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HABITAT
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA

JUNE 1, 1976

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SECRETARY GENERAL, DISTINGUISHED
DELEGATES -- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS SENT ME HERE
COMMITTED TO A CONSTRUCTIVE AND COOPERATIVE ROLE IN THESE
DISCUSSIONS -- AND TO HELP BRING ABOUT THAT ENDURING SPIRIT
OF PEACEFUL, GLOBAL HABITAT TO WHICH THIS INTERNATIONAL
ASSEMBLAGE IS DEDICATED.

PRESIDENT FORD GAVE ME A MESSAGE FOR YOU, BEFORE I LEFT
WASHINGTON. I SHALL READ IT TO YOU NOW:

"YOUR CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS WORLD ATTENTION ON A
CHALLENGE WHICH CONFRONTS US ALL -- HOW TO ENHANCE HUMAN
DIGNITY IN THE VILLAGES, TOWNS AND CITIES WHERE PEOPLE
LIVE. IT IS AN IMPOSING TASK. IT WILL TAKE ALL THE
IMAGINATION, DETERMINATION, AND PERSERVERANCE THAT PEOPLE
AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS CAN SUMMON.



"IN A FEW WEEKS THE UNITED STATES WILL CELEBRATE A GREAT MILESTONE IN ITS HISTORY -- THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. THIS WILL SERVE AS AN OCCASION FOR PONDERING THE LESSONS OF TWO CENTURIES OF EXPERIENCE -- OF THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES -- AND HOW WE ALL MAY BENEFIT FROM THEM AS WE CONTEMPLATE OUR FUTURE.

"IN THIS SENSE, THE CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS WHICH IS INTENDED TO MAKE POSSIBLE A GLOBAL EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE COMES AT AN ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE TIME FOR US AMERICANS. OUR HISTORY IS A REFLECTION OF OTHER PEOPLES IN OTHER PLACES. THROUGHOUT OUR EXISTENCE AS A NATION, WE HAVE BEEN ENRICHED BY IDEAS BROUGHT TO OUR SHORES BY MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANTS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE GLOBE AND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT STAY BUT WHOSE IDEAS LEFT AN ENDURING IMPRESSION ON OUR LIVES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. THE CONFERENCE WILL PROVIDE US WITH YET ANOTHER MEANS BY WHICH WE CAN BENEFIT FROM THE WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS AND ADD NEW DIMENSIONS TO OUR VISION OF OUR NEXT 100 YEARS.

"THERE IS NO TASK MORE COMPELLING THAN THE IMPROVEMENT OF MAN'S CONDITION. THE RECOMMENDATIONS YOU MAKE COULD HAVE A PROFOUND AND LASTING INFLUENCE ON ALL OF US. THE UNITED STATES WILL COOPERATE WITH YOU IN SEEKING TO CHART PATHS THAT OFFER THE PROMISE OF BETTER AND FULLER LIVES FOR ALL PEOPLE AND HABITATS TRULY WORTHY OF MAN."

SIGNED: GERALD R. FORD



AS WE SEARCH FOR THE KEY TO WHAT PRESIDENT FORD CALLS "HABITATS WORTHY OF MAN," WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT WE WILL BE JUDGED, NOT SO MUCH ON OUR SKILLS IN THE ARENA OF WORLD POLITICS, BUT IN OUR WILLINGNESS TO LAY ASIDE THE DEBATES THAT DIVIDE US AND CONCENTRATE ON THE GREATER NEEDS THAT BROUGHT US HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

HABITAT IS A CREATIVE CHALLENGE. SINCE IT IS CERTAIN THAT OUR OFTEN STERILE -- AND TOO OFTEN RIGID -- THINKING OF THE PAST WILL NOT SERVE THE AWESOME NEEDS OF THE FUTURE, THIS CONFERENCE DEMANDS A RADICAL CHANGE IN OUR ENTIRE PERCEPTION OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. ABOVE ALL IT CALLS FOR A LONG RANGE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS RATHER THAN DEALING SEPARATELY AND SHORT RANGE WITH EACH CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE HAVE MUCH TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER; MUCH TO TAKE BACK WITH US FOR POSSIBLE APPLICATION TO SIMILAR NATIONAL PROBLEMS OF OUR OWN. FOR, ALTHOUGH THE NUMBERS AND THE PROBLEMS ARE GLOBAL -- UNIFYING US IN RESOLVE -- THE CHOICE OF ACTION BY THE NATIONS HERE ASSEMBLED WILL BE DEFINED IN THE LONG RUN BY NATIONAL APPLICATION DICTATED BY LOCAL NEEDS, LOCAL ECONOMICS, LOCAL CUSTOMS AND LOCAL EXPERIENCE.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MY COUNTRY IS SET AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF IN A FREE SOCIETY IN WHICH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY IS BASED ON THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF ALL OUR CITIZENS.

