

Problems of human settlements — (Continued from P. 2)

to shift these trends toward more desirable objectives....

Canadian strategy

Basically, and briefly, we are looking at a strategy that embraces objectives and policies in three interrelated areas: *first*, the future size of Canada's population and its rate of growth; *second*, the distribution of our future population across Canada and in our urban communities; *third*, the management of our future urban growth so as to create the kind of cities and communities that we want. These are difficult policy areas and effective responses in them will not be easy to provide. But they will be provided, implicitly if not explicitly. Given our federal system, it is desirable, if not necessary, that they be provided explicitly.

In Canada we are asking ourselves: if the patterns of growth being unfolded by the trends are unacceptable, what alternative patterns of growth would be desirable? What public spheres can best be used to achieve them? And what public policies can best be used to create communities that are livable, human in scale and in harmony with the natural environment? The responses to these questions cannot be imposed by any level of government. It is essential to achieve a broad national consensus on the objectives we are to pursue. Once we have that consensus, we shall need to determine the best means available compatible with our value-system and our democratic form of government.

Canada is not unique in asking these questions or in searching for appropriate responses to them. That is evident from the five tentative themes for "Habitat" adopted by the UN preparatory committee in January. The *first*

of these, in fact, is "policies and development". The *second* is "the social and economic aspects of settlements". The *third* is "the planning and management of settlements". The *fourth* is "the design and construction of shelter and services". And the *fifth* is "human settlements and the natural environment".

Virtually every member country of the UN faces the problem of rapid urbanization and the need to manage urban growth. When it comes to means, we have a great deal to learn from one another. We in Canada are especially interested in the experience of Western Europe and the Commonwealth, with many of whom we share value systems and forms of government.

Each country, of course, has to develop its own response to urbanization and its own means to manage urban growth. The scope for international action on the problems of human settlements is limited. The really vital actions needed to solve these problems must be undertaken by countries themselves. This is as true for developing countries as it is for developed countries.

That is why, in the preparations for "Habitat", nations have agreed to spend a great deal of time and effort in identifying approaches to human settlements problems that have been applied in one country or region and that may have elements that are transferable to other countries or regions.

I believe that through this kind of exchange people and nations and governments will see that human settlements problems are capable of solution, that solutions are indeed available if we have the common will and wit to apply them, that we don't need to shirk from addressing these problems.

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Four areas for advance

In my view, at this stage, "Habitat" should make a significant advance in at least four areas.

First, "Habitat" should have a number of important program results. These could include, perhaps, a decision to have an on-going UN human-settlements demonstration program. If a concrete program for the exchange of information and ideas on human settlements were established, it would be of tremendous benefit not only to those nations where urban problems are of the greatest con-

cern but also to Canada, Britain and other developed nations.

Another area where "Habitat" should have important results is in education and research. These, perhaps, could include a decision to strengthen and establish a number of regional urban-management training institutes. There is an acknowledged need to better the competence of urban management throughout the world both in the developed and developing nations. And I think it is essential to the future of human settlements that nations develop and train leaders and officials who can grapple with the task of managing the huge cities that are an inevitable part of our future.

Another result was called for when the General Assembly launched "Habitat". The Assembly requested that the conference should have a "financial" and "institutional" result. Canada recognizes that this is very important. We also recognize that any recommendations in this area, to be meaningful, will require the most careful consideration and must carry the broadest possible measure of support from governments.

Finally, I should like to see "Habitat" adopt a firm declaration of principles with three basic characteristics. It should recognize the fact that human settlement is one of the critical issues of mankind. Secondly, it must recognize the diversity and complexity of human settlements and it should identify the main areas of action as well as the political and scientific resources that need to be marshalled. Thirdly, it should represent a commitment by governments to tackle human-settlements issues with the resources and urgency that are required.

I realize that this is a tall order. But this is what "Habitat" is all about and, in developing and refining such a declaration of principles, it seems inevitable that our understanding of human-settlements issues, and the commitment by our governments to their resolution, will be strengthened. And this will benefit all nations.

The challenge is immense, but it will not disappear. Indeed, it will intensify and demand the most thoughtful, cohesive and energetic applications of our diverse and disparate resources. "Habitat" presents a unique and timely opportunity to harness the genius of man to meet this challenge.

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