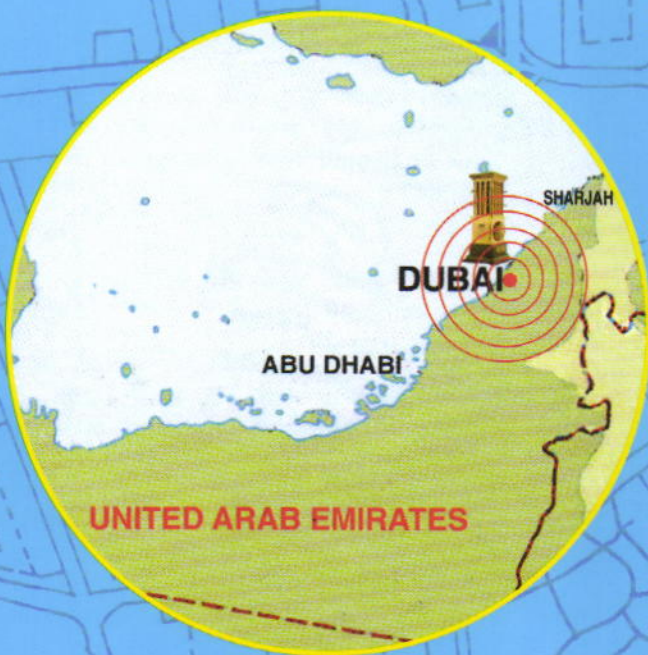


DUBAI DECLARATION

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR HABITAT II
ON BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Dubai, U.A.E., 19-22 November 1995



DÉCLARATION DE DOUBAI

LA CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE DE DOUBAI
SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU MILIEU DE VIE;

Dubai, U.A.E., Du 19 Au 22 Novembre 1995



UNITED NATIONS



دبي



HABITAT

ENGLISH

FRENCH

ARABIC

D U B A I D E C L A R A T I O N

FOREWORD

The Dubai Declaration was originally formulated at the Dubai International Conference on Best Practices for Improving the Living Environment organized by the Dubai Municipality in association with the United Nations (UNCHS/HABITAT) in Dubai, U.A.E. during 19-22 November, 1995. 95 countries and 914 participants from all over the world attended the Conference. 28 best practices were presented at the conference by industrialized as well as developing countries and thus gave the first flavour of the vast international potential for practical mutual assistance through the sharing of transferable and replicable expertise and achievements of excellence.

The Dubai Declaration was later formally adopted by the UNCHS/HABITAT conference in New York during February 1996. The Dubai Declaration has been adopted by the United Nations as well as by the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities (WACLA) at the HABITAT II Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey during 3-14 June 1996. The Declaration is referred to in both the HABITAT Agenda (Istanbul Declaration) and the WACLA (Istanbul Declaration). It can be truly said that the Dubai Declaration gave birth to the international concept of sharing Best Practices for the accelerated development of the human settlements sector. The Declaration represents a clear expression of the aspirations, hopes and strategies by Governments, Local Authorities, NGOs and CBOs for the improvement of the living environment for the benefit of humanity well into the 21st century through the application of an international system of recognizing and disseminating best practices.



The Dubai Declaration is noteworthy for another extremely important outcome, namely, the establishment of the Dubai Award for Excellence in Improving the Living Environment. This Award is referred to in item 8 of the Dubai Declaration and was established under the directive of H.H. Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. The Award comprises a total of U.S. \$ 400,000 to finance the biennial event honouring the Best Practices to be chosen by a UNCHS Technical Advisory Committee as well as an international jury of eminent personalities. The first Award took place in Istanbul on June 4, 1996 as part of the HABITAT II conference's main events.

Dubai Municipality is pleased to be associated with the international effort in responding positively to the immense challenges of human settlements issues in the 21st century. The Dubai Declaration will give a momentum to this effort and galvanize the achievement of meaningful exchange of expertise and co-operation among governments, local authorities, NGOs and CBOs for the common good of humanity.

Qasim Sultan

Director General
Dubai Municipality



Opening ceremony of the Dubai International Conference for Habitat II on Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment.

DUBAI DECLARATION

THE DUBAI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR HABITAT II ON BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, having brought together over 900 delegates from governments, United Nations Agencies, international organizations, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), professional associations and the private sector, from 19th to 22nd November 1995, and having reviewed a selection of 28 Best Practices documented for the Habitat II Conference:

BACKGROUND AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1) Recalling Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and particularly its chapters 7 and 28 which highlight the essential linkages between human settlements and sustainable development;
- 2) Also recalling the United Nations Conferences on the Rights of the Child (New York, 1991), Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) and Women and Development (Beijing, 1995) which highlighted major human development issues: unsafe and unhealthy environment, violence and the differentiated effects each has on men and women;
- 3) Desirous to explore the full implications of the recommendations of these conferences for sustainable urban development;
- 4) Recognizing the importance of the call of the General Assembly to forge a positive vision of an urbanizing



world and the goals of Habitat II - "The City Summit": adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world;



- 5) Recognizing that human settlements are where sectoral issues addressed at previous conferences intersect in daily life and that Habitat II represents the convergence of on-going local and global concerns as well as an opportunity for the confirmation and consolidation of earlier plans of actions;
- 6) Recognizing the recommendations and decisions of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II calling upon all national committees and the Secretariat to identify and disseminate best practices as an integral part of the preparatory process and establishing guidelines and criteria for this purpose;
- 7) Concerned with finding practical and sustainable solutions to the social, economic and environmental challenges facing an urbanizing world, including: management of development; employment creation and poverty elimination; access to land and security of tenure; management, protection and rehabilitation of the environment; efficient use of resources; prevention of crime and all forms of violence; rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons; equality for all men and women; social integration and equality for children, the elderly and the disabled; empowerment of local communities; and access to shelter, basic services and finance;
- 8) Equally concerned with the need for the Habitat Agenda resulting from the "City Summit" to guide and inspire concrete actions in solving shelter and human settlements problems in an integrated and sustainable way for the first two decades of the 21st century;

