



CCGHS Informal (04)4

**ComHabitat Work Plan
May 2004 – 30th June 2006**

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

CCGE	Commonwealth Consultative Group on the Environment
CCGHS	Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CHEC	Commonwealth Human Ecology Council
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
Habitat Agenda	The main document that came out of the UN's Habitat II conference held in Istanbul, in June 1996. It has been adopted by 171 countries.
Istanbul+5	United Nations General Assembly Special Session for an Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda, New York, June 2001.
Management Group	This refers to the Management and Advisory Group, which forms an element of the proposed structure for ComHabitat outlined in CCGHS Informal(04)5. Until the structure is formally adopted by the CCGHS, the present group will act as an Interim Management and Advisory Group.
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UN-Habitat GC	UN-Habitat Governing Council
WUF	World Urban Forum (2004)
CBOs	Community-based organisations
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

The Commonwealth Secretary-General formally established the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements (CCGHS) in September 1998, building on earlier work by the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC) to harness expertise and experience throughout the Commonwealth. At its inaugural Meeting in Nairobi in May 1999, the CCGHS adopted a Commonwealth goal of:

“Demonstrated progress towards adequate shelter for all with secure tenure and access to essential services in every community by 2015”.

2. Subsequent meetings of the CCGHS discussed a structure for the initiative and its supporting elements, and in May 2003 the entire framework was renamed ComHabitat.

3. ComHabitat consists of the Ministerial Group (CCGHS) supported in practical ways by agencies from government, local government, civil society and the private sector. Currently, the key partners are the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation, CHEC, Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), Homeless International, and the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID). Further details about the Interim Structure of ComHabitat are provided in CCGHS Informal(04)5.

4. In preparation for the June 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on the Habitat Agenda (Istanbul+5), the CCGHS developed and adopted a *Commonwealth Input to Istanbul+5*. This document agreed broad objectives for the CCGHS in working towards the Commonwealth Goal, implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹. The objectives were amended by the CCGHS in May 2003 and now read as follows:

- Provide basic services to households, neighbourhoods and villages.
- Incorporate shelter provision into national poverty alleviation programmes.
- Promote good governance.
- Promote security of tenure.
- Remove systematic discrimination against women especially in respect of title to property and inheritance rights, with general support for the Commission on Human Rights resolution on the equal rights of ownership of and access to land.
- Promote attainment of the Commonwealth goal.

5. On 5th June 2001, CCGHS met in the wings of the UN General Assembly Special Session and adopted a ‘Commonwealth Input to Istanbul+5’. This discussed activities for the CCGHS under five broad headings, which capitalise on the strengths that the Commonwealth has to offer in terms of consensus building and the exchange of information, experience and advice. These headings are:

¹ In particular target 11, which aims to have achieved by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers and target 10 to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

- Development of partnerships.
- Identification of new innovative resources and use of existing funding more effectively.
- Promoting the sharing of ideas, experience and lessons learned.
- Capacity building and country reports.
- Promoting good governance and security of tenure.

6. After Istanbul+5, DFID agreed to provide funding of £295,880 to ComHabitat over a period of five years, ending 30th June 2006. In April 2004, following a tendering process, Homeless International was selected to host the ComHabitat partnership. This paper presents the detailed approach that will be taken by ComHabitat from May 2004 to June 2006 in addressing the broad framework and priorities set by the CCGHS in the *Commonwealth Input to Istanbul+5*. During the period of this Work Plan, the funding comprises of £60,000 per year from DFID, £30,000 per year from the Commonwealth Foundation, and contributions in kind from the Commonwealth Secretariat and other partners.

Work Plan Development

7. Homeless International developed a Work Plan – based has upon its proposal and taking into account working collaboratively with Management Group partners – which was approved by the Interim Management Group on 7 June 2004. It focused on activities that would be carried out by the ComHabitat Secretariat and upon which the Secretariat would be required to report on to the Interim Management Group. However, it also included activities that would be carried out by the wider Management Group partnership and ComHabitat Network.