IT IS THE COMBINED VOICE, AND FORCE, OF ALL OUR CITIZENS, REPRESENTING ALL SIDES AND ALL ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS WHICH PROVIDE OUR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE CRITICAL INFORMATION AND JUDGMENT ESSENTIAL TO BALANCING THE OPPOSING FORCES OF INEVITABLE GROWTH AND FINITE RESOURCES, WHILE RESPONDING TO OUR NEEDS.

NEVER HAS THE FLEXIBILITY OF OUR NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BEEN MORE CHALLENGED THAN BY OUR EXPERIENCE IN URBANIZATION. IN THE SPACE OF LESS THAN 100 YEARS WE HAVE MOVED FROM A SPARSE AGRARIAN SOCIETY TO A CROWDED URBAN SOCIETY. IN THE PROCESS WE HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH HUNDREDS OF PROGRAMS AND VIRTUALLY THOUSANDS OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO DEAL WITH THIS CHANGE.

BOTH OUR MISTAKES AND OUR TRIUMPHS HAVE BEEN HIGHLY VISIBLE TO US -- AND TO THE REST OF THE WORLD -- AND OFFER A LABORATORY OF HARD LESSONS TO OTHER NATIONS AT THIS CONFERENCE, NOW, AND LONG AFTER HABITAT HAS BEEN ADJOURNED.

WE ARE HERE TO SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE WE DERIVED FROM THE APPROACHES WE HAVE TRIED -- BOTH THOSE THAT WORKED AND THOSE THAT FAILED.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE KNOW NOW THAT IN SPITE OF THE SUPPORT OF URBANISTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, IN SPITE OF OUR NOBLE INTENTIONS AND HARD WORK, AND IN SPITE OF STRONG PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCING -- WHOLESALE URBAN RENEWAL CAN DESTROY THE CULTURE, SPIRIT AND SOCIAL FABRIC OF AN URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD.

WE LEARNED BY THAT MISTAKE, AND NOW RATHER THAN BY CLEARING THEM OUT, UP-ROOTING THE RESIDENTS AND REBUILDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD FROM THE GROUND UP, WE ARE RECLAIMING OUR CENTER-CITIES BY PRESERVING AND RESTORING AND ADDING.

WITH RESOURCES SO SCARCE, WE MUST BE CREATIVE IN THE RE-USE OF EVERY EXISTING AND SERVICIBLE RESOURCE THAT REMAINS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD LARDER.

AS A NATION OF THE WORLD, OUR EXPERIENCE AND OUR LESSONS CANNOT BE ISOLATED FROM THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE. INDEED, THE DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE -- AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MY COUNTRY -- WAS PART OF THAT GLOBAL EXPERIENCE.

TODAY, AS THE RAPID SHRINKING OF OUR PLANETARY HABITAT AFFIRMS THE NAIVETE OF SOME OF OUR PAST CONCEPTS, WE MUST CONCEDE THAT:

.....NO NATION'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT CAN BE INSULATED FROM THE GLOBAL ECONOMY -- NOR FROM THE NECESSITY OF POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE KIND WE ARE ENGAGED IN RIGHT HERE.

FOR SOUND NATIONAL PLANNING BENEFITS THE ENTIRE WORLD COMMUNITY; AND COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AUGMENTS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS.

