

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)

Programme objectives

Promoting the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming is a fundamental to every sphere of UN-HABITAT's activities. The new strategic vision for the now fully-fledged agency states that the empowerment of women is to be used as a primary indicator of success of all of UN-HABITAT's interventions. In 2001, the organization revised its gender policy to further strengthen gender mainstreaming in all its programmes and activities.

In May 2003, UN-HABITAT's Governing Council adopted a landmark resolution (19/16) on women's rights. It marked the first time a resolution on women has made direct linkages with the resolutions on women's rights to adequate housing, land and property adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights. It urges governments to promote effective participation of women in human settlements planning and development. It stresses the need for the right to housing and secure tenure for women living in poverty. It also raised the issue of access to finance, credit and protection from forced evictions, especially for women with HIV/AIDS.

The aim is to ensure that the agency contributes effectively towards addressing the Millennium Development Goals, especially the target on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Operational activities

IA gender plan of action has been drafted and a handbook on mainstreaming gender into human settlements programmes will be developed to help staff incorporate gender concerns into their programmes. A gender mainstreaming strategy for water and sanitation has been developed. UN-HABITAT recently prepared a *Manual for Project and Programme Cycle Management* that emphasizes the need to address gender issues.

An Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Women's Issues in Human Settlements held in February 2003 identified and recommended priority areas for action with respect to: secure tenure, urban governance, urban economy and infrastructure, research and monitoring, capacity building, advocacy and information.

Emphasis is also placed on women's rights to land and property ownerships as part of the secure tenure, adequate shelter, land tenure and housing rights programmes. Two policy papers, *Women and Secure Tenure* and *Women and Urban Governance* were published in 2001. Last year the agency published a report entitled, *Rights and Reality: Are Women's Equal Rights to Land, Housing and Property Implemented in East Africa?* Other activities include research on violence against women, HIV/AIDS, orphans and shelter, and household surveys intended to bring out gender differentials.

UN-HABITAT is currently preparing documentation on gender sensitive policies and legislation as best practices to be shared. It supports local-level dialogues and exchanges on gender mainstreaming within its Urban Management Programme. It also has award competitions for municipalities in Latin America. Through the community forum in Afghanistan, gender concerns are being addressed. A project on empowering urban women entrepreneurs through housing development and land rights is being implemented in East Africa. UN-HABITAT also supports women's networks and other partners working in the area of human settlements. ■

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