8. This paper is an elaboration of the Work Plan produced by Homeless International and includes targets for both added value work² (Section II) and internal capacity³ (Section III). Targets are given for each area of work, together with a brief description of how the targets fit into the larger framework and priorities. Appendix 1 includes tables for each work area that illustrate the targets, the key activities to achieve each target and the timing of activities. At this stage, key activities for the period have been identified but other activities will be added as ComHabitat develops and new opportunities arise. In addition certain targets are short-term – for example, concerning the establishment of systems – whilst other targets are more strategic and long-term. In particular, the ComHabitat Secretariat hopes to develop projects to seek external funding. A budget to utilise the existing committed funding is presented in Section IV of this paper.

9. This Work Plan is a ‘working document’, which will be presented to the CCGHS for discussions and adoption when it next meets in April 2005.

II. ADDED VALUE

10. Members of the CCGHS, Management Group and wider ComHabitat Network are already working towards the Commonwealth Goal, Habitat Agenda and achieving the MDGs. ComHabitat should seek to add value to that work, rather than replicate it. Targets have been identified in three areas of added value:

² Networking/advocacy, research/information sharing and the CCGHS process.

³ Administration, governance/structure and fundraising/publicity.

- networking and advocacy;
- research and information sharing; and
- the CCGHS process.

11. These three areas are interlinked and to a large extent mutually dependent. ComHabitat needs to establish and strengthen its network, before it can advocate successfully. Information and research findings need to be disseminated through ComHabitat's network, and can also form the basis for advocacy. Perceptions of the success and relevance of CCGHS meetings and ComHabitat events will influence the growth of ComHabitat's network.

12. The limited budget currently available for ComHabitat activities means that the development of an effective web site and electronic communication will be vital to achieving the targets in these added value areas. Management Group partners also have an important role in keeping the ComHabitat Secretariat, and each other, informed of their activities.

Achieving the targets outlined in the following four areas will enable ComHabitat to move towards the vision for 2006.

Vision of ComHabitat in 2006⁴

ComHabitat will be recognised as an established, credible and respected facility working at international level and offering the following:

- An effective mechanism for promoting and monitoring, within and between Commonwealth countries, the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and associated Millennium Development Goals.
- An information and referral service for CCGHS and other governmental, local authority, non-governmental, community, professional and private sector agencies seeking assistance in strengthening their capacity to implement the Habitat Agenda, particularly in the area of creating alternatives to forced eviction.
- An active network within the Commonwealth enabling dialogue and exchange between all the key partners involved in implementing the Habitat Agenda.
- A means of strengthening dialogue between the Commonwealth and other agencies and networks concerned with ensuring safe and secure shelter for all.

Networking and Advocacy

13. ComHabitat differs from other agencies and programmes in its position with respect to the CCGHS, and the lead position that Ministers have for facilitating implementation of the Habitat Agenda and achieving the MDGs most relevant to human settlement development. ComHabitat's networking and advocacy should stem from both this unique position, and its base in partnerships between the sectors that are critical to implementing the Habitat Agenda (including government, local government, NGOs and private sector). A number of the Commonwealth's characteristics make it an ideal forum for exploring implementing the Habitat Agenda and achieving both the Commonwealth Goal and the MDGs. There are Commonwealth countries on every continent. Commonwealth membership is diverse in terms of size, income and type of economy, but members share a

⁴ Taken from Homeless International's proposal to host ComHabitat.

common working language and similar legal, political and educational systems. The Commonwealth also has a tradition of working through consensus based on shared values.

14. ComHabitat has the potential to advocate the CCGHS priorities, Habitat Agenda, Commonwealth Goal and MDGs both within the Commonwealth, and also to the global community on the basis of Commonwealth experiences. Although some activities can be planned in advance, the nature of advocacy is such that there needs to be flexibility in responding to current events and issues.

15. It is important for ComHabitat to establish links with key campaigns and institutions, and also to build up a network of contacts to form the envisaged ComHabitat network⁵. Networking will not only be achieved through specific ComHabitat funded activities, but through the activities of Management Group partners and others. Networking will be partly achieved through attending key events, however it is vital that criteria for attendance by the ComHabitat Secretariat are established, in order to ensure that resources (both time and money) are not wasted in attending too many events. The Interim Management Group has discussed a timetable of key events that ComHabitat should attend and further events, which Interim Management Group partners may be attending and which ComHabitat should track. ComHabitat should have a focused theme to take to the various events it will be attending; the Interim Management Group identified partnership as the theme for the first year.

