

**INURA**  
**Bulletin 11: May 1996**

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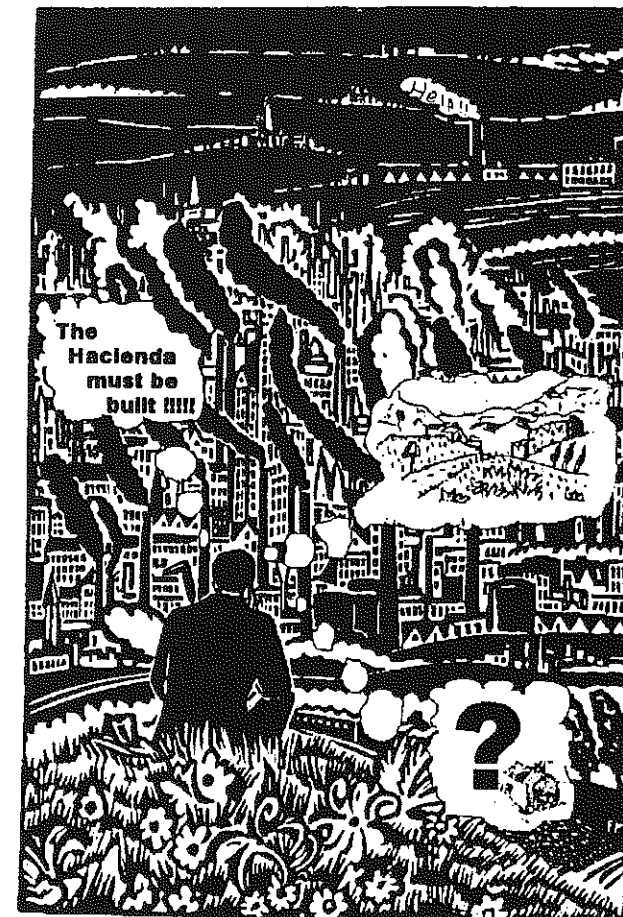
**INURA**

1991	Zurich & Salecina	Switzerland
1992	Hamburg & Rostock	Germany
1993	London & Durham	UK
1994	Florence & Sienna	Italy
1995	Amsterdam	Netherlands
1996	Luton & Letchworth	UK
1997		Switzerland



**Bulletin 11 May 1996**

***"Making Urban Environments:  
 Self Help and Utopias"***



**Programme for Annual Meeting  
 Luton and Letchworth, UK  
 8th - 14th June 1996**

**Bulletin 11. May 1996**  
*Programme for Annual Meeting*  
**Making Urban Environments: Self Help and Utopias**

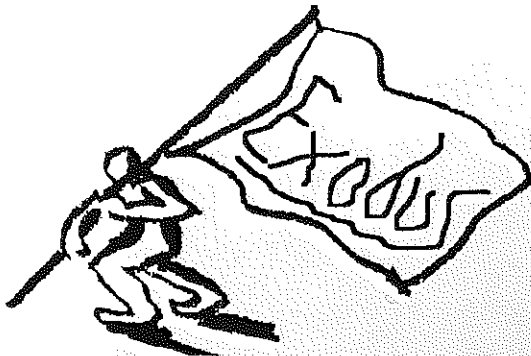
For this year's meeting, INURA is pleased to take up the invitation from Exodus to visit their 'Housing Action Zone', a self-help housing collective located on the edge of Luton in southern England. Through the week we will help Exodus test their concept for a new community centre which they want to establish in one of the town's many disused warehouses and perhaps gain some inspiration from the way they have pursued their objectives in the face of great opposition from the local council and the police.

The rest of the meeting will be based in Letchworth, the UK's first Garden City, an earlier example of an attempt to make the urban environment more inhabitable.

The theme of this year's meeting ; 'Making Urban Environments: Self Help and Utopias' hopes to explore the different experiments of urban improvement found in this region of England. From the small scale self-help approach of Exodus, the Garden City concept at Letchworth and the huge new town built around the car at Milton Keynes. Each offers a different vision of how an urban environment should function and who should build and control it. An examination of these alternative visions will raise many questions about the nature of urban environments and the political systems they are built on.

