

**REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**HABITAT II**  
**ISTANBUL II + 5**  
**NATIONAL REPORT**  
**ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HABITAT AGENDA**

**Skopje, February, 2000**

## REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

### NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA

Republic of Macedonia is strategically determined and committed to the goals of providing adequate shelter for all of its citizens. It is extensively active in creating more reliable, healthier, better and more equitable, sustainable and more productive human settlements.

The strategy also gives incentive for developing relevant programs aimed towards improving the quality of living in the settlements, as well as stimulating development in smaller towns and village settlements.

The inhabited places, especially the cities are the centers of economic development, technical progress, social welfare and culture.

This National Report represents a review of the progress made in the implementation of the goals, principles and recommendations contained in the Habitat Agenda of the United Nations Conference of Human Settlements –Habitat II.

This Report gives an illustration of the circumstances related to the sustainable development of the settlements in the urban continuity and the provision of a relevant shelter for everybody.

The Report was prepared by the Ministry of Urbanism and Construction – Center for Habitat, as a coordinator, in cooperation with the relevant state bodies and organizations competent in given fields that are members of the National Committee.

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**Republic of Macedonia** is located in the southeast part of Europe, i.e. in the central part of the Balkans. The Republic of Macedonia is bordering with four countries: to the North with Yugoslavia, to the East with Bulgaria, to the West with Albania and to the South with Greece. The length of the Macedonian border accounts for 850 km.

The territory of the Republic of Macedonia encompasses a **total area** of 25.715 sq.km. Regarding its morphology, it is predominantly mountainous country. Besides the mountain massifs, the valleys and valley fields have an important place in its relief structure.

With respect to the relief structure of the territory, 17.830 sq.km. of its area is at a latitude of 1000 meters, while 7.883 sq.m. at a latitude exceeding 1000 meters.

Its forests and afforested ground cover an area of 50% of the country, which has a relevant impact on its entire environment, as well as on the environment of the cities and villages.

The geographical position of the country is very favorable subjecting the country to different climate influences with two predominant climate zones – Mediterranean and Continental with some variations.

- The **population** is one of the basic elements on which the forecasts for future development are based on. Within these frameworks, there is a unique population policy aimed towards maximizing the utilization of the space and resources, humanizing the conditions for family and social life of the population, reducing migrations as well as creating conditions for more balanced development of the Republic. The number of the population in the Republic of Macedonia accounts for **2.015.000** inhabitants ( 1998). It is estimated that by the year 2020 the total population will account for 2.225.000 inhabitants.

The population is mainly concentrated in the cities, municipal centers and in Skopje, as main administrative, economic and cultural center of the Republic of Macedonia. This results in decline of the number of inhabitants in the remaining human settlements, pasivization of the economic activities in certain regions, and even complete desertion abandonment of human settlements.

The 1999 refugee crisis, resulting from the war in Kosovo – FR of Yugoslavia, had a significant impact on the number of the population of the Republic of Macedonia. As a result of this situation, some intervention measures were initiated for building collecting centers for the refugees with accompanying infrastructure.

- In 1997 the **Law on Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia** was enacted. Out of the total **1795** registered human settlements, **29 (1.6%)** are urban, and **1766 (98.4%)** are rural settlements.

Out of the total number of inhabitants in R.M **59.7%** of the population lives and works in the urban areas, while **40,3%** in the villages.

With the new administrative and territorial division, **123 municipalities** and municipal centers have been established that are to play an important role in the future urban development of the country.

Urbanization is a complex, dominant process in the physical and total social and economic development of the state.

- The Republic of Macedonia has designed a **Physical Plan** (covering the period to the year 2020) that serves as a guiding document, as an integral development project to define the physical organization of the state, goals and concepts for the physical development of different areas, as well as the conditions for their implementation. Based on the global situation and tendencies in the Republic, this Plan outlines the basic goals for resolving problems related to the space organization, utilization and arrangement and protection of human environment for the sustainable future.

- The Government of the Republic of Macedonia in its annual programs funded from the budget, includes the preparation of plan documentation. According to the Law on Physical and Urban Planning the following types of plans are prepared: general urban plans, detailed urban plans and urban documentation for human settlements. The physical planning and the preparation of the plans, considered as a continuous process, are subject to periodical revision in order adjust the concrete needs of the population and the local conditions. In these plan documents modern methods of urbanization and implementation of principles for sustainable development are incorporated, fully respecting the natural characteristics of the given locality.

