

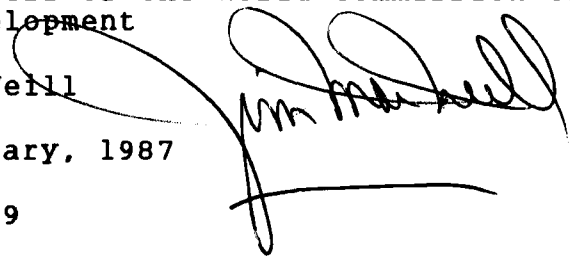
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

EIGHTH MEETING
Tokyo, Japan
February 23 - 27, 1987

WCED/87/21

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members of the World Commission on Environment
and Development
FROM: Jim MacNeill
DATE: 16 February, 1987
RE: Chapter 9



Herewith a final draft of Chapter 9 on the Urban Challenge. It has been significantly streamlined and shortened in line with our discussions in Moscow. It has also gone through a further extensive peer review and this is reflected in the text.

ACTION REQUIRED: For Discussion and Approval

CHAPTER 9

THE URBAN CHALLENGE

	paras
(opening paragraphs untitled)	1-9
I. The Growth of Cities	10-15
1. The Crisis in Third World Cities	16-22
2. The Situation in Industrial World Cities	23-31
II. Confronting the Urban Challenge in Developing Countries	32
1. Establish National Urban Strategies	33-42
2. Strengthen Local Authorities	43-50
3. Support Self-Reliance and Citizen Involvement	51-59
4. Improve Housing and Services for the Poor	60-69
5. Tap Poorly Used Resources	70-73
III. International Cooperation	74-75
1. Cooperation Among Developing Countries	76-80
2. Increased Multilateral and Bilateral Support	81-89
3. Strengthen UN Leadership on Habitat and Human Settlements Issues	90-92

Tables

	page
9-1 Proportion of Population Living in Urban Areas 1950-2000	4
9-2 Examples of Rapid Population Growth in Third World Cities	5

Boxes

9-1 Dominating Cities	7
9-2 Environmental Problems in Third World Cities	10
9-3 Three Ways to Use \$20 Million to Improve Conditions in a City of 1 Million	29
9-4 Misunderstanding Women's Needs in Housing Projects	39

CHAPTER 9

THE URBAN CHALLENGE

1. By the turn of the century, almost half the world will live in urban areas – from small towns to huge megacities.^{1/} Cities are incubators of change, opportunities, and crises and the ways in which they develop are fundamental for sustainable development globally.

2. The world's economic system is increasingly an urban one, with overlapping networks of communications, production, and trade.^{2/} This system, with its flows of information, energy, capital, commerce, and people, provides the backbone for national development. A city's prospects – or a town's – depend critically on its place within the urban system, national and international. So does the fate of the hinterland, with its agricultural, forestry, and mining, on which the urban system depends.

3. In many nations, certain kinds of industries and service enterprises are now being developed in rural areas. But they receive high-quality infrastructure and services, with advanced telecommunications systems ensuring that their activities are part of the national (and global) urban-industrial system. In effect, the countryside is being 'urbanized'.

4. The inability of many Third World cities to accommodate decently their rapidly expanding populations and to absorb them into their economies has produced an

urban crisis of growing proportions. Industrialized countries have long experienced various forms of environmental pollution and inner-city decay, crime and violence, social and racial tensions, and unrest. These problems are now concentrated in developing countries, where a high proportion of city-dwellers live in poverty - poor incomes, poor diets, and poor health. Their shelters are mostly built illegally, with little or no provision for safe water, waste removal, drainage, or roads.

5. In this crisis, a few huge and growing megacities have received a great deal of attention. Their often dominant position in political and economic life gives them the power to command a disproportionate share of national resources to the detriment of smaller cities and rural areas. Unfortunately, the place and power of megacities have tended to cast a cloud over the process of urbanization in general, and its historically positive role in the development process.

6. Cities are an expression of the social, economic, technological, and political processes that dominate the societies of which they are a part. They provide individuals with opportunities for upward mobility and alternatives to rural life, a function of crucial importance in many developing countries of today. Their inequalities reflect those of the larger society.

7. The challenge is to enable the urban system as a whole to play the role it must in promoting more productive national economies. Even in predominantly rural and agricultural societies, urban centres have strategic roles to play in building a stronger and more diversified economic base and encouraging more productive and sustainable agriculture production. But this cannot be done unless reinforcing measures are taken to tackle

the relentless toll of poverty and premature death that continue to afflict both urban and rural poor.

8. The dominance of cities gives them a key role in almost any strategy to deal with environment/development issues. New forms of sustainable growth and employment, policies to meet future energy needs, and policies to enhance food security all depend on coherent approaches to urban design, development, and management.

9. Urban areas differ greatly in their levels of development, in their resilience and ability to respond to challenges, in their vulnerability to outside forces, and in their dependence on the external environment. But they all share a few general characteristics:

- * They account for a large part of production, resource use and waste generation. They offer enormous opportunities for actions to promote sustainable development.
- * The direct and indirect linkages between different centres and their connection with the broader processes of development require that urban policy should not deal with each centre in isolation but with the urban system as a whole.
- * In many cases, these linkages are international, and require a framework of international cooperation for successful management.

I. The Growth of Cities

10. This is the century of the 'urban revolution'. In the 35 years since 1950, the number of people living in cities almost tripled, increasing by 1.25 billion. In

the more developed regions, the urban population nearly doubled, from 447 million to 838 million. In the less developed world, it quadrupled, growing from 286 million to 1.14 billion.

11. Over only 60 years, the developing world's urban population increased tenfold, from around 100 million in 1920 to close to 1 billion in 1980. At the same time, its rural population more than doubled.

- * In 1940, only one person in eight lived in an urban centre, while about one in 100 lived in a city with a million or more inhabitants (a 'million city');
- * By 1960, more than one in five persons lived in an urban centre, and one in 16 in a 'million city';
- * By 1980, nearly one in three persons was an urban dweller and one in 10 a 'million city' resident.^{3/}

Table 9-1			
Proportion of Population Living in Urban Areas 1950-2000			
	1950	1985	2000
World Total	29.2	41.0	46.6
More Developed Regions	53.8	71.5	74.4
Less Developed Regions	17.0	29.2	39.3
<hr/>			
Africa	15.7	29.7	39.0
Latin America	41.0	69.0	76.8
(Temperate South America)	(64.8)	(84.3)	(88.6)
(Tropical South America)	(35.9)	(70.4)	(79.4)
Asia	16.4	28.1	35.0
(China)	(11.0)	(20.6)	(25.1)
(India)	(17.3)	(25.5)	(34.2)
 Urban Population 1950-2025 (In Millions)			
	1950	1985	2000
World Total	734.2	1982.8	2853.6
More Developed Regions	447.3	838.8	949.9
Less developed Regions	286.8	1144.0	1903.7
<hr/>			
Africa	35.2	164.5	340.0
Latin America	67.6	279.3	419.7
Asia	225.8	791.1	1242.4
 Source: "Urban and Rural Population Projections, 1984" Unofficial Assessment, Population Division, United Nations, New York.			

12. The population of many of sub-Saharan Africa's larger cities increased more than sevenfold between 1950 and 1980 - Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Nouakchott, Lusaka, Lagos, and Kinshasa among them.^{4/} (See Table 9-2.) During these same 30 years, populations in many Asian and Latin American cities (such as Seoul, Baghdad, Dhaka, Amman, Bombay, Jakarta, Mexico City, Manila, Sao Paulo, Bogota, and Managua) tripled or quadrupled. In such cities, net immigration has usually been a greater contributor than natural increase to the population growth of recent decades.

