

NATIONAL REPORT BELGIUM

HABITAT II

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- The Belgian institutional structure and the preparation for Habitat II
- Human settlements and Habitat: the last 20 years
- National and regional policies and action plans
- Internal cooperation

This report has been drafted by the Belgian National Committee Habitat II and is based on data and information provided by the regional and the national administrations. The Belgian National Committee Habitat II thanks Professor Han Verschure for his kind co-operation to the drafting of this report.



The 1994 Constitution specifies that Belgium is a federal kingdom and that it comprises three communities: the French, the Flemish and the German-speaking Communities and three Regions: the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels Regions. Because of the federal structure mentioned above, development of the policies and action described in this report are the responsibility of different levels of power according to the jurisdiction assigned to them in the Constitution.

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PART

1

THE BELGIAN INSTITUTIONAL
STRUCTURE AND THE
PREPARATION PROCESS FOR
HABITAT II



BELGIAN REPORT

Belgium has a political and administrative structure that is based on the recognition, in its constitution, of three communities and three regions, to which the federal state has devolved numerous powers.

The 1994 Constitution defines Belgium as a federal Kingdom, consisting of:

- three communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community, each have competencies in the cultural and personal fields;
- three regions: Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels, each having competencies in the socio-economic fields.

In their domain of competencies, the communities and the regions are not subordinated collective units (unlike the provinces and the municipalities) but are situated at the same level of power as the federal authority.

As such, their norms have an equal legislative value as the norms of the federal government.

In matters within their sphere of competencies, the regions and the communities have full international competencies, including the right to conclude full-fledged international treaties.

The responsibility and the competencies regarding the problems of human settlements constitute a very good example of competence division between the federal

governments and parliaments, and the governments and parliaments of the communities and the regions.

The elaboration of a Habitat policy is in the first place in the hands of the Regions and the Communities. Housing, public works, urban planning, physical planning and environment are principally their competence. As for employment, labour, transport and traffic, the competencies are divided between the federal state and the regions.

Social affairs are the competence of the federal government and of the communities.

Belgium, with its strong and very old tradition regarding human settlements, urban development, planning and architecture, has much to offer in the City Summit matters. That is why Belgium has started as from 1994 a National Committee for Human Settlements in order to prepare the National Report and the Conference: this Committee includes representatives of all sections, the federal government, the governments of the regions and the communities and the NGO's. The Committee has had several meetings in 1994, 1995 and 1996.

On the basis of the contributions of all these entities within this national Committee, a national report has been elaborated, which will illustrate the large experience and the various pioneering roles of Belgium and its entities.

A. ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD

Belgium enjoys a particularly favourable geographical position in north-western Europe. As well as the natural border formed by the North Sea, it is bounded by the Netherlands to the north, Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the east, and France to the south and west.

Belgium is located in one of the world's most populated and most commercial regions. It also lies at the heart of a major urban and economic axis stretching from London to Milan, and passing through Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich and Zurich, which includes half of all Europe's major cities, that is 80 urban agglomerations with more than 200.000 inhabitants.

Belgium opened its doors early to international co-operation.

Brussels, Belgium's capital, hosts the Commission and Council of the E.U. and (part of the year) also the European Parliament, making it effectively the present capital of Europe.

Belgium also hosts the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and many other international intergovernmental organizations, for example: SHAPE, the West European Union, the Belux Secretariat, the EFTA Secretariat, the C.D., the European Space Agency, Eurocontrol, the Energy Charter Secretariat, the OIM (ex CIME) and almost 850 international non-governmental organizations.

B. POPULATION

Belgium is a country in Western Europe of about 10.130.000 inhabitants (as of 01.01.1995), spread over

an area of 30.518 km².

There are three languages: Dutch, French and German, each of them being the official language of a corresponding community: Flanders in the North, the French Community in the South and the German-speaking Community in the East of the country. These language communities live in three regions: the Brussels region is officially bilingual (French and Dutch) and is inhabited by some 958,000 people (in majority French-speaking); Flanders, in the northern part of the country, is inhabited by approximately 5,847,000 Dutch-speaking people; Wallonia, in the southern part of the country counts some 3,312,000 inhabitants; they are French-speaking, except for the German-speaking people (approx. 70,000) living in the East along the border with Germany.

These figures show how densely populated the country is: 330 inhabitants per km².

In terms of population density, Belgium ranks second among the fifteen E.U. countries, behind the Netherlands (349 inhabitants per km²).

This population is very unevenly distributed.

The highest population densities are to be found in the north and centre of the country, more especially within the triangle formed by the cities of Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent, in which more than 40% of the national population live within an area of 5,300 km². By contrast, the population density south of the Charleroi-Namur-Liège axis is less than 80 inhabitants km².

Since the end of World War II, the rural areas of Belgium have been marked by two major processes: the growth of urban suburbs and "Liège" turbanization of the country side, in particular in the north and centre of the country.

Like most developed countries, Belgium's population has stagnated since 1970.

The causes are the traditional ones: the slow deceleration of natural growth, linked in turn to declining birth rates and a fall in net inward migration, which can be explained by the economic crisis and a more selective immigration policy.

Currently, birth and mortality rates are a balanced 12 per mille, whilst the net inward migration balance is around 2 per mille.

The falling birth rate in conjunction with higher average life expectancy (72 years for men and 78 for women) is leading, as everywhere else in Western Europe, to the ageing of the population.

Belgium hosts a large foreign population, consisting mainly of E.U. nationals. The most widely represented nationalities are Italian, Moroccan, French, Turkish, Dutch and Spanish.

This foreign population is distributed between Brussels-Capital, the other major cities, the industrial and former coal-mining regions, and certain frontier areas.

C. GEOGRAPHY

C.1. Climate

Owing to its latitude (between 49° 30N and 51° 30N) and also its proximity to the sea, Belgium enjoys a temperate maritime climate characterized by moderate

temperatures, prevailing westerly winds, a high level of cloud cover and frequent and regular rain.

C.2. Regional diversities

Belgium presents a variety of landscapes and sites which perfectly reflect most of the multiple geographic facets of Western Europe.

Despite its small size and very high population densities, Belgium has a remarkable natural heritage.

C.3. The human landscape

The major characteristic of the Belgian countryside is its very high degree of urbanization. The urbanization

process speeded up in the 19th century, and accompanied the industrialization of the country until

1945, and even as late as 1970 in certain Flemish regions such as Kempen. In the past few years, the urbanization process has penetrated the rural environment.

Between 1831 and 1976, i.e. over a period of 145 years, the Kingdom's total population increased by a factor of 2.6, with urban and rural populations multiplying by 5.7 and 1.4 times respectively.

The almost total urbanization of the national territory has profoundly modified rural and urban areas. Whilst the countryside is becoming increasingly urban with the multiplication of urban-style dwellings, the cities have expanded substantially to become genuine urban regions. Belgium has 15 such urban regions with more than 80,000 inhabitants each: together these represent 63% of jobs and 53% of the population. Each of these regions is organized according to a model of more or less concentric zones corresponding to a large extent to the different stages of urban development.

In general, recent developments have brought with

them the depopulation of the inner cities. At the same time, the movement of industrial activities away from the cities has liberated many sites, accentuating the decay of fairly vast areas. One outcome of this phenomenon has been the many private and public urban renewal operations which have had to be undertaken in order to give new life to these urban sub-areas.

Belgium has some 135 towns and cities which structure the whole of the country. These include 6 regional "metropolises" or major agglomerations (Brussels, Antwerp, Charleroi, Ghent, Liège and Namur) and 14 regional cities. The regional metropolises generally radiate out to cover more than 1 million inhabitants, with the exception of Charleroi, which covers around 650,000. Brussels in particular, with good road and rail connections, exercises a strong polarizing influence so that its agglomeration serves approx. 4 million inhabitants. The regional cities in turn have an area of influence of between 200,000 and max.600,000 inhabitants.

D. ITS ECONOMY

The three major sectors of business activity - agriculture, manufacturing and services - represent 2%, 28% and 69% respectively of the Belgian economy.

Each of these sectors has seen major changes in the last 20 years.

D.1. Agriculture

Despite a substantial reduction in the farming population and of usable agricultural area, which shrank by 270,000 hectares or 16% between 1960 and 1985, Belgium's agricultural production has continued

to grow. The reasons for this are to be found in a high degree of mechanization and in the growing intensification of farming, as shown in particular in higher yields.

D.2. Manufacturing

Between 1960 and today, manufacturing has fallen from 42% to 28% of the Belgian economy, with parallel changes in structures and spatial organization. The causes for these changes are many, but all relate to recent technological change and increased international competition.

Alongside these structural changes, we should also point to changes in the location of industrial sites.

Originally sited close to the sources of raw materials, next to railways and/or waterways or within the urban networks, industrial areas are now situated along major

transport infrastructures (ports, but in particular motorways - particularly important in Belgium - and roads), in most cases on the periphery of cities and agglomerations. Everywhere the number of "industrial parks" has increased. Belgium now has more than 100 of these with a total surface of 40,000 ha. Almost all recently-founded companies are located in these parks, which have also attracted a number of already existing establishments.

The energy sector has also changed substantially.

With its own coal reserves, Belgium until 1960 used

coal as a major source of energy. During the 1960s, hydrocarbons increased in significance, and by 1973 represented 85 % of energy provisions compared with just 13 % for coal. The oil crisis put an end to this situation, with a reduction in the share of oil, the

redevelopment of the use of (imported) coal and the promotion of gas (also imported). But the most significant element of this change was the very marked development of the nuclear sector, which today represents some 70 % of total electricity production.

D.3. The services sector

Right now, almost 70 % of Belgians work in the services (or "tertiary") sector, which represented only half of all jobs in 1970 and less than 40 % in 1947.

Alongside the development of the services sector in the narrow sense of the term, we are also witnessing an increasing "tertiarization" of the primary (agricultural) and, particularly, the secondary (manufacturing) sectors.

The location of services activities correlates very closely to urban structures and to the hierarchy of centres: more than three quarters of service jobs are to be found in cities. Also, within the urban regions, the distribution of activities corresponds to a certain logic: decision making activities are concentrated in the central parts, whilst we observe a spreading out elsewhere of service activities and/or activities demanding large amounts of space.

The redistribution of activities has deeply transformed the traditional structures of urban spaces, the more so because, at the same time, old industrial sites were being abandoned.

Economy situation

Belgium's gross national product, which is very close to the average for the Europe of the twelve, amounted in 1995 to BEF 7.977 billion or \pm US\$ 26000 per capita, putting Belgium in thirteenth place among OECD countries. However, the cost of its public debt continues to be high.

An Open Economy

Since 1972 Belgium has performed best in terms of inflation, which has remained constantly below the European average. Unemployment, on the other hand, was for a long time well above the European average. In 1988, the trend began to reverse, and since 1989 unemployment has been below the EEC average. This improvement is due essentially to the development of

new industrial sectors and the tertiary sector, which, as already mentioned, has permitted the creation of a considerable number of new jobs.

Another feature of the Belgian economy is its open structure.

Every working day, Belgium exports some BEF 13.8 billion or \pm US\$ 462 million of goods and services. In manufacturing, two workers out of three and, in some sectors, three workers out of four work for and thanks to exports.

Despite its small size (0.21% of the world's population), the U.E.B.L. together accounts for more than 3 % of world exports, making it in fact the tenth largest commercial power in the world.

Moreover, based on exports per head, the U.E.B.L. leads the world with a per capital export figure four times that of Japan and six times that of the United States.

Historically specialized in the production of semi-finished products, Belgium, like most other European countries, has had to diversify its industrial production and move increasingly towards new sectors, including so-called high technology sectors such as biotechnology, new materials, micro-electronics, new energies, medical technology, aerospace and telecommunications.

Belgium also exports an increasing amount of services (data processing, training, consulting, engineering, financial services etc.).

The U.E.B.L. together accounts for almost 5% of total service provision in the world, placing it in sixth place among service exporting countries behind the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan.

PART

2

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND
HABITAT



BELGIAN REPORT

First a few general introductory characteristics of Human Settlements and Habitat will be given; subsequently the specificity at the national (federal) level will be summarized, followed by the specificity of

each of the three regions Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels. Lastly a few examples of Best Practices of the last 20 years will be highlighted.

A. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HABITAT IN BELGIUM: INTRODUCTORY CHARACTERISTICS

Although Belgium is a relatively small country and very open to its Western-European neighbours as well as to the world as a whole because of its high degree of economic export orientation, its variety of cultural influences from Celtic as well as Latin origin, and its excellent infrastructure links, it has a strong and rather unique human settlements and habitat identity with some of the following characteristics:

- a very high degree of urbanization (95%);
- an urbanization of rural areas;
- a predominance of medium-size and small towns, most of these with a very long historic tradition, and an increasing concentration of urbanization along some major axes;
- a good number of towns and villages with a valuable, at times outstanding, cultural heritage and built environment patrimony demanding continuous conservation efforts but also constituting a great asset to both the local inhabitants and to international visitors;
- a slow, almost stagnant population growth with, however, a very high density (330 inh/km² in 1995, national average);
- a very dense network of roads, railways, river courses and communication;

- an increasing pressure on open spaces (agricultural land, green areas) and on the natural environment in general;
- differentiated cultural identities of the communities (Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking) and regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels);
- a regionally differentiated approach to human settlements and habitat policies, programmes and projects;
- habitat and, generally, building activities as a strong expression of culture and as important economic activity;
- a built environment with a high degree of individual freedom of expression, with, however, a relatively homogeneous urban tissue tradition;
- a high degree of home-ownership (60-70%);
- a relatively old housing stock;
- a tradition of socially redistributive human settlements policy related urban and rural infrastructure with a high degree of infrastructural services (water, sewage, electricity) to individual and collective dwellings;
- a tradition of socially redistributive housing policy which, however, in the 80's was reduced to correcting market imperfections and, although somewhat revitalized in the 90's, is still insufficient.