We look forward to seeing you all in June and hope that this meeting will prove as interesting and stimulating as all the previous INURA gatherings. Bon voyage and see you in London on the 8th or 9th of June.

Best wishes,  
Louanne Tranchell, Bob Colenutt & Geraint Ellis



The UK is still a country searching for an elusive economic recovery from a long recession, and it is still run by the Conservative Party. Recent local government elections have given Labour and the Liberal Democrats more control of Councils throughout the country, and John Major now faces defeat in the general election. Because of the strange British political system, this could be held at any time between now and June 1997. His majority in the House of Commons has dwindled to a single seat as members of his "Tory" party defect to other parties or die.



The Tories lurch from one political crisis to another: they are split over Europe, BSE in cattle has devastated the farmers, and the IRA have suspended the ceasefire. In an attempt to win back votes they have imposed more severe law and order legislation such as the Criminal Justice Act which gives the police more powers to act against squatters, environmental or political protests, trespassers and even young people trying to have a good time.

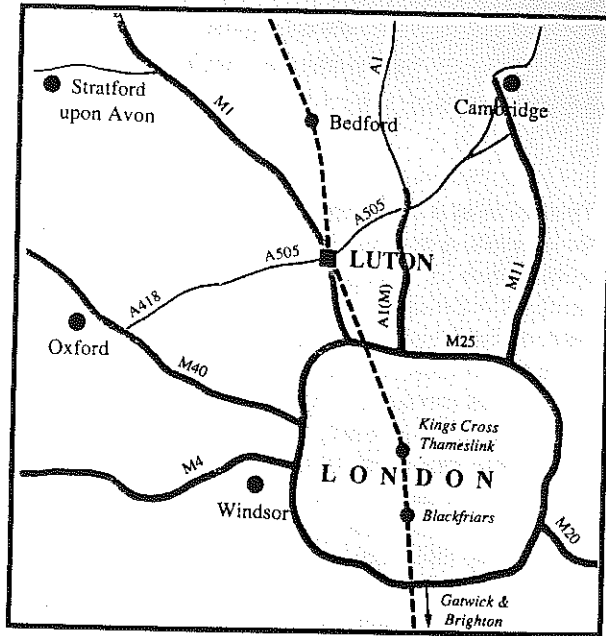
This current political climate has resulted in disenchantment with mainstream politics. There is an increased belief in direct action, New Economics and Democracy, a growth in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) movement. Another alternative is the new lottery which every week gives millions of people the dream of becoming instant millionaires.

The Labour Party has been reformed under the leadership of Tony Blair into "New Labour" taking it away from its socialist roots to a centre-left social democratic party. It must try to undo the damage caused by the Conservative policies of the last 17 years, but it shows little sign yet of having a radical agenda.

From 8 -30 June 1996 England hosts the European Soccer Championships, the largest soccer event since the 1966 World Cup!

**Luton**

Luton is located only 50 kilometres north of London, 60km from Cambridge, on the edge of the Chiltern Hills and in one of the main transport corridors of the UK (the M1), an area containing many of the UK's new towns. Because of its excellent transport links this area was seen as ideal for new settlements designed to absorb overspill from London. Milton



Keynes, Welwyn Garden City, Letchworth, Stevenage and Harlow, each a version of the post war State's vision of an urban ideal.

Luton itself has a small historic core surrounded by industry and housing estates, both the result of rapid postwar growth. Most people in the UK would describe Luton as an unremarkable town, more known for its airport than anything else. It began in Roman times as *Lygetum*, becoming famous as the centre of the British hat industry in 1600s and remains a national supplier of British headware. The town is also known for its connections with the motor industry as the home of Vauxhall Motors (owned by General Motors), whose factories underpin the economy of the area and who have recently announced renewed investment in the town. Luton also has the headquarters of one of the UK's largest brewing companies, Whitebread plc which has been in the area since the 1760s.

Luton is additionally known however, not for its cars or beer, but because as the home of Exodus.

