

Stockholm in 1972. This generated world-wide publicity for environmental issues and launched the UN Environment Programme, which since that time has monitored environmental conditions throughout the world and maintained pressure on national governments. It has also organised international action, most recently the Barcelona Agreement under which all the nations around the Mediterranean have started to clean up that sea, which had become a sewer for southern Europe and North Africa.

Observable action by governments and international bodies to attack the forces which threaten the environment has been greeted with profound relief by environmentalists and ordinary people who previously stood aghast and helpless before the prospect so graphically portrayed in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. There's a long way to go, but at least action is being taken and hope can take the place of despair.

The other five global conferences — on population, food, law of the sea, women and energy — have all made their mark on attitudes and produced discernible effects.

### Tolerable solutions

The hope is that the Habitat conference will provide a springboard for action and lead the way towards tolerable solutions to the mounting congestion of which no city dweller today can fail to be aware.

Canada knows that her part in this conference is dictated as much by self-interest as by a moral obligation to help with the more serious problems of the Third World. Exploding urbanisation is a Canadian problem, too. In common with other developed countries, Canadians will need to build as many communities in the next three decades as they have in their entire history. This is unprecedented, in terms of scale and rate of growth, and like everyone else, Canada will be out to learn from the experience of the other countries represented at Habitat.

Most of the countries coming to the conference are bringing audio-visual displays of ways in which they have solved particular settlement problems, which are being made available both in three-minute capsule and full-length versions. Some titles from the list are:

- Algeria** The green belt and 1000 socialist villages
- Botswana** Rural-urban drift
- Columbia** Invasion of colinas (squatters)
- Greece** New towns dealing with new needs
- Hungary** Thermal water utilisation
- Kuwait** Resettlement of the Bedouin
- Rwanda** Delivery of community services to farmers
- Togo** A new Togolese approach to urban renewal
- USA** Citizen involvement in public decision-making
- USSR** Mass housing construction in Vilnius

Canada has contributed four audio-visual programmes:

— "Management of urban growth and land use," illustrating Canadian methods of coping with the rapid growth of the country's largest urban areas and the decline of rural communities and smaller centres.

— "Design innovations for settlements in Canadian climates," documenting a number of very recent, largely technical innovations that are particularly appropriate for Canada. These include a variety of solar-heated houses; year-round, roof-top greenhouses; and new architectural designs and building arrangements specifically adapted to severe northern conditions.

— "Governing human settlements," a topic in which Canadian experience is of particular international interest. Because responsibility for local government is fully within provincial jurisdiction, Canada is almost like 10 countries when it comes to experimenting with new urban and regional arrangements for government.

— "Community rejuvenation," focusing on a few outstanding examples of the social, economic and physical rehabilitation of neighbourhoods and communities. Instances may be found in central cities — for example, the Strathcona Community in Vancouver — or in completely rural settings like the Blood Indian reserve in southern Alberta. Nor is physical rehabilitation overlooked, in view of many excellent examples of buildings being "recycled" in Quebec and the Maritimes.

### Pass on know-how

All this amounts to a vast pooling of ideas, added to which the conference is setting out to find agreement on specific ways in which the nations can work together towards a general improvement in human settlements.

Barney Danson outlined the form these agreements could take.

First, Habitat could produce an institutional restructuring in the United Nations enabling it to play a stronger role in human settlements issues than it has in the past: for example, a special committee to meet annually and to evaluate progress.

Second, experts and administrators should be trained to cope with the trends that seem inevitable. Ways need to be found to manage the present unprecedented size and growth rates of cities, and pass on this know-how to thousands of people.

Third, a number of programmes should be initiated to tackle at least *some* of the world's human settlements problems.

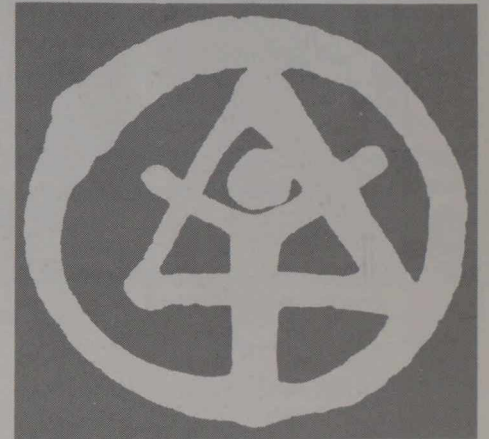
Lastly, the conference could adopt a Declaration of Principles, which would give the governments of the world targets and ideals as a spur for action and a measure for their progress.

Mr. Danson commented: "Human settlement problems can be solved, if they are singled out, and dealt with in practical, pragmatic fashion. If anyone asks, for example, what the World Health Organization has done in the 30 years of its existence, it will, sometime this year,

be able to say 'One of the things we have done is to eradicate smallpox from this planet: totally and probably permanently.' Other UN agencies can point to similar achievements, but we have, as yet, not made a similar attack on the more complex problems of human settlements. . . This must surely be a high priority for the *next* 30 years, and Habitat must be the occasion to develop the right structure and institutions to lead the work, to build on and complement the progress in Stockholm relating to the environment and that emerging from Bucharest, relating to population." ♦

## Habitat symbol

The Habitat symbol combines three traditional forms to reaffirm man's belief that he can find answers to the problems of human settlements. The circle emphasizes the universal nature of such problems. The triangular Greek letter 'delta' represents shelter. The human figure appeals for better ways to provide this shelter. And the rough graffiti style reflects mankind's urgent need for answers.



## Canadian entry features the sun

Five out of the 14 projects that Canada is featuring in the audio-visual display at Habitat are examples of the use of solar energy, which is currently being experimented with in various ways as a possible future alternative to expendable energy sources. (See footnote)

These, along with the other nine projects featured at Habitat, are all supported by funds allocated under the Government's Urban Demonstration Programme. Although that programme has been cancelled as a result of cuts in the federal budget, these 14 were allowed to go ahead. They are as follows:

**An Ark for Prince Edward Island.** This prototype home is intended as an up-to-date version of Noah's original, creating a high