Table 9-2

Examples of Rapid Population Growth in Third World Cities

	1950		Most Recent Figure	UN Projection For 2000
Mexico City	3.05		16.0 (1982)	26.3
Sao Paulo	2.7		12.6 (1980)	24.0
Bombay	3.0	(1951)	8.2 (1981)	16.0
Jakarta	1.45		6.2 (1977)	12.8
Cairo	2.5		8.5 (1979)	13.2
Delhi	1.4	(1951)	5.8 (1981)	13.3
Manila	1.78		5.5 (1980)	11.1
Lagos	0.27	(1952)	4.0 (1980)	8.3
Bogota	0.61		3.9 (1985)	9.6
Nairobi	0.14		0.83 (1979)	5.3
Dar es Salaam	0.15	(1960)	0.9 (1981)	4.6
Gter. Khartoum	0.18		1.05 (1978)	4.1
Amman	0.03		0.78 (1978)	1.5
Nouakchott	0.0058		0.25 (1982)	1.1
Manaus	0.11		0.51 (1980)	1.1
Santa Cruz	0.059		0.26 (1976)	1.0

Source: Recent census data used whenever possible; if none available, an estimate by the city government or a local research group has been used. UN projections for the year 2000 from Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Estimates and Projections of Urban, Rural and City Populations 1950-2025 (the 1982 Assessment), ST/ESA/SER.R/58, New York, 1985 and from UN, Urban, Rural and City Populations 1950-2000 (as Assessed in 1978), Population Studies No. 68 (New York, 1980). Other data from Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite, Shelter: Need and Response (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), with some figures updated with more recent census data.

13. In many developing countries, cities have thus grown far beyond anything imagined only a few decades ago - and at speeds without historic precedent. (See Box 9-1). But some experts doubt that developing nations will urbanize as rapidly in the future as in the last 30-40 years, or that megacities will grow as large as UN projections suggest. Their argument is that many of the most powerful stimuli to rapid urbanization in the past have less influence today, and that changing government policies could reduce the comparative attractiveness of cities, especially the largest cities, and slow rates of urbanization.

14. The urban population growth rate in developing countries as a whole has been slowing down - from 5.2 per cent per annum in the late 1950s to 3.4 per cent in the 1980s.^{5/} It is expected to decline even further in the coming decades. Nevertheless, if current trends hold, Third World cities could add a further three-quarters of a billion people by the year 2000. Over the same time, the cities of the industrial world would grow by a further 111 million.^{6/}

15. These projections put the urban challenge firmly in the developing countries. In the space of just 15 years, (or about 5,500 days) the developing world will have to increase by 65 per cent its capacity to produce and manage its urban infrastructure, services, and shelter - merely to maintain present conditions. And in many countries, this must be accomplished under conditions of great economic hardship and uncertainty, with resources diminishing relative to needs and rising expectations.

1. The Crisis in Third World Cities

16. Few city governments in the developing world have the power, resources, and trained personnel to provide

BOX 9-1

Dominating Cities

Nairobi, Kenya: In 1975, Nairobi had 57 per cent of all Kenya's manufacturing employment and two-thirds of its industrial plants. In 1979, Nairobi contained around 5 per cent of the national population.

Manila, Philippines: Metropolitan Manila produces one-third of the nation's gross national product, handles 70 per cent of all imports, and contains 60 per cent of the manufacturing establishments. In 1981, it contained around 13 per cent of the national population.

Lima, Peru: The metropolitan area of Lima accounts for 43 per cent of gross domestic product, for four-fifths of bank credit and consumer goods production, and for more than nine-tenths of capital goods production in Peru. In 1981, it was home to around 27 per cent of Peruvians.

Lagos, Nigeria: In 1978, Lagos' metropolitan area handled over 40 per cent of the nation's external trade, accounted for over 57 per cent of total value added in manufacturing, and contained over 40 per cent of Nigeria's highly skilled workers. It contains only some 5 per cent of the national population.

Mexico City, Mexico: In 1970, with some 24 per cent of Mexicans living there, the capital contained 30 per cent of the manufacturing jobs, 28 per cent of employment in commerce, 38 per cent of jobs in services, 69 per cent of employment in national government, 62 per cent of national investment in higher education, and 80 per cent of research activities. In 1965, it contained 44 per cent of national bank deposits and 61 per cent of national credits.

Sao Paulo, Brazil: Greater Sao Paulo, with around one-tenth of Brazil's national population in 1980, contributed one-quarter of the net national product and over 40 per cent of Brazil's industrial value-added.

Sources: J.E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite, 'Shelter, Infrastructure and Services in Third World Cities', Habitat International, Vol. 10, No 4, 1986.

Given the distribution of incomes, given the foreseeable availability of resources - national, local, and worldwide - given present technology, and given the present weakness of local government and the lack of interest of national governments in settlement problems, I don't see any solution for the Third World city.

Third World cities are and they will increasingly become centres of competition for a plot to be invaded where you can build a shelter, for a room to rent, for a bed in a hospital, for a seat in a school or in a bus, essentially for the fewer stable adequately paid jobs, even for the space in a square or on a sidewalk where you can display and sell your merchandise, on which so many households depend.

The people themselves organize and help construct most new housing units in Third World cities and they do so without the assistance from architects, planners, and engineers, nor from local or national governments. Furthermore, in many cases, national and local governments are frequently harassing these groups. The people themselves are becoming increasingly the true builders and designers of Third World cities and quite often the managers of their own districts.

Jorge Hardoy
Institute of Urban Studies,
Buenos Aires
WCED Public Hearing
Sao Paulo, 28/29 Oct 1985

their rapidly growing populations with the land, services, and facilities needed for an adequate human life: clean water, sanitation, schools, and transport. The result is mushrooming illegal settlements with primitive facilities, increased overcrowding, and rampant disease linked to an unhealthy environment.

17. The low priority governments give urban problems has exacerbated the crisis. Initially, they may have assumed that high rates of migration to cities were a temporary phenomenon and that the spontaneous growth of illegal settlements and overcrowded tenement areas were problems that would solve themselves as the economy took off. The fallacy of this assumption is today only too evident.

18. In most Third World cities, the enormous pressure for shelter and services has frayed the urban fabric. Much of the housing used by the poor is decrepit. Civic buildings are frequently in a state of disrepair and advanced decay. So too is the essential infrastructure of the city; public transport is overcrowded and overused, as are roads, buses and trains, transport stations, public latrines, and washing points. Water supply systems leak, and the resulting low water pressure allows sewage to seep into drinking water. Often a third of the city's population has no piped water, storm drainage, or roads.^{7/}

19. A growing number of the urban poor suffer from a high incidence of diseases; most are environmentally based and could be prevented or dramatically reduced through relatively small investments (see Box 9-2). Acute respiratory diseases, tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, and diseases linked to poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water (diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, and typhoid) are usually endemic; they are one of the major causes of illness and death, especially among children. In parts of many cities, poor people can expect to see one in four of their children die of serious malnutrition before the age of five, or one adult in two suffering intestinal worms or serious respiratory infections.^{8/}

20. Air and water pollution might be assumed to be less pressing in Third World cities because of lower levels of industrial development. But in fact hundreds of such cities have high concentrations of industry. Air, water, noise, and solid waste pollution problems have increased rapidly and can have dramatic impacts on the life and health of city inhabitants, on their economy and jobs. Even in a relatively small city, just one or two

BOX 9-2

Environmental Problems in Third World Cities

Out of India's 3,119 towns and cities, only 209 had partial and only 8 had full sewage and sewage treatment facilities. On the river Ganga, 114 cities each with 50,000 or more inhabitants dump untreated sewage into the river every day. DDT factories, tanneries, paper and pulp mills, petrochemical and fertilizer complexes, rubber factories, and a host of others use the river to get rid of their wastes. The Hoogly estuary (near Calcutta) is choked with untreated industrial wastes from more than 150 major factories around Calcutta. Sixty per cent of Calcutta's population suffer from pneumonia, bronchitis, and other respiratory diseases related to air pollution.