The following plans have been prepared: **142 general urban plans** covering a total area of **40.442 hectares**, of which 29 plans for urban settlements (26.471 hectares) and 113 plans for rural settlements (13.971 hectares).

Special emphasis is given to the preparation of plan documentation for the villages in order to provide for their revitalization. A total number of **1.110 plan documents** covering an area of **36.586 hectares** have been prepared. Out of these plan documents 177 are urban documentation for human settlements, while 933 are general acts for human settlements.

The total prepared plan documentation for human settlements covers an area of **77.028 hectares** of urban area.

- In some rural settlements the communal network is not sufficiently developed or is almost at a marginal level, and therefore there is a need of intensifying their functional and communal equipment and planned arrangement of the rural settlements, upgrading local infrastructure and developing efficient communication links with the centers that are higher level of development.

In rural settlements located in the vicinity of municipal centers there is a tendency of increasing the number of their population as a result of the following factors: natural conveniences for intensive agricultural production, modern communications, relatively short distance to the urban settlements. The permanent, daily migration village-town creates conditions for the villages to assume a role of suburb settlements.

All this creates conditions for decreasing the pressure on the cities and motivating the people to remain in their environment, thus promoting all the aspects of living and working in rural environment and creating the necessary economic and social security.

However, care should be taken for preservation and promotion of natural values and environmental attributes of the area in order to achieve sustainable development and safeguard the cultural characteristics and features.

- In the field of culture the process of protection, reconstruction and maintenance of the sites and cultural monuments, respectively cultural movable and immovable heritage, is continuously developed and permanently valorized.

- The Republic of Macedonia continues with its processes of modernizing the **system of education** by allocating own funds and periodically funds from international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

- The development policy in the process of developing the economy of the Republic of Macedonia has been mainly directed towards rational utilization of natural characteristics, the soil and forests, ore resources, population and human resources.

After a period of over twenty years of recession, 1996 was marked as a year when conditions were created for gradual overcoming the recession stage in the economic cycle and when the Macedonian economy entered the stage of a moderate (modest) economic development that continued in 1998.

The Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences in cooperation with the United Nations Development Agency (UNDP) prepared the **Economic Development National Strategy** of the Republic of Macedonia. This project is a strategic document giving the guidelines regarding the reforms during the economic transition, regarding the

macroeconomic and development policy of the Government and business activities of the enterprises.

The performance of the Macedonian economy is limited due to the rigid material limitations resulting from the problems cumulated during the years and the negative trends. Despite such complex problems and political crisis in the Region, the Republic of Macedonia was persistent in implementing its stabilization policy both regarding its economic trends and its structural reforms. Its basic priorities are maintenance of the macro-economic balance and stability of the national economy.

However, the sanctions and the economic **blockade** of Yugoslavia and the long-lasting and still present crisis (period 1992-2000) have resulted in unfavorable economic consequences affecting the economy, and consequently Macedonia is in a position of complete infrastructure, business, financial and other kinds of isolation that have a disastrous impact on the economy. The international economic support and compensation cannot significantly compensation for the damages suffered.

The forecasts for 1996-2000 are that the **gross domestic product** will be increased in an average real rate of approximately 3%, while in industry it will have a rate of 4%

The gross domestic product per capita is from **1.500 to 1.600** American dollars.

- The unemployment in the Republic of Macedonia marks a trend of increase and has serious impact on the quality of living in the urban settlements and on the sustainable development. Besides affecting the urban settlements, the unemployment is also extensively affecting the rural settlements resulting in migrations from villages, especially from those located in hilly-mountainous area.

This situation of unfavorable and recessive development of the economy also affects the life of the citizens because some of complete closure of some of the production facilities contributing to the increased number of unemployment. All this has adverse effect on the physical development and arrangement of the urban and rural human settlements. Also, the process of privatization of the enterprises and their restructuring led to the decline of employment and reduced living standard among the population. As of December 1999 the number of unemployed persons was 354.660. The employment rate is 35.9%, compared with the unemployment rate of 34.5%.

Such unfavorable tendencies in the economy, as well as political and economic situation in the **Region** and in the **Balkans**, resulted in

stagnation and decrease of tourist turnover, specially related to foreign tourism.