B. BELGIUM: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HABITAT: THE LAST 20 YEARS

B.1. Social, cultural and economic aspects

Several aspects have influenced the changes of Belgium's human settlements and Habitat in the last 20 years. Further to the introductory elements in Part I, the following are highlighted:

Demography

Slow growth of population and the changing nature of the demographic structure are particular features. Between 1970 and 1991 the population growth in the

20 year period was 3.4%; a considerable part of this growth is attributed to international immigration, particularly in the period '71 to '81 (50%); also birth rates show some variation with a relative low birth rate in the period '84 to '87 and a peak around '91-'92.

The changing population pyramid indicates that the "ageing" phenomenon is growing: between '70 and '91 the proportion of people older than 60 grew from 18.5

to 21% and above 75 years grew from 4.5% to 6.5%.

The urban population figures indicate that although the urbanization continues slowly, the population of the larger cities is declining.

An important indicator is the changes in family size: although the population in general only grew 3.4%, the number of families increased 22% between '70 and '91, showing a sizing down of families and the increase of one-person or one-parent households, largely because of the ageing of population and the higher divorce rates: so a total of 718,897 families has been added to the number of families between '70 and '91, thereby indicating that although the population may be slow in growth, household unit requirements are still substantially growing.

Employment and productivity

As indicated, the nature of the economy has changed considerably and results in a much higher proportion of the active population employed in the service sector. The total active (working age) population has been growing but slowly, with a considerable difference between the male active population (declining with about 100,000) and the female active population (increasing with about 550,000).

In the same period the demand for employment grew dramatically (from 82,242 to 429,496) which resulted in an unemployment rate of 10.2% in 1991 (7.3% male and 14.3% female) and this rate has grown to 14% in 1995. In addition, the unemployment is unevenly distributed with e.g. a low 10% in the Province of West-Flanders and a high 28% in the province of Hainaut (1993).

In general the Belgian productivity is among the highest in the world, but also the cost of labour is high, so that the competitiveness of Belgium in the international market remains a challenge.

Income, social security and the welfare state

With a high per capita income, the Belgian population generally enjoys a high level of material comfort; this together with a well-developed social security system guarantees, in general, a high degree of physical life quality, reflected in a high life expectancy.

The social security system has a double objective: to guarantee a minimum income to everyone, and also to secure a high life quality standard (health, education, etc.)

Although the average income per capita has steadily increased during the last twenty years, and is among

the highest in the world, the income disparity and the number of poor people has also increased.

In a study of 1994 covering the period 1985 to 1992, the number of households below the poverty line (European norms) was estimated around 6% of all Belgian households. In addition it was shown for example that the households with lowest income have to spend a higher proportion of their income on housing (around 35% of income spent on housing for lowest income categories, 25% of income for higher income categories). This is also reflected in an increasing income disparity and an increasing number of people relying on the minimum subsistence income payment (around 70,000 people in 1995, an increase of 11% in one year time).

Although the social security has generally performed well in the past 20 years, the welfare state principle adheres to the idea of general access (universality), i.e. the benefits such as education, health services, infrastructure, are accessible to all regardless of class, race, religion or income. The right to social security, housing, cultural development, etc. are to be guaranteed to every citizen. However, this also means that often (unwillingly) the benefits of the welfare state are proportionally more given to groups in society who are better informed, organized or with easy access to infrastructure.

The recent societal debate focuses on the effectiveness of the social security system to reach the disadvantaged and the measures necessary to guarantee a continuation of the system for the next generation, particularly in light of the ageing population.

Civic society and cultural development

The parliamentary democracy and multi-party system constitutes a fundamental asset of the Belgian society. Culturally the society is structured around the family, the place of origin, the relatives and friends and the peer group formations. In addition, societal life in Belgium is highly influenced by the many organizations and associations that support and strengthen the civic society: not only political parties, but also unions, work-related associations, charity organizations, non-profit and non-government organizations as well as a range of community-based organizations are active in structuring and enhancing daily life. Most citizens are member of one or more organizations or associations.

Moreover, the industrial nature of the country as a whole is also reflected in a well developed private sector, active in predominantly small and medium size

(several family-based) enterprises with also a good number of multinationals having a firm base in Belgium.

Cultural identity and diversity have structured daily life in Belgium both as a manifestation of locally specific cultural heritage and as expression of the diversity in language communities and regions.

Of particular importance is the long tradition of local autonomy under a variety of central authorities throughout history; particularly the strong identity of

historic towns and cities have conditioned a sense of the "local". The grouping of citizens around the town or village square was not only a traditional physical pattern but also a traditional symbol of local community formation.

However, this traditional community formation has, in the last generations, to a great extent changed into a more fragmented, more mobile, and also, particularly in the larger towns, an increasingly multi-cultural society.

B.2. Infrastructure and built environment

Built environment

In general, Belgium is characterized not only by a high density but also by an urbanization manifested among others by the extent of its built-up areas.

Starting in the 1960's but continuing in the '70's and 80's, the built-up areas spread further and particularly the road network was more and more intensively used.

Particular features of this phenomenon are:

- a spread of all towns and cities beyond their traditional boundaries (e.g. the historic city-rings)
- a ribbon-pattern building development along the major non-freeway arteries (the state or provincial roads)
- new industrial sites development at the periphery of each intermediate and, at times, also of smaller towns
- encroachment onto agricultural land and/or natural areas particularly in some of the major cities of Antwerp (major harbour and petro-chemical extensions), Brussels (light industries and services), Ghent (harbour and industry), Brugge-Zeebrugge (major harbour extensions), Charleroi (light industries), Kortrijk (light industries), etc.
- a particularly dense built environment in the quadrangle Antwerp-Ghent-Brussels-Leuven
- an increasingly fragmented built-up area whereby the relative homogeneity of some historic city areas has in some cases (Brussels) been heavily transformed, and in other cities now only constitutes a fragment of a heterogeneous, urban expansion of the post-war period.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure network in Belgium is characterized by a high density and a generally high level of quality and accessibility.

The road network is dense and particularly the freeway

network expanded in the 60's and 70's; although little expansion of the network itself has occurred in the last 10 years, the intensity of use has greatly increased, so that, particularly at major bottlenecks, traffic problems have become a feature of daily life.

The rail network was already dense since the early part of the century and although expansion has virtually stopped in the last 20 years (in some cases even reducing the places and frequency of stops), it continues to be of high density and of intensive use particularly along the major east-west and north-south axes.

In general the level of infrastructural services (water, electricity, sewage, telephone) is high, although local/regional differences occur and the costs for services connection are steadily increasing.

Water

The households' connection to the public water distribution network has developed in the last 20 years to such an extent that most households have access to the water mains. Water consumption has also increased steadily (110 litres per person per day), creating occasional local shortfalls in summer peak consumption periods. The additional use of tap water is relatively popular, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas. In recent years taxes on water consumption have greatly increased, although the right to public access is being protected.

Sewage

Connection to the public sewage discharge network has also steadily increased over the last 20 years. In general, sewage waters discharge had a particularly damaging effect on river water quality in the 1970's and 80's, and although in recent years the efforts of waste water treatment have increased, the percentage of waste water treatment is still relatively

low (30-35%) compared to several other EU countries.

Electricity

Virtually all households are connected to the electricity network which operates reliably, although at relatively high cost. Access to electricity is regulated so that a minimum consumption is guaranteed.

Telephone

The evolution of telephone connections between 1975

(1.850.000) to 1993 (4.395.000) shows a steady increase such that a high proportion (78% in 1991) of the population has direct access to a private line; also the number of public pay phones has increased from about 5200 in 1975 to 14.400 in 1993. However, the cost of a communication is high in comparison to most EU countries. In the last few years the mobile phone systems have been introduced but are still relatively low in number.

B.3. Transport and mobility

In general, Belgium has a very dense system of road and rail network, a very important international harbour development, a local transport water network of decreasing importance, and an important air transport and airport system.

Being at the hub of western Europe and because of its economic export orientation, this intensive network for transport and mobility is very important to the country as a whole and to the different regions and towns locally.

Road network and road-bound mobility

Between 1975 and 1993, the total length of regional and provincial roads increased from 13.231 km to (formerly national) 15.906 km, whereby the increase of freeways (motor-ways) was highest (1.047 km in 1975 - 1.658 km in 1993) and the provincial roads network remained constant at about 1.350 km. To this should be added the large number of municipal/local roads (110.000 km in 1980 - 123.000 km in 1990).

Road-bound mobility has steadily increased over the past 20 years. The total number of registered private cars almost doubled from an already high 2,614,000 in 1975 to 4,110,000 in 1993. Likewise the number of registered transport vehicles increased from 299,000 in 1980 to 413,000 in 1993. The number of bicycles increased from around 3 million in 1975 to about 3.6 million in 1986 (latest available national statistics).

In spite of the increasing number of vehicles and the intensive use of road-bound transportation, the road safety has not deteriorated. The number of victims of road accidents reduced from a total of around 85,000 (1975) to around 75,000 (1995) with however a peak year of around 88,500 in 1989.

The amount of goods transported by road is high, with e.g. 355 million tons in 1991.

The road-bound mobility also includes the, now regionalized, public or semi-public bus transport.

Rail network and rail-bound mobility

The total length of the rail network slightly decreased from almost 4,000 km in 1975 to 3,410 km in 1993; this decrease may also be observed in the decrease of passengers transported from 232 million in 1975 to 145 million in 1993, although the figure of passenger-km is declining at a slower pace. In recent years this fall in rail-bound mobility has somewhat levelled off. As of the early 1990's, efforts have been started to develop a High Speed Train system linking Belgium with the French TGV system; of highest priority will thereby be the North-South line (Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam) and the Brussels-London line, later to be supplemented by a possible East-West line to Germany. However, this HST system has also stirred controversy because of its high cost and its environmental impact as well as its possible resulting in lower investments on local train connections.

In general it can thus be observed that in spite of its public character, the importance of the rail-bound transport has declined, thereby favouring private road-bound transport.

Harbour development and water-bound transport

The major harbours of Antwerp and Zeebrugge have seen a steady expansion in the last two decades: in 1993 the Antwerp water basin infrastructure covered 2,106 ha and the Brugge-Zeebrugge water basin covered 1,010 ha. Other harbours are smaller (Ghent: 520 ha; Ostend: 130 ha; Brussels: 76 ha; Liège: 18 ha). Whereas passenger transport has decreased from a total of 1.9 million to 1.5 million in 1993 (with local variations), the total amount of goods transfer through the harbour has increased from 50 million tons in 1975 to 96.7 million tons in 1993.

Inland water-bound transport has remained relatively constant at about 5,000 million tons-kilometre.

Air transport

The Zaventem-Brussels National Airport is by far the most important airport with a steady increase of passengers and air freight (4.1 million in 1975 - 10.2 million in 1993 and around 120.000 tons in 1975 and 306.500 tons in 1993); other airports include Antwerp-Deurne with over 200.000 passengers in 1993 but little air freight, Ostend with 82.000 passengers but over

42.000 tons of air freight in 1993, Liège-Bierset and Charleroi.

Pipelines

Three major pipelines totalling about 300 km in length start from Antwerp (Antwerp-Rotterdam, Antwerp-Geleen, Antwerp-Feluy) and are used to transport petroleum and refined petroleum products.

B.4. Environment and environmental management

Although matters related to environmental quality largely pertain to the competence of the regional governments, the national government is in charge of the general aspects of environmental quality, the international co-operation and international legislative matters as well as playing a co-ordinating role between regions particularly related to trans-regional decision making.

Since the 1992 Rio UNCED conference, the principles of Sustainable Development as elaborated in Agenda 21 have also been approved by Belgium. These principles are thus increasingly influencing the national decision making in its international responsibilities as well as in its role of co-ordinating regional government initiatives.

The national report of Belgium to the 1992 UNCED Conference summarized the evolution of some environmental aspects in the past two decades:

Air quality

Although major problems persist, it was observed that some emissions had been considerably improved. SO₂ emissions decreased steadily between 1980 and 1987, although occasional high concentrations occur in local industrial areas.

CO₂ did not decrease, although a slight reduction had been achieved in 1987.

High ozone concentrations are particularly noticed in warm summer periods, causing health problems in several areas; although a warning system has been introduced, real precautionary measures have not been implemented.

In 1995 the national government came to an agreement with the industry to make production virtually free of CFK's.

