

**United Nations Conference
on Human Settlements
HABITAT II
@
City Summit
Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996**

Note

**presented by the
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 5

Building the city of the twenty-first century is a major challenge. The city, which is in the throes of unprecedented development, is central to the upheavals taking place in the countries of both North and South. Thus approximately **two thirds of the inhabitants of the planet will be city-dwellers** by the next century.

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This urban revolution is bringing about a qualitative shift which we can link to the globalization of the economy and of technologies, and this in turn makes for far-reaching transformations whose consequences remain to be gauged. A worldwide urban frame is emerging. More and more cities are turning into **megapoles** that are spilling over into rural areas and endangering their ecosystems and original life-styles, highlighting the need for action to achieve **balanced development between rural and urban areas**.

While the rapid **social transformations** observed in cities today generate innovation and progress, they also bring with them social and spatial segregation between rich and poor and between 'legal' and 'illegal' cities, exacerbating the social divisions within societies.

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UNESCO is taking part in the construction of the city of the twenty-first century and is doing so on two fronts: **knowledge and action in the field. Humanizing the city** is UNESCO's **ethical message**.

One of the major tasks to be accomplished in the city is to provide **a shelter to every citizen**. The right to adequate housing is a **human right** enshrined in a number of international standard-setting instruments.

Cities in history have been cradles of civilization. The time has come to re-create the conditions that will restore to the metropolises of today their role as **centres of cultural influence and democracy**. The fight against **intolerance and poverty, injustice and social and cultural exclusion**, the affirmation of **solidarity** as a fundamental value of **democracy and human rights**, the promotion of a **culture of peace** and **education for citizenship** are just a few of the challenges still to be taken up along the road to the city of solidarity and citizenship.

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The face of the city, its architectural heritage and its public spaces engender a **city culture** in which inhabitants must be able to participate on a daily basis.

To live in the city also means **to protect the environment**, fight pollution, address the problems of **water, energy, waste, noise pollution and urban transport**, and so forth.

The city of the twenty-first century will be what its inhabitants make of it – especially **women and young people**, whose neighbourhood innovations in the social, economic and cultural spheres create bonds of solidarity.

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UNESCO will do its utmost to ensure implementation of the **Habitat II Global Plan of Action** by adopting a **partnership approach** that involves **all public and private actors at the local, national and international levels**. The Organization is continuing its action on behalf of **cities and human settlements through the programmes** it implements in its fields of competence.

The capacity for contribution, innovation

and action in favour of cities must be supported and enhanced through **education, training, information and communication**. UNESCO is involved in training **urban actors**, setting up information **networks and data banks**, and communication activities designed, in particular, for the media.

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The city of the twenty-first century must become a plural space and a place where **different cultures meet and mingle**, for it will need to manage complexity, aspiration to diversity and new forms of solidarity. In this way, it can at last become a unique place for laying the **foundations of peace** and harmony through **development and solidarity among citizens**.

... 2. Three rationales behind UNESCO's contribution

+ *Understanding in order to act*

Since UNESCO's mission is to improve and disseminate knowledge, it is implementing a number of **research programmes on society and nature**.

In the social sciences, UNESCO has created the **Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme**.

Its aim is both to contribute to better knowledge of the processes of social transformation and to put the findings of social research to good use in policy – and decision-making.

MOST is developing activities on cities as places of rapid transformation, particularly as regards social exclusion and cohesion, violence and multi culturalism in an urban setting and the relationship between cities and globalization. MOST's international research projects cover topics such as cities and sustainable development, urban violence, city language, industrialization of medium-sized cities and globalization, problems specific to mega-cities (with UNU), the environment and women in cities.

In the area of natural sciences, **UNESCO is encouraging research on the biosphere, environment and development, links between urban and rural areas, management of the city as an ecosystem, rational use of soil and waste management**

(MAB programme: Man and the Biosphere);
urban water-resources management
(IHP: International Hydrological Programme);
renewable energies in cities
and human settlements; reduction of risks
connected with natural disasters such as
earthquakes and floods (IGCP:
International Geological Correlation
programmes).