Targets in the area of networking and advocacy include:

- To establish linkages with relevant organisations in the UK and other Commonwealth countries.
- To establish linkages with UN-Habitat's campaigns on urban governance and secure tenure.
- To establish linkages with UN Millennium Project task forces 7 (water & sanitation) and 8 (improving the lives of slum dwellers).
- To organise ComHabitat network events, including at the World Urban Forum.
- To attend relevant Commonwealth, UN-Habitat and other events to promote ComHabitat and develop its network.
- To build on linkages with Commonwealth Consultative Group on the Environment.

Research and Information Sharing

16. There are numerous research agencies, academic institutions and programmes actively researching issues surrounding the Habitat Agenda and related Millennium Development Goals, based in the Commonwealth and elsewhere. ComHabitat, with its limited resources, should not be trying to duplicate these programmes, but rather to build on these, complement their approaches and provide a Commonwealth perspective. ComHabitat can play an important role in making existing information accessible – particularly through its website – and also in developing research projects specifically geared to the CCGHS process. A draft research strategy for ComHabitat is included as Appendix 2 to this Work Plan.

⁵ See the (Interim) Structure of ComHabitat are provided in CCGHS(04)INFORMAL3 for more information about the ComHabitat network.

17. Targets in the area of research include:

- To develop a framework for research to identify, in collaboration with other agencies and programmes, key indicators that will enable effective tracking of implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
- To produce documentation and design and build a database detailing the current status of Commonwealth member states in implementing the Habitat Agenda and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, on basis of above research⁶.
- To develop a framework for research on the availability and options for urban development finance.
- To disseminate research findings widely and through most appropriate media and fora (including use of web site and international events).
- To identify key resource centres where good practice has enabled significant progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda and where personnel are able and willing to share their methods, learning and insights with others.
- To identify and provide web site links to key UN-Habitat (and other agencies') research and documentation outputs.

CCGHS Process

18. The Commonwealth Secretariat will continue to convene both formal and informal meetings of the CCGHS. Homeless International, as ComHabitat Secretariat, will support the Commonwealth Secretariat in the preparation of papers and documentation. The ComHabitat Secretariat's target in the area of CCGHS process is:

- To work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to co-ordinate the organisation of both formal and informal CCGHS meetings, and ensure the production of background documentation.

19. It is envisaged that the CCGHS will continue to both hold consultations in the wings of UN-Habitat meetings – with the next formal meeting during the 2005 UN-Habitat Governing Council – and to advocate Commonwealth concerns at international meetings. The 13th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) will address the themes of water, sanitation and human settlements, which are key to achieving the Commonwealth Goal and implementing the Habitat Agenda. The CCGHS may consider linking up with discussions in the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE) in preparation for this event.

III. INTERNAL CAPACITY

20. Targets have been identified in three areas of internal capacity:

- administration and systems development;
- governance and structure; and
- fundraising and promotion.

⁶ This work will not duplicate, rather it will complement the substantial efforts that already exist in this area. The work is intended to help the CCGHS and other ComHabitat members to assess their progress with implementation in a meaningful way.

21. ComHabitat is now being hosted by Homeless International and some of the challenges previously faced in establishing internal systems no longer apply. In particular, ComHabitat Secretariat will be using Homeless International's existing Financial Procedures, Schedule of Delegated Authority, Per Diem Policy and Personnel Policy.

Administration and Systems Development

22. Targets in the area of administration and systems development include:

- To finalise a contractual arrangement between the Commonwealth Foundation and Homeless International by the end of June 2004⁷.
- To liaise with the Commonwealth Secretariat, and others as appropriate, to clarify roles with respect to organising CCGHS meetings, which are convened by the Commonwealth Secretary-General and serviced by the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- To establish and maintain a management information system for ComHabitat's network of contacts and other information.
- To manage the budget and funding:
 - operate ComHabitat as a separate 'company' within Homeless International's SAGE accounting system; and
 - report to the Commonwealth Foundation on a quarterly basis.
- To co-ordinate organisation of Management Group meetings and ensure the adequate production of relevant background documentation and briefing papers.
- To design templates and a house style for ComHabitat documents, based on branding exercise, by end July 2004.