Water quality

Belgium has a generous supply of water, both through regular rainfall and through the major river courses. In general, the aim is to guarantee a high water quality for

human consumption, but also to safeguard, or restore wherever necessary, the biological equilibrium of water courses and sea water. However, in the past 20 years the general quality of water in river courses and sea water has been problematic, although recent efforts show signs of improvement.

Major sources of water quality deterioration are chemical pollutants of industrial, agricultural and domestic origin. In addition, the relatively late initiatives of treatment of waste water has resulted in a need for major quality improvements over the coming years.

So far, water consumption remains high (approx. 2 million m³ per day) and consumers paid relatively little; although in recent years prices per minimum year consumption (e.g. 100 m³) have sharply increased, with considerable local price differences, consumption patterns have, as of yet, not been fundamentally modified.

Waste

Production of waste has steadily increased over the past 20 years. In 1990 the average domestic waste production in the Flemish region was about 307 kg/inhabit., and 280 kg/inhabit. in the Walloon region.

Industrial waste was approx. 4.2 million tons in each of the two regions in 1990; to this should be added another 6 to 7 million tons for each region as so-called loose industrial waste (including construction waste, etc.).

In addition, there has been a steady increase of waste imported from neighbouring countries (about 2 million tons in 1990) of which more than 1 million tons is dangerous waste.

Waste treatment is roughly 50% by incineration, 35-40% dumping on approved dumping sites and 10% composting or illegal dumping.

In the last few years increasing efforts are made to install selective collection (individual and grouped). In addition, the 1993 eco-taxes have started to impose

taxes on dangerous goods (batteries, blades, etc.) and on non-recycled recipients. Thus a process of awareness-raising related to recycling has been induced which will be further stimulated in the coming years.

Of particular importance is the clearing or conversion of old, abandoned industrial sites often heavily polluted with toxic pollutants; a new legislation forces owners to clear sites before a sales agreement can be reached.

Noise

Although noise pollution was neglected for a long time,

in recent years the negative effects have been felt and recent legislation is setting restrictive norms on excessive noise.

Because of the high density overall and the particular density of road networks, noise pollution remains high and accounts for an increasing degree of environmental dissatisfaction.

It should be stressed that now an Environment Permit is needed for each activity classified as harmful, dangerous or noisy.

B.5. Governance and the civic society

In general, the civic society is exceptionally well developed in Belgium; the formal system of decision making at national, regional, provincial and local level is organized around a compulsory voting system (legislature of 4 years at national and regional level and 6 years at local level). The multi-party system guarantees choices and, although in the last 20 years several governments have followed one another, all have manifested a consensus democracy' around coalitions of parties.

In addition, however, the multitude of organizations and associations in which citizens can participate and which organize many aspects of daily life are a manifestation of civic involvement and participatory society.

Of particular importance related to human settlements and habitat are the numerous organizations and associations which enhance access to infrastructure and services, monitor and/or lobby for the improvement of the natural and man-made environment, facilitate access to credit for home-ownership, organize tenants and local neighbourhood activities in general, strive to improve the quality of the work place, and promote social and cultural development. Because of the diversity in cultural identities between the three communities in the country, the civic society reflects this diversity, and, although several national organizations exist, many of these have split up in regional entities over the past 20 years.

Although differences between the communities in Belgium may have occasionally resulted in local tensions - often more political than cultural - the consociational model largely operates well and has been able to diffuse tensions into compromises and mutually beneficial arrangements.

Regional and local governance

Of particular importance is the gradual shift, during the last 20 years, of authority from the national to the regional and local governments, particularly in matters related to human settlements and habitat.

Although general aspects related to health, legislation and finance are still under the national government, it should be clear that the great majority of matters related to human settlements and habitat have gradually come under the authority of regional governments. This guarantees, in principle, a closer proximity to the population as a whole and to the cultural differentiated communities in particular.

In terms of physical planning, Belgium has never had a national land use plan, although considerable centralized planning has taken place in the past, particularly in important sectorial matters (economic planning, public works, etc.).

The 1962 Physical Planning Law established a clear framework for the various types and levels of physical planning from a National Plan (never realized, over Regional Plans (some regional studies already initiated prior to 1962), Sub-regional or Sector Plans (in 1966, 48 sub-regions were decided and sub-regional plans became the de facto highest level physical plans), General Land-use Plans (at municipal level, many however were not well developed), and Particular Land-use Plans (at the level of parts of a town, a neighbourhood, etc.). The 1962 law was amended in the 70's and gradually the national authority over physical planning were devolved to the regional governments.

Although the 48 sub-regional or sector plans, of which 41 had been approved by the end of the 80's, still form the legal base for physical planning, the three regional

governments (Flanders, Brussels, Wallonia) have recently each taken the initiative to elaborate new regional spatial development plans. So far only the Brussels Regional Development Plan has been approved.

Likewise, local authorities have a well rooted share of responsibilities in matters related to human settlements and habitat.

Building permits are issued locally within general frameworks and compulsory consultation set at the regional level. Likewise, local safety, health and local infrastructure maintenance is to a large extent the daily responsibility of local authorities within the framework set by the regional government.

An Environment Permit is required for activities classified as harmful, dangerous or noisy. The more potentially damaging the activity, the higher level of authority from whom the permit must be sought.

In 1977 a major effort was undertaken to regroup smaller municipalities (thereby reducing their number from 2500 to 589) into larger town entities; in addition in the past decades many inter-municipal organizations have been formed to deal with aspects of physical planning, development of new industrial sites, inter-municipal waste collection and waste management, and supra-municipal local management in general.

In addition, several municipalities have taken innovative initiatives to improve the local living environment (e.g. local traffic plans, green zones, pedestrian streets, etc.).

Municipalities, apart from their regularly allocated share of central budget, levy local taxes and can also solicit financial support from the specialized bank (so-called "Municipal Credit Bank"), and general support from the Association of Towns and Municipalities.

B.6. Housing

General characteristics

As already noted, the country as a whole is almost entirely urbanized, so that housing is to be largely understood as urban housing.

In spite of the slow demographic growth in the past 20 years, urban physical expansion has been considerable and continues to the detriment of agricultural land and green areas. This can be partially explained through the sub-urbanization tendency to move from the inner city to the suburban subdivisions, but is also caused by indiscriminating commercial expansion along the major arteries, the planning of new industrial sites, the lack of a coherent land use policy and the growing demand for housing due to the down-sizing of households.

The sub-urbanization of the 60's and 70's had also affected the quality of inner-city dwelling. Many inner-city areas, particularly in the larger towns, became dilapidated, neglected or occupied by lower income groups. Towards the late 70's and in the 80's the awareness for inner-city problems started to emerge and initiatives started so as to renovate inner-city areas, to preserve historic monuments and sites, and to designate rehabilitation areas in various urban agglomerations.

As the period of sub-urbanization and subsequent efforts at inner-city renovation coincided with the increased devolution of powers to the regional and

local governments in matters related to human settlements and habitat, it was clear that many such efforts were not always harmoniously co-ordinated, nor the result of a well-thought out policy at regional or local level. Some municipalities however took innovative initiatives already in the 70's, others followed in the 80's or early 90's.

In addition, the particular role of the King Baudouin Foundation must be emphasized, which since the late 60's persistently drew attention, through its many innovative studies and its often challenging policy proposals, to the need for urban renewal, the necessity for conserving the cultural heritage of monuments and landscapes, and the desire to draw attention to issues of social deprivation, exclusion or discrimination particularly visible in (older) city areas.

Since the early 90's and also with the new 1995 national and regional government policies, the attention for urban development and habitat has been increased.

Housing

Although the regional governments are fully responsible for their own housing policy, a few essential aspects remain the competence of the national government: these mainly relate to the legislative matters (right to housing, the rental housing law, the mortgage loans legislation and parts of the fiscal aspects of housing).

The right to housing

Belgium has a long tradition of guaranteeing the inviolability of the private property and the private sphere of life and family.

The 1993 Constitution explicitly states the "right to decent housing" as a constitutional right in Belgium. Each region further details the modalities and implementation priorities.

The rental housing law

The federal law regulates the conditions of rental agreements and of annual increase of rents. In principle, rents should not be increased with more than the average increase of consumption goods (price index). Although protecting the rights of tenants, the practical application of the law has not always been strictly enforced and increases have risen beyond normal (1975 index = 100, 1995 index = 248.9, but rents 1995 = 286.6); owners circumvent the law with new tenants and with renewals of contracts.

Mortgage and fiscal aspects of housing

The federal legislation pertaining to housing mortgage loans protects the borrowers, regulates the limits of interest rates and registers defaulters with the National Bank.

In general, mortgage loans are, up to a certain level, tax deductible.

Fiscal matters are partially regional, partially of the federal competence; for example, the value added tax for building and property sales is established at the federal level, so is the administration of property income taxation. However, the income tax and succession rights on property are payable to the regional governments.

Social housing policies

Belgium has had, since the early 20th century, a long tradition of social housing provision to assist lower income groups in their housing needs. The examples of innovative new social housing projects in the 20's and 30's as well as in the 50's and 60's are still standing, whereas in the 70's and early 80's accents were more on rehabilitation and renovation. In general, it can be observed that the 70's still had a fairly good priority for social housing, whereas this had been neglected in the 80's and again somewhat revitalized in the early 90's (1980: 25% of all new dwellings; 1989: 2.7% of all new dwellings). Previously within the national budget, social housing is now the responsibility of the regions. In 1992 the Walloon region had 4.4% of its regional budget for social housing, the Brussels region 8.2%

and the Flemish region 16.3%.

Housing quantity

Although the 1970's data usually argued that there was relatively little absolute housing shortage in Belgium, as it was assumed that all households were housed in some form of dwelling, the 1991 figures (3.742.000 dwelling units in 1991 for approx. 3.953.000 households) show that a substantial shortage exists (200.000 units) which is due to both the down-sizing of households (fewer persons per household resulting in an increase in households looking for a dwelling unit) and also to the locational shortage due to the unavailability of suitable and affordable dwellings in some towns (particularly in the medium-size growing towns).

In 1991 a total of 65% of the dwellings were owner-occupied, although substantial variations exist between regions, and in larger cities where rental housing is proportionally higher.

Housing quality

	Obsolescent housing stock (quality)	Dwellings with incomplete comfort
1970	16.9%	77%
1981	15.1%	47%
1991	(estimate) 11%	42%

Although also qualitative housing matters are the competence of the regions, some general national characteristics can be noted: compared to several neighbouring European countries, the Belgian housing stock is of relative older age, and replacement is relatively slow, on a total number of 3.748.165 dwelling units (1991) the housing quality has evolved as follows (as percentage of total number dwellings).

This shows a remarkable change in the 70's as to the improvement in comfort (bathroom/shower, WC, central heating) but a much slower change as to the replacement of dwellings below minimum quality.

Homelessness and social exclusion

Although exact figures for homeless people in Belgium are not easily found (recent estimates by the European observatory mentions 26.400 homeless or 0.26% of the population in 1993), it is clear that the problem of homelessness which was little known or almost non-

existent in the 70's, has become visible in the late 80's-early 90's, particularly in the larger cities. In addition, on the basis of demands to homes and institutions assisting homeless people, particularly in the larger cities, the number of temporary or permanent homeless, destitutes or people living in fully unfit conditions, can be estimated to be between 200,000 and 280,000, constituting 2 to 3% of the total country's population. The abolishing of the law on "vagrancy and begging" in 1993 also resulted in closing some federal institutions temporarily housing homeless.

It is now the explicit responsibility of the local authorities (more particularly also through their commissions for welfare assistance) to facilitate access to housing for the homeless. In addition, the new law "on urgent programmes for a solidarity society" enables local authorities to claim unoccupied dwellings for allocation to homeless or socially

excluded.

Social exclusion is indeed on the increase. Typically, low income families who do not benefit from the limited number of social housing, have to look on the secondary housing market where quality is low and rents high. In recent years land speculation and unregulated housing market has been particularly detrimental to households below the poverty line in larger cities; often the people had to settle for temporary rental housing (to which the rental law does not apply) or started to occupy obsolescent housing stock or moved to illegal dwellings on camp sites. Problems are aggravated when low-income people do not longer have a legal address, thereby losing the rights to social security benefits including the right to qualify for social housing; in order to stop such vicious circle processes, recent policies are drafted to fight social exclusions.

B.7. Construction sector

The construction sector is traditionally an important economic sector in Belgium (between 6 and 8% of GNP; 9% of employment in 1970 = 300,000, 6.5% in 1991 = 240,000) and the state of health of economy is proverbially linked to the construction sector's flourishing: "when the construction thrives, everything thrives".

In the post-war period boosting the construction (e.g. through public works construction) has regularly been used to stimulate economic performance, particularly in periods of a sluggish economic performance.

However, this tendency has not been so pronounced in recent years and the construction sector (particularly its domestic building activities) has not regained its high peak performance of the late 60's-early 70's.

The construction sector in general is characterized by a strong tradition, a solid know-how and a good diversification.

The production of basic construction materials such as cement, steel, bricks, roof structures, etc. is to a high degree locally based; over the years some Belgian companies have become major competitors in the European scene of building materials (e.g. cement and brick industries).

Except for a few large construction companies, most domestic construction is carried out by smaller companies with skilled labour, with good but largely traditional management approaches.