Chinese industries, most of which use coal in outdated furnaces and boilers, are concentrated in around 20 cities and ensure a high level of air pollution. Lung cancer mortality in Chinese cities is four to seven times that in the nation as a whole, and the difference is largely attributable to heavy air pollution.

In Malaysia, the highly urbanized Klang Valley (which includes the capital, Kuala Lumpur) has two to three times the pollution levels of major cities in the United States, and the Klang river system is heavily contaminated with agricultural and industrial effluents and sewage.

Sources: Centre for Science and Environment, State of India's Environment: a Citizen's Report (New Delhi: 1983); Vaclav Smil, The Bad Earth: Environmental Degradation in China (London: Zed Press, 1986); Sahabat Alam Malaysia, The State of Malaysian Environment 1983-84 - Towards Greater Environmental Awareness (Penang, Malaysia: 1983).

factories dumping wastes into the only nearby river can contaminate everyone's drinking, washing, and cooking water. Many slums and shanties crowd close to hazardous industries, as this is land no one else wants. This proximity has magnified the risks for the poor, a fact demonstrated by great loss of life and human suffering in various recent industrial accidents.

21. The uncontrolled physical expansion of cities has also had serious implications for the urban environment and economy. Uncontrolled development makes provision of housing, roads, water supply, sewers and public services prohibitively expensive. Cities are often built on the most productive agricultural land, and unguided growth results in the unnecessary loss of this land. Such losses are most serious in nations with limited arable land, such as Egypt. Haphazard development also consumes land and natural landscapes needed for urban parks and recreation areas. Once an area is built up, it is both difficult and expensive to re-create open space.

22. In general, urban growth has often preceded the establishment of a solid, diversified economic base to support the build-up of housing, infrastructure, and employment. In many places, the problems are linked to inappropriate patterns of industrial development and the lack of coherence between strategies for agricultural and urban development. The link between national economies and international economic factors has been discussed in Part I of this report. The world economic crisis of the 1980s has not only reduced incomes, increased unemployment, and eliminated many social programmes. It has also exacerbated the already low priority given to urban problems, increasing the chronic shortfall in resources needed to build, maintain, and manage urban areas.^{9/}

2. The Situation in Industrial World Cities

23. The Commission's focus on the urban crisis in developing countries is not meant to imply that what transpires in the cities of the industrial world is not of crucial importance to sustainable development globally. It is. These cities account for a high share

of the world's resource use, energy consumption, and environmental pollution. Many have a global reach and draw their resources and energy from distant lands, with enormous aggregate impacts on the ecosystems of those lands.

24. Nor is the emphasis on Third World cities meant to imply that problems within the cities of industrialized countries are not serious. They are. Many face problems of deteriorating infrastructure, environmental degradation, inner-city decay, and neighbourhood collapse. The unemployed, the elderly, and racial and ethnic minorities can remain trapped in a downward spiral of degradation and poverty, as job opportunities and the younger and better-educated individuals leave declining neighbourhoods. City or municipal governments often face a legacy of poorly designed and maintained public housing estates, mounting costs, and declining tax bases.

25. But most industrial countries have the means and resources to tackle inner-city decay and linked economic decline. Indeed, many have succeeded in reversing these trends through enlightened policies, cooperation between the public and private sectors, and significant investments in personnel, institutions, and technological innovation.^{10/} Local authorities usually have the political power and credibility to take initiatives and to assess and deploy resources in innovative ways reflecting unique local conditions. This gives them a capacity to manage, control, experiment, and lead urban development. In centrally planned economies, the ability to plan and implement plans for urban development has been significant. The priority given to collective goods over private consumption may also have increased the resources available for urban development.

Large cities by definition are centralized, manmade environments that depend mainly on food, water, energy, and other goods from outside. Smaller cities, by contrast, can be the heart of community-based development and provide services to the surrounding countryside.

Given the importance of cities, special efforts and safeguards are needed to ensure that the resources they demand are produced sustainably and that urban dwellers participate in decisions affecting their lives. Residential areas are likely to be more habitable if they are governed as individual neighbourhoods with direct local participation. To the extent that energy and other needs can be met on a local basis, both the city and surrounding areas will be better off.

'Sustainable Development and
How to Achieve It'
Global Tomorrow Coalition
WCED Public Hearing
Ottawa, 26-27 May 1986

26. The physical environment in many cities of the industrial world has improved substantially over the decades. According to the historical records of many major centres - like London, Paris, Chicago, Moscow, and Melbourne - it was not too long ago that a major part of their population lived in desperate circumstances amid gross pollution. Conditions have improved steadily during the past century, and this trend continues, although the pace varies between and within cities.

27. The percentage of the population served by refuse collection is today almost 100 per cent in most urban areas. Air quality has generally improved, with a decline in the emission of particles and sulphur oxides. Efforts to restore water quality have met with a mixed record of success because of pollution from outside of cities, notably nitrates and other fertilizers and pesticides. Many coastal areas however, close to major sewage outlets, show considerable deterioration. There is rising concern about chemical pollutants in drinking

water and about the impacts of toxic wastes on groundwater quality. And noise pollution has tended to increase.

28. Motor vehicles greatly influence environmental conditions in the cities of the industrial world. A recent slowdown in the growth rate of vehicle numbers, stricter emission standards for new vehicles, the distribution of lead-free gasoline, improvements in fuel efficiency, improved traffic management policies, and landscaping have all helped reduce the impacts of urban traffic. In many cities, pedestrian zones have been created.

29. Public opinion has played a critical role in the drive to improve urban conditions. In some cities, public pressure has triggered the abandonment of massive urban development projects, fostered residential schemes on a more human scale, countered indiscriminate demolition of existing buildings and historic districts, modified proposed urban highway construction, and led to transformation of derelict plots into playgrounds.

30. The problems that remain are serious but they affect relatively limited areas, which makes them much more tractable than those of Cairo or Mexico City, for example. Certain aspects of urban decline even provide opportunities for environmental enhancement. The exodus of population and economic activities, while creating severe economic and social difficulties, reduces urban congestion, allows new uses for abandoned buildings, protects historic urban districts from the threat of speculative demolition and reconstruction, and contributes to urban renewal. The de-industrialization of these cities is often counterbalanced by the growth of the services sector, which brings its own problems. But this trend creates opportunities to remove heavy

industrial pollution sources from residential and commercial areas.

31. The combination of advanced technology, stronger national economies, and a developed institutional infrastructure give resilience and the potential for continuing recovery to cities in the industrial world. With flexibility, space for manoeuvre, and innovation by local leadership, the issue for industrial countries is ultimately one of political and social choice. Developing countries are not in the same situation. They have a major urban crisis on their hands.