Delegates who have already returned the booking form have been registered

Name:.....

Address:.....

Tel: ..... Fax: .....

E Mail: .....

I will /will not be attending INURA 1996

Please indicate for which nights you will require accommodation;

Sunday	9th June (Luton)	YES/NO
Monday	10th June (Luton)	YES/NO
Tuesday	11th June (Luton)	YES/NO
Wednesday	12th June (Letchworth)	YES/NO
Thursday	13th June (Letchworth)	YES/NO

I will / will not be able to attend INURA 1997 in Switzerland

August/September is / is not a good time to hold this event

Please keep me on the INURA mailing list: YES/NO

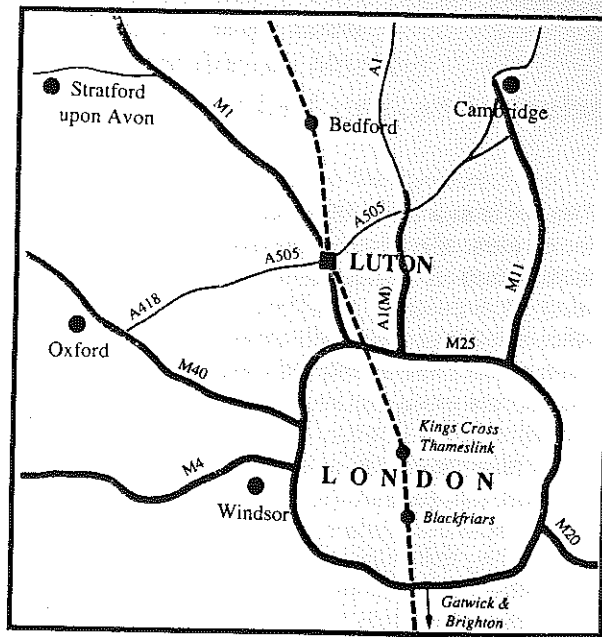
Please return as soon as possible to;

Louanne Tranchell,  
52, Dewhurst Road,  
London W14 0ES  
Tel: (+44)171 603 6493

## Luton

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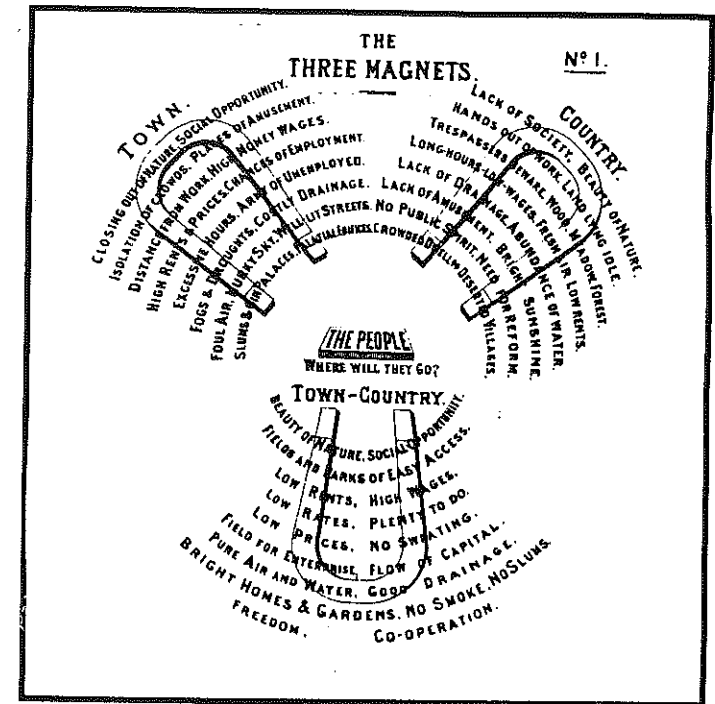
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## Letchworth

Located 70 kilometres from London, Letchworth's main fame comes from being England's first Garden City. The history of the Garden Cities began after World War I, when returning soldiers were demanding 'homes fit for heroes' and Ebenezer Howard (1850 -1928) wrote a book called *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. In this he criticised the social, economic and environmental ills associated with the uncontrolled growth of large cities and the decline of rural populations. In the proposed Garden Cities land uses were controlled in the public interest, all urban land was in public ownership, population size was limited to 30,000 and the city was surrounded by a belt of agricultural land (later translated into the green belt around all the UK's major cities).