Governance and Structure

23. Targets in the area of governance and structure include:

- To agree a proposal for the future structure of ComHabitat at the Interim Management Group meeting in June 2004, and present this at the next formal meeting of the CCGHS.
- To investigate options for the registration of ComHabitat as an independent legal entity and present these to the appropriate body for decision by June 2006.

Fundraising and Promotion

24. Targets in the area of fundraising and promotion include:

- To develop and maintain the ComHabitat web site as an effective means of communicating ComHabitat activities and sharing information.
- To produce appropriate publicity material and distribute at key events and through networks.
- To develop a communications strategy for ComHabitat
- To mobilise the necessary resources to sustain a long-term resource, advice and referral centre.

⁷ It has been agreed that the Commonwealth Foundation will continue in its existing Memorandum of Understanding with DFID and will subcontract the hosting of ComHabitat to Homeless International.

IV. BUDGET

25. This is an indicative budget for the use of committed funds during the first year of Homeless International's contract to host ComHabitat.

Budget Line	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Expenditure will include
Personnel	£60,000	HI staff and consultants
Office facilities & supplies	£12,000	Proportional contribution to HI overheads, direct ComHabitat costs such as bank charges and letterhead printing
Equipment	£3,000	
International travel	£5,000	Visits to Nairobi, Zambia and WUF
UK travel	£500	
Documentation & website	£5,000	Brochure/flyer for WUF, web site development
Accounting and audit	£1,000	
Meetings and events	£3,500	WUF event
Total	£90,000	

Appendix I – Detailed activities by quarter

Networking and Advocacy

Target	May – Jun 2004	Jul – Sep 2004	Oct – Dec 2004	Jan – Mar 2005	Apr – Jun 2005	Jul – Sep 2005	Oct – Dec 2005	Jan – Mar 2006	Apr – Jun 2006
To establish linkages with relevant organisations in Commonwealth countries.	meet management group partners visit Zambia	meet Commonwealth professional organisations, CBC, etc visit UN-Habitat visit India & Kenya	establish other linkages as appropriate						
To establish linkages with UN-Habitat's campaigns on urban governance ⁸ and secure tenure.	discussion with CLGF	visit UN-Habitat, Nairobi							
To establish linkages with UN Millennium Project task forces 7 (water & sanitation) and 8 (improving the lives of slum dwellers)		visit UN-Habitat, Nairobi meet various task force members							
To organise ComHabitat network events, including at the World Urban Forum.	discussions with management group partners	send invites and hold event	add contact details of attendees to database						
To attend relevant Commonwealth, UN-Habitat and other events to promote ComHabitat and develop its network.		WUF		CLGF conference	UN-Habitat GC		Pre-CHOGM civil society consultations		

⁸ In 2004/05 National campaigns are planned in a number of countries, Commonwealth countries are Kenya and Uganda. Indian and Nigerian campaigns were launched in 2001 and Latin America and Caribbean campaigns in 2000.

To build on linkages with Commonwealth Consultative Group on the Environment		visit UNEP Nairobi		CCGE meeting	CSD 13				
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Research and Information Sharing

