

## M E S S A G E

by

**PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT**

to the Habitat Conference in the City of Vancouver

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The prevailing circumstances in most of the human settlements in the Third World call for a serious international procedure that would help reach a suitable solution for the grave problems of housing, services, water, energy and communications, particularly in rural areas deprived for so long of the basic needs necessary for any reasonable standard of living. I hope this conference will issue a series of decrees that will provide us with a practical vision of the future, in confrontation of all the problems of human settlement. »

Mr. President, Heads and members of delegations :

« Human settlements do not only represent a refuge for the human beings, but in fact they are also the mirror reflecting the existing environmental, socio-economic and political circumstances.

The Nile Valley and the Delta region in Egypt were, since time immemorial, a cradle for the first settlements ever made in history. Moreover, the styles of residence of the Egyptian settlements were later introduced and spread in the other neighbouring areas. Just as we boast of our ancient heritage, we, likewise, care for the prevailing circumstances in our settlements whether urban or rural.

The problems facing human settlements in Egypt are not only due to the tremendous rate of growth in population, nor can they be

attributed to the unbalanced economic development alone, nor to the precipitous trend in the establishment of cities without planning or to the rural exodus. These problems are the final outcome of a long period of colonialism, and frequent armed aggressions directed against the unity of Egyptian territories. That is why the problems we face in Egypt are the result of unique social, economic and political factors, the first of their kind. Nevertheless, these problems are almost similar to those facing all the developing countries in the Third World.

Deliberate devastation of the Egyptian settlements in the Suez Canal area is but a deliberate destruction of life itself. The enormous sacrifices borne by Egypt in order to resume navigation in this international waterway, to reconstruct settlements all along the banks of the Suez Canal and to implement large-scale programmes set for the re-settlement of the inhabitants, these sacrifices represent part of our overriding concern with the improvement and maintenance of human settlements and their preservation.

We seize this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to our Arab brothers and to our friends in various parts of the world who offered their assistance to share in the implementation of this work that requires human solidarity.

The October War in 1973 has made it possible to pursue an overall national policy for the establishment of settlements as well as for reconstruction. In fact, the world has become more aware of the fact that rehabilitation is the basis of development in its broad and comprehensive sense.

Concerning the situation in our country, the setting up of the Ministry of Housing and Construction represents a turning point, as it is a transition from partial programmes of development to an overall development for rehabilitation. The major objects of the

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Ministry are not only confined to the reconstruction of the settlements devastated in the Suez Canal area, but they also comprise broader objectives for the purpose of re-shaping the housing map of Egypt. Accordingly, this would allow an optimal use of natural and human resources, and conceiving new horizons for human settlement outside the thickly populated Nile Valley. This, in addition, comprises the pursuing of a new policy for the re-distribution of the inhabitants among different regions, for the building of new settlements and supplying them with roads, transport lines, electricity and water in addition to other services.

In short, we work seriously to reach a better standard of life. The ambitious projects embarked upon by the Egyptian Government, invite international participation and cooperation.

Our work in this connection has provided an instance of international cooperation. We invited more than 300 consulting companies and have welcomed them along with the U.N. Development Programme.

This clearly explains the need of developing countries for the establishment of a new body for international cooperation in the field of human habitat. In the light of these facts, the Egyptian delegation announces that it would strongly support any suggestion that might be adopted by this conference, connected with the establishment of an international agency or programme, for human settlement, under the U.N. sponsorship.

It is hoped that this body will pave the way to participation, upon world level, in regional and national settlements. This will bring about bridging of the gap between the poor and rich countries.

I now wish to comment on the document presented to the conference under the name of 'Proclamation of Principles'. The Egypt-

tian delegation believes that this document has been formulated and planned in a manner capable of dealing with most of the threats and problems connected with the human habitat.

But the main responsibility of the international community is to agree on a list of regulations and principles to be embodied in an international charter relative to human settlements and not just a proclamation of principles.

Furthermore, the Egyptian delegation wishes to draw attention to the important causes that will require serious discussion such as:

- 1) Illegitimate erection of settlements on territories occupied by means of armed aggression.
- 2) Illegitimate changes in historic habitats and archaeological sites, as well as deliberate distortion of cultural legacy.
- 3) Wholesale expulsion of the population from their lands, and confiscation of lands by means of violence and oppression.
- 4) Racial policies and discrimination, based on colour, race and religion which are reflected on human settlements in a most shameful manner.

This is why we appeal to world public opinion to reject and condemn the above actions which obstruct progress, peace and the prosperity of man.