

In developing a human settlement policy, Canada must take into account a number of factors and circumstances peculiar to our own situation:

- (a) First, unlike most of the participants at the Conference which are unitary states, Canada is a federation. Our several levels of government - federal, provincial, territorial and municipal - all have significant responsibilities for human settlements. Coherent and effective human settlement policies in Canada can only be achieved through intergovernmental cooperation. The HABITAT Conference will no doubt further encourage national debate and intergovernmental consultation in the field of human settlement and stimulate in particular the further development of national, provincial and metropolitan land use policies.
- (b) Secondly, we believe that settlement policies and strategies should focus on the problems of growth and decline, that is to say, on the improvement of the quality of life in larger human settlements and the maintenance of a vital community life in smaller towns and villages and in rural settlements. In Canada, as in many other countries, we are faced with an increasing concentration of population growth in a few large cities and metropolitan areas, such as Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver. The frequent result of rapid growth has been sprawl, loss of the best farmland, and - too often - sub-standard living conditions. Concurrently, many of our smaller towns and rural areas have remained static or have declined, losing many of their most productive people to the big cities. This has been the case in many other parts of our country.
- (c) Thirdly, while the major portion of our population growth is the result of natural increase, immigration plays a critical role in shaping the growth of Canadian human settlements. With the sharp decline in our birthrate, immigration is becoming even more important.
- (d) Fourthly, one of the objectives of human settlement policies in Canada must be to overcome the major differences in the economic conditions and the quality of life enjoyed by Canadians in different parts of the country. Our human settlements must be able to offer to our citizens in various parts of the country comparable, if not equivalent, employment, housing, education, health and other basic facilities.