Through the Garden City Association Howard established a number of new settlements were formed, the first of which was Letchworth in 1903, designed by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker.

The Garden City concept won official acceptance and in 1946 the New Towns Act was passed and a larger number of new settlements formed. The most well known product of this Act is Milton Keynes (designed in the 1960s with a population of 200,000) which will also be visited during the meeting. The Garden City concept had a profound impact on urban planning in UK and around the world, but increasingly its ideas, e.g. segregation of land uses, limitation of town size and green belts have become questioned in recent years.



## Exodus

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Exodus was started by a group of native Lutonites whose local pub had been closed down because of weed-smoking and who were dissatisfied with the commercial dance scene. The organisation held its first party on June 5 1992 attracting some 150 people. The third party drew 1,000 and on New Year 1992/93 10,000 gathered free-of-charge.

Local police recognised the importance of Exodus' activities for the town's youth, and helped try and find a legal venue for renting and licensing. Force headquarters had other ideas, pushed by political and possibly business pressure from the alcohol industry. Chief Inspector Mike Brown commented to *NSS* at the time: "Licensed premises were experiencing a fair amount of loss of trade, loss of customers. People might pop into the pub for a quick drink around ten, then they'd be off for the rest of the night. Some licensees were starting to get into real financial trouble. As a consequence there was a lessening of alcohol-related offences." Against the national trend, the crime rate in Luton dropped by 6 per cent that year.

On January 30 1993 police raided Long Meadow Community Farm, which was first squatted by Exodus after a dance had been held there, and was then licensed to the collective by the Department of Transport. Thirty-six collective members were arrested and taken to Luton police station, along with the PA system. By 2am 4,000 people had peacefully surrounded the station. Everyone was released by the next morning and the PA returned.

Exodus also squatted a derelict old people's hospice on the edge of town for which they now have a tenancy. Thirty-five people live there, renovating the buildings out of their housing benefit entitlement and some money from the dances.

The collective has continued putting on unlicensed dances in their area, using mainly deserted quarries during the summer and warehouses in winter. There's no advertising, just word-of-mouth and one phone line. Exodus has always insisted that they wanted to run licensed dances, but have never had the means to do so. Commercial companies have refused to lease warehouses to them, and planning permission was refused on the one building they might have been able to lease. Luton Borough Council is now trying to do what the police were unable to achieve—stop the unlicensed dances by the use of civil injunctions.

In reply Exodus wants to rent a large warehouse space in Luton—the town has proportionately more empty warehouse space than anywhere else in the country. Money from the dances would pay for the space, and for setting up a community centre there with cafe, workshop facilities, a recording studio and local radio station.

"At last people feel part of something," asserts Glenn Jenkins. "Where there was coldness and despair, now there's warmth and a regeneration of community values. This centre will be free from personal profit. All money will be accountable to those that participate. The centre will provide a focus for Luton youth, an outlet for their creative expression, a place where they feel they belong and which belongs to them."

## Programme for INURA Meeting 8th- 14th June 1996

Date	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Saturday 8th June	Arrive London	Arrive London Soccer: England vs Switerland	Arrive London Informal Meeting at Riverside pub: The Anchor at Bankside
Sunday 9th June	1000hrs:1st Meeting Point; Kings Cross Station Guided Tour ; Karl Marx walk	Pub Lunch 1630hrs:2nd Meeting Point; Kings Cross Travel London to Luton	1800hrs;3rd Meeting Point; Shannon Hotel, Luton Opening session, INURA Papers1800
Monday 10th June	Luton Town Hall Speaker; Alan Cochrane, Open University	Introduction to Exodus Background and Issues	Exodus ; Discussion session on community centre concept
Tuesday 11th June	Speaker : Hilary Wainwright, Editor.'Red Pepper'	INURA papers	INURA papers
Wednesday 12th June	Speaker: George Monbiot; The Land is Ours Campaign	Exodus wrap up	Travel to Letchworth, Letchworth Hall Hotel INURA Papers
Thursday 13th June	Study Visit; Milton Keynes	Study Visit; Letchworth	INURA papers Dinner
Friday 14th June	INURA papers	Wind up session	

