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ACTIVITIES OF CEPAL IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

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CONTENT

/Introduction

Introduction

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, represents a change of approach to the conception of the problems and solutions traditionally linked to urban development and housing. The earlier fragmentary partial view, dominated by an excessive concern for housing, construction and urban planning, has been replaced by an integral notion, in which these questions are part of the general socio-economic development process. Within this perspective, habitat cannot be dealt with in isolation from the facts which affect the activities aimed at raising the quality of human life. The Vancouver recommendations and Plan of Action stress that the problems of the habitat, as a physical expression of social processes, can only be solved as part of national development policies.

These recommendations are mainly aimed at the developing countries and imply the formulation of express settlement policies, together with a challenge, in that territorial management and the improvement of the habitat must be achieved under conditions of critical poverty and under pressure from exceptionally rapid population growth and urbanization. In the circumstances, an effort is required to replace the traditional policies and create new instruments for their implementation. Generally speaking, there is a need to produce non-conventional goods and services, in a context of different forms of organization and financing. This effort, which requires political imagination economic rationality and technological readjustment, will not be easy nor can its objectives be achieved in the short-term, since it involves new conceptual instruments and a better institutional and personal preparation in order to make innovative and creative use of inadequately used natural resources, human capacities and cultural characteristics.

The restructuring of settlement policies, the revision of the institutional apparatus which supports the management of human settlements and the training of the agents constitutes an undertaking which affects all the countries of the region and which CEPAL cannot evade. CEPAL's contribution, however, cannot be merely academic, but must be part of a process of conscientization and exchange of experience, since formulas cannot be recommended nor techniques transmitted. The solutions must be imaginative and innovative in order to be efficient in the conditions prevailing in Latin America, as regards the promotion and search for realistic answers which emerge as the result of methodical reflexion and the availability of specific information, rather than from imports of technologies developed in other socio-cultural contexts.

The importance of the recommendations of the Vancouver Conference and the existence of similar situations in the countries of the region, justifies and permits an accurate definition of the supporting functions of CEPAL as regards the efforts of member countries in this regard. General Assembly resolution 32/162, indicates how the United Nations should be organized in order to perform this supporting function, and mentions two different types of activity for the regional executive units. The technical secretariat requirements' for the region's consultation and decision-making machinery must be attented to while new regional programmes on human settlements must be prepared and implemented.

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This document reviews the activities of the Executive Secretariat in this double role and makes a proposal as regards the Regional Human Settlements Programme (RHSP) for the period 1982-1983, mainly aimed at the training of the capacities required for the countries to be able to carry out the recommendations of the Vancouver Conference within the limits of their own policies. The implementation of the 1982-1983 programme will be affected by the limitation on the regular resources available to the Commission, which will make it necessary to resort to extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations system, of other international co-operation bodies and the member countries of CEPAL.

The programme proposed for 1982-1983 has been examined with a group of high-level government experts who have contributed their experience and know-how in a personal capacity in a collective consultation held in Mexico in March 1981. However, this proposal is sponsored by the Executive Secretariat and is open to the comments and amendments which the Committee on Human Settlements of the nineteenth session of the Commission may consider it desirable to introduce at its meeting of May 1981.

A. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT SINCE THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION

In the last six years the Latin American and Caribbean countries have dealt with the question of human settlements on eight occasions, four of them in regional meetings or conferences exclusively devoted to this subject:

1975 Caracas: Regional Preparatory Conference for Latin America on Human Settlements
1976 Vancouver: Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements
1976 Mexico: Latin American Regional Meeting on Human Settlements (convened by CEPAL at the request of Mexico)
1977 Guatemala: Seventeenth session of the Commission (resolution 378 (XVII) on regional co-operation in the field of human settlements)
1978 Mexico: United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean on financing and environmental management of human settlements
1979 La Paz: Eighteenth session of the Commission (resolution 407 (XVIII) provided for the creation of sessional committees on human settlements)
1979 Mexico: Latin American Conference on Human Settlements
1980 Mexico: Third meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS)

These meetings reached important agreements that reflect the interest which the countries of the region have given to human settlements.

