Guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services

The Governing Council,

Recalling its resolution 20/5 requesting the Executive Director to compile best practices on policies, norms and institutional conditions related to the delivery of basic services within the context of sustainable human settlements and to submit a report, including recommendations on guiding principles on the delivery of and access to basic services for all, to its twenty-first session for its consideration,

Also recalling the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, which calls for the promotion of access to safe drinking water for all and the facilitation of the provision of basic infrastructure and urban services, including adequate sanitation, waste management and sustainable transport through transparent and accountable management of public services, and also partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations, for the delivery of those services,

Further recalling its resolution 20/18 in which it took note with appreciation of the Draft Guidelines on Decentralisation and the Strengthening of local authorities, and requested the Executive Director to finalise the Draft during 2006, in consultation with the CPR, and to submit the Guidelines for its consideration at its twenty-first session;

Noting that resolution 20/18 further requested the Executive Director, building on the experience of the Global Urban Observatory, to assist United Cities and Local Governments, with the participation of Governments and local authorities, to develop the concept of a global observatory that would assess, monitor and evaluate the state of decentralisation and accountability to people at the local level and local governance in the world, as important conditions for achieving the goals of the Habitat Agenda;

Bearing in mind paragraph 177 of the Habitat Agenda, which stresses that sustainable human settlements development can be achieved “through the effective decentralisation of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making authority and sufficient resources, including revenue collection authority, to local authorities, closest to and most representative of their constituencies”,

Recognising that local democracy and decentralisation are key elements which can contribute significantly to attaining the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals;

1 General Assembly resolution S-25/2, para. 59.
Cognizant of the Reports HSP/GC/21/2/Add.7 and HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2, entitled respectively “Guiding principles on the delivery of and access to basic services for all” and “Cooperation with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners, including draft guidelines on decentralisation and the strengthening of local authorities”:

1. **Welcomes** the consultative process conducted by the Executive Director to prepare the report HSP/GC/21/2/Add.7 and the efforts made by the members of the inter-partner committee established by the secretariat to guide and monitor the preparation of that report;

2. **Appreciates** the leadership of the Executive Director in the international dialogue on decentralisation aiming at improving governance at all levels;

3. **Adopts** the “International Guidelines on Decentralisation”, which are annexed to the Executive Director’s Report HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2, as a key instrument in the promotion of good governance and the strengthening of local authorities;

4. **Requests** the Executive Director to develop draft Guidelines on access to basic services for all based on consultations with concerned stakeholders and in line with the “International guidelines on decentralisation” and the “Guiding principles on access to basic services for all”;

5. **Requests** UN-HABITAT to further develop tools and indicators to support the application of the Guidelines on decentralisation and on access to basic services, and to assist interested Governments in adapting them to their national contexts, where appropriate;

6. **Invites** Governments to undertake further concerted and coordinated action to place decentralisation and integrated local development, including access to basic services, at the centre of governance and development policies, and strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks with regard to decentralisation, participatory governance and sustainable access to basic services for all;

7. **Calls upon** UN-HABITAT to develop innovative partnerships with local authorities and their associations, including United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to support the process of ownership of these Guidelines at the local level;

8. **Encourages** Governments to support technically and financially the application of the Guidelines on decentralisation, the preparation of the guidelines on access to basic services and the establishment of an Observatory, which would assess, monitor and evaluate the state of decentralisation, local governance and access to basic services in the world;

9. **Requests** the Executive Director to include a reference to the implementation of the present resolution in her overall progress report to the twenty-second session of the Governing Council.