

# Global Observances of World Habitat Day 2001

For the second time, the global observances of World Habitat Day were held in Japan. In 1991 the day was celebrated in Hiroshima and presided by the Mayor of Hiroshima under the theme “Shelter and the Living Environment”. The 2001 global celebrations were held at the ACROS Fukuoka International Conference Centre in Fukuoka, Japan, including high level participation from the Government of Japan. Mr. Wataru Aso, Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture was the official host. Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, read the Secretary-General’s message and delivered the opening address on World Habitat Day. The Executive Director also delivered a keynote speech on “The Future of Our Cities”. She spoke extensively on the challenges of a world without slums; urbanization and the problem of slums; lessons from history, the Habitat Agenda and the global campaigns on Secure Tenure and Urban Governance; and the role of Local Authorities to meet the challenges of a world without slums.



Mr. Wataru Aso, Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture




Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Chairman, Japan Centre for Preventive Diplomacy



Mr. Hiroo Kinoshita, Special Advisor, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Government of Japan



Mr. Hirotaro Yamasaki, Mayor of Fukuoka City



Opening ceremony statements were also made by Mr. Hiroo Kinoshita, Special Advisor to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport; Mr. Wataru Aso, Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture; Mr. Hirotaro Yamasaki, Mayor of Fukuoka and Mr. Tatsuo Kawai, Chairperson of cooperating Committee for UN-HABITAT Fukuoka Office. Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Chairman, Japan Centre for Preventive Diplomacy, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, delivered a keynote speech on “The Role of the United Nations in Human Development.”

The afternoon programme was on a panel discussion on “Towards Better Living Environment”, coordinated by Mr. Hatsuhsa Takashima, Director of UNIC and the panelists being – Babar Mumtaz, Wardah Hafidz, Geoffrey Payne and Hiroshi Sawada.

At the venue an international seminars on Securing land for the Urban Poor was held on Tuesday, 2 October 2001, to assess the efficiency of urban land markets and its impact on accessing urban land by the poor for their housing and economic needs. The seminar was attended by over 40 international experts and academics. The main speakers were: Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT; Professor Ian Williams, University of Melbourne; Mr. Chris Williams, UN-HABITAT; Mr. Jamal Ansari, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi and Mr. Geoffry Payne, Geoffrey Payne and Associates.

A children’s Art Competition from grades 4 to 6 was organized in Fukuoka and Nairobi on the theme to encourage a better understanding of issues and compare the perception of children from two diverse regions. The winning pieces of art have been reproduced in form of a calendar for 2002.

A special public seminar on “Women’s Lives and Habitat” was organized by the Soroptimist Association in Fukuoka and addressed by the Executive Director.

## **BRAZIL UN-HABITAT**

**I**n Brazil, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro launched the Open Forum for Regularization of Tenure which will serve as an instrument to promote public debate and policy dialogue in the activities of the Global Campaigns for Secure Tenure which the Municipality has officially joined. The meeting was extremely successful because it allowed for a thorough verification of alternative formulas available to Municipalities, highlighting comparative advantages and drawbacks. It served also to set in motion a further process of analysis by the Task Force which will soon lead to an extension of the initiative, in terms of public debate. These activities are organized also in the framework of a recently approved initiative for Brazil, under the Cities Alliance, a global partnership led by UN-HABITAT and the World Bank promoting sealing-up of urban upgrading.

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## CHINA

UN-HABITAT Beijing Information Office initiated countrywide activities at local level in Shenzhen, Zhaoqing, Zhongshan and Foshan in Guangdong Province, Jinan, Qingdao, Zibo, Dongying and Jining in Shandong Province, Shihezi in Xinjiang Iygur Autonomous Region, Chijeng and Tongliao in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Tianjing and Chongqing Municipalities. The day was celebrated in a variety of activities:


- Special programmes and colours were produced on television, radio and newspaper on the theme.
- World Habitat Day messages were delivered by provincial and municipal high-ranking officials on television, radio and newspapers including achievements in housing development and human settlements environment improvement.
- Various levels and sizes of seminars and workshops were organized on “Dwellers processing their own houses”.
- Other activities included exhibitions and on the theme “ New Century, New quality and New Life” to enhance the quality of housing construction, property management and service.
- Performance were organized on the theme “Better Living Environment, improving Living standards and property management”.
- Quiz shows, consultations and real estate fairs were organized on the World Habitat Day theme.