Target	May – Jun 2004	Jul – Sep 2004	Oct – Dec 2004	Jan – Mar 2005	Apr – Jun 2005	Jul – Sep 2005	Oct – Dec 2005	Jan – Mar 2006	Apr – Jun 2006
To develop a framework for research to identify, in collaboration with other agencies and programmes, key indicators that will enable effective tracking of implementation of the Habitat Agenda.	develop framework & desk review of existing work visit UN-Habitat Nairobi identify pilot group of countries		carry out research						
To produce documentation and design and build a database detailing the current status of Commonwealth member states in implementing the Habitat Agenda and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, on basis of above research.		initial database design	database development						
To develop a framework for research on the availability and options for urban development finance		develop framework identify pilot group of countries	carry out research						
To disseminate research findings widely and through most appropriate media and for a (including use of web site and international events)					Interim findings presented at UN-Habitat GC			disseminate research findings	
To identify key resource centres where good practice has enabled significant progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda and where personnel are able and willing to share their methods, learning and insights with others.	initial discussions with management group partners			develop ComHabitat web site links pages share information through key events and newsletter?					
To identify and provide web site links to key UN-Habitat (and other) research and documentation outputs.	monitor UN-Habitat's and other agencies' research and documentation outputs		ensure that redesigned ComHabitat web site provides links to useful research, documentation and other web sites related to the Habitat Agenda and MDGs						

CCGHS process

Target	May – Jun 2004	Jul – Sep 2004	Oct – Dec 2004	Jan – Mar 2005	Apr – Jun 2005	Jul – Sep 2005	Oct – Dec 2005	Jan – Mar 2006	Apr – Jun 2006
To work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to co-ordinate the organisation of both formal and informal CCGHS meetings, and ensure the production of background documentation.		informal meeting at WUF			potential formal meeting at UN-Habitat Governing Council CSD 13				

Administration and systems development

Target	May – Jun 2004	Jul – Sep 2004	Oct – Dec 2004	Jan – Mar 2005	Apr – Jun 2005	Jul – Sep 2005	Oct – Dec 2005	Jan – Mar 2006	Apr – Jun 2006
To finalise a contractual arrangement between the Commonwealth Foundation and Homeless International by the end of June 2004 ⁹ .	Sign contract								
To liaise with the Commonwealth Secretariat, and others as appropriate, to clarify roles with respect to organising CCGHS meetings.	discussions with Commonwealth Secretariat WUF meeting arranged								
To establish and maintain a management information system for ComHabitat's network contacts and other information.	Establish system		Maintain system						
To manage the budget and funding:									

⁹ It has been agreed that the Commonwealth Foundation will continue in its existing Memorandum of Understanding with DFID and will subcontract the hosting of ComHabitat to Homeless International.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> operate ComHabitat as a separate 'company' within Homeless International's SAGE accounting system; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open separate bank account establish accounts code structure 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> report to the Commonwealth Foundation on a quarterly basis. 		Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report	Quarterly financial report
To co-ordinate organisation of management group meetings and ensure the adequate production of relevant background documentation and briefing papers.	agree annual meeting timetable	meetings as required							
To design templates and a house style for ComHabitat documents, based on branding exercise, by end July 2004.	obtain info on branding exercise	develop house style for documents							

Governance and structure

Target	May – Jun 2004	Jul – Sep 2004	Oct – Dec 2004	Jan – Mar 2005	Apr – Jun 2005	Jul – Sep 2005	Oct – Dec 2005	Jan – Mar 2006	Apr – Jun 2006
To agree a proposal for the future structure of ComHabitat at the management group meeting in June 2004, and present this at the next formal meeting of the CCGHS.	present structure to management group	present structure to informal CCGHS meeting			present structure to CCGHS ¹⁰				
To investigate options for the registration of ComHabitat as an independent legal entity and present these to the appropriate body for decision by June 2006.					investigate options			present options for decision	

¹⁰ It is assumed that the next formal CCGHS meeting will be held in the wings of the UN-Habitat Governing Council in April 2005

Fundraising and promotion

Target	May – Jun 2004	Jul – Sep 2004	Oct – Dec 2004	Jan – Mar 2005	Apr – Jun 2005	Jul – Sep 2005	Oct – Dec 2005	Jan – Mar 2006	Apr – Jun 2006
To develop and maintain the ComHabitat web site as an effective means of communicating ComHabitat activities and sharing information.	clarify situation re domain, hosting & support	update web site for WUF	collate feedback on website	restructure web site		maintain web site			
To produce appropriate publicity material and distribute at key events and through networks.		brochure or flyer for WUF			UN-Habitat GC				
To develop a communications strategy for ComHabitat			use feedback from WUF to develop strategy						
To mobilise the necessary resources to sustain a long-term resource, advice and referral centre.		research potential funding sources			submit specific proposals				