II. CONFRONTING THE URBAN CHALLENGE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

32. Settlements – the urban network of cities, towns, and villages – encompass all aspects of the environment within which societies' economic and social interactions take place. Internationally, the major cities of the world constitute a network for the allocation of investment and for the production and sale of most goods and services. These centres are the first to be plugged into this network, through air- and seaports and telecommunications. New technologies usually arrive and are first put into practice in large and then smaller cities. Only if centres are firmly plugged into this network can they hope to attract investment in technologies and manufacturing goods for world markets. Nationally, cities are veritable incubators of economic activities. Some enterprises are large-scale but the vast majority are small, doing everything from selling snack foods to mending shoes and building houses. The growth of these activities is the foundation of the domestic economy.

1. Establish National Urban Strategies

33. The natural evolution of this network of settlements, however, has caused apprehension in most developing countries. Of particular concern has been the phenomenal growth of often one or two major cities. In some countries, the desire to limit this growth has led to spatial policies designed to accelerate the development of secondary centres. Underlying this has been a particular concern that unbalanced growth is increasing interregional disparities and creating economic and social imbalances that can have serious consequences in terms of national unity and political stability.

34. Although far from conclusive, the available evidence suggests that most attempts by central governments to balance spatial development have been both expensive and ineffective. Major macroeconomic, social, and sectoral policies have often been directly opposed to the decentralization policy. Investments supported by governments and aid agencies have followed the same centralizing logic as private investments, and have built transportation facilities, educational and health institutions, and urban infrastructure and services where the demand exists, in the major city. Rural-urban migration has followed the same pattern. A major reason why so many migrants in recent decades went to cities such as Nairobi, Manila, Lagos, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Rangoon, or Port au Prince was the dominant role each centre came to play in its national economy.

35. The macroeconomic and pricing policies pursued by governments further reinforced this concentration. The major cities, often the capital, usually receive a disproportionately large share of the total national

We see that the increasing urban drift is inevitable: There are a lot of 'push' factors working in the rural areas. Rural pluralization is caused by absence of land reform, by the increase of absentee landownership, by the displacement of the Green Revolution.

Besides the 'push' factors of the rural areas, there are, of course, the 'pull' factors, the glamour of the Big City, the higher pay of urban jobs as compared to rural income possibilities. So the informal sector of Jakarta has grown; maybe from the 7 million population of Jakarta, 3 or 4 million - at least two-thirds - are the result of the urban drift.

George Adicondro
Director, Irian Jaya,
Rural Community Development
Foundation
WCED Public Hearing
Jakarta, 26 March 1985

expenditure on education and on subsidies to reduce the prices of water, corn, electric power, diesel fuel, and public transport. Railroad freight rates sometimes favour routes that pass through the capital. Property taxes in the city and surrounding districts may be undervalued. New or expanded industries encouraged by the import substitution policies are encouraged to establish in or near the capital.^{11/}

36. Agricultural and food policies have also tended to promote rapid growth of larger cities. Low or even negative economic supports for agricultural products have driven smallholders off their land and added to the numbers of the rural poor. Urban food prices, held low by subsidies, have served to attract many of them to cities. In recent years, however, some developing countries have found it possible to begin to reverse this transfer of income from the rural areas and smaller towns to the major cities. In some cases, policies to promote small landholdings and intensive farming have had this effect. Increasing production, a growth in agricultural

employment, and higher average incomes have stimulated the development of small and intermediate centres in the agricultural regions they serve.^{12/}

37. These are some important lessons to be learned about spatial strategies for urban development:

- Nothing much short of coercion will prevent the growth of the major city in the early stages of development.
- The key to successful intervention is timing, to encourage deconcentration only when the advantages of concentration are diminishing.
- Policy interventions to avoid include those that increase the attractiveness of the major city, particularly subsidies on food and energy, overly generous provision of urban infrastructure and other services, and excessive concentration of administrative power in the capital.
- The best way to encourage the growth of secondary centres is to build on the natural economic advantages of their regions, especially in resource processing and marketing, and the decentralized provision of government services.
- Rural and urban development strategies and approaches should be complementary rather than contradictory: the development of secondary centres is to the direct economic benefit of the resource areas they serve.

38. The job opportunities and housing provided by cities are essential to absorb the population growth that the countryside cannot cope with; as long as price controls and subsidies do not interfere, the urban market should offer advantages to rural producers. But there are obviously conflicts of interest between developing

country city-dwellers and farmers. A major thrust of the discussion on food security (see Chapter 5) was to assert the importance of decisively turning the 'terms of trade' in favour of farmers, especially small farmers, through pricing and exchange rate policies. Many developing countries are not implementing such policies, partly for fear of losing the support of politically powerful urban factions. Thus they fail both to stem urban drift and to improve food security.

39. Such considerations can provide the basis for developing an explicit national settlements strategy and policies within which innovative and effective local solutions to urban problems can evolve and flourish. Every government has such a strategy in effect, but it is most often implicit in a range of macroeconomic, fiscal, budget, energy, and agricultural policies. These policies have usually evolved incrementally in response to the pressures of the day and, almost invariably, they contradict each other and the stated settlement goals of the government. A national urban strategy could provide an explicit set of goals and priorities for the development of a nation's urban system and the large, intermediate, and small centres within it.

40. Such a strategy must go beyond physical or spatial planning. It requires that governments take a much broader view of urban policy than has been traditional. All the various policies mentioned above have an overwhelming and often decisive influence both on the rate and direction of urbanization, and on the ability of local governments to cope with the consequences of urban change. More sustainable forms of urban development will not emerge if urban policy continues to be viewed as a narrow field concerned largely with questions of local governance, land use planning, and the provision and development of land and services.

41. With an explicit strategy, nations can begin to reorient those central economic and major sectoral policies that now reinforce megacity growth, urban decline, and poverty. They can likewise promote more effectively the development of small and intermediate urban centres, the strengthening of their local governments, and the establishment of services and facilities needed to attract development initiatives and investment. Ministries of Planning, Finance, Industry, Agriculture, and so on would have clear goals and criteria against which to assess the effects of their policies and expenditures on urban development. Contradictory policies and programmes could be changed. At the very least, the spatial biases inherent in macroeconomic and fiscal policies, annual budgets, pricing structures, and sectoral investment plans could be exposed and assessed. Within such a strategy, the traditional tools of urban policy, including land use planning and control, would stand a better chance of being effective.

42. The formulation of such a strategy is clearly a central government responsibility. Beyond this, however, the role of central governments should be primarily to strengthen the capacity of local governments to find and carry through effective solutions to local urban problems and stimulate local opportunities.

2. Strengthen Local Authorities

43. The institutional and legal structures of local government in most developing nations are inadequate for these purposes. In most African and Asian nations the structure of urban government goes back to the colonial period and was designed to deal with predominantly rural and agricultural societies. It was never intended to

I have heard all these comments regarding Cubatao, about industrialized areas, and all speeches try to guarantee the possibility for survival of people. You talk very little about life, you talk too much about survival. It is very important to remember that when the possibilities for life are over, the possibilities for survival start. And there are peoples here in Brazil, especially in the Amazon region, who still live, and these peoples that still live don't want to reach down to the level of survival.