In recent years particular issues related to environmental protection and sustainable development in construction have emerged:

- energy conserving building techniques are stimulated, particularly in relation to the use of insulating material, double glazed windows, and fuel-efficient central heating systems. Subsidies for energy saving domestic remodelling were given for some time in the mid-eighties;
- production of building materials involving toxic waste (e.g. gypsum) or including harmful products (e.g. asbestos fibres) were modified or discontinued and are now subject to strict environmental permits;
- recycling of construction waste (concrete waste from dismantled buildings) has been studied and experimentally applied; increasing efficiency in wood consumption for construction has changed traditional heavy timber roof construction to lighter-weight constructions.

C. WALLOON REGION: 20 YEARS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HABITAT

C.1. Social, economic and cultural aspects

Demography

By 1994 the Walloon region had 3.304.539 inhabitants or 32.7% of the country's total. In 1981 the region had 3.229.001 inhabitants (also 32.7% of the country's total). The annual growth rate is low, at present just below 0.4%, with light fluctuations showing even a 0.1% growth rate in the early 80's but a short peak around 1989 of over 0.4%; the last few years this growth rate is more stable just below 0.3%. Over a longer period (last 90 years) the Walloon region shows a slow and rather constant growth rate of about 0.19% annually. With the present trend continuing, it is expected that population increase will be slightly faster in the period 1995-2000. Life expectancy is high, around 75.5 with a differentiation between men (71) and women (78).

The population increase in the Walloon region is, to a large degree, due to immigration, as the natural growth has virtually stopped. Between 1960 and 1975, the migration was high, to fall sharply after 1975. The proportion of foreign nationals is around 11% of the total population.

The greying of the population continues with the bulk of the population pyramid in the 20 to 45 years age group.

The down-sizing trend of households also continues with a further reduction from an average size of 2.88 persons/ household in 1970 to 2.5 in 1991, but resulting also in an increase of households from 1.090.337 in 1981 to 1.238.072 in 1991, and of small (partially one-parent) households in particular (from 8 to 12% of all households).

Overall regional density with 196 inhabit./km² is almost half of the Flemish region density, also well below the country's average of 330 inhabit./km², but still twice the European average.

Employment and productive activities

The Walloon region contributes with 26% (1993) to the Gross National Product. From 1980 to 1987 the growth rate of the Gross Regional Product in the region was stagnant with around 0.4% annually; between 1987 and 1992 the growth has increased with an annual average of 2.9%, however with a high unemployment;

particularly in the last years, the fragility of economic growth remains, as proven also with the 1993 negative growth rate of GRP of -1.9% (National -1.7%, European -0.5%).

Whereas traditionally the economic wealth of the region was greatly produced by industry, the recent changes in the Walloon region show that by now the tertiary (service) sector contributes with 61% to the Gross Regional Product and with 69% to the employment of the active population. Industry still accounts for 29% of GRP (22% of employment), agriculture for about 3% and the construction sector for about 6%.

The region in general has gone through a rather problematic economic situation, particularly in the 70's and early 80's, when the traditional primary (coal-mining, agriculture) and secondary (heavy steel industry) had to be reoriented towards industrial restructuring and technological innovation (e.g. applied metal industries, specialized technologies) and towards the tertiary sector (including tourism).

Unemployment is high in the region, with around 20% (1993), rising to 25% in 1995, (of total active population) and around 9% of population earning full unemployment wages; however, some sub-regional variations are also pronounced with the Hainaut province having substantially more unemployed and the Luxemburg province considerably less. This is also partially indicated by the higher level of retired people in Hainaut (16%) versus the Luxemburg (13.2) and Brabant-Wallon (12.8) provinces.

Income, social exclusion and spatial segregation

The per capita income in the Walloon region is lower than the national average and is slightly above 20,000 US\$ (1993). Taking the national average at 100, the Walloon average fiscal income in 1993 was 93, the Flemish region's 104 and the Brussels region's at around 97.6. The number of unemployed had stabilized between 1985 and 1991, but it rose again in the last years to reach 257.873 unemployed benefiting from unemployment wages payment, and 40% of them had been unemployed for more than 2 years.

In addition, about 1 out of every 50 households of the region (2%) has to appeal to the assistance of Public Social Welfare Centres for a minimum subsistence

allowance (minimex); their number has risen from 20,865 households in 1987 to 28,950 in 1994. Sub-regional disparities clearly indicate that some of the most problematic areas in terms of minimex households are located in older industrial areas around Mons, Charleroi, Liège (with about 5% subsistence-income households), Brussels, in the eastern and south-eastern part of the region (lower than 1% minimex).

In terms of (subjective) perception, a 1993 survey showed that 35% Walloons saw the risk of poverty also for themselves and 15% saw social exclusion as a risk.

Civic society and cultural development

The Walloon region has, over the past two decades and in line with the federalization process of the country as a whole, established its political autonomy and direct regional parliamentary and local governance system through regular elections.

As a particular feature of complexity it should be stressed that the French-speaking community is larger than the Walloon region, as it also includes the French-speaking Brussels region population.

Cultural development is thereby territorially a somewhat larger concept than the Walloon region

proper and is developed more by the French-speaking community as a whole.

Cultural activities abound as well as in sports, youth and a diversity of socio-cultural, often locally organized initiatives.

The Walloon region attaches particular importance to the educational aspects of physical planning, urbanism and habitat: in secondary education as well as to the public at large, great efforts are made to raise awareness for human settlement matters, the importance of the natural and manmade heritage (landscapes, towns, monuments, etc.) as well as to the participatory process in human settlements and habitat decision making.

The solidarity principle, an essential element of the welfare state is also accentuated in the Walloon region. Poverty and exclusion is seen by many Walloons as a particular manifestation of injustice and should be remedied. The serious economic crisis of the seventies and the high degree of unemployment often, of a structural nature, has wrought substantial solidarity, although the disparity between the rich and the poor has increased, like in the country as a whole, but to a slightly lesser extent than in the other regions.

C.2. Public infrastructure services and built environment

Built environment

The Walloon region, with a relative high density (of 196 inhabit./km²), is well below the national average (320 inhabit./km²); however, this density is rather unevenly distributed, with a density around 300 inhabit./km² in the east-west axis (Liège-Namur-Charleroi-Mons) and low densities (around 50 inhabit./km²) in the Luxemburg province, with the exception of the Arlon district (158 inhabit./km²).

Land-use distribution data (1994) show 12% of the total territory for residential purposes, close to 50% for agriculture, almost 30% forest area, 4.2% green areas, 2.4% industrial sites, 1% infrastructure and 0.56% water surfaces.

Clearly the residential land-use is higher in Brabant (about 20%), with also high agricultural land (62.5%), and forest areas are highest in proportion (47.2%) in Luxemburg.

Urbanization, although below national average, is in general high, around 90%, although the cadastral land-use shows a contradictory picture of only 12.3% urban land-use and 87.7% of rural plots. This is mainly due

to the fact that many plots are of mixed use, combining urban living with some small-scale agricultural activity and thereby classified as "rural".

In terms of built environment, the Walloon region is distinctly different from the Brussels and Flemish region.

Although urbanization and indiscriminate expansion, building of local industrial sites and shopping areas in peri-urban locations, linear growth along ribbon-pattern development, is also quite visible, with an increase of over 17% of built-up area between 1980 and 1993 (with only a 2.7% population increase), the Walloon region still has extended agricultural areas (Brabant and Namur provinces), and considerable forest areas (Luxemburg province).

In the major urban areas 35% of the total population is concentrated on 6% of the territory, with a density of about 1,130 inhabit./km².

With a tradition of older, concentrated villages, several historic towns, and a concentration of first-industrial revolution areas of the 19th century, the region also could not escape the modern movement's bland version of 50's and 60's architecture in the urban periphery.

However, with a rather old housing stock (above national average) and a substantial number of old abandoned industrial sites, the Walloon region was also quick in initiating some innovative urban renewal projects (e.g. in Namur, near Mons) in the early 70's and 80's, in other cases these are still ongoing or have bogged down (e.g. Liège).

In the rural areas some regrouping of agricultural land has been undertaken to facilitate more rational agricultural cultivation.

The draft Regional Spatial Plan initiated in 1992 has also included a critical reflection on the Walloon built environment, drawing attention to the unique features of both cultural heritage and of natural resource areas (forests, valleys, agricultural landscape, village sites, etc.).

Public infrastructure services

Public infrastructure services have substantially improved in the last two decades, thereby particularly benefiting the improved servicing of dwelling units.

Water

In 1991, 99.8% of the population was connected to the water supply system (as compared to 93% in 1970); 86% of the dwellings have a fully equipped bathroom. Specific problems remain in isolated areas and on semi-permanent camping sites which only have a few communal taps. Although prices have considerably increased, the Walloon region has a good potable water supply.

Heating

Although the great majority of dwelling units use a private heating system (some 53% of dwellings have a private central heating system of which 47% uses fuel, about 30% natural gas, and some 13% coal), a few municipalities (e.g. Verviers) had an interesting municipal, public heating system for dwelling unit connection.

Sewerage

In 1991, 98% of households have some form of sewerage disposal system, but only 60% is connected to a public sewerage system, and a small percentage (approx. 20%) of discharged waste water is treated.

Electricity

Virtually all inhabitants are connected to the electricity network; production is ample and informational network links with France have been made. Some critical reflection has been voiced as to the production of electricity through nuclear power plants along the Meuse river. Electricity costs, particularly for domestic consumption, remain high, especially for the growing number of low-income or subsistence-income (minimex) people.

Telephone

Telephone connection to households amounts to 77% in 1991; in addition every settlement or city neighbourhood will have public telephone booths.

C.3. Transport and mobility

Although the Walloon region in general has a good road system, a reasonable system of public transport, some navigable water courses with inland harbour facilities, and two regional airports, it must be accentuated that individualized road-bound transport development (particularly freeways) has been given priority in the last decades, to the detriment of public transport. Several smaller municipalities are relatively isolated because of the infrequent public transport; furthermore, the lateral connections between provinces are still problematic in terms of public (rail) transport.

Road-bound transport and mobility

Road-bound mobility has been greatly given priority in the past two decades because of the dramatic increase in freeways (between 1970-1992 multiplied by 3.2) as well as the increase in formerly national, now regional

roads by 18%.

At present (1993 data), the network includes:

- 815 km of freeways
- 5,494 km of regional (former national) roads
- 627 km of provincial roads

or a total of 6,947 km of major roads, which means 401 km per 1000 km² or 2.1 km per 1000 inhabitants. Of particular importance are the so-called 2 x 2 lane roads (freeways and some priority regional roads) amounting to 1,586 km or 11% of the total of major roads; the Walloon region thereby ranks among the highest in Europe of so-called rapid road concentration.

To this figure should of course be added the municipal/local road.

As of 1992 the regional roads have been reclassified into two major types:

- the regional large roads ("réseau grand gabarit") with high traffic intensity linking major towns, regions and neighbouring countries
- the regional interurban roads ("réseau interurbain") connecting towns but emphasizing also the quality of environment and habitability along these roads.

In spite of the increase in the road network, the intensity of use has risen more sharply (between 1980 and 1991 with 70%), so that at many points, particularly around Brussels and within urban centres, the saturation is a reality during peak hours.

Between 1981 and 1991 the use of the automobile for work-residence and school-residence mobility have increased; total passengers share increase from 81 to 84% of total mobility between 1985 and 1991 with a 25% increase in passengers-kilometres; goods transportation by road increased with 37% and its total share of mobility increased from 61% to 71%.

Although creating major environmental and quality of life problems as well as substantial economic costs, luckily road safety also increased, so that with a 23% increase of number of motorized vehicles (384 per 1000 inhabitants in 1981 to 471 per 1000 inhabitants in 1993), the number of death and injured decreased between 1980 and 1993 with almost 20% (with a temporary slow-down in the decrease in 1993).

It is clear that also in the Walloon region road-bound mobility was given much greater priority, and that the pressures of the automobile lobbyist could not be resisted.

However, environmental problems and loss due to accidents and loss of time due to road congestion have seriously worried the population. The Walloon Commission for Road Safety (CWSR) is advising the regional minister as to measures to improve road safety.

C.4. Environment and environmental management

In general, the environmental capacity aspects in the Walloon region follow the general national trends with increasing environmental problems in the more urbanized and industrialized areas, the increasing production of waste and the modest attempts to impose selective collection and recycling, the increasing pollution of water courses due to the increase of polluted effluents of domestic and industrial origin not yet counterbalanced by sufficient waste water

alleviate environmental problems and study alternatives (car-pooling, cycling, etc.).

Rail and other regional/local public transport

In general, although the public transport network is relatively dense, the promotion and/or development for public transport was not of high priority in the last two decades.

Rail network in the Walloon region is about 1,289 km, to which another 143 of High Speed Train (TGV link Paris-Brussels-Germany) will be added in the coming years.

However, many smaller trains stops and some local lines have been closed.

Regional/local public transport (mainly bus transport) is organized by the Walloon Regional Transport Company (RWT) and by more localized companies of public transport (TEC) in 5 sub-regions (Brabant, Charleroi, Hainaut, Liège-Verviers, Namur-Luxemburg). Total network length is 17,593 km (1993) with around 1,900 vehicles (of which 30 metro vehicles in Charleroi). Total number of passengers decreased from 191.7 million in 1985 to 160 million in 1993.