## HUNGARY

UN-HABITAT Information Centre for East-Central Europe in Budapest mobilized countries in the region to organize celebrations to mark World Habitat Day. In Budapest a professional forum on the theme with 30 participants was opened by Ferencúé Hörcher, Director of UN-HABITAT Centre in Budapest. The basic idea underlined his welcome speech: “Physical and economic power of the world should be coordinated not against poor people, but against poverty”.

The proceedings are summarized below:

In all probability the urgent problems of slums of big cities with several millions of inhabitants – with special regards to metropolises in the developing world – cannot be solved in the above outlined way. It seems, however, that in Hungary the mentioned case can contribute to the deceleration of deterioration of inner district of big cities. Destruction of inner city areas should by all means be slowed down. This case seems to be suitable for solving this task. All the more, since it as was told by Gábor Aczél the rehabilitation process of inner city parts has already started on national level. The extent to which segregation is harmful or useful can be discussed. The major part of the society feels well in the relatively social environment. This question needs to be answered yet. And this is exactly the aim of professional programme, to



discuss these unanswered questions and try to find an answer. A good opportunity for this is the World Habitat day, organized on the first Monday in October every year, where thinking heads are trying to find solutions to unsolved problems.

## INDIA

United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, information Dissemination Office, Chennai, India in association with HUDCO, EXNORA International, Science City, Institute of Town Planners India (Tamil Nadu Chapter) & Citizens Alliance for Sustainable Living (SUSTAIN), Chennai, celebrated this year's World Habitat Day on 2 October 2001 which was also Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.

As a part of the celebrations an Art Competition was conducted earlier for school children under three categories namely (1) High School Category (2) Primary School Category (3) Young Childrens' Category on the theme ANY URBAN SCENE GOOD OR BAD. A total of over 440 entries had been received from 46 schools. These were evaluated by a panel of three professional Artists who selected 41 children for an on-the-spot painting competition on the same theme. Among the above categories the handicapped children were categorized separately as Category four. This event was held on Saturday 15 September 2001 between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. in which 36 candidates participated and 16 students were selected for award of prizes.

The celebrations on 2 October 2001 consisted of prize award ceremony for the winners of the painting competition and an interactive Youth Workshop on this year's theme "CITIES WITHOUT SLUMS".

Mr. L. M. Menezes, Director, Centre for Urban Poverty Alleviation, Chennai, who was the Chief Guest, delivered the Keynote Address; and Lt. Col. A. B. Das, Executive Director, HUDCO South Zone Office, Chennai presided over the function.

The programme commenced with Registration of participants. Over 100 persons participated and they included students and faculty members from several city colleges, school children, a number of professionals from the institute of Town Planners, India, T.N. Chapter, citizens and persons working with government and the non-governmental organizations.

The theme of the day was introduced by Mr. G. Dattatri, Trustee, Citizens Alliance for Sustainable Living (SUSTAIN). The message of the Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, along with the publications on the theme, poster, extracts of the National Slum Draft Policy and from Census of India (Paper-2) providing an idea of the slum situation in Tamil Nadu were circulated to all the participants.

Mr. L. M. Menezes, in his keynote address, dwelt on the problems of cities, the problems of the informal sector both in housing as well as occupation and stressed how these persons in the informal sector are an integral part of the city. He pointed out that this sector can be taken

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care of properly only if the local governments were fully committed and continues to be in charge of programmes to raise their living quality and incomes. In this connection he brought out the need to implement the 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment on empowerment of local bodies and people at the grassroots level. He also stressed the value of educating the students and youth and welcomed the initiative to involve both school children and students from college in this World Habitat Day celebrations . He emphasized the role of youth in the sustainable development of the cities and freeing them from slums ultimately.

Lt. Col. A . B. Das, who presided, traced the slum and housing situation and explained how HUDCO has been involved in urban poverty alleviation and slum upgrading through both financial and technical inputs. He stressed the fact that although government and institutions like HUDCO could provide all the necessary backup support, the need for full stakeholder involvement in the programmes with community development was also very important. In this connection he elaborated on his experience in Bangalore where successful programmes were launched.

The ceremony for the award of prizes and token gifts to successful participants in the painting competition was presided over by Mr. A .V. Iliango, a noted Artist and who was the chairman of the panel of judges. The prizes were distributed by Mr. A. V. Iliango, Mr. K. Jeyachander and Ms. Rajny Krishnan who had gone through all the entries. Mr. Iliango, in his introduction, commended all the participants for their understanding of the theme as well as expressing it

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through art form. He was appreciative of the support being given by parents for such events and hoped that it is a good augury for our future development.