In 1975, research projects of common interest for the countries were prepared for the first time. In September 1976, the Latin American Regional Meeting on Human Settlements was the first of the regional meetings held since the Vancouver Conference (May-June 1976). At this meeting, the region's needs for assistance and its priority aspects, many of which had already been mentioned

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at the Caracas Conference, were more precisely defined. Also for the first time the creation of an intergovernmental body was considered following the recommendations of the Vancouver Conference.

In 1977 on the occasion of the seventeenth session of the Commission, the member countries adopted resolution 378 (XVII) requesting the Executive Secretariat of the Commission, to make a start on the regional human settlements programme which will give priority to research, the training of human resources and information.

In 1979, during the eighteenth session of the Commission, the member countries adopted resolution 407 (XVIII), which provides for the creation of committees on human settlements which would meet every two years on the occasion of the ordinary meetings of the Commission.

At this same meeting it was also agreed to convene a Latin American Conference on Human Settlements, which took place in November of that year in Mexico City. This conference endorsed and expanded the mandate on the regional human settlements programme and requested the Executive Secretary to create an administrative unit which would be responsible for the duties described in General Assembly resolution 32/162.

1. Regional Human Settlements Programme (RHSP)

For the implementation of this programme, between 1977 and 1979 the Executive-Secretariat only had extrabudgetary resources contributed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). With these resources a study was made of the first research topic indicated by the member countries for the Regional Programme, and a start was made on a programme on human settlements technology, implemented jointly by CEPAL and UNEP between 1977 and 1979.

The first of these activities, a global study of the social aspects of the environment in Latin America, took the form of four monographs, a formal model and a map of the region's human settlements. This study made it possible to accumulate considerable knowledge of the Latin American habitat, and provided the information needed to prepare the documentation submitted by the Executive Secretariat to the Latin American Conference on Human Settlements held in Mexico in November 1979.

The CEPAL/UNEP programme on human settlements technology, the first phase of which was completed in December 1979, prepared two demonstration projects which were implemented in co-operation with the Government of Mexico (human settlements technologies in the wet tropics, and the experimental training of cadres) a regional census of centres for the research and development of human settlements technology, and the preparation of a directory of regional users and producers of these technologies. Two seminars on training in technologies suited to the wet tropics were held in two countries of the region, and two regional meetings on specific aspects of appropriate technologies. The programme also made a start on preparing a document file of technological options and a register of current scientific and technological research projects in the

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region. At this time, five monographs on the state of knowledge of optional techniques and a glossary of technical terms are being prepared for publication. CEPAL, together with UNEP, is studying the financing of the second phase of this programme, which will mainly be aimed at the official establishment of an institutional network in the region and the enlargement of the file of technological options.

The annex contains a list of the documents prepared as part of the Regional Human Settlements Programme between 1977 and 1980.

2. Supplementary activities

Once the budgetary resources contributed by CIDA and UNEP were exhausted, the Executive Secretariat carried out the following work with its own resources:

(a) At the request of the member countries at the Latin American Conference on Human Settlements (Mexico, 1979), a survey was prepared of the implementation of the recommendations of the Vancouver Conference.

(b) Pursuant to the fourth recommendation of this Conference, the Executive Secretariat organized, with the co-operation of UNDP and UNEP, a seminar on appropriate technologies for human settlements which took place in Managua, Nicaragua, from 3-15 November 1980, in collaboration with the Government of this country, and was attended by 27 professionals, experts in the preparation and implementation of human settlements policies, programmes and projects;

(c) At the request of Habitat, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements a co-operative study has been prepared on the construction industry in Latin America, and will be used by the Centre for preparing a global review requested by the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements;

(d) Two projects in co-operation with the Centre were begun: (i) the preparation of a general methodology for the planning (national and local) of human settlements, and (ii) the development of appropriate technologies for slum urban and rural settlements.

B. PROGRAMME 1982-1983

General Assembly resolution 32/162 lays down that the activities of the United Nations in the field of human settlements should be conducted at the regional level using the budgetary resources of the economic commissions in each region, the resources transferred by the Habitat Centre, voluntary contributions by the countries and contributions which may be obtained from bilateral and multilateral co-operation bodies. The Regional Human Settlements Programme (RHSP), constitutes the official instrument which permits the channelling of these resources to achieve the objectives indicated by the countries of the region.