- The communication network of the Republic of Macedonia, consisting of several communication sub-systems has been established through the traffic and communications links on the basis of which the physical organization of the area is founded.

Located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, the Republic of Macedonia is a natural crossroad of the European and Balkan communications system through which important communication corridors following the direction towards North-South – Corridor 10 and East-West - Corridor 8 pass through.

There has been a trend for construction of new roads, or upgrading, modernization and rehabilitation of the existing ones. This trend will continue in the year 2000.

The East-West Corridor, 36 kilometers long (Skopje-Tetovo) is under construction. The funds were provided by the European Investment Bank and the World Bank – Washington, as well by funds from the Republic of Macedonia.

Regarding the internal road network, 50 kilometers have been constructed at all levels, while approximately 200 kilometers have been reconstructed and modernized.

The air traffic using the two airports – Skopje and Ohrid, played an important role in the refugee crisis in Kosovo several thousand people were transferred-evacuated in different countries (period April-July, 1999)

- The population and the economy of the Republic of Macedonia are supplied with water through the constructed systems that are predominantly local. The water supply system uses spring waters, underground waters reservoirs and water currents. Their percentile representation is as follows:

- Springs 52.3%; underground waters 24.6%; reservoirs 13.5%; water currents 9.6.

The total yearly consumption of water for supplying the population and economy (excluding the technological water) accounts for 241.667.000m<sup>3</sup>.

A supply pipeline 494 kilometers long, with a diameter of 200 to 1.600 millimeters have been constructed. In the Republic of Macedonia

there are 8 factories for treating the waters from the reservoirs and surface waters with a total capacity of 2.300 l/sec/, as well as reservoir area of 110.000 m<sup>3</sup>. The total length of the distribution network in the Republic accounts for approximately 3.000 kilometers with a diameter exceeding 80 mm. ( period up to the year 2000).

The International community, especially Austria, the Republic of China – Taiwan, UNICEF, the International Red Cross, the Action Against Hunger, MCMS, KfW-Bank Frankfurt has given their support to the Republic of Macedonia in overcoming its problems with water supply.

The situation regarding the coverage of the cities and villages with healthy waters and discharge of the wastewater is not at adequate level. Therefore, there is a need of further activities in order to overcome the existing problems related to the water supply for different types of consumption and construction of sewerage system for treatment of waste waters.

Irrigation means development of hydro irrigation systems that will be developed as follows:

- Reconstruction and rehabilitation of the existing systems for irrigation presently covering an area of 126.617 hectares;
- Final construction of the existing systems for irrigation with a basic and detailed networks presently covering an area of 33.308 hectares;
- Construction of new systems for irrigation that will cover an area of 106.342 hectares.

- In the field of **energy infrastructure**, the construction of the first stage of the gas pipeline has – Deve Bair-Skopje been completed. The second stage will include construction of two branches (Sv. Nikole – Veles – Negotino and Tetovo – Jegunovce – Gostivar).

The construction of the electrical power plant Kozjak and multi purpose dams Lisitch and Zletovica are under construction.

In the programs of the Republic of Macedonia for the future period, a construction of several reservoir dams is forecasted, but the required funds have not been yet provided.

- The human environment protection system has been established in the **Law on Protection and Promotion of Human Environment** (1996). This Law is the basic legal-normative act for *integral*



monitoring, control and management in the field of human environment and nature. Also, a National Environment Action Plan for Protection of Human Environment – NEAP (1997) has been adopted that will serve as a state strategy for monitoring, control and resolving, by way of priority of all present and future problems representing a latent hazard on the quality and potential of the human environment. Presently local environmental action plans – LEAPs at local and municipal level are in a stage of preparation according to the commitments set forth in the NEAP. Six municipalities from the Republic have been included in the LEAPs preparation and their initial stage of implementation. The project is financed by the German Government – German Association for Technical Cooperation – GTZ.

An **Information Center for Protection of Human Environment** and a **Data Processing Center** have been established for the purpose of monitoring the quality of human environment and nature and raising public awareness among the population. All entities endangering human environment and nature are liable to submit data about pollution. Such data are used for producing cadaster and a map of pollutants, as well as a register for waste and harmful matters. Also, a **Fund for Protection of Human Environment** has been established whose resources will be used for undertaking preventive and rehabilitation measures in the field of protection.