+ Acting in the field:

examples of UNESCO programmes

The MOST and MAB programmes, one
on natural science and the other on
ecological sciences, joined forces to
launch a programme on: ‘**Cities:**
management of social transformations
and the environment’.

This is a programme of experimental
actions in pilot sites in support of initiatives
by the inhabitants, especially women
and young people, to improve their own
living conditions. Its intention is to tackle,
on specific sites, social problems such as
under-employment, delinquency, drug
addiction, exploitation of women and
children, and environmental problems
such as those relating to water, waste and
various forms of pollution. The programme
is based on partnership involving
UNESCO, national authorities, local
communities, non-governmental organizations,
grass-roots associations and
research institutions and universities.

Training of urban actors: architects,
town-planners and developers, and also
elected local officials, civil servants and
social workers, is conducted by means of
the existing programmes of action such
as the **MOST and MAB programmes.**

UNESCO’s heritage programme has
made it possible to create the ‘World
Heritage Towns Network’ and to draw

up the **‘International Charter for**
the Conservation of Historic Towns
and Urban Areas’ which serves as a guide
for the authorities of historic towns when
it comes to managing historic centres
and integrating their life into the townplanning
development of urban conglomerations.

Many monuments have already been
rescued through the programmes for the
restoration of historic buildings in the
towns on the World Heritage List and

those targeted in UNESCO's International Safeguarding Campaign: they include the old city of Havana, the Medina of Fez and Dubrovnik.

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... The Organization's programmes on Man and the Biosphere (MAB) and the **Management of Social Transformations (MOST)** train urban actors: architects, town planners, developers, elected officials and social workers.

... Making the city a living cultural heritage

Throughout history, cities have been cradles of civilisation. Citizens can be taught the history of their cities thus engendering a sense of belonging to a community and responsibility for its development. Urban planners and policy-makers should focus on cultural development especially in disadvantaged areas. Exhibition areas and meeting places for the various cultures represented in the city could be established to promote tolerance and respect for diversity. UNESCO also supports cultural tourism that respects the identity and ecology of cities while creating jobs and improved economic development.

UNESCO's heritage programme has led to the establishment of the World Heritage Towns Network and the International Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas which serves as a guide for managing and integrating historic centres in urban planning.

Partnerships between the public and private sectors

The Organization will participate actively in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to be adopted at the Habitat II Conference.

Improving the living conditions of city dwellers is a massive challenge that requires partnerships linking the public and private sectors. UNESCO will work with non-governmental organizations, mayors and local authorities as well as scholars and scientists in the research and academic fields.

UNESCO has been working towards improving city life through many of its programmes.

For more than two decades, UNESCO's MAB programme has linked conservation and development through the creation of biosphere reserves. These are protected areas where conservation is combined with the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of local

communities, scientific research and world-wide information exchange. The MOST programme develops international research projects on cities that explore topics such as violence, urban language, the environment and women and shares these findings with decision-makers.

These two programmes have now joined forces in the *Cities; Management of Social*

Transformations and the Environment project. This activity seeks to help city residents, especially women and youth, tackle urban problems such as delinquency, drug addiction, unemployment and pollution,

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... UNESCO takes a leading role in promoting intergovernmental and interdisciplinary research and sharing of knowledge on urban issues. Its programme on Management of Social Transformations (MOST) actively facilitates exchange between public policy-makers and social scientists and supports a variety of comparative research with practical applications.

MOST is currently working on the Project on Cities with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme. This activity joins UNESCO's expertise in social and ecological science to encourage local initiatives and to improve the quality of life. These include measures to promote citizenship, training, the sharing of know-how as well as to boost urban employment in social and environmental professions.