Appendix 2 – Draft Research Strategy

Introduction

In *Focus on the Habitat Agenda*¹¹, the CCGHS made a commitment to “work through practical, hands-on approaches to providing shelter and improving human settlements”, and identified “monitoring and gauging progress” as a key element of this work. The Commonwealth Input to Istanbul+5¹², states that the “CCGHS, through partnership with other concerned sectors of the community, will assist Commonwealth countries to implement the Habitat Agenda in practical ways which include: . . . Promoting the sharing of ideas, experience and best practices. . . [and] . . . Assisting in capacity building through for example, increased access to relevant information including web sites . . .”. More recently, research and information sharing has been identified as a means by which ComHabitat can assist the CCGHS in meeting these commitments. The proposal for hosting ComHabitat, which was accepted by the Management Group in April 2004, outlined a vision for ComHabitat in 2006 that placed monitoring and gauging progress, and sharing experiences at the centre. (see Box 1 below). With the widespread adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) it is important to also consider how people will monitor and gauge progress towards achieving these goals.

Some principles for ComHabitat’s involvement in research

ComHabitat differs from other agencies and programmes in its position with respect to the CCGHS, and the lead position that Ministers have for facilitating implementation of the Habitat Agenda and achieving the MDGs most relevant to human settlement development. It is important that this positioning be strengthened rather than diluted through the competencies that the ComHabitat Secretariat seeks to develop, including those in the area of research. Given the anchor of ComHabitat in the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements (CCGHS), one of the main objectives of the facility should be to act as a referral and support base for CCGHS itself, as well as for NGOs, CBOs, local government, etc. It is important that such a base be anchored in real practices rather than idealised notions of “what should be”. Research will play a key role in ensuring that ComHabitat can play this role.

There are Commonwealth countries on every continent. The diversity of Commonwealth membership in terms of country size, income and type of economy, combined with a largely a common heritage in terms of legislation relating to human settlements, makes the Commonwealth a particularly useful arena in which to carry out research.

There are a number of principles that ComHabitat should consider in developing research projects:

¹¹ CCGHS (1999) *Focus on the Habitat Agenda: The Commonwealth Development Framework for Human Settlements*

¹² CCGHS (2001) *Statement by member countries of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements at the Special Session on Habitat II*, New York, June 8, 2001.

- **Avoid duplication and work in partnership.** There are numerous research agencies, academic institutions and programmes actively researching issues surrounding the Habitat Agenda and related Millennium Development Goals, based in the Commonwealth and elsewhere. ComHabitat, with its limited resources, should not be trying to duplicate these programmes, but rather to build on these, complement their approaches and provide a Commonwealth perspective.
- **Ensuring research is relevant.** Research projects should be relevant to the work of the CCGHS and the priorities that it has from time to time outlined. In particular, research should work towards the aim of the CCGHS employing “*vision and innovation to establish new and practical solutions to the problem of providing shelter for all*”¹³. Research should also take account of wider movements in the field of human settlement development.
- **Ensuring research results are accessible.** This includes not only the results of any ComHabitat research, but also the research of others and is key to ComHabitat becoming established as a useful referral and support base for CCGHS and other Habitat Agenda partners. Accessibility not only involves availability – for example through the ComHabitat web site – but also presentation in appropriate language¹⁴ and formats, for example case studies of real examples. The Communication Strategy currently being developed by the ComHabitat Secretariat will outline some ground rules for documentation.
- **Facilitating linkages and dialogue.** Research projects should provide material to feed into macro-level planning; particularly as such processes are frequently dominated by agencies, such as finance ministries, that lack a human settlements perspective. Both the processes and outcomes of ComHabitat’s research should focus on facilitating linkages and dialogue, rather than merely the production of research papers.

Initial research projects

Context

In the field of human settlement development, and development more widely, a number of trends have become apparent. The series of UN conferences during the 1980s and 1990s, together with their five- and ten-year reviews, led to the UN resolving to achieve a number of new, time-bound targets for economic and social development in order to free people from “*the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty*”¹⁵. Most bilateral and multilateral development agencies have taken since used these MDGs as a framework to guide their programme design and resource allocation.