Water-bound transport

The navigable water course network is about 417 km length in total, of which 84% allows a tonnage of 1,350; local/regional harbour infrastructure is developed in Liège, Namur, Charleroi and to a minor extent in some towns along the Meuse-Sambre river and Brussels-Charleroi canal. Major infrastructure works (boat elevators and boat "slide") have been developed on the Brussels-Charleroi canal.

Air transport

The Walloon region has two regional airports, Liège-Bierset and Charleroi. Both are relatively small but their use for goods transport as well as for passengers (notably also for charter flights) is on the increase.

treatment, and the increase of noise hindrances.

However, the Walloon region, conscious of its problems, and having been exposed to serious pollution problems around heavy industries since the late 19th and early 20th century, has made considerable efforts to improve environmental quality. It has subscribed to the general principles of sustainable development as expressed at the 1992 Rio Conference. Of particular importance is the Walloon region's

decree of April 1994 regulating environmental management and planning.

Air

Air pollution remains a problem in and around urban areas, particularly as regards SO² and CO production as combined effect of domestic and industrial energy consumption (heating). The acid pollutants have had damaging effects also on several monuments. In addition, NO_x emission in urban areas and along heavy traffic axes, together with CO emission produce photochemical oxidants. Lead concentration in plants along intensive traffic axes has also been observed. In addition, specific high industrial air pollution areas are registered, although most industries have, in the course of the last 20 years, reduced their visible pollution (soot) and are, with re-conversion tackling other emissions. In general, air quality is still very good in Luxemburg province, but problematic in the Hainaut and Liège provinces.

Water

Waste water discharge (both domestic and industrial) accounts for the high degree of pollution in the major water courses.

By 1992, waste water was treated, in 253 water

treatment stations with a total capacity of approx. 1.5 million inhabitant equivalence.

Waste

The waste production has steadily increased over the past two decades.

By 1992, 1.047.000 tons of domestic waste only was produced, of which about 50% dumped on approved dumping sites, 40% was incinerated, and approx. 5% recycled; remaining waste was illegally dumped. Figures for industrial and commercial waste were at the time not given.

Noise

Noise has been at the top of the hindrances felt by people in urban areas and along major traffic axes.

Ground pollution and derelict industrial sites

Ground pollution due to agricultural and industrial waste remains problematic.

Of particular importance in the Walloon region is the large number of derelict industrial sites, of which by 1992 a total of 7.270 ha was recorded, of which 46% were coal-mining sites, 33.8% stone quarries, and 20% industrial and other sites.

C.5. Local government and civic society

The Walloon region has over the past two decades increasingly structured its regional government and process of becoming an autonomous region in the federal nation. Particular matters related to human settlements and habitat are to a very large degree the full responsibility of the region.

Physical planning of human settlements has been a concern of the Walloon regional government for several years; at present one can distinguish a regional and a local level of planning (each with their specific plans):

- Regional level planning

- a Walloon regional plan (PRAT) is at present existing in draft form: it sets out the broad objectives, strategic options and the spatial impli-

cations for the years to come: the process of consultation and amendments is ongoing;

- the region is covered by 23 approved sector (sub-regional) plans following the 1962 national physical planning act still operational, and supplemented by the Walloon Code of Territorial and Town Planning.

- Local level planning

- general land-use plan: although defined in the 1962 national act, these have not been produced so often and are replaced by municipal structure plans and municipal urban design regulations (since 1989);

- specific land-use plan, necessary for the approval of larger-scale operations and subject to a process of consultation of the public at large.

C.6. Urban development and housing

Urban development and housing have, over the past two decades, been among the priority matters in the regionalization process, so that now the Walloon

regional government is almost entirely responsible for human settlements; the few remaining federal responsibilities pertain to the general legal (e.g. the

rental act) and fiscal framework governing national laws. The Walloon regional government has since the early regionalization stages taken regional planning, urban development and housing as some of the highest priorities and has, in these matters, been the most active and innovative of the three regions, and also the region with the highest concern for social redistribution effects.

The Directorate General of Physical Planning, Housing and the Patrimony, of the Ministry of the Walloon Region is in charge of human settlements and housing matters.

For the implementation of policies, programmes and projects, the Ministry also involves various public, parastatal or semi-public and private actors.

Urban development

Urbanization in the Walloon region is high (estimated 90%); so is the overall density (190 inhabit./km²); however, among the three regions, the Walloon region has the lowest level of urbanization (national average 95%) and density (national average 320 inhabit./km²).

In human settlement terms three zones can be differentiated in the region:

- the highly urbanized, traditionally industrialized zone in the river basins of the Meuse, Sambre, Haine and Vesdre, this zone contains most of the larger towns and has also undergone the greatest socio-economic changes in the last few decades, particularly through a devitalization of inner-city areas in favour of the urban periphery;
- the more southern zone, with few towns and lower density and predominantly of rural character;
- the peri-urban and rural zone just south of Brussels which has seen an increasing urbanization because of the capital proximity.

In terms of urban settlement, three types are distinguished:

- urban agglomerations, with a total of (1991) 1.4 million or 43% of the Walloon population and covering 14% of the Walloon territory; these agglomerations contain all municipalities with a density of 500 inhabit./km² or above. The fully urbanized municipalities have a total average density of 1.130 inhabit./km²;
- intermediate settlements, which are neither rural nor fully urban, but group the peri-urban, ribbon-type developments along major axes, and urbanized rural areas;
- the small rural municipalities.

In terms of urban agglomeration, Liège takes the dominant position in economic and cultural sphere of influence, followed by Charleroi and a number of sub-regional centres: Namur, Mons, Tournai, Verviers, Arlon and La Louvière. With the exception of Arlon, all these urban centres are situated in the river basins zone.

Although the urban spread has continued with more than 17% between 1980 and 1991, population increase in general was low (2.3%) with even a declining population in the inner-city areas of e.g. Liège and Charleroi. The urban spread was, like in the country in general, also in the Walloon region caused by the peri-urban expansion through increased parcelling, the development of new economic zones outside the urban centres, the growth of commercial and service activities at urban fringes inducing automobile mobility and the peri-urbanization of Brussels extending into the Walloon region.

By contrast, inner-city areas as well as older industrial municipalities suffered stagnation, often visible in a deterioration of the physical environment in general and the degradation of the housing stock in particular.

It was therefore one of the major priorities of the Walloon regional government, as well as of several municipalities, to revitalize and renovate urban centres and disused industrial sites and to boost the urban development through concentrated housing and urban renewal projects.

The Walloon Draft Regional Physical Development Plan (Plan Regional Aménagement du Territoire) specifies these priorities into three complementary strategies:

- give prominence to towns as engines of socio-economic development and organizers of the Walloon spatial territory;
- redefine the rural living and spatial character to enhance agricultural development and specific unique Walloon open areas;
- elaborate projects for the following specific dynamic actions:

urban renewal and revitalization of urban centres renewal efforts must have a functional, aesthetic, financial and environmental added value;

revitalization efforts will enhance public-private partnerships and the public part of contributions emphasizes public space improvements (parks, footpaths, street lighting, etc.). In 1991 20 million BEF were allocated, whereas from 1992 an annual budget of around

100 million was budgeted. So far projects have been initiated in both larger towns (e.g. Liège, Tournai) as well as in smaller municipalities (e.g. Aubange, Marche-en-Famenne):

- priority action areas ("zones d'initiative privilégiée") depending on local conditions and priorities, four different types of actions are undertaken in appropriate municipalities:
 - * right to housing action zones aiming at assisting municipalities whose land and housing prices have risen sharply and still want to guarantee fair access
 - * reuse of particular residential areas which had been abandoned and are in need of new investments for economic and physical revitalization, particularly in some municipalities with few resources
 - * integrative action stimulating solutions to remedy unemployment, poverty, delinquency, drug abuse and social segregation in some neighbourhoods with excessive problems
 - * reuse and revitalize particular social housing neighbourhoods which had been neglected by the social housing societies:
- assistance to the homeless
 - the programme of assistance to the homeless operates since 1988 and subsidizes initiative for collective reuse of dwellings for the homeless;
- setting up non-profit social real estate agencies since 1993 several larger towns have seen the creation of such agencies mediating between owners and low-income renters and effectively managing the housing in which such mediation has taken place;
- neighbourhood associations
 - started in 1993, these associations activate the role of the social housing societies in selected municipalities so as to speed up maintenance of public and private parts of residential areas, thereby giving priority to the unemployed young people;
- rental permits
 - the increase of rental housing of inferior quality and the circumvention of owners of the national rental act has led the Walloon region to adopt in 1995 a "rental permit decree" to enforce the law locally and have stricter control on quality of rented units, particularly in collective dwellings with shared sanitary facilities.

Housing

Housing in the Walloon region is, to a large extent, urban housing, although some 10% is rural housing.

Quantitative aspects

In 1991, the region counted 1.212.139 dwelling units for a total population of around 3.300.000 inhabitants and 1.289.996 households, showing an average household size of 2.5 pers./household.

The growth of the housing stock between 1970 and 1981 was by 9.6% (with an increase of households of 9.5%) and between 1981 and 1991 by 2.3% (households increase of 8.7%). In 1971, 57% of the housing stock was owner-occupied, in 1981 63% and in 1991 66%.

In 1991, a total of 66.4% was owner-occupied housing, and 80% was individual dwellings (41% detached, 16% semi-detached, 20% row houses), 17% apartments or studios and 3% collective housing.

The down-sizing of households as well as the deterioration of the housing stock is affecting the shortage in housing in the region in general.

In addition, some sub-regional or local variations are quite visible:

- the Brabant region accounts for the highest growth in the housing stock, 31.6% increase between 1970-1981 and 14.1% increase between 1981-1991;
- the Luxemburg province also had a higher than average growth (11.7% and 10%), whereas Hainaut (6.6% and -1.7%) and Liège (6.6% and 2.1%) a lower than Walloon average growth.

A total of 45,120 dwelling units were unoccupied in 1981.

The housing stock in the region is generally old, with 61% in 1981 constructed before 1945 and in 1991 still 42% dating from before 1945. Further figures of 1991 reveal that 33% of the stock was built before 1919, 17% built between 1919 and 1945, 27% built between 1946 and 1970, 20% between 1971 and 1985 and only 3% after 1985.

In addition to the regular housing stock, one should add a small number of mobile dwelling units, mostly located on (approved or illegal) camp sites, although decreasing from 1,598 units in 1970 to 1,383 in 1991, concentrated in tourist areas mainly in Luxembourg and Namur provinces, they do constitute a problem, particularly as their quality is low and their location is often on flood-prone sites.

Qualitative aspects

The quality of the housing stock can be summarized as follows:

- 77% of the housing stock is more than 20 years old; although not necessarily a qualitative problem as such, it is shown that the older houses do need some repair or improvement in comfort facilities, and that close to 20% of the stock older than 35 years is of precarious quality;
- the 1981 census indicated that roughly 50% of the housing stock was of sound structural and generally good quality, another 10% of sound structural quality needing improvement; about 25% of the stock needed structural and other qualitative improvements and 7.5% was of inferior structural quality, whereas close to 9% was totally unfit for habitation and could not be saved;
- comfort assessment in 1991 showed that all dwellings had water supply connections, 92% WC, 86.4% bathroom installed, 54% central heating, 98.2% some form of waste water discharge, 78.5% telephone connection, 60% had a private garage and 78% a garden;
- sub-regional variations show that the qualitative problems are most pronounced in the Hainaut and Luxemburg provinces and least problematic in the Brabant-Wallon part (with only 0.76% of totally unfit dwellings, and a higher percentage of fully equipped bathrooms and central heating);
- the figures on surface area of a dwelling unit show that 8.7% is less than 45 m², 20% between 45-65 m², 43.4% between 65-105 m², 14.9% between 105-124 m² and 11.5% above 124 m²; this also indicates that about one third of the population lives in dwellings below the minimum of 70 m² habitable space.

C.7. Construction sector

The Walloon region considers the construction sector as an important economic sector. Although the construction boom was high in the 70's, between 1980 and 1984 its importance fell from 9.1% to 6.2% of the Gross Regional Product in Wallonia, period which coincides with a sharp decline in new (also housing) construction; during the same period employment in the sector fell by 36.5% with a loss of 27,347 employment units.

Since then a modest increase in the sector has been able to make up about one third of the jobs lost with an even more modest annual sector growth of 0.14%.

However, the construction sector, because of its high labour intensity, is a potential job creator, and can create up to 42% more new jobs than other industrial investments.

So the enhancing of housing construction, needed also to meet the housing demand, is considered a good strategy and will be continued in the near future.

Housing demand

Although population growth in the region is very small, in some sub-regions even negative, the housing demand still increases, mainly because of the down-sizing of households, the locational imbalances, but particularly because of the price increase of sales and rents for housing which make it increasingly difficult for low and lower-middle-income people to accede to adequate housing.

Recent (1991) imbalance between number of households (1.289,996) and offer of dwelling units (1.212,139) indicated a theoretical demand of roughly 75,000 units; however, demand in practice is lower as joint occupation and affordability may not reflect the realistic and effective demand.

