

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN AREAS AND HISTORICAL CENTRES

All over the world, urban areas, especially traditional residential districts, are in process of physical deterioration.

Urban problems and the concept of Sustainable Human Development in urban areas were the central themes of the UN/ HABITAT conference in Istanbul in 1996 as well as the recent International Urban Forum in Barcelona, in September 2004.

Important conclusions about urban development reached in Istanbul may be applied to the social and economic tasks facing many cities and historical centres, especially those of Latin America and the Caribbean. The conclusions may be summarised in the following five points:

- a) The necessity of defining a broad-based equation for participation in order to implement the agreements of HABITAT II. This would mean strengthening local communities, guilds, cooperatives and other forms of communal organisation in order to achieve satisfactory interaction with administrative groups.**
- b) To reinforce the concept of “human housing- a human right” with a special reference to urban poverty and the improvement of shelter.**
- c) To examine the complementary role of local action in the improvement of urban conditions, seeking ways to combat the negative effects of growing urbanisation.**
- d) To analyse ways of linking the aspects related to areas of human habitation, such as urban-rural relationships, land use, sustainable transport facilities, communication systems, water, use of sustainable energy, heritage preservation, well-planned agricultural activity in urban and suburban areas, the improvement of the urban economy and the mitigation and prevention of disasters.**
- e) To bear in mind relief of poverty, equality of opportunity for both sexes, preservation of the environment and job creation.**

All these aspects depend not only upon the success of the wider economic policies but also upon local initiatives which complement the projects planned and developed by central government.