Area in bold line is time spent at the Exodus Housing Action Zone

**INURA 1997**  
A PROPOSAL FROM INURA ZURICH FOR NEXT YEAR  
(TO BE DISCUSSED IN LUTON)

**The last six years**

Over the past six years, INURA has slowly grown and matured steadily. All of our active members have contributed to create a new kind of network. We have continuously tried to broaden and strengthen co-operation between activists and researchers, from a wide range of professional and geographical backgrounds.

We've been successful in building up a colourful and diverse network of people and we have attracted more than 130 urban researchers and activists from over twenty countries. Besides holding five (and soon six) exciting and delightful meetings in the Swiss Alps, on the Baltic Sea, in North England, Tuscany, The Netherlands and soon in Southern England, we have also attempted to extend our activities to new fields of action.

Whereas the knitting of personal ties has proven to be extremely rewarding and resulted in the major achievement of INURA, attempts to realise further going INURA projects have met with varied success. On one hand the 'Capitales Fatales' book project - a result of INURA networking between Frankfurt, Berlin, Zurich and North America, was a hard lesson of co-ordination and endurance. On the other the long proposed INURA journal still does not progress the way we should have wished. The reason for this as well as future perspectives will be discussed in Luton.

**There is considerable potential interest in our network, but we are increasingly in need of finding sustainable and dynamic structures, solid foundations and meaningful projects. We therefore like to submit the following proposal to the Luton meeting and also to our non-attending members.**

**THE PROPOSAL FOR INURA 1997**

INURA 1997 shall be a little different to previous meetings.

In addition to the traditional closed meetings for INURA members we would like to introduce a new element by opening up a part of our annual conference. This means finding a suitable new structure for the meeting.

The first part of our annual conference shall be an open congress, held jointly with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and the cultural centre Rote Fabrik (Red Factory). The idea is to combine a rather 'classic' congress at the University with an attractive cultural programme at Zurich's most interesting and beautiful venue. During the day, talks and discussions will take place at the SFIT and at Rote Fabrik. In the evenings, leisure and entertainment (music, theatre, dance etc.) will be performed at the lakeside in Rote Fabrik. For the talks and seminars we think of inviting a few 'external' key speakers as well as selected INURA members.

This first part (including a city tour) will last two to three days.

The second part of our meeting will be 'as usual'. It will be strictly for a limited number (20 to 35) INURA members, for the exchange of personal and professional ideas. It will be set in a splendid retreat in the mountains.

We also suggest to move the traditional date of the INURA meeting from May/June to August/September. The reason for this (once only?) shift being personal engagements of INURA Zurich members in May and June and more importantly for you - the higher probability of good outdoors and swimming weather in the late summer.

Eagerly awaiting your response.

INURA Zurich

Monday May 6 1996

**'This land was made for you and me'**



**MORE THAN 500 "land campaigners" invaded Wandsworth in south London yesterday in the first of a series of actions to reclaim derelict sites across Britain.**

Members of The Land is Ours group drove in convoy from Shepherds Bush in west London to York Road, Wandsworth where they took over the former distillery site and started building a communal village (above).

The action marked the 50th anniversary of the biggest occupation in history when 100 sites were seized by demobbed servicemen and their families on May 8 1946.

The Land is Ours group has spent six months organising for the demonstration recruiting architects, builders, gardeners and lawyers who will help secure the development.

The group intends to build a sustain-

able village with huge communal structures, house gardens and community projects.

As a sustainable village, the site is expected to develop independent sources of food, water and power.

The land rights protesters said that the squat marked a new phase in the direct action movement — changing from simply campaigning against the sort of development that they don't want to the type that they do.