In the past the implementation of the RHSP came up against the notorious disparity between the mandate of the member countries and the resources available to the Executive Secretariat. Had it not been for the contributions of extra resources from agreements signed prior to the meeting which adopted the regional programme (Guatemala, 1977), it would have been impossible to carry out any

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activity in the field of human settlements. In any case, it was not possible to comply with the request for studies made by the countries except when their nature coincided with the topics agreed upon with CIDA and UNEP.

In preparing the programme for 1982-1983, the Secretariat has tried to ensure that its future activities in this field will be in keeping with the resources actually available and that maximum use will be made of scanty resources. The programme for 1982-1983 stresses the training of human resources, an activity to which the countries of the region allocated one of their highest priorities and which was expressly indicated in resolution 32/162 as the main activity at the regional level. At the third session of the Commission on Human Settlements, the preference for training programmes was specifically stressed at the request of the Latin American countries. CEPAL has a long tradition in this field, of which its recent experience with the RHSP is part. Three seminars on the subject of suitable technologies for human settlements were therefore held between 1978 and 1980.

The three components of the programme 1981-1983 described in detail below and which should be maintained in successive programmes, correspond to the basic priorities of the RHSP 1977-1979, as indicated by the countries at the seventeenth session of the Commission in resolution 378 (XVII) of 5 May 1977; however their content has been altered to bring them into line with the recommendations of the group of experts invited by the Executive Secretariat to the consultative meeting in March 1981. Thus the programme proposed is organized as follows:

1. Research
   (a) Methodological framework for the planning of human settlements
   (b) Financing of the needs of human settlements
   (c) Administration of plans and programmes
   (d) Human settlements technologies

2. Training of human resources
   (a) Training of technical cadres
   (b) Training for collective participation
   (c) Expansion of vocational training
   (d) Training of university teachers
   (e) Promotion and advisory services for vocational training programmes

3. Information and dissemination
   (a) Regional network for technological exchange
   (b) Exchange of publications
   (c) Exchange of experience
   (d) Means of communication and dissemination

/1. Research

1. Research

The research activities are directly linked with the subprogramme for the training of human resources, for which they should provide the main source of knowledge. However, the product of the studies carried out should be of value in itself and contribute to the progress of knowledge in the region. In order to fulfil this objective, the research topics proposed correspond in their majority to methodological frameworks intented to serve as a basis for more precise methodologies and procedures which can only be determined within each country.

(a) Planning of human settlements

The aim is to produce, in co-operation with the Habitat Centre in Nairobi, a methodological guide which will serve the countries of the region in planning their national human settlements systems and in preparing strategies for improving the habitat. The study stresses the distribution of population with a view to being of service to the decentralization policies in which most of the countries of the region are engaged, and corresponds to one of the topics proposed in the RHSP 1977-1979 which could not be implemented for lack of resources.

It is anticipated that it will be necessary to establish differences between human settlements policies at the national and local level. The former must reflect and at the same time support national socio-economic development strategies. The latter, aimed at the improvement of the habitat, should show substantial differences depending on the different categories of settlement, in terms of the relative speed of population growth and the concentration of economic investments.

A first version of the methodological framework, already started, should be completed in October 1981. For 1982 a regional meeting of experts to study this first version, and an experimental application in one country of the region, are planned. For 1983 the preparation of a series of materials for teaching and dissemination is planned, based on the theoretical work and its practical application. At the same time three workshops will be held which will apply the teaching techniques tried out in the seminars held between 1978 and 1980 by CEPAL in the field of human settlements technology.

(b) Financing of human settlements needs

The study will be aimed at reviewing the systems and procedures existing in the countries of the region, to establish new financial systems capable of offering greater coverage to the lower income groups, including the informal sector, to deal with their requirements for housing and housing services. The new schemes should constitute forms of financial assistance not only of completed dwellings but of processes of production, assembly and distribution of physical components of human settlements. These schemes should also be specially designed to cut costs, incorporate new forms of work and organization and contribute to a better distribution of the contribution of the public sector.

/(c) Administration

(c) Administration of plans and programmes

The inertia of the past places in practice a considerable obstacle in the way of new policies and strategies for territorial management and improvement of the habitat, particularly during the periods of transition which follow the adoption of new strategies and policies. Assuming that the governments decide to undertake new orientations as regards human settlements, it would be necessary to have practical guidelines for reorganizing the institutional apparatus on the basis of the experience of the countries of the region. These guidelines should include, inter alia, alternatives for the traditional forms of management which will make it possible to increase the level of participation of the population and the efficacy of the norms and regulations which mainly concern the control of the growth of human settlements, particularly as regards the use and transfer of land.