WE CANNOT SHIRK OUR OBLIGATIONS -- AS WORLD CITIZENS -- TO THE NEEDS OF THE MANY POOR PEOPLE AND POOR NATIONS AMONG US. TOGETHER, WE DO HAVE THE TECHNICAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE A SUITABLE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EVERY LIVING MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RACE TODAY. THE QUESTION IS OUR MORAL COMMITMENT TO THAT OLDEST QUEST OF HUMANITY -- A WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THE INCREASING NUMBER OF HUMAN BEINGS IN SETTLEMENTS, RESULTING BOTH FROM HIGH BIRTH RATES AND FROM MIGRATION, CRITICALLY COMPLICATES THE TASK OF PROVIDING A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EACH AND CALLS FOR A REDEDICATION TO THE WORLD POPULATION PLAN OF ACTION ADOPTED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY IN BUCHAREST IN 1974 AND NOW BEING EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD.

IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT WE CANNOT ACHIEVE A WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY WITHOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EXPANDING WORLD ECONOMY. GOOD INTENTIONS ALONE WILL NOT TURN THE MAGIC KEY. WE CANNOT ACCOMPLISH IT WITH A ONE-WAY FLOW OF FUNDS FROM THE RICHER NATIONS TO THE POORER NATIONS -- A METHOD TRIED AND FOUND WANTING, BOTH BY THE NATIONS WHO HAVE BORNE THE HEAVY BURDEN AND BY THOSE WHO HAVE FELT THEIR NATIONAL PRIDE COMPROMISED BY A RELATIONSHIP OF CONTINUING DEPENDENCY ON THE GOOD WILL OF OTHERS.

THUS, WE BRING TO THIS CONFERENCE A NUMBER OF PRACTICAL INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS -- TEMPERED BY OUR NATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND FAITHFUL TO THE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- PARTICULARLY RESPONDING TO THE EXPRESSED CONCERNS OF
- DEVELOPING NATIONS.

THE UNITED STATES EMPHASIZES FOUR AREAS OF PRIORITIES
AND PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THOSE COUNTRIES:

FOOD PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND NUTRITION.

POPULATION PLANNING AND HEALTH.

EDUCATION, AND

HUMAN RESOURCES.

EACH OF THESE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS POLICY -- BUT, UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE TENDED
TO DEAL WITH THEM INDIVIDUALLY.

HABITAT ITSELF, IN ITS COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE
HUMAN SETTLEMENT, REINFORCES OUR NATIONAL DETERMINATION TO
EFFECT CHANGES IN SOME OF OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

FIRST: TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED RURAL/URBAN BALANCE, WE
ARE DEVELOPING NEW INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES
TO HELP NATIONS WHO WISH TO STRENGTHEN THEIR RURAL REGIONS.
THIS WOULD FOCUS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARKET TOWNS AS AN
ALTERNATIVE TO THE BOUNDLESS GROWTH OF SINGLE URBAN CENTERS.
IT IS AIMED AT THE INCREASE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION --
AND WITH IT, THE SOUND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL REGIONS.

SECOND: WE ARE TURNING TO A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PROVIDING SHELTER FOR THE URBAN POOR.

ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT INSTRUMENTS FOR THIS IS OUR HOUSING INVESTMENT GUARANTEE PROGRAM, WHICH HAS FINANCED MORE THAN \$1 BILLION OF SHELTER PROJECTS, AND WHICH IS NOW THE LARGEST SINGLE SOURCE OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCING FOR SHELTER. AT ITS INCEPTION, THIS WAS A PROGRAM FOR THOSE OF MODERATE INCOME. WE ARE SHIFTING THAT EMPHASIS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE POOR.

THE HOUSING INVESTMENT GUARANTEE PROGRAM WILL BE USED INCREASINGLY TO ASSIST THE POOR TO HELP THEMSELVES, IN TWO WAYS: (1) BY FINANCING SITES AND SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO BUILD OR COMPLETE THEIR OWN HOUSING; AND (2) BY FINANCING THE IMPROVEMENT OF SLUM AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS TO PROVIDE BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS.

THIRD: WE WILL SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS -- APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY AND CREDIT FOR SMALL PRODUCERS, FAMILY PLANNING, HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND EDUCATION -- SO THAT THE PROGRAMS WILL PROVIDE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE POOR TO EXPAND THEIR INCOMES AND GAIN EASIER ACCESS TO THESE SERVICES THEY NEED.