MOST also serves as an international clearing house for collecting and distributing information on city management for the 21st century.

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... UNESCO has established an action-oriented project for the six-year period 1996-2001, entitled "Cities: management of social and environmental transformations". The first four years will be spent designing and implementing a small number of pilot activities. During the final biennium (2000-2001), a comparative evaluation of these experiments will be carried out, and proposals will be designed to improve policies for cities, mainly in respect of support for local communities in the context of urban management.

This project, anchored in the MOST (Management of Social Transformations) and MAB (Man and the Biosphere) programmes of UNESCO, will be implemented in partnership with local authorities, NGO's and grass-roots organisations. Co-operation with the international organisations and scientific communities is actively sought.

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... **W**HILE already implementing specific actions on social, cultural and ecological aspects of urban life, UNESCO will support the follow-up of HABITAT II by increasing research, training, information, dissemination and initiation of pilot projects in the field of urban and environmental management.

Other key UNESCO efforts

include:

- c The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme which did pioneering studies for over two decades, (1970 to 1990), on cities as ecosystems;
- l The International Hydrological Programme, working on water problems in cities.
- c UNESCO World Heritage Centre and its cities in the World Heritage List; this programme created a World Heritage Cities Network in 1991 in Quebec and, since then, The International Management Guide for Historical

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The need for sustainable development of cities

has become a major international priority.
as was underlined by the ‘Earth Summit’ in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and confirmed at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen

in 1994. It **is also a central focus of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) scheduled for 3-14 June 1996.**

in Istanbul, Turkey.

Through its scientific programmes MOST (Management of Social Transformations) and MAB (Man and Biosphere), UNESCO is participating actively in this renewed examination.

Over the period 1996-2001, an experimental collaboration between MOST and MAB will design and implement a number of pilot activities in collaboration with NGOs, local authorities, and grass-roots organizations, and will on this basis draw up proposals for improving policies for cities, particularly as regards support for local communities as a part of urban management.

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http://www.unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi51_towns_en.pdf

Bureau of Public Information

memobpi

Towns and human habitats (2006)

Almost 50% of the world’s population or some 3 billion people now live in towns and cities. Apart from being places of urban poverty, cities are also considered as engines of development, principal sources of social change and communication, centres of cultural expression, innovation and inter-cultural exchange.

...Urban sprawl and pollution very often adversely affect the natural environment and biodiversity both inside and outside cities. To minimize their effects, UNESCO’s Division of Ecological Sciences (ECO), within the framework of its Man and the Biosphere programme (MAB), upholds the

integrated ecosystem approach to urban management, applying the biosphere reserve concept to the city and its hinterland. Cities working along the lines include Cape Town, Chicago, Rome, Seoul, Sao Paulo and Stockholm.

... As lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), UNESCO views cities as the chief centres of thought and action when it comes to education and learning about sustainable development.

... In the framework of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, the World Heritage Cities Programme was established and the formation of several cities networks encouraged, such as the creation of the Organisation of World Heritage Cities aiming at enhancing the exchange of experience on the international level. The Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture as well as the Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes have been drawn up recently and since then serve as guiding tools for integrated management and planning of historic urban areas.

<http://earthwatch.unep.net/about/docs/ewwp7-4.php>



**UNITED NATIONS
SYSTEM-WIDE EARTHWATCH**

Environmental Security

UNECE B Environment and Human Settlements Division

The Environment Ministers at the Aarhus 1998 Conference "Environment for Europe" voiced the urgent need to stop the continuous degradation of the environment in the whole of the UN/ECE region, with particular emphasis on the newly independent States. **There is growing consensus today that environmental degradation and resource depletion can amplify or cause conflict and instability. Environmental or resource problems that substantively diminish incomes or employment and cause environmental and health hazards pose threats to national security.**

Floods, water scarcity and pollution, depletion of fish stocks due to over-fishing or pollution, deforestation, desertification, land degradation and erosion, unsafe waste disposal, accidents with hazardous chemicals, and environmental consequences of armed conflicts are examples of environmental factors that contribute to human insecurity, social tensions and political instability. Conflicts over shared natural resources and ecosystems may lead to tensions within and between States. Conflicts in some parts of the region may have an impact also on other parts, directly or indirectly. All this undermines the efforts of countries themselves and of the international community to promote an economically prosperous, environmentally and socially sound UNECE region.