(d) Human settlements technology

In the technology normally applied to the construction of buildings and the supply of urban and rural services, imported solutions predominate which are frequently inadequate for the socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions of the majority of the countries of the region. This is not, however, a question of directly carrying out research and technical development studies, but of co-operating with the member countries in their efforts at technological rationalization.

This subprogramme would therefore be oriented towards the preparation of conceptual and methodological bases for the selection of appropriate technologies in general. These technologies should correspond to particular circumstances of place, time and culture, which can only be defined to the application of selective criteria. Within these criteria the use of conventional energy and its replacement by new sources of energy is of special importance in the region, and in this regard the design of urban planning and architectural forms and the use of adequate construction materials would receive special attention, particularly in the tropical ecosystems which constitute an important part of the regional space and at the same time, constitute the largest reserve of territory for population settlement.

Activities in this line of research would include a project on suitable construction technologies for spontaneous and rural settlements which the Executive Secretariat is implementing jointly with the Habitat Centre in Nairobi.

2. Training of human resources

Training, which constitutes the backbone of the programme, would be divided into five groups of activities closely linked with each other: (i) training of technical cadres; (ii) training for collective participation; (iii) extension of vocational training; (iv) training of university teachers, and (v) promotion and advisory services to vocational training centres.

/(a) Training

(a) Training of technical cadres

It is considered that the greatest difficulty for the implementation of new human settlement policies is the great shortage of technical cadres to act within medium-sized and small communities, which means that this component of the programme is aimed at training non-university personnel to carry out auxilliary tasks in the communities and municipalities which do not have professional staff and require sufficient knowledge in order to be able to deal with the improvement of their habitat within limitations of size, organization and resources.

This activity has been conceived of as part of the perspective tried out in the demonstration project implemented within the CEPAL/UNEP Programme of human settlements technology in 1979, which combines training in the field with the experimental creation of internal assistance networks, so as to prepare non-university technical personnel during the implementation of experimental projects of assistance to small and self-constructing communities.

(b) Training for collective participation

This is a group of activities aimed at training the population in general, community leaders, political leaders and authorities, particularly in the base communities, so as to increase collective participation in the formulation of programmes, construction of goods and services for housing and the control and maintenance of the environment. These activities would serve to study the conditions of the countries of the region for the use of the mass media and appropriate programmes would be designed for the diffusion of methods of collective participation, appropriate technologies and information related to human settlements, most particularly as regards the experience of the countries of the region with most capacity for contributing innovative solutions.

(c) Extension of vocational training

The training of professionals responsible for the public sector programmes relating to the habitat would be effected by means of seminars or workshops intended to supplement their formation, so as to prepare them for efficacious intervention in the construction processes, which have generally non-explicit economic, social, cultural and environmental repercussions on the training programmes of the majority of the region's university centres.

In order to transmit new knowledge and experience in a short space of time, a method of active participation based on modern communication techniques, is required. In this method, the traditional role of the teacher is replaced by that of a guide in a collective learning process in which the participants discuss and frequently question the concepts, thus contributing to the continued progress of knowledge.

/(d) Training

(d) Training of university teachers

This activity would take the form of courses of university teachers aimed at expanding their teaching field and orienting it according to new prospects. It would also include one or more seminars for the extension of vocational training as described in the previous paragraph. These could be held during the university vacations and would be organized on a subregional basis so as to serve groups of countries from training centres selected according to their contributing capacity. Participants in the courses would be exclusively practising school or university teachers or staff presented by Latin American universities as part of programmes to improve their teaching staff.

(e) Promotion and advisory services for vocational training programmes

This activity supplements the above and would be aimed at offering assistance to vocational training, university and technical training centres interested in improving their training programmes in terms of the changes recommended by the Vancouver Conference and national development needs in the sphere of human settlements. The assistance would not only consist in the supply of teaching material, particularly audiovisual methods and texts, but also in assistance missions for the reorganization of existing programmes and the creation of new training centres. For this type of activity CEPAL possesses basic information both in CLADES and in the unit responsible for the RHSP on the majority of the centres which currently offer post-graduate courses in urban and regional development.