Speaker from the floor
WCED Public Hearing
Sao Paulo, 28-29 Oct 1985

cope with rapid urbanization or to manage cities of several million inhabitants. Newly independent governments inherited a framework of laws and procedures totally inappropriate to deal with the urban processes they were about to confront. Yet in many nations, this inherited framework remains largely in place.

44. Where the immediate colonial past is less evident, as in most Latin American nations, the political, institutional, and legal frameworks for local government are often just as inappropriate and inadequate. As in Asia and Africa, most are based on models imported from Europe or North America. This has made it difficult for them to influence the direction of urbanization and to manage the problems of large, rapidly expanding urban centres. It has created cities that are energy- and material-intensive and dependent on imports, and that add to the burden on the national economy, including pressures on trade and balance of payments.

45. Urban development cannot be based on standardized models, imported or indigenous. Development possibilities are particular to each city and must be assessed within the context of its own region. What works in one city may be totally inappropriate in

another. Although technical help from central agencies may be needed, only a strong local government can ensure that the needs, customs, urban forms, social priorities, and environmental conditions of the local area are reflected in local plans for urban development.

46. Most functions and services essential for the efficient performance of an urban economy, and for a healthy and productive city, are best delivered at the urban level. In many instances, national governments have assigned these responsibilities to local authorities but they have not given them the political power, decision-making capacity, and access to revenues needed to carry them out. This leads to frustration, to continuing criticism of local government for insufficient and inefficient services, and to a downward spiral of weakness feeding on weakness.

47. The lack of political access to an adequate financial base is a major weakness of local government in many developing countries. Most local governments have difficulties getting enough revenue to cover their operating expenses, let alone make new investments to extend services and facilities. Even richer city governments have access to the equivalent of only \$10-50 per inhabitant to invest each year. Despite these weaknesses, the trend in recent decades has been for national governments to reduce the financial capacity of local governments in real terms.

48. The result is growing centralization, and continuing weaknesses at both the central and local level. Instead of doing a few things well, central authorities end up doing too many things, none of them well. Human and financial resources get stretched too thin. Local governments do not gain the expertise,

authority, and credibility needed to deal with local problems.

49. The developmental role of local government and of local democracy assumes particular importance in the present context of rapid urbanization and economic crisis. The thrust for local government reform is a critical part of the wider effort to counter the deterioration in urban economies and living conditions, and to develop more livable and sustainable cities.

50. To become key agents of development, city governments need the political, institutional, and financial capacity to initiate and follow through. Access to more of the wealth generated in the city and to a large proportion of the revenue base is essential. Only in this way can cities adapt and deploy some of the vast array of tools available to address urban problems - tools such as land title registration, land use control, and tax sharing.

3. Support Self-Reliance and Citizen Involvement

51. In most developing countries between one-fourth and one-half of the economically active urban population cannot find adequate, stable livelihoods. With few jobs available in established businesses or government services, people have to find or create their own sources of income. These efforts have resulted in the rapid growth of what has been termed the 'informal sector', which provides much of the cheap goods and services essential to city economies, business, and consumers.

52. Thus, while many poor people may not be 'officially' employed, most are working - in unregistered factories and construction firms, selling goods on street corners, making clothes in their homes, or as servants or

guards in better-off neighbourhoods. Most of the so-called unemployed are in fact working 10-15 hours a day, six to seven days a week. Their problem is not so much underemployment as underpayment.

53. Most house building, maintenance, or upgrading in the cities of developing countries is done outside official plans and usually in illegal settlements. This process mobilizes untapped resources, contributes to capital formation, and stimulates employment. These informal-sector builders represent an important source of urban employment, in particular for low and unskilled labour. They are not capital- or technology-intensive, they are not energy-intensive, and as a rule they do not impose a drain on foreign exchange. In their way, they contribute their share to attaining some of the nation's major development objectives. Moreover, they are flexible in responding to local needs and demands, catering in particular to poorer households, which usually have nowhere else to turn. Many governments have begun to see the wisdom of tolerating rather than quashing their work. Large-scale bulldozing of squatter communities is now rarer, although it still happens.

54. Governments should give more support to the informal sector, recognizing its vital functions in urban development. They should give it appropriate status and try to channel its potential more purposefully. Some governments have done so, facilitating loans and credit to small entrepreneurs, building cooperatives, and neighbourhood improvement associations. Providing tenure to those living in illegal settlements is basic to this process, as is easing some building and housing regulations.

55. Multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies should follow suit, and some are beginning to do

The shantytowns have found their own technique, their own resources without any assistance from anyone else, and they solved their housing problems. The real problem is not that. It is the poverty, the lack of planning, the lack of technical assistance, the lack of financing to buy construction materials, the lack of urban equipment.

To change this housing policy for human settlements, they should stimulate self-construction, instead of financing these large housing complexes. It would have been much better and would have cost less to help the people to carry out the self-construction.

Generally speaking, it seems clear that without meeting the basic needs of human beings, concern for the environment has to be secondary. Man has to survive, answer, and attend first to his basic survival needs--food, housing, sanitation--and then to the environment.

Walter Pinto Costa
President, Environmental and
Sanitation Association
WCED Public Hearing
Sao Paulo, 28-29 Oct 1985

so. Non-governmental and private voluntary organizations are springing up in many countries to provide cost-effective channels for assistance, ensuring that it gets to those who can use it. A much larger proportion of assistance could be channelled directly through these organizations.

56. The above measures would also reinforce self-reliance and local governance by the poor in their own neighbourhood associations. Left to their own devices, the poor in many Third World cities have organized to fill gaps in services left by the local government. Among other things, community groups mobilize and organize fund-raising or mutual self-help to deal with security, environmental, and health problems within the immediate area.

57. Governments should move from a position of neutrality or antagonism to active support for such

efforts. A few have actually institutionalized such programmes so that public ministries or agencies work continuously with community organizations. In the Indian city of Hyderabad, for example, an Urban Community Development Department set up by the municipal corporation works directly with community groups and non-government organizations (NGOs) in poorer neighbourhoods. By 1983, some 223 organizations had been formed by residents in low-income areas, plus 135 youth organizations and 99 women's groups.^{13/}

58. Such groups can mobilize labour and organize a whole range of activities. The decentralization of tasks and responsibilities to neighbourhood level, with government agencies playing a major role in supporting and advising community organizations, would reduce the scale of urban problems to more manageable levels. National and local governments should recognize this potential; support these organizations; acknowledge their rights, powers, and roles; and work with them.

59. Such cooperation would change the relationships between governments and neighbourhood organizations, allowing individual citizens and their organizations to participate in decisions about resource allocations that affect them, increasing their sense of control over the process, and inspiring responses. It could help to provide the inhabitants of illegal or informal settlements with publicly funded infrastructure and services. It would also allow governments to tap the energies, resources, and inventiveness of these people and organizations. Governments would become partners and sponsors of the people who are the main builders of their cities.

4. Improve Housing and Services for the Poor

60. In most developing-world cities, the poor are left on their own to find accommodation. Generally, they either rent rooms - whether in tenements or cheap boarding-houses, or in someone else's house or shack - or they build or buy a house or shack in an illegal settlement. There are many kinds and degrees of illegality, and these influence the extent to which governments tolerate the existence of such settlements, or even provide them with public services and facilities.

61. Whatever form it takes, low-income accommodation generally shares three characteristics. First, it has inadequate or no infrastructure and services - including piped water, sewers, or other means of hygienically disposing of human wastes. Second, people live in crowded and cramped conditions under which communicable diseases can flourish, particularly when malnutrition lowers resistance. Third, poor people usually build on land ill-suited for human habitation: floodplains, dusty deserts, hills subject to landslide, or next to polluting industries. They choose these sites because the land's low commercial value means they stand a better chance of not being evicted.