Several projects at state and trans-border level have been designed and implemented, such as: the project for Ohrid Lake protection, the project for monitoring system for air pollution in the Skopje City (pilot project), the project for the River Vardar automatic monitoring system, the project for control and management of solid communal, industrial and sanitary waste, as an interim and permanent complex solution, studies for control, treatment and management of waste waters from the communal and industrial sewerage systems, restoration the environment in the old urban settlements with cultural heritage, the project for clean and green Macedonia, etc.

Remarkable results have been achieved through permanent cooperation between the scientific and research institutions, the Universities in the Republic of Macedonia and the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, such as:

Final completion of the legislative norms and regulations related to the human environment through approximation and implementation of the EU guidelines. Preparation of regulations regarding the standards, substitution and protection of energy sources and energy, performance following the principle "paid by the polluter", national strategy for sustainable development, law on natural heritage of special

importance, valuable areas of special importance such as national and inter-state National Parks, declaring unpolluted areas in the State as eco-potentials for clean agricultural and farmer production, etc.

Environmental problems and some of the negative impacts of human activities on the environment and nature are obvious. However, due to the budget restrictions, priority is given will be given in future to short-term and medium-term needs for protection of human environment following the rehabilitation and preventive principle. The concept for protection of environment constitutes a part of the complex system for planning and management of the environment for sustainable development.

- **Planned permanent development of health** is accordance with the development of the economy and the system of settlements. The development of modern health care and social welfare of the population initiates developed network of institutions in this field. The privatization process in some segments of primary health care – doctors' and dentists' practices and pharmacies, is still in progress, and the first efforts have been made for opening private specialized clinics.

For the purpose of promoting health and social welfare, during the period of 1996-2000 two homes for sheltering **old, sick and weak persons** were built in the Republic of Macedonia. These homes are financed by the Foundation Sue Rider from Great Britain

The **Law on Physical and Urban Planning** stipulates provision of measures in the form of regulations for **hencicapped persons** so that they could safely move and use the facilities in urban settlements. The Law also provides provisions for standard rules that will give equal opportunities to the hencicapped persons. Also, measures, standards and norms for eliminating the barriers in the city and human settlements and use of the facilities have been incorporated. The **Regulations on Standards and Norm for Area Planning and Facility Designing** were adopted in 1999.

- In the field of **housing** and home as a basic kernel of human settlements there are permanent processes of transformation. The changes in the political and economic system resulted in a shift in the housing policy, i.d. abandoning construction of social housing. There is a new trend in the housing policy – a new way of housing construction valuation and investment, assesment of the location and adjustment of housing and land policy.

Changes in the social and education structure of the population also have an impact on the way of living.

A possibility is given to enlarge or expand the existing buildings, to reconstruct the attic space into a living space, thus increasing the housing fund and reducing the need for living space specially for new families.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia is making efforts to provide adequate shelter for social cases by allocating **25%** of its planned annual housing construction in social ownership.

Due to the negative processes in the society, decline in the standard of living, the refugee crisis, etc. there is ever increasing need of social housing. In the course of 1999 the Republic of Bulgaria donated pre-fabricated housing facilities with 169 housing units that helped in resolving some of the social cases. For their full completion additional funds for infrastructure were provided from the Republic.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a program for construction of apartments for **young married couples** that are to be soled under preferential conditions – **50%** participation and **10** years of repayment. The Government is making efforts for providing favourable financial conditions for resolving housing problems by granting credits for housing construction under good terms.

As a result of the migration processes from rural to urban settlements, the facilities constructed in suburb settlement are sub-standard. This construction is not in line with the designed urban development which has an adverse impact on human environment and its sustainable development. There is also an illegal construction of industrial, business and other types of facilities.

The housing construction is marked by individual housing construction and market oriented housing sector. The infrastructure at the localities and facilities as a whole is developed at maximum level as a tendency for increasing the standards in the field of housing.

The aspiration is to provide housing for each household, aseismically built, replace the substandard housing fund with new one and to reconstruct and upgrade the old one.

In the course of 1998, 5320 approvals for construction were issued. In March 1999 the Law on Physical and urban planning was changed to include mechanisms for reducing the procedure for acquiring documentation necessary for construction. Also, **one stop shop system** was introduced. As a result, 12.000 decisions for construction were issued in 1999.