The Science City had sponsored the prizes for the 16 winning students and also token gifts in the nature of useful books on environment, science and general knowledge to all the participants of the on-the-spot painting competition. It also sponsored the mementos to Chief Guests, panel of judges, chairmen, panelists and rapporteurs of youth workshop sessions. The officers of the Science City, particularly Dr. Thomson Jacob, scientific officer, helped in the organization of events.

The youth workshop commented immediately after the award of prizes. There were two sessions: Sessions I – Why do slums Manifest ? and Sessions II – Strategies for Slum-Free Cities.

Sessions I was chaired by Mr. M.G. Devasahayam and assisted by panelists consisting of Mr. T.K. Ramkumar of EXNORA, Mr. Suresh Kuppuswamy, Director, school of Architecture & Planning and Dr. Thooyavan, Chairman of the ITPI, T.N. Chapter.

Session II was chaired by Lt. Col. A.B. Das and assisted by panelists consisting of Dr. Kesavan, formerly Directorate of Town planning and Dr. K.P. Subramaniam, Professor, Division of Traffic & Urban System Engineering, Anna University.

## KENYA

World Habitat Day Observance in Kenya were marked in Nairobi by official celebrations by the Government of Kenya and UN-HABITAT staff project to assist the less privileged members of the society on 2 October 2001.

The official celebrations with high level Government officials and members of the Diplomatic Community were held at the City Stadium, attended by over 600 people from all walks of life and around 70 UN-HABITAT staff members. The activities included official speeches, traditional dancers, choirs, a poem on the theme and entertainment by the United Nations Nairobi Song Birds. The Ag Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT read the message of the Secretary-General and Statement of the Executive Director, UN-HABITAT.



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UN-HABITAT staff collected large quantities of clothes, shoes, books, toys and money for distribution to the less fortunate members of the society. These were distributed on Tuesday, 2 October to the following charitable institutions:

Mji was Huruma, Old Age Home  
Pangani Lutheran Children's Centre  
Sai Amboseli School  
Nyumbani Children with AIDS  
Three-in-one Academy

## LIBYA

Arab Town Organization (ATO) organized the first Arab IT Forum on the occasion World Habitat Day in Tripoli. The event brought together 400 active member cities from 1 – 3 October including Arab Mayors and governors, government officials as well as decision makers from international organizations and local authorities. Over the three years, the Forum discussed a number of topics including best practices, networking and use of appropriate technology.

## NIGERIA

World Habitat Day in Nigeria was celebrated on 4 October due to the National Independence Day, which falls on 1 October every year. The celebrations were well attended by members of the Diplomatic Corps, Cabinet Ministers, Members of the National Assembly, top Civil Servants, and general public. There were exhibitions on the theme and the event was copiously covered by the Nigerian Media. The Year 2002 National Awards for Best Practices were flagged off as



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well as the launching of Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) in collaboration with UNICEF. At the occasion, Secretary-General's message was read by the Director of United Nations Information Centre, Nigeria; Executive Director Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka's speech was delivered by UNDP Resident Representative and two major keynote addresses by the Hon. Minister of works and Housing and Hon. Minister of State for Works and Housing. Other activities included goodwill message from UNICEF Country Representative, a drama sketch on "Cities without Slums" by students of Government Secondary School, Abuja.

## USA

UN-HABITAT New York Office marked the day with panel discussions in New York. The most important participant was Professor Michael Doyle, ASG in the Secretary-General's Office and coordinator of the Road Map exercise. He made an excellent presentation on the importance of slum upgrading in the UN's development agenda and on the preparation for annual monitoring of the "Cities without Slums" target in the Millennium Declaration's road map exercise.

Panel discussions were vibrant, interesting and diverse. One of the most stirring intervention from Mr. John Bryant, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Los Angeles-based community revitalization programme "Operation Hope". He mentioned the parameters that made Operation Hope a bottom-up success – self-respect and the determination to shake off the poverty stigma, coupled with "economic education". Excellent presentations were also made by Dr. Preston martin on his long experience in neighbourhood revitalization schemes across the country; Mr. Joseph Chamie on the importance of "Urban Revolution"; Michael Cohen underlined the need to obtain real financial commitment from member states in implementing the Millennium Declaration's slum goal; Jan Petersen spoke on grass-roots approaches of women's groups in the normative and operational sphere; and David Scribner illustrated the Nicaragua housing project implemented by the Global Housing Foundation.



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