3. Information and dissemination

This group of activities would aim at offering support to the activities of research and dissemination of knowledge as regards human settlements within the region. The activities would be implemented where possible by means of networks already established, such as LATINAH, CAVEIS/SELA and INFOTERRA. The programme includes, in addition to the network for technological exchange which will be set up with the co-operation of UNEP, the exchange of publications and local experiences and mass media dissemination.

(a) Regional network for technological exchange

In co-operation with UNEP and as a continuation of the Programme on Human Settlements Technology, which was implemented between 1977 and 1979, it is aimed to set up a network for technological exchange so as to contribute to progress in the concept and the practice of appropriate technologies for the human habitat. This project aims at establishing the necessary machinery to ensure the exchange between institutions and persons who devote themselves to research, development, education and dissemination in this regard. The project includes the identification of institutions which work in this field and the periodic revision of the Directorio de Usuarios y Productores de Tecnologías de Asentamientos Humanos, the first version of which was published by CEPAL in December 1979, and the expansion of the Archivo Documental de Alternativas Tecnológicas, started that same year.

/(b) Exchange

(b) Exchange of publications

This activity would aim at offering information to national institutions and persons on the publications regularly produced in the countries of the region and abroad. In some cases, copies could be supplied of certain non-commercial publications and documents in general which it would otherwise be difficult to obtain. In the future, translations of texts could be offered which are only available in languages other than those of the countries interested. The volume of information already accumulated in CEPAL on settlements in general and on technological alternatives in particular may contribute basic elements to this activity.

(c) Exchange of experience

This would be a matter of organizing a service for the identification, review and dissemination of experience accumulated in the region (policies, organization, planning and technologies), which may be useful for the countries interested in introducing innovations into their institutional policies and organization. In some cases, appraisal studies will be organized to test the efficacy of the solutions selected and the feasibility of their transfer to similar situations. The formation of an inventory of institutional and personal capabilities available in the countries would complete this activity, and thus offer an important service for interregional co-operation and the horizontal transfer of know-how and experts.

(d) Dissemination of the programme through the mass media

The objective of this component of the information and dissemination activities would be the production and distribution of material for the mass media, particularly audiovisual material, for training persons for collective participation at all levels. A latent demand for these communication materials does actually exist; they can be disseminated through the radio and television in particular, and inform the population as regards the sense of collective responsibility for improving the quality of human settlements and the environment in general.

The production of audiovisual material for vocational training courses and seminars would be another objective of this activity, which would thus be of an auxiliary nature as regards these courses and seminars.

The production and distribution of this type of information material requires resources which few countries of the region possess of themselves. The transport, distribution and final use of the material produced in turn requires special machinery which would have to be set up regionally and in collaboration with certain international co-operation bodies such as the information services of the Habitat Centre and UNEP.

/C. FINANCIAL

C. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION

1. Regional programme

The table given below sums up the financial implications of the proposed programme. As it is easy to see, the majority of its components do not have financial resources for their implementation, and this imposes a need for a financing strategy which implies a common effort by the countries of the region to mobilize the co-operation of other international, multilateral and bilateral co-operation bodies, and member countries of CEPAL.

An important element for collective bargaining could be the definition of profiles corresponding to the different components of the programme which do not have clearly specified sources of financing. Some of these projects may attract the interest of certain member countries and serve as a basis for obtaining supplementary resources from outside the region. In this regard, the specific possibilities of horizontal co-operation could provide an efficient framework whose possibilities should not be underestimated. The participation of regional financing bodies such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the subregional banks and financial corporations could constitute another important objective of the proposed strategy.

In these negotiations it must be borne in mind that the work programmes for 1982-1983 of the agencies of the United Nations system have already been drawn up and only additional resources can be obtained, which although not substantial, could help to solve the immediate financial problem. In this regard, the financing of the extension of vocational training component by means of UNDP resources in principle allocated to the countries of the region (indicative figure) could be mobilized when the countries themselves show interest. These resources are relatively modest, and it is assumed that they could be contributed, as has happened in the past, without much difficulty.