The time is ripe for the upcoming fifth Ministerial Conference AEnvironment for Europe@ (Kiev, Ukraine, 21-23 May 2003) to make a well-focused contribution to strengthening environmental security in the region. It should, first of all, shed light on key linkages between environmental, social, economic and security issues to help build political consensus on measures needed to resolve the problems. Second, there is a need for the Conference to send a strong political message on policy integration as a powerful tool to promote the environmental security of all countries. Important tools to be considered would cover strategic environmental assessment and integrated land-use planning. Third, the Ministers in Kiev should take important confidence-building and tension-reduction measures. These may include partnership arrangements between Governments with active participation and wider involvement of business and industry, civil society organizations and other major groups. Fourth, the Kiev Conference should also discuss how to strengthen the capacity of countries to cope effectively with environmental insecurity and the way in which the international community can help in this respect. It can address the issues of improving water management, reinforcing environmental institutions including enforcement and compliance agencies, improving public environmental financing, strengthening environmental management in enterprises, and improving environmental education and training.

Building a Culture of Prevention

UNESCO B Unit for Disaster Reduction

Within the framework of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), UNESCO is engaged in ABuilding a culture of prevention@ to counter disasters and reduce vulnerability of populations at risk.

There is today more scientific knowledge and technical know-how than ever to anticipate and mitigate the potential effects of a disaster before it strikes. Yet the number and the impact of natural disasters are increasing. The toll is particularly severe and tragic in poor urban areas of developing countries. The vulnerability of poor and developing countries is increasing as a result of population growth, uncontrolled urbanisation in disaster-prone areas, alteration of the natural environment, and substandard training of city planners and decision makers. Disasters touch the most vulnerable populations, increasing their vulnerability further. To break the vicious circle, disaster prevention and mitigation measures have to be fully and systematically integrated in development processes and planning.

Disaster mitigation involves knowledge and know-how in many domains and necessitates constant dialogue and concerted action of all the actors concerned: general public, scientists and decision-makers.

UNESCO contributes to and participates in the global efforts that enhance preventive interdisciplinary and participatory approaches.

UNESCO is engaged in the assessment and mitigation of risks arising from hazards of geological origin (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and landslides) and contributes to the study of hazards of meteorological origin (storms, floods, prolonged droughts, desertification).

UNESCO provides sustained support to promote research and understanding of the basic natural events processes, of the societal aspects of disasters and of the interface of the two fields.

Intergovernmental scientific programmes such as the International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the Man and the Biosphere Programme, the programmes of UNESCO's intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and UNESCO programme on the Management of Social Transformation (MOST), in their areas of competence participate in this effort.

UNESCO also contributes to the three global observing systems, the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) and the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS).

To integrate geo-hazard knowledge and expertise in decision-making processes, to encourage the adoption of policies and actions of sound planning and management of land-use and construction techniques,

to promote the development of preventive and preparedness plans, including the implementation of global to local warning systems, UNESCO fosters information, education, transfer of data and experience among countries and communities.

Sharing of knowledge, of data, of resources and know-how is encouraged at the community, national, regional and international levels. Capacity building and user-oriented approaches are fostered. Successful pilot projects are publicized.

Education, communication and information are promoted at all levels, involving scientists, technicians, promoting a sustained dialogue for an increased awareness among policy makers, public and private sector, and local communities. Support is given to the design and dissemination of training and information materials.