Poverty has also become more widely defined as “*caused not only by inadequate income but also by many other (usually interconnected) deprivations*”¹⁶, many of which the

¹³ CCGHS (1999) *Focus on the Habitat Agenda: The Commonwealth Development Framework for Human Settlements* (emphasis added).

¹⁴ Language here refers to terminology and style.

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/2, *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, paragraph 11.

¹⁶ Mitlin, D. and Satterthwaite, D. (Eds.) (2004) *Empowering Squatter Citizen: local government, civil*

Habitat Agenda seeks to address. Meanwhile, an increasing number of Commonwealth countries are developing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). These PRSPs have sought to both analyse poverty and elaborate strategies to combat it. However, in a review of 23 PRSPs, Mitlin (2004) identified an “*apparent confusion of approach, methodology and analysis*” in their measurement of poverty. As a result “*simple quantitative estimates based on poverty lines are failing to pick up issues relating to the urban poor*”¹⁷, but it is these estimates upon which countries and donors strategies are based.

Some agencies, including DFID, have begun to focus on urban/rural linkages. The Habitat Agenda calls for “*a regional and cross-sectoral approach to human settlements planning, which places emphasis on rural/urban linkages and treats villages and cities as two ends of a human settlements continuum*”¹⁸. A recent paper argued that “*the rapid growth of capital cities like a Kampala or a Dar es Salaam, that perhaps offer the only prospects of serious poverty reduction in the country where they are located, is often prematurely curtailed by a failure to support the urban infrastructure necessary to fuel the growth process*”¹⁹

Considering the breadth of vision of the Habitat Agenda, and the inter-dependent nature of the Millennium Development Goals, all of the MDGs could be considered as part of ComHabitat’s research remit. UN-Habitat has recognised this interdependence in its latest Urban Indicators Programme, which has broadened its scope beyond its traditional range of Habitat indicators to look at MDG indicators. However the most directly relevant targets to ComHabitat are likely to be those under Goal 7 “Ensuring environmental sustainability”:

- Target 10, to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and basic sanitation; and
- Target 11, to achieve by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Research on indicators

In carrying out research on indicators, ComHabitat will be seeking to support CCGHS’s commitment to “*monitoring and gauging progress*”²⁰. The proposal for hosting ComHabitat, which was accepted by the Management Group in April 2004, outlined two research projects the first of which focused on indicators. The proposal included the following activities in its work programme:

society and urban poverty reduction, London: Earthscan, p xii.

¹⁷ Mitlin, D. (2004) “Understanding Urban Poverty; what the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers tell us”, *IIED Working Paper* (series on Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas), London: IIED.

¹⁸ UNCHS (1996) *The Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda*, Nairobi: UNCHS, paragraph 104.

¹⁹ Ellis, F. and Harris, N. (2004) *New thinking about urban and rural development*, Keynote paper for DFID sustainable development retreat, University of Surrey, Guildford, July 2004.

²⁰ CCGHS (1999) *Focus on the Habitat Agenda: The Commonwealth Development Framework for Human Settlements*

- Carry out the necessary research to identify, in collaboration with other agencies and programmes, key indicators that will enable effective tracking of implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
- On the basis of research carried out, produce documentation and design and build a database detailing the current status of Commonwealth member states in implementing the Habitat Agenda and achieving the MDGs. Focus on key partnerships that enabled progress to be made.
- Identify key resource centres where good practice has enabled significant progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda and where personnel are able and willing to share their methods, learning and insights with others.
- Establish systems whereby those who need assistance are able to contact and establish linkages with relevant resource centres.

The following section describes how these proposed activities relate to the research principles outlined above.