- 9) Recognizing that special attention has to be given to the situation of poor countries in assuring balance between urban and rural development and the continuing need for international co-operation for shelter and basic infrastructure;
- 10) Believing that the worldwide promotion of effective mechanisms for extending the exchange of best practices will significantly contribute towards empowering local communities to shape their futures;
- 11) Acknowledging the various institutional, financial and human resources constraints may limit local capacity to take full advantage of and contribute to such best practice exchanges and that these constraints particularly the need for human resources development and adaptation, also be addressed in this context;
- 12) Expressing appreciation for the invaluable contribution of Dubai Municipality, United Arab Emirates, in sponsoring and hosting the International Conference on Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment and providing assistance to partners in developing countries to facilitate the documentation of their case studies;
- 13) Commending the leadership of UNCHS (Habitat) in providing technical assistance and disseminating guidelines, nomination criteria and unified format to facilitate the compilation and exchange of best practices, including the innovative methodology adopted to analyze and document their gender impact, as a major component of the Habitat II process;
- 14) Taking note of the efforts underway by UNCHS (Habitat) and its partners to disseminate the best



practices through electronic, printed and audio - visual media to the largest possible audience, updated electronic catalogue of best practices;

- 15) Believing that ready access in all parts of the world to such information will contribute to more effective and meaningful partnerships between and among governments, local authorities, NGOs/CBOs, and the professional, academic and private sectors in addressing the challenges of sustainable human settlements development;



RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

1. Call for a co-ordinated strategy to be implemented by UNCHS (Habitat II) in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and all appropriate stakeholders, designed to empower action, influence policy at the local level, and promote real synergy between local, national and international development initiatives; and, to strengthen communication between national and local authorities and their constituencies;
2. Stress that any international effort for collecting and exchanging best practice information on human settlements development must be transparently designed and implemented with the organizations representing local authorities and other stakeholders, building upon their extensive international and national networks and expertise;
3. Recommend to the Preparatory Committee and the "City Summit" that the following considerations be added to complement the already adopted criteria of tangible impact, partnerships and sustainability for selecting those practices worthy of global dissemination:

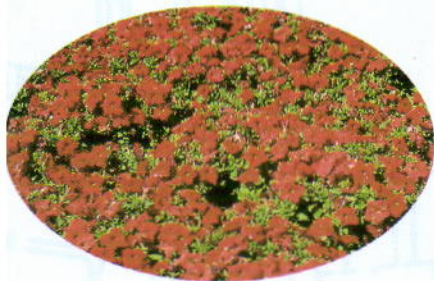
- a) Leadership in inspiring action and change, including change in public policy;
 - b) Promotion of accountability and transparency;
 - c) Empowerment of people, neighbourhoods and communities and incorporation of their contributions;
 - d) Acceptance of and responsiveness to social and cultural diversity;
 - e) Potential for transferability, adaptability and replicability;
 - f) Appropriateness to local conditions and levels of development;
 - g) Promotion of social equality and equity.
4. Further suggest that the following be incorporated to strengthen the unified reporting process to enhance best practice dissemination:
- a) Ready and user-friendly access in all major languages to concise summary information outlining the elements and giving contact details for follow-up inquiries;
 - b) Formation of international networks to assess innovation, creativity and transferability of practices at various levels of development;
 - c) Establishment with the international associations of local authorities and other stakeholders of national and regional focal points to advice on the usefulness and on-going refinement of the system;



- d) Formation of international networks to assess the extent to which participatory processes are used and diverse interests and needs, particularly those related to gender differences are assessed;
 - e) Development and use of indicators for participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, disaggregated by gender and age.
5. Welcome the steps being taken by UNCHS (Habitat) in developing a global electronic catalogue on best practices, in its various forms including the Internet, CD-ROM, diskette and printed form, as well as other practical means of facilitating access by policy makers and practitioners to the experience of their counterparts in addressing common problems;
 6. Encourage all governments, United Nations Agencies, local authorities and their associations, NGOs/CBOs and professional associations to work toward common reporting formats and processes and to establish direct and cross referencing links with each others systems and with the UNCHS (Habitat) electronic catalogue of best practices in order to greatly enhance and facilitate the transmission of information, experience and expertise to their respective end-users;
 7. Call upon UNCHS (Habitat), in partnership with governments, other United Nations agencies, associations representing local authorities, the private, public, non-governmental, professional and voluntary sectors to explore mechanisms for compilation, systematic analysis and assessment of best practices as an integral part of the follow-up process beyond Habitat II, for the purpose of:



- a) Developing best practice initiatives as sites of learning for sharing their experiences and knowledge base with the global community;
 - b) Using and disseminating best practice case studies as training, management and organizational development materials;
 - c) Further developing the best practices catalogue as a means of matching supply and demand for technical co-operation at all levels;
 - d) Compiling and disseminating an international roster of experience, expertise and knowledge based on those persons, institutions and organizations directly responsible for implementing the best practices;
 - e) Promoting the transfer and adaptation of environmentally sound, socially-responsive, economically viable technologies, products and services;
 - f) Furthering the transfer and adaptation of practical solutions for capacity-building, including staff exchange programmes, at the international, regional, national and local levels.
8. Welcome, with appreciation, the establishment by Dubai Municipality of the **Dubai Award for Best Practices** which will be administered in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat);
9. Call upon UNCHS (Habitat) to make the presentation of the Dubai Declaration a part of the official events of the Istanbul Conference.



22 Nov, 1995

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