When designing required housing space, the following standards are applied: **25-25 m<sup>2</sup>/capita**, depending on the type of settlement; **40-80 m<sup>2</sup>/apartment** ( optimum size); **100%** equipment of the apartment with installations, especially in urban settlements, respectively replacement for sub-standard housing fund.

- Within the frameworks of the **temporary housing** resulting from some emergency situation (natural or technical disasters), catering capacities may be used on temporary basis, located elsewhere in the country as well as facilities in the rural areas, especially passive regions that may be efficiently used for sheltering the population in need. Also, weekend facilities in the weekend settlements located in the vicinity of the cities or tourist localities may be used

Republic of Macedonia was affected by the **refugee crisis** during April-September 1999 as a result of the war in Kosovo - Yugoslavia. There was an enormous influx of refugees that resulted in unexpected entry of **360.000 nationals from Kosovo** ( 17% of total population of the Republic of Macedonia) that had significant impact on the economic, education, social and health situation.

Within very short period of time **shelters for crisis situation** were to be provided. For that purpose **9 camps** on an area covering **90.60** hectares were constructed including all the required infrastructure - access roads, water, sewerage, electricity, etc. These camps provided shelter for **approximately 160.000 persons**, while the remaining were accommodated in families, in private houses.

The main burden in arranging the camps was born by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, which faced with such an emergency situation managed to cope with the problem much better than some bigger and economically more powerful countries. UNHCH and many other local and foreign non-government organizations also gave their contribution. Such an enormous influx of people affected the country in fields. As for example, only during the month of **June 1999**, **35.000** persons were laid-off as a result of canceled business contracts and investments by foreign partners due to the crisis and the war in the Region. The number of people in need of social assistance rapidly increased at state level. The number of socially assisted persons in the Republic of Macedonia reached a figure of **266.000**, while the number of refugees **360.000**.

The refugees were given primary and other types of health care which had a negative impact on the budget funds for health as well as on the entire living conditions of the population.

Such an enormous number of sheltered refugees also had an adverse effect on human environment with all the accompanying negative aspects.

Some of the refugees - approximately 20.000 are still in the country. Out of this figure, 2.700 are accommodated in children's or workers' summer resorts within the framework of the program for providing shelter under winter conditions.

The construction of the camps disturbed part of the natural environment of the settlements and the nature itself. The Republic of Macedonia is making enormous efforts and investing resources for revitalization of the area where the camps were located. However, the international community should also give its contribution.

Documentation has been prepared for arranging the space in accordance with the existing urban plans, while some of the localities will be aforesaid so that this degraded space will resume its previous form.

- With the adoption of the Law on Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia (1990) the number of municipalities was increased - 123 in order to improve the efficiency of the local self-government activities to meet citizens' requirements. In this respect, the organization of settlements plays an important role. According to the legal regulations, the adoption of urban plans for physical development of human settlements falls under the Local self-government (Law on Local Self-Government, adopted in 1995). The same regulations apply for construction ground and communal activities, where the level of communal hygiene of settlements is taken into consideration as primary condition for sustainable development. The local self-government is in charge of the activities required to be undertaken in relation with air and water pollutants. Generally speaking, the activities related to protection of human environment in future will be focused on eliminating, i.e. reducing and controlling the existing sources of pollution and preventive protection of new sources of pollution.

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In order to resolve some of the specific problems in the field of human settlements, extensive financial resources are required which cannot be provided from own resources. Therefore, international financial and technical assistance is required if implementation of national plans and activities is to be achieved. Conditions for sustainable development should be created that will attract investments, create possibilities for employment and provide revenue for development of human settlements.

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All the above mentioned considerations regarding the plan for physical development of human settlements indicate that many activities have been taken for the implementation of the **Istanbul Declaration and Habitat Agenda**.

The Republic of Macedonia is committed to accept the challenges falling in the field of human settlements at global and local level, fully aware that cities and villages represent an important element of cultural, economic, social living in any state indicating the way that future generations should follow.

Led by the challenges for creating **human settlements and sustainable development** Republic of Macedonia is, **the actively contributing** in the construction of better quality settlements within the world home and affirming the existing and new partnerships for undertaking action on international, national and local level directed towards improvement of human environment.

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