62. Landownership structures and the inability or unwillingness of governments to intervene in these structures are perhaps the main factors contributing to 'illegal' settlements and chaotic urban sprawl. When half or more of a city's workforce has no chance of obtaining a legal plot on which a house can be built, let alone of affording to buy or rent a house legally, the balance between private landownership rights and the public good must be quickly rethought.

63. Given urbanization trends in most developing countries, there is no time to wait for slow and uncertain programmes. Government intervention must be reoriented so that limited resources are put to maximum effect in improving housing conditions for the poor. The options for intervention are many (see Box 9-3), but governments should be guided by these seven priorities:

- * provide legal tenure to those living in 'illegal' settlements, with secure titles and basic services provided by public authorities;
- * ensure that the land and other resources people need to build or improve their housing are available;
- * supply existing and new housing areas with infrastructure and services;
- * set up neighbourhood offices to provide advice and technical assistance on how housing can be built better and cheaper, and on how health and hygiene can be improved;
- * plan and guide the city's physical expansion to anticipate and encompass needed land for new housing, agricultural land, parks, and children's play areas;
- * consider how public intervention could improve conditions for tenants and those living in cheap rooming or boarding-houses; and
- * change housing finance systems to make cheap loans available to lower-income and community groups.

BOX 9-3

Three Ways to Use \$20 Million to Improve
Conditions in a City of 1 Million

- Option 1: Build 2,000 public housing units for poor families (with an average of six family members), each costing \$10,000. Conditions improved for 12,000 people, but little cost recovery possible for poor families. If the city's population grows at 5 per cent annually, 630,000 new inhabitants will be added over 10 years, so only a tiny fraction of total population will have benefited.
- Option 2: Establish a 'site-and-service scheme' whereby poor families are responsible for building their houses on an allocated site supplied with piped water, connection to a sewer system, and electricity, roads, and drainage. At \$2,000 per plot, this means housing for some 60,000 people - about 10 per cent of the city's population growth over 10 years.
- Option 3: Allocate \$100,000 to a neighbourhood organization representing 1,000 poor households (6,000 people) in an existing low-income settlement. It chooses to improve drainage and roads, build a health clinic, establish a cooperative to produce inexpensive building materials and components, and reblock the settlement to improve access roads and provide 50 new plots. With \$10 million, 100 such community initiatives are supported, reaching 600,000 people and providing 5,000 new housing plots. Many new jobs are stimulated. The remaining \$10 million is spent on installing piped water; at \$100 per household, all 600,000 people reached.

64. Most cities urgently need a large and continuous increase in the availability of cheap housing plots convenient to the main centres of employment. Only government intervention can achieve this, but no general prescriptions are possible. Societies differ too much in how they view private landownership and land use rights, in how they use different instruments such as direct grants, tax write-offs, or deduction of mortgage interest, and in how they treat land speculation, corruption, and other undesirable activities that often

I'm an expert in slum dwelling. We're establishing a small, tiny organization trying to organize slum dwellers, because we see so many slums. Slums in the city, slums in the villages, slums in the forests.

I have worked for four years to motivate my fellow slum dwellers to become transmigrants, and they finally migrated to ten places all over Indonesia. They are still in very good communication with me. They're still sending me letters, and they say that life is not better in the transmigration areas. Living in the shadows in the urban slums or living in the shadows in the transmigration site is just the same.

When I go back to my people, the slum dwellers, tonight they will ask me what I have got from this meeting in the big hotel. They won't ask for information, just 'have you brought some money for us to build new houses?'

Syamsuddin Nainggolan
Founder,
Yayasan Panca Bakti
WCED Public Hearing
Jakarta, 26 March 1985

accompany processes of this kind. Although the means are particular to each nation, the end must be the same: governments ensuring that there are cheaper, better-serviced, better-located, legal alternatives to illegal plots. If this need is not met, the uncontrolled growth of cities - and its accompanying high costs - will not be stopped.

65. Besides land, building materials are another major cost for people putting up their own houses. Government support for the production of materials and of certain structural components, fixtures, and fittings could reduce housing costs and create many jobs. Small neighbourhood workshops often have cost advantages because of the low cost of transport from the workshop to the building site.

66. The majority of building codes and standards are ignored because following them would produce buildings

too expensive for most people. A more effective approach might be to set up neighbourhood offices to provide technical advice on how health and safety can be improved at minimum cost. Good professional advice can lower building costs and improve quality, and might be more effective than prescribing what can or cannot be built.

67. Many poor people rent accommodation; half or more of a city's entire population may be tenants. Increasing the availability of house sites, materials, and credits does little for those who must rent. One possibility is financial support to non-governmental, non-profit organizations to purchase and develop property specifically for rental units. A second is support for tenants to buy out landlords and convert tenancy into cooperative ownership.

68. Governments, especially those strapped for resources, may claim that piped water supplies and sewage disposal systems are too expensive. As a consequence, poor people may have to pay water vendors far more per litre of water than middle- or upper-income groups pay public agencies to pipe water into their homes. Western water-borne sewage systems and treatment plants may be prohibitively expensive. But other techniques and systems cost between one-tenth and one-twentieth as much per household, and most of these use much less water. Moreover, lower-cost technology can be upgraded over time, as money becomes available.^{14/}

69. Major improvements can be made relatively cheaply in all these areas. But costs will remain low only if low-income groups are encouraged to participate fully in defining what they need, in deciding what they will contribute to the new services, and in doing the job with their own hands. This cooperation depends on

establishing the new relationship between citizens and government called for earlier.

5. Tap Poorly Used Resources

70. The available resources in or close to cities are often underused. Many landowners leave well-located sites undeveloped in order to benefit later from their increasing value as the city grows. Many public agencies have land that could be put to better use, such as the area next to stations and harbours controlled by railway and port authorities. Several countries have introduced special programmes to encourage public and private cooperation in the development of such lands, a trend that should be encouraged. There is a general need to find innovative and effective ways of pooling land for the common good. Most cities have mechanisms for acquiring land either at market rates (which means that schemes are never implemented), or at arbitrarily low confiscatory rates (where the alliance of political forces and landlords blocks the acquisition anyway).

71. Governments should also consider supporting urban agriculture. This may have less relevance in cities where land markets are highly commercialized and land for housing is in short supply. But in most cities, especially those with less commercialized land markets, considerable potential exists. Many African cities already realize this. Urban agriculture, especially on city fringes, is undertaken by people as a way to feed themselves. In other instances, the process is more commercialized, with enterprises specializing in vegetable production for sale within the city.

72. Officially sanctioned and promoted urban agriculture could become an important component of urban development and make more food available to the urban

A lot of youth in the Third World countries and even adults are unemployed. We want simple technologies whereby one particular person can do a kind of a job that could have provided job opportunities to several hundreds. What are we doing with the surplus potential, energy? So again I say that development is people, it is not high technology, it is not modernization, it is not westernization. But it should be culturally relevant.