The Land is Ours spokesman George Monbiot said: "Our role is constructive, peaceful and positive and our purpose here is to build a sustainable village with houses and gardens to make deve-

lopment work for us, not against us.

"Development in Britain has done a lot for the big developers, but very little for those who need it most. We desperately need to use the vast areas of derelict land in our cities to house the homeless to relieve urban bleakness and to take the pressure off the countryside," he said.

The land, which has been derelict for seven years, is owned by industrial giant Guinness, and the campaigners hope that the firm will be sympathetic.

But Guinness said that it was in the process of appealing against a local authority decision to refuse Safeway permission to build a giant supermarket on the site.

It would decide after the Bank Holiday what action to take against the protesters.

The campaigners began putting up tents on the site and were hoping to build a shelter to hold over 200 people.

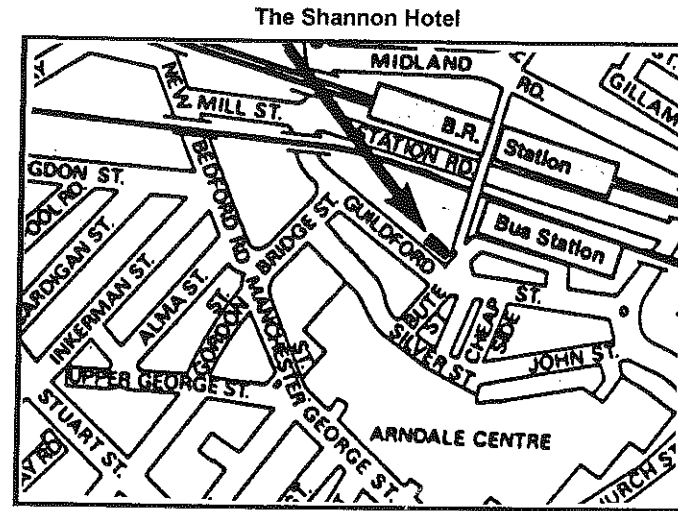
**Accommodation**

For people arriving on Saturday we have not made any formal accommodation arrangements. It is hoped that everybody can be given a bed by friends and other INURA members. If you can make your own arrangements please do, but if this is not possible please contact Geraint Ellis (Home; +44-181- 341 7690 Work: +44-171 928 6193) who organise something.

Accommodation in Luton will be at:

**The Shannon Hotel**, 40a, Guildford Street Luton LU1 3SS (Tel; 01582 482119, Fax; 01582 482818).

Accommodation for bed and breakfast in shared room will cost £25.00 per night.



The stay in Letchworth goes up market;

**The Letchworth Hall Hotel**, Letchworth Lane, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6 3NP (Tel; 01462 683747/8, Fax: 01462 481540).

Letchworth Hall is an old Manor house built in 1625 for the Lord of the Manor of Knebworth, Sir Rowland Lytton who was Member of Parliament for Hertfordshire during the reign of King James I. The hotel is set in eight acres of mature landscaped grounds (bring your golf clubs!) and still has many of its original architectural features. It is a few minutes walk from Letchworth, England's first Garden City. A ccommodation for bed and breakfast in a shared room will cost £25.00 per night



## Meeting arrangements

### Arriving Saturday?

No formal arrangements have been made for people arriving on Saturday 8th June and you are expected to make your own accommodation arrangements (see below). If you are in London on this date you may want to meet at a riverside pub in central London. This will be at the Anchor at Bankside, on the south bank of the Thames near Southwark Bridge at 2000hrs.

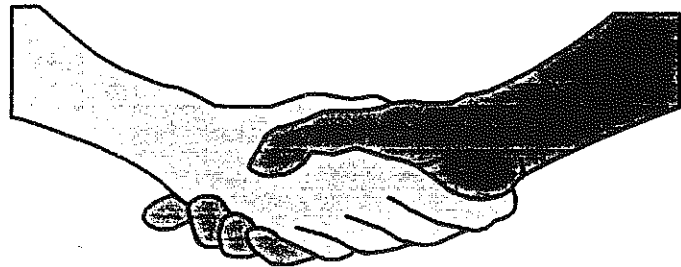
### Arriving Sunday?