There is much current work on indicators and measurement (e.g. UN-Habitat’s Global Urban Observatory and the MDG taskforces). Many Commonwealth countries also produced National Habitat Reports for Istanbul+5. However, this information is often not accessible to practitioners. CCGHS has prioritised monitoring and gauging progress and defined “*incorporating shelter provision into national poverty alleviation programmes*”²¹ as a major objective; this incorporation will only be achieved if those influencing the design of these programmes have access to information about lack of shelter²² provision. However, statistics used in global reports are often inaccurate due to the questionable validity of the indicators used and the accuracy of the data sources:

*“There is no lack of nonsense statistics on levels of urban poverty. Anyone with knowledge of Nairobi or any other urban centre in Kenya would be astonished to see that only 1.2 per cent of Kenya’s urban population was considered “poor” in 1998 . . . or that only 4 per cent of its urban population lacked sanitation in 2000”*²³

Community-based organisations and local government are developing new ways of measuring and prioritising; for example the surveys carried out by federations of the urban poor affiliated to Slum/Shack Dwellers International²⁴, or City Development Strategies being developed by many cities. The research on indicators will seek to:

- Develop working relationships with other research initiatives²⁵.

²¹ CCGHS (2001) *Statement by member countries of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements at the Special Session on Habitat II*, New York, June 8, 2001.

²² Shelter is taken to mean adequate, safe, secure housing and the associated infrastructure.

²³ Satterthwaite, D. (2003) “The Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction” in Satterthwaite, D. (Ed.) *The Millennium Development Goals and Local Processes: Hitting the target or missing the point?* London: IIED, p 38

²⁴ See for example, Weru, J. (2004) “Community federations and city upgrading: the work of Pamoja Trust and Muungano in Kenya”, *Environment and Urbanization*, 16 (1), pp. 47 – 62.

²⁵ The ComHabitat Secretariat has already had an initial meeting with Eduardo Moreno, Chief - Global Urban

- Review and synthesise Habitat National Reports.
- Review Commonwealth PRSPs with a view to analysing the degree to which they are supportive of Target 10, Target 11 and the CCGHS goal.
- Provide links to key web sites, documents and contact details of researchers through the ComHabitat web site²⁶.
- Identify key indicators and the levels and methods whereby these indicators can be tracked and collated.
- Develop a database and provide overview syntheses and analysis on the ComHabitat web site.
- Identify key resource centres where good practice has enabled significant progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda.

Research on urban finance

In *Focus on the Habitat Agenda*²⁷, the CCGHS highlighted “*the creation of new and innovative funds for housing and land development*” as a key element of the framework for action. A crucial element of encouraging the development of new and innovative funds must be an appreciation and analysis of existing funds, the context in which they have operated and lessons learnt. The second research project outlined in the proposal for hosting ComHabitat, which was accepted by the Management Group in April 2004, focuses on urban finance. The proposal included the following activity in its work programme:

- Carry out research on the availability and options for urban development finance and disseminate the findings of this research widely

ComHabitat has chosen to focus on researching finance for human settlements in urban areas for a number of reasons including: a recognition that poverty is becoming increasingly urban²⁸; and that in densely populated urban areas financing needs are larger scale and more complex²⁹. Research into financing human settlements development (including infrastructure) has been carried out by a range of institutions, including international NGOs such as Homeless International and WaterAid. It is important that ComHabitat seeks to build upon this work.

The research on urban finance will include examination of the following in a range of case study countries:

Observatory, UN-Habitat.

²⁶ For example the UN-Habitat Global Urban Observatory web site, or the interim reports of the Millennium Task Forces.

²⁷ CCGHS (1999) *Focus on the Habitat Agenda: The Commonwealth Development Framework for Human Settlements*

²⁸ UN-Habitat (2003) *Slums of the World: the face of urban poverty in the new millennium?*, Nairobi: UN-Habitat, p.12.

²⁹ Providing micro-finance to individuals often cannot help in improving housing and infrastructure in dense urban settlements, instead large-scale finance is needed, for example to construct community toilet blocks, or settlement-wide water and drainage systems.

- financial and banking regulations and their impact on settlement investment;
- the development of local financial markets;
- the range and status of local financial institutions, including banks, micro-finance institutions and non-formal institutions; and
- the range of products available (and affordable to different groups) for slum upgrading, home improvement, new build, land purchase, infrastructure development, etc.