITAT as well as the regional offices and Habitat Programme Managers are detailed in the report to the Governing Council. However it is worth highlighting that an effort is made at country level, especially through the role of the Habitat Programme Managers, to increase the convergence of these activities to ensure higher efficiency in view of the achievement of the goal of the Millennium. This applies to the Urban Environment Programme, Training and Capacity Building, gender and HIV/AIDS related activities.

12. Concerning Disaster Management Activities, the goals of the Millennium Declaration are all closely linked to the ability of a population to cope with and respond to disasters and crises. UN-HABITAT Tsunami response strategy and activities are all supporting longer term recovery/reconstruction/development seeking not to rebuild the status quo in most places, but to leverage investment in the emergency/recovery phases into the longer term view. Apart from the emergency interventions, where the shelter component is the central position, UN-HABITAT has also developed a series of methodologies and principles for implementation of broader sustainable relief in human settlements in crisis.

13. The second World Urban Forum in Barcelona gave to a number of programmes an opportunity to expand their networks and link with new partners. For example, recognising the work of UN-HABITAT in disaster mitigation and post-conflict reconstruction, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) has invited UN-HABITAT to sit as a member. UN-HABITAT’s strategy under the MDGs perspective, aims at consolidating formal linkages with pertinent global humanitarian organizations, such as the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR), UNHCR and UN-OCHA, as well as NGO’s and other international agencies.

14. Also the Urban Millennium Partnership (UMP) on localizing MDGs promoted by UN-HABITAT, UNDP and UCLG was launched at World Urban Forum and received support from many partners. Preparatory activities under this new initiative have already begun while seeking appropriate funding. UMP opens up a wealth of opportunities to contribute to the implementation of the MDGs, including the goal on slums. UMP will evolve so that the MDGs become a central part of its organizing framework. UMP will work closely not only at local level but will also seek the involvement of central governments, civil society and international partners.

15. To support operational activities UN-HABITAT has launched the design phase of the Slum Upgrading Facility with the financial support of the Governments of the United Kingdom and Sweden as a partnership with the Members of the Cities Alliance and
representatives of PIDG, IFC, UCLG, SDI, and commercial banks. The SUF Design Team is field testing financial mechanisms in selected countries in West Africa, East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. A separate report is presented on this matter to the Committee of Permanent Representatives under the work of Human Settlements Financing Division- Sub-Programme 4

IV COORDINATING WITH OTHER PARTNERS

16. In this field, UN-HABITAT’s activities during the period were conducted in line the spirit of the Millennium Project and were based on a large collaboration with all partners in view of ensuring a broad-based support to the Goal. This includes the following:

- UN-HABITAT has been instrumental in the drafting and dissemination of the report of the MDGS Task Force on slums “A Home in the City”. The report largely translates the principles of Habitat Agenda in connection to the two themes “Shelter for all” and “Sustainable Urban Development” and proposes a large spectrum of policies conducive to the effective implementation of the Goal. The report was also discussed during the last session of the Governing Council as the subject of a special event. One of the recommendations of the Task Force conveyed by the report is to reconsider the “100 million” goal by embracing the situation of future urban poor populations and the provision of adequate alternatives to slum formation.

- Based on the reports of all the Task Forces established by the Millennium Project, Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Project, published a report “Investing in Development – A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals” which refers extensively to the Goal on slums and the data produced by UN-HABITAT.

- In preparation of the forthcoming General Assembly of September 2005, UN-HABITAT and the World Bank have published a brochure “Reviewing the Millennium Declaration from the Urban Perspective” that provides a structured set of arguments which could be used by delegations and partners to contribute effectively to the 2005 review, including the need to develop innovative financial systems for large scale slum upgrading and empowering urban poor as central actors for the achievement of the goal.

- CSD 13, dedicated to water, sanitation and human settlements has recently offered another important forum to debate these issues and coordinate positions of Habitat Agenda partners in view of the next General Assembly.