Taking into account the down-sizing trend between 1981 and 1991, showing an increase of small households of 17.6%, and the reduction of families of -1.4%, the future demands can be estimated; in addition, the growth of households by income categories give a typological indication (1981-1991 figures indicate a 34.4% of households in the higher-middle-income bracket, 2.6% in the middle-income, and 6.5% in the low-income bracket; to this should be added the growing number of below or at minimum-income level, growing at about 22% over the last 3 years.

The total number of households increase between 1992 and 2010 has been estimated at 118,000 or 9.1% increase; this would indicate a theoretical demand of approx. 198,000 dwelling units between 1992 and 2010, with a relative high demand in the higher-income brackets in Brabant and a sharp increase of demand by the low-income households (unemployed, retired, lower-income and minimex) with a total of 75% of demand mainly concentrated in Hainaut, Liège and Luxemburg. The demand by 2010 would be approx. 162,000 owner-occupied and around 30,000 rental housing, or about 10,000 to 17,000 units per year.

Housing expenditures show that the lower-income households have to spend between 35 and 40% of their income on housing, whereas in 1981 this was around 25%. Indeed, (between 1977-1993) rents have increased 50% more than the normal consumption price increase; between 1981 and 1991 this increase was even 64% more than price index. Compared to construction cost increase, it has been shown that the general price increase of rental and owner-occupied housing has been 80% higher.

This increase is partially explained by the slow-down in new construction, the ineffective implementation and circumvention of the housing rent law and by unscrupulous exploitation by landlords.

Homeless and problem groups

Although exact figures are not made available, the problem of homelessness is real and has been sharply increasing, as could be observed by the organizations organizing assistance to the temporary or permanently homeless.

In addition, socio-economic exclusion being on the increase, as indicated by the increasing number of unemployed (12 to 16% with sub-regional variations) and the sharp increase of minimum wage earners (minimex) of 33% between 1989 and 1994, now amounting to over 30.000 households or 3% of the total; in addition, the very low-income categories are increasingly disappearing from the social public housing market, not because they are better off, on the contrary, because they fall increasingly below the minimum criteria to qualify (only 13.7% of social public housing beneficiaries are very low-income, whereas they used to count for 25 to 30% in the early 70's).

Housing policy

The Walloon region has since the seventies declared its intention to have an equitable housing policy. In addition, the general principle "right to adequate housing" is of the utmost importance to the regional government.

However, similarly to the national context and the other regions, public investment in housing sharply fell in the 80's, although the Walloon region did make efforts to launch small innovative urban renewal projects in the 80's, giving priority also to housing redistribution efforts.

The "right to housing" in the Walloon region is explicitly interpreted not only as an *individual* right, but also as a *collective duty*. This has been the basis for creating rental commissions, associations of

neighbourhoods, non-profit real-estate agencies and for a stricter control on rental permits.

Policies now focus on:

- implementing the collective "right to housing"
- improving the quality of existing housing, particularly in the older, inner-city areas and housing estates near old industrial areas, thereby giving priority to urban renewal and reuse of industrial estates
- a more socially just social housing policy.

Housing subsidies (private sector)

The Walloon region has a variety of housing subsidies to meet a variety of needs (acquisition, renovation, assistance to rents for low-income earners, etc.). Some of these subsidies are in the form of premiums, others in the form of guarantees to loans, still others to cover differences between market rates and reduced rates.

The following types of assistance in housing were available up to 1993:

- a premium for moving, installation and rent subsidy for the selected low-income groups (ADIL)
- subsidy for renovation reserved for dwellings in related urban renewal areas
- acquisition premium for public (owner-occupied) housing
- construction premium reserved for demolition of old dwellings with construction of a new one within urban areas
- premium to improve dilapidated dwellings and premium for restructuring.

Social housing

The Walloon regional government had a social (public) rental housing stock of 98.517 dwelling units (1993 approx. 8% of total dwelling units), of which the 84.000 were located in the Hainaut and Liège provinces: 57% is single household units (detached, semi-detached or row houses) and 43% apartments. The management of this housing stock is the responsibility of the Walloon Regional Housing Society (Société Région wallonne de Logement) created after the regionalization of the National Housing Society (in 1971 the Walloon region counted 64.034 social rental housing units).

The demand for social rental housing by 1993 was 39.354 households, of which 70% are low-income earners, whereas about 58% of occupants of the present stock are low-income earners.

Considering the demand, the actual production is very low (148 in 1992 and 221 in 1993 or about 0.6% of the demand).

In addition to the management of the stock, the regional

society also has an upgrading programme of their old stock, by 1993 approx. 11,530 units had been upgraded; half of these were less than 20 years old.

The society has over the years also constructed, through its local housing societies, a considerable number of dwelling units for sale (with loans). The

present outstanding plans for acquisition are 11.7 billion BEF for 5,356 dwellings. Similar to the other regions, the number of social housing units built in the 70's was relatively high, very low in the 80's and slightly increasing in the 90's (about 450 dwellings annually the last 3 years).

D. FLEMISH REGION: 20 YEARS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HABITAT

D.1. Social, economic and cultural aspects

Demography

Population in the Flemish region, although conforming to the general slow growth rate of the country as a whole, shows the highest growth rate of the three regions. In 1981 the region comprised 5,634,152 people (57.1% of country total) and in 1994 the population was 5,847,022 (57.9% of country total). The growth rate in the 1982-1988 period was constant around 0.2%, but raised to 0.4% in 1989 and remains higher (0.5%) in 1991 to 1993, to fall again to 0.4% in 1994; with present trends and fluctuations the population projection is expected to be around 6.1 million in 2022, to slightly fall again after that.

Life expectancy is around 77 (1993) with a differentiation between men (73.9) and women (80.2). The greying of the population is also a feature of the Flemish region, with a gradual shift of the largest age group (0-20 years of age in 1972 and 20-40 years of age in 1992).

The trend of down-sizing of household continues slowly, and the one-parent headed households are on the increase.

The proportion of foreign nationals in the Flemish region (4.7% in 1993) is substantially lower than in the Walloon (10.9%) and Brussels (29.2%) regions. Roughly 50% is of European Union origin, 18% of Maghreb countries and 16.5% from Turkey.

Employment and productive activities

The Flemish region contributes to the Gross National Product with 59.7% (1992); economic growth rates in the region have fluctuated in the last decade with a low of -1.65% in 1981 to a high 5.74% in 1988 and a slow growth of 1.9% in 1992.

The changes in the economic sectors are clearly visible with industry (42.3% in 1980; 36.9% in 1991) and agriculture (2.9% in 1980; 2.5% in 1991) diminishing

in importance and the service sector growing (56.1% 1980; 61.5% in 1991). Major industrial production are the petro-chemical, the metal and the food and beverage industries; others include textiles, furniture and construction.

The Flemish region, just as the country as a whole, is also export-oriented with 75% of its export towards European Union partners.

The proportion of active population to the total population still decreases; the unemployment in the Flemish region is relatively high (14%) but lower than the Walloon (25.9%) and the Brussels region. Sub-regional variations are clear, with higher unemployment in the eastern part of the region (15-18%) and lower in the central and western part of the region (10%); however, youth unemployment is still high with 15.8%.

Income, social exclusion and spatial segregation

The per capita income in the region is high, with 744,800 BEF (approx. 23,500 US\$ - 1993 data); this is higher than the national average but lower than the Brussels region average. However, the spread of income is better than in the Brussels region, where income disparities are greatest.

The average household income in the Flemish region rose with 6.9% between 1976 and 1992 (discounting inflation); taking into account the down-sizing of households, the real increase is closer to 15.4%.

The number of below-poverty-line people in the region (EU norm) is about 5%; the number of households in insecure income position decreased from 21% in 1985 to 16.5% in 1992; however, recent figures indicate that the social exclusion is on the increase (3.7% of households in 1993 to 3.9% in 1994). The number of people in the region entitled to benefit from a subsistence minimum income is around 27,000 or 38% of the country's total.

The highest incidence of poverty is found in the larger cities (Antwerp, Ghent, Mechelen) but also in a few smaller towns or villages, particularly in secluded areas west of the Brussels region, east of Leuven city region. Within the larger cities some neighbourhoods show a particularly high concentration of socially excluded.

Civic society and cultural development

The Flemish region has, in line with the federalization process of the country, established its political autonomy and direct parliamentary elections.

Although surveys have revealed that direct political interest is relatively low, clearly participation in the civic society through associations and organizations is

high.

Cultural development is organized through local cultural councils (88% of all municipalities have established such councils), sports and youth councils. Participation in cultural events and use of public facilities (public libraries, sport facilities, etc.) is good. The multitude of socio-cultural organizations with local branches is also a clear sign of civic participation.

The solidarity principle is also in the Flemish region part of the social welfare state. Welfare efforts are undertaken by the regional as well as by the local governments (through their commissions for Social Welfare). In addition, many NGO's and community-based organizations do act in the welfare sector.

D.2. Public infrastructure services and built environment

Built environment

The high density characterizing the country (320 inhabit./km²) as a whole is even more pronounced in the Flemish region with an overall density of 450 inhabit./km² in 1994, thereby figured among the highest in the world (compare e.g. The Netherlands with 420 inhabit./km², Europe as a whole with 135 inhabit./km²).

The urbanization rate is close to its maximum, and is further manifested in a built environment characterized by

- spread of towns and cities
- urbanization of open areas
- ribbon-pattern development along the roads connecting towns and villages
- high concentration of built-up areas in the Antwerp-Ghent-Brussels-Leuven quadrangle
- increasingly fragmented built-up areas beyond the historic traditional town boundaries.

The period 1950 to early 1980's has been characterized by rather indiscriminate building, expansion of towns, building local industrial sites and shopping areas in peri-urban locations and increasing the road-bound infrastructure. In terms of architecture the modern movement had its impact also on the Flemish region but produced most often a bland watered down version of the qualitative examples of the international movement of the 30's. Several high-rise projects, including social housing, although some already planned in the late 30's, were implemented in the 60's and 70's; at the time it looked as if every town wanted to have its high-rise even if no real need was there. In the late 70's and 80's the doubts about the

modern movement slowed down most ambition projects, several architects turned to individualistic post-modern single-building efforts, and particularly innovative urban design and careful spatial planning was greatly absent.

A few interesting urban renewal projects were initiated (Brugge, Antwerp) but one had to wait for the early nineties for a more qualitative reflection on the built environment, which so far resulted in a few interesting projects but also in several prestige projects (bank buildings feature among the prominent ones) of which mainly the size and costs are impressive.

Public infrastructure services

In general, most of the inhabitants of the Flemish region enjoy the access to basic infrastructure services such as water supply, sewerage disposal, electricity and telephone.

Water

The Flemish region has over 2 million subscribers to the public water supply network consuming approx. 1.18 million m³ of potable water per day, of which 86% is actually paid for, with a 14% waste or public use.

The Flemish region does not have sufficient ground water or surface water to supply the demand, therefore about 20% is obtained from the Walloon region. However the increasing qualitative and quantitative problems require a more rational use of the water supply system; in addition, prices for potable water have increased substantially in the past decade with considerable local variations ranging from 2,500 F per 100 m³ to 6,210 F per 100 m³ per year.

Sewerage

The sewerage infrastructure is the primary responsibility of the municipalities: at present (1993) about 79% of inhabitants are connected to a network, but there are considerable local variations with municipalities of only 50 to 60% inhabitants connected, others with close to 95%. Those inhabitants not connected discharge directly in water courses or have a sink-put or septic tank system.

However, of all waste water collected through the network, only 30% is, so far, treated in waste water treatment plants, before discharge into the water courses. This compares unfavourably with some EU countries (Denmark 92%, Netherlands 92%, France 52%). A major effort has been initiated to speed up the construction of collection and of treatment plans.

Electricity

Virtually a 100% of the Flemish population has access to the electricity supply network which is to a great extent privatized with some public control and public participation. Prices per kw/hour are relatively high and the virtual monopoly position of electricity suppliers is subject of debate.

Telephone and telecommunication

A substantial part of the population (1991: 79%) has a private telephone connection, and all have access to public phones. Although prices remain high, the mobile phone and new telecommunication systems (e-mail, fax, etc.) are increasing steadily.

D.3. Transport and mobility

In general, the Flemish region enjoys a very good road system and a reasonable system of public transport (train, bus and local tram/metro). The road system has clearly been given higher priority in the past decades, whereas the public transport has suffered. Although prices of local public transport are relatively high, an effort is made to improve the services and frequency. Mobility has greatly improved. Compared to 1987, automobile transportation increased 40% (drivers) to 80% (passengers), cycling increased 14%, but public transport mobility reduced (-12%) and pedestrian also (-58%).

Road network and road-bound mobility

The total road network (freeways, regional, provincial and local) is about 57,000 km, with an average density of 4.2 km per km². This total length is subdivided in:

- 823 km freeways
- 7,010 km of regional roads
- 721 km of provincial roads
- 51,000 km of municipal/local roads
- 6,284 km of bicycle paths of which 44% are cycle reserves along the vehicular roads, and 56% are separate tracks.