Jan Selego
World Vision International
WCED Public Hearing
Nairobi, 23 Sept 1986

poor. The primary purposes of such promotion should be to improve the nutritional and health standards of the poor, help their family budgets (50-70 per cent of which is usually spent on food), enable them to earn some additional income, and provide employment. Urban agriculture can also provide fresher and cheaper produce, more green space, the clearing of garbage dumps, and recycling of household waste.^{15/}

73. Another poorly used resource is solid wastes, the disposal of which has become a major problem in many cities, with much of it dumped and uncollected. Promoting the reclamation, reuse, or recycling of materials can reduce the problem of solid waste, stimulate employment, and result in savings of raw materials. Composting can support urban agriculture. If a municipal government lacks the resources to collect household wastes regularly, it can support existing community-based schemes. In many cities, literally thousands of people already make a living sorting through wastes by hand on municipal tips. Investing in a more capital-intensive, automatic recycling plant could be doubly counterproductive if it unnecessarily consumes scarce capital or if a plant would destroy many people's livelihoods. But an immediate need here is to give

health advice and provide health care services to those who are making a living off municipal tips.^{16/}

III. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

74. The future will be predominantly urban, and the most immediate environmental concerns of most people will be urban ones. A successful transition to sustainable development means reversing the current trends of accelerating environmental degradation and urban decline, especially in developing countries. This will require new priority programmes for the better management of urban areas. It will require getting at the real policy sources of the problems and tackling immediately the backlog of debilitating effects. This double-barrelled challenge can only be met with a significant increase in more effective international cooperation.

75. The effectiveness of efforts to improve urban life depends largely on the health of national economies. In many developing countries, this is linked closely to the state of the world economy. An improvement in international economic relations (see Chapter 3) would perhaps do more than anything else to enhance the capacity of developing countries to address their linked urban and environmental problems. But beyond that is the need to strengthen cooperation among developing countries at the regional level and to increase various types of direct support from the international community, as well as to give greater policy weight and improve international cooperation in this domain.

1. Cooperation Among Developing Countries

76. Developing countries can do a great deal together to develop the policy concepts, programmes, and

institutions needed to tackle the urban crisis they share. As they formulate broad national urban strategies, it is important that they share experiences on the management of their growing megacities, on the development of small and intermediate centres, on strengthening local government, on upgrading illegal settlements, on crisis-response measures, and on a range of other problems that are more or less unique to the Third World.

77. Many existing regional organizations, especially those with a broad economic and political mandate, could play an important role in providing forums for these issues. The question of national urban strategies, for example, could be added to the agenda of regional meetings of economic planning and finance ministers. The relationship between pricing policies and urban goals such as the promotion of small and intermediate centres could be considered at meetings of agricultural, energy, and other ministers.

78. Regional bodies could also help nations to share experiences and explore new ways of managing megacities and strengthening local institutions. Although the management problems confronting Caracas, Dakar, or Delhi have little relevance to those confronting London or Paris, the cities of Latin America, West Africa, or South Asia have much in common.

79. Sharing this experience in appropriate regional forums could be valuable in itself and it could lead to other effective activities. For example, a country could request the organization to review its urban policies within the broader context discussed earlier. Such external policy reviews have already proved useful, providing countries not only with fresh insights but also with political levers to make changes that would

otherwise be much more difficult.^{17/} Sharing experience could also lead to exchanges of technical staff, contingency plans, or even trade in more appropriate products and technologies.

80. This type of political, economic, and technical cooperation could help in the development of urban policy concepts and development models rooted in developing countries' own experiences. Research on such concepts and models could provide the basis for rethinking the Third World city. It could also feed in-country training programmes (or, for smaller nations, regional training programmes) for city and municipal government staff. Good policy proposals and good training courses depend on good local information and analysis; far too little of all three of these is found within developing countries and cities.

2. Increased Multilateral and Bilateral Support

81. A greater flow of international resources is required to support the efforts of developing countries to tackle the unfolding urban crisis. An agreed definition of 'urban development assistance' does not exist, but the Development Assistance Committee recently estimated that total bilateral and multilateral aid for urban programmes averaged about \$0.9 billion per year over 1980-84.^{18/} It is also estimated that to date fewer than 5 per cent of the developing world's urban population has been reached by a housing or neighbourhood upgrading project sponsored by a development assistance agency. This level of support needs to be increased significantly. Moreover, the scope of support should be broadened and its quality and terms improved.

82. Assistance will be needed to enable developing countries to undertake the programmes mentioned above

through regional agencies. Direct assistance is also needed to support the development of urban strategies and to assess the impacts of critical non-urban policies and programmes on urban goals. Additional assistance should be offered to support the strengthening of local governments in developing countries and, in particular, to enable them to share their experiences. Given the increasing exposure of urban populations to environmental hazards of industrial origin, contingency planning is a growing need. Countries and cities should be enabled to cooperate to develop appropriate responses and capabilities to minimize the risk of such accidents, and to cope with them when they happen. This could involve specialized international technical and advisory teams, including backup equipment.

83. In addition, development assistance agencies should give serious thought to establishing a special fund in each region of the Third World to provide aid and technical assistance directly to city and municipal governments in three areas:

- * to central governments to set up infrastructure funds for local governments;
- * to local governments to undertake tasks such as reorganizing local tax assessments and collection, preparing or updating maps of property ownership, and setting up technical teams to advise households and community groups on improving housing;
- * to all levels of government for in-country training courses and on-the-job training for local officials.

84. Part of the increased aid should go directly to community groups, using intermediaries such as national or international NGOs. Several bilateral aid programmes

have already demonstrated the cost effectiveness of this approach; various NGOs have been responsible for many successful community-based schemes to improve housing and provide basic services. They are generally more successful at reaching the poorest.

85. More aid should also go to supporting independent research groups working in housing and urban issues. Good training programmes are only possible if there is a sound knowledge and information base on which to draw. Ultimately, every major city in the developing world needs an independent research group that can put forward new ideas, help assess local needs, and criticize inappropriate plans. Research groups should also receive aid to provide advice to local governments and community groups; many are doing so already, especially in Latin America.

86. Beyond these more direct forms of financial assistance, international cooperation in the sphere of urban development technologies is of particular importance. Special research and development efforts should be mounted to develop low-cost technologies for urban needs in developing countries. Research and development should be carried out largely by putting together networks of competent institutions, academic and research groups, and public and private enterprises. In this way, low-cost technologies may be made available on more favourable terms and conditions, and more widely diffused.

87. The quality of assistance could also be improved. Agencies are under severe pressure in allocating the limited funds available, and this pressure will increase as the urban crisis deepens. But greater care could be taken in allocating funds. Programmes that run counter

to stated urban goals should not attract support. To this end, agencies could introduce urban criteria in their standard assessment procedures. This could also help them avoid supporting urban development schemes that are clearly inappropriate. For example, schemes that build elaborate roads where few people own cars waste funds and land, and make it hard for pedestrians to reach shops and services. Urban assessment criteria could also ensure that the needs of women and children are taken more fully into account (see Box 9-4).

BOX 9-4

Misunderstanding Women's Needs in Housing Projects

Housing projects often use a gridiron layout that does not allow women to work in their house and at the same time keep an eye on their own or their neighbours' children. House designs and plot sizes rarely consider the fact that many women will want to use their houses as workshops (to make clothes, for instance) or as shops, which in fact are often forbidden in low-income housing projects. Application procedure for low-income housing sometimes requires 'husbands' to apply; this excludes women-headed households - between 30 and 50 per cent of all households. Women's special needs in different cultures are ignored - in Islamic societies, for example, women's need for private open space within the house is rarely considered in house designs, while their need for relatively sheltered pathways to get to shops and clinics is not acknowledged in site layouts.