UNESCO supports the development and design of educational building and structures capable to withstand disaster forces and participates in the protection of the world cultural heritage against natural disasters.

UNESCO's action is a long-term commitment. UNESCO has no relief action. But it may participate punctually after a catastrophic event in post-disaster investigation, recovery and rehabilitation with the objectives to use this window of opportunity to promote or reactivate prevention initiatives.

Soren Terpager Malling
Head of Unit for Disaster Reduction

Biosphere Reserve

UNESCO - Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB)

The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) develops the basis, within the natural and the social sciences, for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, and for the improvement of the relationship between people and their environment globally. By taking advantage of the trans-disciplinary and cross-cultural opportunities of UNESCO=s mandate in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, MAB is promoting both scientific research and information gathering, as well as linking with traditional knowledge about resource use. **It must serve to help implement Agenda 21 and related Conventions, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity.**

The biosphere reserve concept is a key component for achieving MAB=s objectives. Biosphere Reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems under a particular regime: ideally, fully functioning Biosphere Reserves perform three

main roles: (i) conservation in situ of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and landscapes, as well as the diversity there within; (ii) establishment of demonstration areas for ecologically and socio-culturally sustainable (land and) resource use; and (iii) provision of logistic support for research, monitoring, education, training and information exchange related to conservation and sustainable development issues. These functions are associated through a zonation system consisting of core, buffer and transition areas. **Biosphere Reserves are internationally recognized within the framework of the MAB Programme, and remain under sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located; they are united globally into the World Network of Biosphere Reserves**, and as of September 2001 there are 411 sites established in 94 countries.

The Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring Programme (BRIM) is implemented as part of the MAB programme. BRIM originated in 1991 from an initiative of MAB=s regional network for Europe and North America B EuroMAB. Since then, the goals of BRIM have expanded to include provision of possibilities for the interdisciplinary monitoring of biosphere reserves, to provide scientific, administrative and policy-making communities with access to all kinds of information available in biosphere reserves, and to provide means for systematic exchange of scientific information.

Recent decisions of MAB=s governing body - the International Co-ordinating Council of the MAB programme

- were that current work on BRIM should be reoriented to reflect the specificity of biosphere reserves on people and their environment; that BRIM should be provided with an integrated monitoring dimension by incorporating social sciences, including social and economic indicators; and that it should build on existing relevant monitoring initiatives such as the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS). These recommendations have formed the basis for the Special Meeting on BRIM, which took place in FAO Headquarters in Rome in September this year.

The recommendations on the future implementation of BRIM from this meeting were of two-fold nature, as they included:

66847511 Conceptual guidance for the future development of BRIM, including clarifications on the definition of integrated monitoring as well as principles that should be born in mind while designing and implementing activities in the framework of BRIM; and

66847512 Concrete recommendations on actions to be undertaken, based on the comparative advantage of biosphere reserves for monitoring, as well as opportunities and constraints that were identified at the workshop.

As a result a workplan was proposed, with the following main elements:

- activities aiming at developing methodologies for BRIM;
- a process for compilation of case studies;
- pilot studies/projects in selected regions/sites around a number of themes (socio-

economic monitoring, integrated mapping and remote sensing, scaling, adaptation, and data requirements/management);

- key partners;
- funding aspects;

- a metadata facility to be developed and maintained by a body that assumes quality assessment/quality control.

The above-mentioned metadata facility is currently under development. However, a first phase is already available and searchable on the website of the MAB Programme

- >MABnet.=

It includes basic facts about biosphere reserves such as ecosystem types, location, area, contact persons as well as research and monitoring activities. Thus it gives information on what research and monitoring activities are carried out by which biosphere reserves. This information can be searched either by a free search or by using four predefined lists under the themes abiotic, biodiversity, socio-economic and integrated monitoring (see attached list). There is at the moment no collection of data.

This metadata facility can be visited at:

<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/database.asp>.

Katarina Vestin
MAB Programme