In the period 1970 to 1990 the network for roads increased by 21%, mostly freeways; yet the intensity of use has also sharply increased in this period (estimates vary from 60% to 120% increase).

The number of registered motorized vehicles was 2,966,552 in 1994, with a 3% increase compared to 1993. The Flemish region ranks among the top countries with 40 vehicles per 100 inhabitants

(compare: France: 42; Italy 52). The increase of motorcycles between 1988 and 1994 was 80%. During that same period goods transport vehicles increased by 30%.

By 1993 every household had 1.1 vehicle with higher income households having 2.45 vehicles.

The number of public bus vehicles and tram vehicles decreased from 1987 (2667 vehicles) to 1994 (2577).

Similar to the general tendencies, the number of accidents involving injured or deadly victims is slowly reducing after a peak period in 1990 and 1991 (55,000 yearly) to about 49,000 in 1993, of which approx. 970 are still deadly victims. Although the motorized vehicle drivers are constituting the highest number in these figures, it also shows the relative high vulnerability of cyclist and pedestrian among the victims.

The reduction of speed limits within the built-up areas (since 1992: 50 km/h as a general rule) has helped to create somewhat safer traffic conditions, although many so-called "black spots" remain: in the region these vary between 800 and 1000 (intersections, pedestrian crossings, etc.). With proper signalling, improved urban lay-outs, several of these can be remedied.

In addition, road-bound traffic creates substantial environmental problems. Noise pollution has, during the last decade, particularly drawn the attention of discontented residents along major roads. Improved road surface techniques as well as sound barriers have been applied at peak noise pollution points, but

dissatisfaction remains high.

Rail and rail-bound mobility

Although only fully developed national data exist (from the National Railroad Company), estimates for the region show that about 81 million train trips were made in 1994 and 36.8 million tons of goods transported by rail. However, there is a decline in train mobility (between 6-10% between 1980-1994) and a slight increase of goods transportation (1%).

The rail system is well-developed on the east-west axis (Ostend-Brussels-Liège) and the north-south axis (Brussels-Antwerp), moderately on a few inter-city axes (Ghent-Kortrijk; Ghent-Antwerp; Leuven-Mechelen-St. Niklaas) but virtually non-existent on lateral connections (e.g. Antwerp-Hasselt; Brugge-Kortrijk, etc.).

In addition, several minor stops and local stations have been abolished in recent years, contrary to all public opinion demands; it has thereby become clear that, on the national as well as on the regional level, the political will to strengthen rail-bound mobility public transport has been seriously lacking for the last two decades.

Local public transport (bus/tram/ metro)

The local bus public transport is mainly concentrated in the Flemish Transport Company "De Lijn". Although the number of vehicles did not increase, the number of passengers/trips transported has slightly increased by 4% between 1990 and 1994, although the total length of kilometres transported slightly reduced from 1992 to 1994 (119 tot 118 million km). An effort has been made in recent years to streamline connections between various bus routes as well as with railway lines, although off-peak hours frequency is low. The coastal tram (Knokke-De Panne) is a popular recreational line as well as a functional lateral connection.

Only Antwerp has a metro/tram system with two major metro lines and several tram/buslines. In addition, Ghent still has a combined bus/trolleys system.

D.4. Environment and environmental management

With the exception of environmental regulation of an international (European) nature, and the national environmental laws and fiscal rules, most environmental aspects are the responsibility of the region.

Although the Flemish regional government is fully

Water-bound transport and harbours

The Flemish region accounts for 75% of the total national water-bound transport of which approx. 20% (18.7 million tons) is inland transport, with a fairly constant total varying between 90 million (1992) to 100 million (1980) and 90 million (1982) tons/year.

Harbours are major points of economic activity. The 4 harbours total 171 million tons of traffic in 1994 (an increase of 40% compared to 1980), of which 64% Antwerp, 19% Zeebrugge, 14% Ghent and 3% Ostend. The number of passengers using the harbours is generally decreasing, although Zeebrugge saw a slight increase (6%) in 1994.

The Flemish harbours are an essential international link mainly with European ports, but also with North-America, Asia and Africa.

The expansion of Zeebrugge, Antwerp, and to some extent Ghent, has in the last two decades substantially changed the built environment at the periphery of the cities (Zeebrugge has completely altered in the past 20 years from a minor fishing port to a major international harbour). Environmental impacts (e.g. petro-chemical industry north of Antwerp) as well as damage to traditional ecological wastelands and smaller towns has been contested, particularly around Antwerp. The Zeebrugge port harbours an interesting major experimental wind energy production system.

Airports

The Flemish region harbours 3 important airports, of which Zaventem (Brussels) is internationally by far the most important. In 1994 the aircraft movements were 225,662 in Zaventem, 58,876 in Deurne (Antwerp), and 38,120 in Ostend; compared to 1980, this shows a 105% increase for Zaventem, 21% for Ostend and a 18% reduction for Deurne.

Zaventem is important for both passengers (1994: 10 million passengers) and cargo (365 million tons in 1994); Deurne is mainly passenger-oriented (250,000 in 1994) and Ostend mainly cargo-oriented (60 million tons in 1994).

aware of the importance of environmental quality and has also subscribed to the principles of Sustainable Development as expressed in Agenda 21. The way is still to go to see substantial quality improvements and to solve major problems. Indeed a recent report of the Flemish Environment Council stated that problems are manifold, widespread, interrelated and concentrated in

the behaviour of the recent generations...

The Flemish Environment Corporation (semi-public VMM) has been installed to co-ordinate and manage the major problems. The Flemish Administration for Environment and Nature Development (AMINAL) administrates environmental quality.

Water

Surface water quality is a major problem, but regularly monitored. Although most water courses are still heavily polluted by waste water discharge, some improvement in recent years can be observed: in 1994, 42.6% of the monitoring points showed an improvement, and the overall assessment has "improved" from very low quality (extremely unhealthy) to low quality (unhealthy). However 85% of the monitoring points still records quality below acceptable norms imposed by the Flemish government as of 1995.

Surface water pollution by industry has decreased relatively more in recent years than domestic waste water pollution.

In addition, ground water pollution is also increasing, particularly due to nitrates (agricultural pollution). As the Flemish region is particularly vulnerable, and water consumption is still on the increase (demand growing with about 20% by 2010), major efforts are needed: a recently approved agricultural waste decree may improve the situation.

Air

Although air pollution in the Flemish region is still relatively high, particularly at peak locations, a recent stabilization can be observed, so that no further deterioration is expected.

The highest problem areas are: north of Brussels (Vilvoorde), east-north-east of Antwerp, and Ghent. In these locations the combined effect of road-bound traffic and industrial pollution are highest.

CO² emissions are still high. Occasional ozone concen-

trations exceed maximum norms, particularly at peak points (e.g. in summer months).

Ground pollution

Ground and surface soil pollution are also problematic, both due to industrial waste and, more importantly, to agricultural waste. Whereas industrial waste pollution is very localized and can be tackled on-site, agricultural waste ground pollution is widespread and is aggravated by transport as well as by import of manure. Major effects are with nitrates and phosphates. This problem has been neglected for many years, partly due to the strong Farmers' Associations lobby looking only at short-term economic gains. Long term effects, however, are becoming more pressing and a recent agricultural waste decree promises to partly solve some of the problems.

Waste

Domestic and industrial waste production is high. Whereas in the late 80's still a large proportion of waste was dumped and left untreated, the 1995 proportions show that only 25% is dumped, 28% is incinerated and 47% is used in recycling, reuse, composting or other useful applications. The total production of waste (approx. 13 million tons a year) is not increasing, and the target reduction by the year 2000 is set at 12 million tons. Increased selection and selective collection as well as increased taxation of waste should help to reach this target.

The Public Agency OVAM manages the Flemish waste aspects.

Noise

Noise pollution problems, although for a long time disregarded by policy makers, is of high priority to citizens, and recent efforts of creating sound barriers, improving roads but, most importantly, to impose stricter environmental regulations, are intended to alleviate some of the worst problems.

D.5. Local government and civic society

The Flemish region, has gained a large degree of autonomy (since 1970), particularly in matters related to human settlements and habitat since 1989 and further in 1993. Of particular importance has been the recent creation of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Urban Policies and Housing, to co-ordinate hitherto sometimes unco-ordinated (or at least spread over several ministries) matters, with a total budget (1995) of 31 billion BEF (6% of total).

Added to this could be the budget for Infrastructure and Transport of 44 billion or 8.7% of total

Housing has been a long-standing priority among the social welfare policies in the country and the region, although during the 80's this important civic policy was politically rather neglected, to re-emerge as a priority at the end of the 80's and early 90's.

Physical Planning has had a more laissez-faire

attitude, in spite of the 1962 law and the existence of regional and sub-regional/sectorial plans (25 sector plans in the Flemish region). Of particular importance has been the initiative to draft the Flemish Spatial Structure Plan.

This plan has the innovative ambition not to be just another Physical Land-use Plan, but a forward-looking strategic spatial plan capitalizing on potentials and past cultural and natural heritage, as well as developing a new sustainable development vision linked with priority programmes and projects.

The Plan is expected to be approved before the year 2000.

In addition, the regional government has launched the programme "Flanders-Europe 2002" to improve the quality of life in general and civic society in particular.

Local governance

Local authorities have a long-standing tradition to care for the day-to-day quality of human settlements and habitat, particularly in view of the many towns in the Flemish region with an important historical heritage (Antwerp, Ghent, Brugge, Leuven, Mechelen, Tongeren, etc.).

The 308 Flemish municipalities have at their disposal a total budget of 178 billion BEF (1993) or 30.756 BEF (approx. US\$ 1000) per inhabitant/year. Some towns (e.g. Ghent and Antwerp) even have up to 68.000 BEF per inhabitant, and increasing by 18% between 1989 and 1993. Expenditures also rose accordingly and amount to 176.7 billion in 1993. Although the total may seem positive, several municipalities (particularly some larger ones) have run deficits so that the accumulated debt is as high as 89% of the total income.

Particularly the obligations related to social welfare (e.g. Public Welfare Commissions) are costly; in addition, several municipalities had neglected their

inner-city areas and now find themselves having to invest heavily in renewal and maintenance.

Public participation on local level is high, not only through the formal election system (every 6 years) but also to the Municipal Council activities as well as through the various local agencies for housing, environment, infrastructure, social welfare, etc. In 1994, 7202 council persons were elected and 2798 aldermen/women established for a total of 398 municipalities.

In addition to the formal local authority system, many non-government initiatives exist on local level. Several of these have in recent years been active in human settlements and habitat matters:

- environmental councils
- renters co-operatives
- the League for Better Environment (BBL)
- traffic organisations (e.g. "Langzaam Verkeer")
- Flemish Housing League
- Flemish Housing Society through the local Housing/Building Societies.

Their importance to increase citizen awareness should be accentuated. In fact, surveys have indicated that the civic society has a much higher esteem and appreciate better the credibility of local initiatives, particularly non-government ones, than the formal government initiatives.

Local solidarity is an important task for both local authorities and citizens as a whole.

Local measures to improve housing, to start modest land-banking initiatives and to ensure a minimum assistance to the socially excluded, have recently been taken; nevertheless income disparity and social-economic exclusion remains a problem, particularly in large cities and in so-called new-rich boom towns.

D.6. Urban development and housing

With the regionalization the Flemish region is fully responsible for policies and implementation related to housing and urban development. The few federal responsibilities remaining relate to the general legal and fiscal framework governing the national laws.

Matters related to housing and urban development are since 1995 the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Urban Policies and Housing.

For the implementation of policies and programmes, the Ministry also involves various public, semi-public and private actors.

Housing and urban development have gone through considerable changes in the past twenty years.

Urban development

Urbanization in the Flemish region is high, and although the population increase has been relatively slow, the urban built-up areas have expanded in the period 1980-1992 with 31%. This expansion is particularly visible in smaller towns, semi-rural areas and in the peripheries of major urban areas. One may easily conclude that Flanders has been virtually

urbanized with little rural area left, or more properly expressed, with increased urbanization of the rural environment: this trend is also visible in the population and employment statistics showing a higher growth in periphery and outside the larger urban agglomeration.

One now distinguishes several types of urbanized areas:

- urban agglomerations, comprising the major towns and conurbation zones, covering 12% of the Flemish region's land, 37% of its dwellings and 33% of the region's population;
- urban expansion areas, covering 7% of the land, 11% of its dwellings and 16% of the population;
- intermediate (urbanized) areas, covering 50% of the region's land, 35% of its dwellings and 37% of the population;
- rural areas, covering 13% of the land, 3% of the dwellings and 4% of the population.

It is quite noticeable that the peripheral and intermediate urbanized areas together cover close to 70% of the region's territory, comprise almost 50% of all dwelling units and hold 53% of the total region's population.

A further consequence of the urban expansion is that the open areas (green areas, agricultural land, waste land) has been severely encroached upon so that little open areas remain.

As expansion has often been along the major road connecting towns and villages, along so-called "ribbon" development, the mixing of traffic and urban living functions is often causing problems of safety, health and noise. Most of the housing plots in the expansion areas are rather large with free-standing housing and commercial structures, this taking up quite a bit of land.

