Guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services

The Governing Council,

Recalling its resolution 20/18, which took note with appreciation of the Draft guidelines on decentralisation and the strengthening of local authorities prepared the secretariat in collaboration with the Advisory Group of Experts on decentralisation and requested the Executive Director to finalise the Draft during 2006, and to submit the Guidelines for its consideration at its twenty-first session; and further requested the Executive Director, 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, adopted in Istanbul in 1996, 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”;
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 services¹;

Recognising the importance of decentralisation policies in achieving sustainable human settlements development in line with the Habitat Agenda² and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations³;

¹ General Assembly resolution S-25/2, para 59
³ General Assembly resolution 55/2.
Cognizant of the Reports HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2 and HSP/GC/21/2/Add.7, entitled respectively “Cooperation with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners, including draft guidelines on decentralisation and the strengthening of local authorities” and “Guiding principles on access to basic services for all”:

1. Appreciates the leadership of the Executive Director in the international dialogue on decentralisation aiming at improving governance at all levels, including the consultative process on the finalization of the Guidelines on decentralization;

2. Adopts the “[UN-HABITAT] 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;

3. 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 “[UN-HABITAT] guidelines on decentralisation” and the “Guiding principles on access to basic services for all”;

4. 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;
5. **Invites** Governments to undertake further concerted and coordinated action to place decentralisation and local development, including access to basic services, at the centre of governance and development policies, and to strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks with regard to decentralisation, participatory governance and sustainable access to basic services for all;

6. ** 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;

[7. **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;]

8. **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.