Source: C.O.N. Moser, 'Housing Policy: Towards a Gender Awareness Approach', Working Paper #71, Development Planning Unit, London, 1985.

88. While shifts in the scope and quality of aid are tremendously important over the long run, hundreds of millions of city-dwellers need emergency assistance now. International agencies should work with city and local governments and local research groups to identify the most pressing emergency needs. These may include food

assistance, safe water supplies and health care services to reduce child mortality, emergency life-saving services, and other measures in low-income areas. Special funds to cover these should be viewed as emergency assistance, however, not a substitute for support for longer-term measures.

89. Many technical agencies within the UN system have the appropriate knowledge bases to play a valuable role in advising and supporting city and municipal governments. They should identify the information and guidelines that city governments need and the form in which it can be made accessible and usable by them. This could be patterned, for example, upon the ongoing efforts to prepare guidebooks for community workers on identifying disease vectors and mobilizing communities to deal with them, and on interventions to promote child survival and health.

3. Strengthen UN Leadership on Habitat and Human Settlements Issues

90. Human settlements was one of the six priority areas discussed at the 1972 Conference on Human Environment. On the recommendation of the Stockholm Conference, the UN General Assembly decided to establish a special UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation within UNEP, and to convene a major UN Conference on Human Settlements. That Conference, held in Vancouver in 1976, led to the establishment of the UN Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS, or Habitat) with a mandate to provide technical advice and assistance to governments on human settlements policies and projects, and to initiate, coordinate, and provide policy guidance for human settlements activities in the UN System. A 58-member states UN Commission on Human Settlements was created, supported by a small Secretariat located in Nairobi. Special joint staffing arrangements were made with the UN Regional Economic

There must be realization of the importance of including women in any strategy geared towards management of the environment. We are aware that in most programmes where planners plan for implementing various projects or various technologies, the target is always not included and I want to emphasize that without the involvement of the people concerned who are actually involved in the problems - if they are not involved, then if it is a technology without women, it is not a technology at all.

Betty Tero
Association of Women's Clubs
WCED Public Hearing
Harare, 18 Sept 1986

Commissions in developing regions. And the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation was transferred to the UNCHS. In 1985, UNCHS executed nearly 150 field projects in 80 countries with a value of over \$15 million, with funds provided largely by UNDP. In addition, UNCHS received \$5 million from the UN regular budget and \$3 million in voluntary contributions.

91. International cooperation at the global level is now spearheaded by UNCHS, with its efforts brought into focus in 1987 in the UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The capacity of the UN system to provide leadership on human settlements issues through UNCHS needs to be strengthened. This is especially true of its capacity to examine and advise on international economic, trade, agricultural, energy, and other sectoral policies that have an impact on urban concentration and other unsolved problems. Its capacity to mobilize housing finance for low income groups and to strengthen urban management training institutions should also receive greater priority.

92. On the eve of the 21st century, the urban crisis can be seen as an opportunity for initiatives to provide sustainable development. This includes opportunities for new types of international cooperation and solidarity, which cut across traditional institutional and physical boundaries to get to the heart of many sustainable development issues. It also includes opportunities to involve directly people and grass-root organizations -- the true driving forces behind measures to achieve a sustainable future for their immediate habitat and for the Earth.

CHAPTER 9 – FOOTNOTES

- 1/ While accepting responsibility for the contents of this chapter, the Commission wishes to thank Jorge Hardoy and David Satterthwaite of the International Institute for Environment and Development for their valuable advice and support, and Ian Burton, Executive Secretary, IFIAS; John Cox, former Director, International Year for Shelter for the Homeless; Charles Corea, Architect and Planner, Bombay; Peter Hall, Department of Geography, University of Reading; Gabriel Scimemi, Deputy Director, Environmental Directorate, OECD; and John Zetter, UK Department of the Environment (check ID) for their reviews of an earlier draft of this chapter. The chapter draws heavily on four background papers prepared for WCED: I. Burton, 'Urbanization and Development', 1985; J. E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite, 'Shelter, Infrastructure and Services in Third World Cities', 1985 (printed in Habitat International, Volume 10, Number 4, 1986), J. E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite, 'Rethinking the Third World City', 1986; I. Sachs, 'Human Settlements: Resource and Environmental Management', 1985.
- 2/ See J. Jacobs, Cities and the Wealth of Nations (New York: Random House, 1984).
- 3/ UN, The Growth in the World's Urban and Rural Population 1920-1980, Population Studies No. 44 (New York: 1969), and UN, Urban, Rural and City Populations 1950-2000 (as assessed in 1978), Population Studies No. 68 (New York, 1980).
- 4/ The expansion of 'city' or 'metropolitan area' boundaries account for some of the population growth in Table 9-2. The UN projections are based on extrapolating past trends into the future. This method often provides a poor guide to future trends, especially long-term trends. But the data base with which to make better projections is not available.
- 5/ Habitat Position Paper to a Meeting of the Development Assistance Committee of OCED, October 1986, OECD document DAC (86)47, 27 August, 1986.
- 6/ Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, 'Urban and Rural Population Projections, 1984' (unofficial assessment), United Nations, New York, 1986.

- 7/ J.E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite, Shelter: Need and Response; Housing, Land and Settlement Policies in Seventeen Third World Nations, (Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons, 1981). For the situation in Sao Paulo, see Jorge Wilhelm, 'Sao Paulo: Environmental Problems of the Growing Metropolis', submission to WCED Public Hearings, Sao Paulo, 1985.
- 8/ J.E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite, 'Third World Cities and the Environment of Poverty', Geoforum, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 307-33, 1984. See also World Social Prospects Association, The Urban Tragedy (Geneva: UNITAR, 1986).
- 9/ See Osvaldo Sunkel, 'Debt, Development and Environment', submission to WCED Public Hearings, Sao Paulo, 1985; Ricardo Jordan S., 'Population and the Planning of Large Cities in Latin America', paper submitted to the International Conference on Population and the Urban Future, 19-22 May 1986, Barcelona, Spain.
- 10/ G. Scimemi, 'Città e Ambiente', DAEST, Istituto Universitario di Architettura, Venezia, 1987. See also The State of the Environment in OECD Member Countries (Paris: OECD, 1979 and 1985).
- 11/ I. Scott, Urban and Spatial Development in Mexico (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
- 12/ See Chapter 8 in J. E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite (eds.), Small and Intermediate Urban Centres; Their Role in Regional and National Development in the Third World (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986).
- 13/ UNCHS, 'Habitat Hyderabad Squatter Settlement Upgrading Project, India', project monograph produced for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, Nairobi, 1986.
- 14/ J. M. Kalbermatten et al., Appropriate Technology for Water Supply and Sanitation; A Summary of Technical and Economic Options (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1980).
- 15/ D. Silk, 'Urban Agriculture', prepared for WCED, 1985.
- 16/ N. Khouri-Dagher, 'Waste Recycling: Towards Greater Urban Self-Reliance', prepared for WCED, 1985.
- 17/ As an example, see Urban Policies in Japan: A Review by the OECD Group on Urban Affairs Undertaken in 1984/85 at the Request of the Government of Japan (Paris: OECD, 1986).

- 18/ See draft annotated agenda for October 1986, DAC Meeting on Urban Development, OECD document DAC (86) 15. The World Bank definition of urban development assistance was used, which includes fostering urban efficiency and alleviating poverty, shelter, urban transport, integrated urban development, and regional development on secondary cities.