2. Institutional organization

(a) Committee on human settlements

The adoption and supervision of the policies, programmes and projects for human settlements are incumbent on CEPAL as the highest United Nations political organ in the region. In resolution 407 (XVIII), CEPAL decided "that regional co-operation in the field of human settlements should be the subject of analysis and specific examination by committees especially established for the purpose at the sessions of CEPAL"; and urged member governments "to send to the sessions of the Commission, or of the Committee which may deal with the subject, at least one expert in this field to provide the necessary technical support to their delegations".

This decision was subsequently confirmed when the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL, meeting in New York on 20 November 1980 to review the rationalization of the institutional structure and the pattern of meetings, decided, in resolution 419 (Plen.14), paragraph (h), that the subject of human settlements, inter alia should be discussed in sessional committees at each of the Commission's biennial sessions.

/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RHSP (1982-1983)

Subprogramme	Component	Financial sources anticipated	Comments
1. RESEARCH	(a) Planning of human resources	UNCHS	(begun in 1981)
	(b) Financing of human settlements requirements	Not specified	
	(c) Administration of plans and programmes	Not specified	
	(d) Technology of the human resources	Partially specified UNCHS	
2. TRAINING	(a) Training of technical cadres	Not specified	
	(b) Training for collective participation	Not specified	
	(c) Extension of vocational training	UNDP	(subject to request by the countries interested)
	(d) Training of university teachers	Not specified	
	(e) Promotion and advisory services for vocational training programmes	Not specified	
3. INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION	(a) Regional network for technological exchange	UNEP	(at the negotiation stage)
	(b) Exchange of publications	Not specified	
	(c) Exchange of experience	Not specified	
	(d) Means of communication and dissemination	Not specified	

/The sessional

The sessional committees on human settlements constitute the machinery for technical consultation which may propose the resolutions needed to authorize policies, programmes and projects of common interest for all the member countries. The combined action of the committees on human settlements and the Commission itself carry out in a practical form the aims expressed by the General Assembly in resolution 32/162 when it decided that the "regional committees shall be responsible for the formulation of regional and subregional policies and programmes and for their implementation".

The cost of operation of the sessional committees on human settlements is incorporated in the cost of the regular meetings of the Commission and therefore does not have additional financial repercussions.

(b) Secretariat

General Assembly resolution 32/162 recommended in section IV "Organization at the regional level" that: "... each regional committee should be served by a unit of the secretariat with the parent regional commission under an executive officer ..." and that "the principal functions of the regional secretariat units should be: (a) To serve the regional committees referred to in paragraph 1 of the present section; (b) To review progress in the implementation of programmes with the regions; (c) To promote the active collaboration of governmental representatives in activities related to human settlements; (d) To assist Governments of countries in the region in the formulation of their requests for assistance through the appropriate bilateral and multilateral bodies; (e) To establish close links with the appropriate financial institutions at the regional and global levels and with regional units of the specialized agencies; (f) To formulate, implement and supervise regional and subregional programmes and projects, especially regional training programmes; (g) To execute regional human settlements projects".

The creation of a new administrative unit in CEPAL has come up against the financial restrictions the United Nations is currently facing. Foreseeing this, resolution 32/162 established a system of regional reallocation of the regular budgetary resources which served to establish Habitat, Centre for Human Settlements CEPAL has to date received, as have the other regional economic commissions, two professional and one general services post. These posts, which belong to the staff of the Centre in Nairobi, constitute temporary assistance resources which would become permanent as from 1982, depending on a decision by the General Assembly.

However, these posts have been allocated for the implementation of specific projects which are part of both the CEPAL Programme and the Habitat Centre, and thus cannot be considered as part of the secretariat staff. Thus the human resources available to the Executive Secretariat for dealing with the first five duties mentioned in the first paragraph of this section, (a) to (f) inclusive, are reduced to one official of the Commission's staff in Santiago, Chile, who has been transferred to the CEPAL Mexico Office and also act as Co-ordinator of the RHSP.

/Resources will

Resources will also be necessary for staff travel within the region and for holding an annual meeting of experts. The travel and meetings are indispensable for closer working relations between the secretariat and the national bodies responsible for human settlements. Meetings of a consultative nature are anticipated with small groups of experts of the region, in order to review topics of common interest.

D. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The Vancouver Conference signified not only a change in the form in which the question of human settlements had been traditionally dealt with, but also determined a restructuring of the machinery for technical assistance, particularly within the United Nations.

