

Witten / Berlin, 05 January 2002

Rio+10 and the global situation of habitat

Dear Friends,

At the 10th anniversary of the UN-Conference on Environment and Development in Rio 1992 (UNCED) the application of the concept of sustainable development is subject to scrutiny and discussion. In preparation of the Rio+10 conference, which will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002, "Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung", a network of German NGOs, will publish a series of booklets that try to present a critical, non-governmental perspective on the achievements and setbacks on different fields of environment and development.

As a working group inside the "Forum", "Habitat Initiative Deutschland" prepares the respective report on human settlements' and housing issues. Since this report should not only reflect the German habitat situation we kindly ask you for assistance: In order to show an international panorama of the follow-up-processes of the Rio Conference we want to invite you to contribute your **local experiences and short reports that give an account of the most relevant changes of the habitat situation in your country or city.**

In an international context, the following questions seem most important to us:

- Which consequences did the declarations of Rio and the following UN-conferences have on the habitat situation in your country? And particularly: Which impact did they have on popular movements and poor neighbourhoods?
- ... on the situation of homeless and badly-housed people?
- ... on the living and housing conditions in slums and irregular settlements?
- ... on the relation between environment and poverty in housing and settlements?
- Which were the consequences of economical globalisation, privatisation and neo-liberal policies on the habitat?
- How would you describe the changes concerning the inhabitants' participation in decision-making and especially the empowerment of women and minority groups?
- ... the mediation of conflicts and the coexistence of the different cultural groups inside the settlements?
- ... the strategies of tenants' organisations and popular movements?

We consider chapter 7 of Agenda 21 ("Promoting sustainable human settlement development") as the basic reference for this report. Other important references can be found in chapters 3 ("Combating poverty"), 8 ("Integrating environment and development in decision-making") and 10 ("Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources"), as well as in Section III on the role of different actors of civil society. You may consult the Agenda 21 at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21text.htm>

Since some of its goals have been worked out more precisely at the World Conference on Human Settlements Habitat II in Istanbul 1996, we should also refer to the commitments of the "Habitat Agenda". You can find them at <http://www.unchs.org/unchs/english/hagenda/haghome.htm>

For the report that we want to assemble, we do not expect voluminous studies. What we hope to receive are some concrete records and experiences of your work on habitat issues, and your comments and conclusions regarding the reality and prospects of "sustainable human settlement development".

These texts should not exceed two pages. They might also be taken from documents you have prepared for other purposes.

The booklet will be printed in March 2002. Our timetable for the editing is the following:

Until **15th January** you should send us your proposals for possible contributions. In the following days we will decide which will be included in the booklet and which (for reasons of limited space) will only be published in the internet.

Until **25th January** you will receive information on this decision.

You should send us the finished texts no later than 15th February!

That leaves us only around two weeks to translate your contributions and compose the whole booklet!

As a **first step**, today we only ask you for a short reply to the following questions:

- Could you write and send a short text (one or two pages) until 15th February?
- About which subject?
- Do you have other proposals or ideas? Do you plan any actions related to the Rio+10 conference?

Please send your short reply as soon as possible.

We wish you a lucky and more peaceful year 2002.

For a better world of all it's inhabitants.

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