#### Meeting Point 1; Kings Cross 1000hrs

A stroll around places associated with Karl Marx has been arranged for Sunday morning. Meet at the ticket hall in Kings Cross Station, where you will be able to leave your luggage and pick it up on the way to Luton. After the walk we will have lunch at a nearby pub and proceed to Luton.

**Meeting Point 2;** Ticket hall Kings Cross 1630hrs before the departure to Luton

**Meeting Point 3;** The Shannon Hotel 1800hrs (until Wednesday)



### Costs

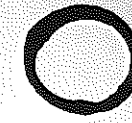
People attending INURA 1996 will be expected to meet their own accommodation costs (see below) plus food, conference fee of £25 and other costs such as travel to and around Luton.

**H**ABITAT II offers a great opportunity to build on the ideas that emerged at the 1992 Earth Summit and to look at how the fundamental problems relating to sustainable development — including poverty, shelter, and consumption — can be solved in our towns and cities.

The idea of sustainable development is well set out in Agenda 21, but this is clearly still an idea under development. It is still an inadequate response to the problems we face. But rather than use Habitat II to further develop these ideas, there are those who are seeking to kill it off altogether.

This became very clear at the recent third PrepCom for Habitat II in New York. As the agenda for the main conference and the Global Plan of Action were discussed, some delegates from the G77 group of countries proposed removing the phrase 'sustainable development' and replacing it with 'sustained economic growth'.

Neglecting for a minute the logical impossibility of economic growth continuing indefinitely into the future, there are some vital issues at stake.



Making the world's...



... human settlements safe, equitable and sustainable...

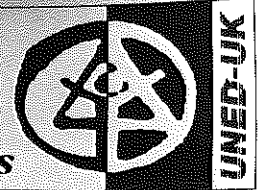


... for people...



... with Habitat II City Summit.

A  
future  
for our  
cities



● Habitat II, June 3-14 1996, Istanbul

"Habitat II is more than a conference. It is a recognition by the international community — an awakening ... that time is running out ... that if we want to save the future, we have no choice other than to find answers today to one of the most neglected and urgent problems of our time, one that goes to the very heart of our everyday lives — how we live, where we live, and, above all, if we live at all."



● Wally N'dow: Habitat II is more than a conference.

Habitat II secretary-general, Wally N'dow

## The Habitat II glossary

**A**LL MAJOR events generate their own jargon and UN conferences are very good at this.

Here we guide you through the key terms that come up in discussions on the future of our cities.

**Habitat II:** The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements called by the United Nations General Assembly. The conference, which will take place in Istanbul June 1996, focuses on managing urbanization and improving the urban living environment.

**Habitat I:** The first Habitat conference was held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. It focused on providing adequate shelter for all, and established the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

**PrepCom:** There have been three PrepComs before Habitat II. These were preparatory committees at which the drafts of key documents were

discussed, plans and timetables talked through and difficult issues identified. They have been attended by UK official delegations, by NGOs, and by local government representatives.

**Global Plan of Action:** This will be the major document agreed at Istanbul. Despite its title it will focus not on global planning but on developing strategies that can be applied to towns and cities world-wide. It has been through several drafts and there are several areas where agreement has yet to be reached.

**Bracketed text:** Those parts of the Global Plan of Action that are not yet agreed will be included in the document for discussion at Istanbul, but in brackets. Unsurprisingly, this bracketed text contains some of the most innovative and controversial ideas.

**The NGO Forum:** As with all such major international events, access to

the main Habitat II summit will be restricted. But as at Rio, the Copenhagen Social Summit and other events, there will be a major public event, the NGO forum, which will host discussions, exhibitions and act as a meeting place for activists from all over the world.

**Agenda 21:** this was the main document agreed at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, the Earth Summit. There are a wide range of issues from environment to poverty, and unemployment and shows how societies can move towards sustainable development. One chapter calls for every local authority to develop their own 'Local Agenda 21' in consultation with the local community. Many of the issues in Agenda 21 are closely linked to these under discussion at Habitat II.