The activities of the United Nations in this field have been entrusted to the Commission on Human Settlements, which acts as a specialized deliberative body within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Commission is made up of 58 member States chosen in rotation for periods of three years, out of which ten posts are reserved for Latin America and the Caribbean.

At the world level, Habitat, Centre for Human Settlements was set up as "... a small and effective secretariat ... to service the Commission on Human Settlements and to serve as a focal point for human settlements action and the co-ordination of activities within the United Nations system...". The main responsibilities entrusted to the Centre in General Assembly resolution 32/162 are: to provide the focal point for global exchanges of information about human settlements; to ensure the harmonization of the programmes on human settlements carried out by the secretariats of the bodies belonging to the system; to supplement the resources of the regions in formulating and implementing human settlements projects when so required; and to implement programmes until they are transferred to regional organizations.

In practice, the Centre functions as the executing agency for national technical assistance projects financed with resources from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and, on a much more limited scale, the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, which collects the voluntary contributions of the countries. The availability of UNDP resources is, however, governed by agreements with the governments through which an indicative figure of available resources for technical assistance is established in each case, reflecting the priorities of the countries and within which human settlements must still be supported. The Habitat Centre is thus the main recipient of the requests for technical assistance from the countries considered individually.

/Many of

Many of the developed countries also offer technical assistance for human settlements. Some have agencies specializing in international co-operation - the United States, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

At the regional level, as regards programmes and projects referring to the Latin American countries as a whole and not separately, CEPAL is the competent body within the United Nations system. The Commission is in fact located at the highest political level as regards intergovernmental aspects of human settlements, and in everything related to other United Nations programmes and activities. This means that the regional policies, programmes and projects of the United Nations as regards human settlements must be approved by CEPAL as an indispensable requirement for their implementation. The programmes and projects for bilateral co-operation between the governments and other countries or bodies belonging to other regional political systems such as SELA or OAS have their own decision-making machinery.

In Latin America, in addition to CEPAL and other specialized agencies of the United Nations (UNEP, FAO, UNESCO, WHO/PAHO, UNIDO, UNICEF), there are other sources of technical co-operation: the Organization of American States (OAS), which maintains projects in the field of regional and rural development, and the Comité de Acción de Vivienda y Edificaciones de Interés Social (CAVEIS), which is part of the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

The international financial bodies like the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the subregional banks and corporations, together with maintaining technical assistance programmes, are the only bodies which can provide financial assistance for certain investments in the context of human settlements.

In this context, it is obvious that the United Nations system should take co-ordinated and supplementary action in order to provide the necessary assistance within its present financial limitations. Assistance activities at the regional level, i.e., those corresponding to programmes of common interest for all the countries of the region or subregional groups of countries, must be co-ordinated within the region by CEPAL, but their financing must be the result of a conjunction of resources from different sources, both regular and extrabudgetary, which must be mobilized by the Executive Secretariat. It should be recalled here that there is only one Regional Human Settlements Programme which defines the topics and content of the projects which compose it. Since this programme is adopted periodically by the countries members of the Commission, it is the legitimate framework which should guide the action of the other bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

The Regional Human Settlements Programme also constitutes the most suitable context for co-operation among Latin American and Caribbean countries, and consequently for preparing a financing and implementation strategy in which the countries and the Executive Secretariat can combine their efforts to mobilize the necessary resources to carry out the Programme. The meeting of the sessional Committee on Human Settlements at the nineteenth session of the Commission is an excellent opportunity for reviewing this strategy.

/Annex

Annex

DOCUMENTS PRODUCED AS PART OF THE REGIONAL HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME OF CEPAL BETWEEN 1977 AND 1980

"Estrategias de crecimiento económico y distribución de población"

"Asentamiento precario en las áreas metropolitanas de América Latina"

"Asentamiento rural en América Latina y el Caribe"

"Centros urbanos de crecimiento explosivo"

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a/ Documents submitted at the Latin American Conference on Human Settlements, Mexico City, November 1979, published by the Secretaría de Asentamientos Humanos y Obras Públicas, Mexico, 1980.

b/ There is a version in Spanish.

c/ Published by the Secretaría de Asentamientos Humanos y Obras Públicas, Mexico.