FOURTH, IN TECHNOLOGY. LAST MONTH, AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT, SECRETARY KISSINGER OUTLINED THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT EVER PUT FORWARD BY THE UNITED STATES TO DEAL WITH THE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOPMENT. MANY OF THE PROGRAMS HAVE IMPORTANT RELEVANCE TO HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ACTIVITIES.

SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY OFFERS ENORMOUS PROMISE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PLANNING. REMOTE SENSING SATELLITES CAN BE USED TO COLLECT DATA ON LAND USE, SOIL TYPES, TRANSPORTATION, AND DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS.

MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES, INCLUDING SATELLITES, HAVE A LARGE, UNTAPPED POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE EDUCATION, TRAINING, HEALTH SERVICES, AND FOOD PRODUCTION.

OBVIOUSLY, SINCE EVERY NATION IS DIFFERENT, ALL OF OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES WILL NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO ALL NATIONS. BUT, WE OFFER ACCESS TO THE TECHNOLOGIES WHICH HELP THE UNITED STATES IN MANAGING OUR URBAN/RURAL ENVIRONMENT -- BOTH AS AN INSIGHT TO OUR NATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND AS EVIDENCE OF OUR DESIRE TO SHARE OUR ACCUMULATION OF KNOWLEDGE WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHOSE URBAN GROWTH IS ALREADY OUT-PACING OUR OWN.

AND FEW SUBJECTS ARE MORE CENTRAL TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR HABITATS THAN THE UTILIZATION OF WATER RESOURCES. THE TECHNOLOGY OF STORING, TRANSPORTING, AND PURIFYING WATER IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE HEALTH AND EVEN THE SURVIVAL OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS.

IN ADDITION THE UNITED STATES WILL ENCOURAGE ITS UNIVERSITIES, INSTITUTES, AND TRAINING CENTERS TO ESTABLISH SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS AND PERSONNEL OF DEVELOPING NATIONS -- IN BUSINESS, INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS, PUBLIC MANAGEMENT, HEALTH, WELFARE AND RELATED SOCIO-ECONOMIC FIELDS.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL ENCOURAGE FORMATION OF A TECHNOLOGY CORPS -- TO PARALLEL OUR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS -- TO WORK WITH AND HELP TRAIN LOCAL OFFICIALS IN THE NEW AND COMPLEX PROBLEMS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MANAGEMENT.

AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO EXPANDING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR EXCHANGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INFORMATION. TO THAT END, THE UNITED STATES ALREADY HAS MOVED TO IMPROVE THE CENTER'S ACCESS TO THE EXISTING INFORMATION CENTERS OF OUR COUNTRY.

THE OBJECT IS TO DELIVER THE MAXIMUM USABLE SETTLEMENTS INFORMATION TO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE MINIMUM TIME AND WITH THE LEAST NUMBER OF BARS TO READY ACCESSIBILITY.

MY GOVERNMENT OFFERS THIS CONFERENCE AND THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD THE BEST OF WHAT WE HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE -- NOT OUT OF CHARITY NOR A SENSE OF BEHOLDEN INDEBTEDNESS.

THE RESOURCES OF THE WORLD -- WHEREVER LOCATED -- ARE VITAL TO ALL OF US; AS IS THE WORLD ECONOMY BY WHICH WE ALL MUST LIVE.

AT THE 7TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, LAST SEPTEMBER, OUR NATIONS AGREED ON AN AGENDA OF MUTUAL INTERNATIONAL ACTION. SINCE THAT TIME WE HAVE MOVED FORWARD WITH HISTORIC INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS ON TRADE AND FINANCE.

WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH. WE STILL HAVE MUCH TO DO.

TO CONCLUDE WITH THE WORDS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER:

"MATERIALLY, AS WELL AS MORALLY, OUR DESTINIES ARE
INTERTWINED. THERE REMAIN ENORMOUS THINGS FOR US TO DO. WE
SAY (ONCE MORE) TO THE NEW NATIONS OF THE WORLD: WE HAVE
HEARD YOUR VOICES. WE EMBRACE YOUR HOPES. WE WILL JOIN
YOUR EFFORTS.

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO OUR COMMON SUCCESS."

THANK YOU.