Concurrently with the spread of urbanization, the inner-city areas, particularly in the larger towns, have often stagnated and, if left unattended, have deteriorated. This stagnation is among others observed in the figures related to unemployed people of which close to 40% live in inner-city areas of the larger agglomerations (1991 data).

Whereas in the early 70's this tendency was observed but little real effort was made to counteract, in the 80's and continuing in the 90's this stagnation has been counterbalanced with a revalorization of town and village centres with a variety of local initiatives (pedestrian shopping streets, urban renewal housing schemes, traffic-free residential neighbourhoods, etc.) and with a recent reorientation towards a new urban policy.

Essential features of a new urban development policy include among others:

- an integrative approach, cutting through traditionally sectoralized responsibilities and/or improving co-ordination between various actors;
- an inclusive approach such that all actors must feel responsible for the major problems related to poverty and social exclusion;
- a participatory approach increasing access to information, services and infrastructure, particularly for those most in need.

In addition, the spatial aspects of urban development will be further tackled in the Flemish Region Spatial Structure Plan to be further elaborated in the coming years.

Housing

As a consequence of the high degree of urbanization, housing in the Flemish region, can, to a very large extent, be classified as urban housing.

Quantitative aspects

The number of dwelling units in the Flemish region grew between 1981 and 1991 with 9.18%. That is a slightly higher increase than the population. This growth however is not evenly spread over the region but shows high growths, particularly in a few smaller municipalities (e.g. Kapellen +65%; Brecht +36%; Koksijde +34%, etc.).

In 1991 the Flemish region comprised 2,141,557 dwelling units, of which 78.5% are single family houses and 21.5% are apartment type units. It was estimated that about 80,000 dwellings were unoccupied.

Owner-occupied dwellings account for 70% of the housing stock and rental dwellings for 30% (23% private, 5% social non-profit housing).

Qualitative aspects

The quality of the housing stock can be summarized as follows:

- 59% of the housing stock is more than 20 years old;
- visual (external) inspection has indicated that between 1961 and 1994 the percentage of good quality dwellings rose from 60 to 68%, whereas the percentage of below quality standard has remained fairly constant the last 25 years at about 12 to 14% of the total stock (300,000 dwellings) of which at least 10% is beyond salvation;
- internal comfort assessment (bathroom, shower, WC, central heating) indicates an improvement between 1981 and 1991 from 49% to 59% of the total

dwelling stock, whereas the number of dwellings without minimal comfort decreased from 28% to 14%;

- although the housing stock is relatively old, it is still shown that over 6% of the dwellings built between 1946 and 1961 is already of precarious quality;
- the quality of the housing stock is not evenly spread in the region: one observes a qualitative deterioration in East- and West-Flanders and an improvement in the other provinces;
- housing surface area is increasing (average per inhabitant: 23.9 m² in 1961, 34 m² in 1991). However about one third of the households still live in houses below the minimum of 70 m² habitable space.

Housing demand

In spite of the slow population growth, the demand for housing is still increasing, because of households down-sizing and because of locational or cost unbalances.

Estimates vary but the Draft Flemish Region Spatial Structure Plan states a yearly demand for 25,000 new dwellings between 1991 and 2007, of which 240,000 total would be built within existing urban areas and 140,000 in new open expansion areas.

The sale of dwellings is somewhat stabilized in recent years, but the increasing sale of apartments indicates a higher demand for this type.

The demand for better housing is high among the one-parent households, the sole-income earning households, the elderly and the people living below the poverty line or earning only a subsistence income. These groups on the whole also have to spend well over 20% of their income on housing; it has been noted that the number of people having to spend more than 20% of their income on housing has tripled in the period 1976 to 1992, thus showing a trend of housing becoming more expensive and/or more people having lesser incomes.

The increase of average cost of dwellings in the past 15 years shows that (discounting normal inflation) rents have increased with 46% and the sales price of dwellings with 60%; taking into account that the average salaries have only slightly increased above normal inflation, this clearly indicates the increasing problems of affordability in housing; moreover, it was shown that the price of lesser quality rental housing increased faster than the better quality (and higher priced) housing.

Homelessness and problem groups

Recent studies indicate that about 120,000 people in the region live in places unqualified as "decent housing" often as real homeless. The centres accommodating homeless people had in 1994 sheltered 1879 persons a day, but demands were more than double.

Among other problem groups are identified the dwellers on (illegal) camp sites, nomads and roving people, and dwellers in unsafe and unhealthy rental rooms in the inner-city areas. Only a quantitative assessment of nomads and roving people exists, giving a total of 980 households in 1994, with an expected increase to 1090 households; 625 of these households do not have temporary dwelling sites.

Housing policy

The Flemish region has recently confirmed in its "Flemish Housing Code" that "everyone has the right to a human habitat. This includes promoting access to an appropriate and good quality dwelling place, in a decent living environment, affordable and with security of tenure." This principle underlines past, present and future Habitat concerns.

The recent Flemish government policy agreement states three objectives for the habitat policy in the coming years:

- priority for implementing the "right to housing", particularly for households with lowest social chances related to income, employment, health and housing;
- improve the quality of existing housing and housing environments;
- increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the habitat policy.

Housing subsidies (private sector oriented)

The Flemish regional government continues the tradition of the national policy to stimulate private individuals and households to improve their housing situation by either purchase, new construction or improvement of their dwelling.

Before 1993 a series of purchase, renewal or renovation subsidies existed; these have now been largely replaced by interest subsidies.

In general, it can be observed that the total budget for such subsidies has decreased in recent years (around 3 billion in 1984, 5 billion in 1988, and a total yearly of around 2.5 billion in 1994). The total number of dwellings covered through this system varies from a high 31,500 in 1988 to a lower around 20,500 in 1993

and 17.700 in 1994.

Next to purchase, renewal and renovation subsidies, the regional government allocates rental subsidies for low income households or for large families in the social housing sector. The total budget for rental subsidies for low income families increased from 35.2 million in 1991 to 85 million in 1994, whereas the budget for large families in social housing increased from 197 million to 202 million, reaching about 10% of all renters in social housing.

Since 1994 the regional government also subsidizes renters cooperatives (5.377 members in 1994) with a budget of 10 million. In addition, social rental offices manage about 765 dwelling units.

Social housing

The partners in the social housing sector are: the municipalities, the Public Agencies for Welfare (OCMW), the Flemish Housing Society, the Flemish Housing Fund, the Association of Municipalities, and the semi-private corporation Domus Flandria.

Each of these partners can solicit a number of financial interventions ranging from investment credits and loans to the Flemish Housing Society and the Flemish Housing Fund, to budgets for special urban renewal projects and for the urgent programme (10.000 dwellings built in the period 1991-1997 with the involvement of the Domus Flandria corporation), and various subsidies or incentive premiums for renovation, renewal and upgrading of houses, public areas or urban sites, mostly through the local authority channels.

The budgeting allocations have varied substantially over the years. In the 80's, yearly budgets dropped from a high 20 billion to a low 7 billion. The 1994 budget was 11 billion, whereas for 1995 12 billion is allocated, with an additional for the Domus Flandria programme of 30 billion over a 3 year period.

D.7. Construction sector

Construction activities are not only important nationally but in the Flemish region as well. Flanders accommodates 47% (15.566 companies) of all construction enterprises in the country and accounts for 6% of the total share of the Flemish industrial Gross Geographical Product and for 65% of the Belgian Gross National Product.

The importance of employment in the sector has, however, substantially decreased in the past two

The importance of the Flemish Housing Fund (of the Large and Young Family League) is around 40 to 45%. Investment in rental housing was quite low in the period 1985 to 1998.

Municipalities are important partners as between 40 to 55% of all municipalities allocate incentive premiums, and about 15 to 30% undertake initiatives for special target groups (the elderly, handicapped, migrants, etc.).

The Flemish Housing Society manages 116.170 (1994) rental housing units, accounting for approximately 10% of the total housing market and 18% of the rental market. In addition, the Society builds new purchase housing, renovates existing dwellings or implements social and development projects. The activities of the Flemish Housing Society are spread over many local Housing Societies.

Although the activities of the Housing Societies slowed down considerably in the 80's, a more active period has been started in the 90's.

As to the beneficiaries of the various housing programmes, it can be assessed that most of them fall in the category of the low, lower middle and middle income categories, with a clearer indication that 95% of rental subsidies go to the low and lower middle income groups, and the loans go more to the middle income groups (only 10% of beneficiaries below 850.000 income). Loans from the Flemish Housing Fund go to the middle (up to higher middle) income groups (50% earn more than 700.000).

The social housing programmes benefit for a good percentage the lower income categories, although 12% of the beneficiaries still have a high 850.000 income or above.

It should also be noted that the people below poverty or with minimum subsistence income only to a small degree benefit from the programmes. These people are thus truly within the socially excluded groups.

decades (decrease of approx. 48%).

The construction sector has a good know-how and is typically structured in many small and medium-size enterprises and only a few larger ones, which have also a national corporate structure.

In addition, a large part of the construction materials are resources of local production origin (bricks, cement, steel, etc.).

Of particular importance are the efforts undertaken in recent years to reduce and/or recycle waste produced in the construction (demolition, unused products, etc.). However, also the construction sector will have to increase efforts to orient itself towards long-term

sustainable development objectives, particularly in the more energy efficient production methods (e.g. cement production is still a high energy user) as well as to eliminate all toxic materials (e.g. old asbestos materials now gradually removed).

E. BRUSSELS REGION: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HABITAT: THE LAST 20 YEARS

E.1. Social, cultural and economic aspects

Demography

The Brussels Region not only shows all the elements of a stagnant population, but on the whole has had a negative growth rate in the last two decades (average of -0.4% with low peaks of -0.75% in 1984 and -0.9% in 1992). Consequently the Brussels Region has seen its population decreased from 1,000,221 inhabitants in 1981 to 949,070 inhabitants in 1994; this also means that, whereas in 1981 the region still accounted for 10.1% of the Belgian population, in 1994 this is reduced to a 9.4% share. On the basis of these trends it is expected that the Brussels region population will further decrease to approx. 801,000 inhabitants by the year 2010. In addition, the population repartition also shows a greying of the region's inhabitants: in 1981, 22% of the population was above the age of 60, and the estimates for 2010 give a 27% figure.

Also the change of family size follows a national down-sizing trend with Brussels having the smallest households of 2.2 persons/household in 1981 and expected to fall to 2.1 by 2010, but in addition also indicate a decrease of households from 454,000 in 1981 to an expected 375,000 to 400,000 households by 2010.

A particular feature of the region is the high proportion of foreign residents in Brussels (24% in 1981, estimated 26 to 36% in 2010). This high proportion is attributed to the high number of nationals from Mediterranean origin (Maghreb, Turkey, Southern Europe) and to a lesser extent to the increasing number of European Union civil servants and related activities. This trend also indicates an increasing multi-cultural dimension to the Brussels region.

Within the region itself there are considerable differences as to the decrease of population. The Brussels municipality (the so-called Pentagon) has the highest proportion of out-migration (32,579 between 1961 and 1981), whereas most of the peripheral

municipalities still have a little surplus or a zero-growth.

Employment and productive activities

On a total of 511,000 active population in 1985, it was estimated that about 55.5% was employed, 28.5% was unemployed or had only temporary jobs, whereas 16% was excluded from the regular job market. However, the 1993 figures showed a slightly better job situation with 21.6% of the male population unemployed and 24.9% for the female population, which would come to about 23% unemployment.

During 10 years (1981 to 1991 figures), the Brussels region has seen fundamental changes in its economic structure: industry and primary distribution decreased from 23% to 19%, whereas the public sector (civil servants & administration) and the private service sector grew from 35% to 39% with a noticeable increase in the international administration (European Union) and the service sector: the other secondary and tertiary activities account for approx. 41%, of which 25% is catering for the larger regional sphere of influence and around 16% for local retail and services. Because of the fact that many private enterprises, although quite a few having the production centres outside the Brussels region, nevertheless do have their administrative headquarters in Brussels, the Brussels region contributes to a relatively large share of the GNP (14% in 1993) and has a relatively high per capita income with, however, very unequal distribution of income.

Income, social exclusion and spatial segregation

Although the Brussels region harbours a small number of highly paid executives and top civil servants (among others of the European Union), it also accounts for a large proportion of the lower to lower-middle income group. The problems of poverty and social exclusion are particularly visible in the region with noticeable spatial segregation. So the 1985 figures already

indicate that some municipalities (e.g. St. Gillis) had only half of the per capita income of the better-off municipalities (e.g. Ukkel, St. Pieters-Woluwe); this spatial segregation has been further accentuated in the 1990 s, with so-called poverty pockets located in areas of St. Joost, Anderlecht, St. Gillis, Schaarbeek and Brussels proper.

The combined effects of high unemployment rate and lower level of formal education of the unemployed was accentuated by the increase of individuals in the so-called risks group from 54,000 in 1990 to almost 62,000 in 1993. To these should be added the at or below minimum wage earners. At present it is estimated that about 10% of the total population belongs to the socially excluded, with some municipalities having a share of 25% socially excluded.

Several of the above elements partially explain the deteriorating nature of life in some of the Brussels

region municipalities. Equally, if not more aggravating, however, has been a quite explicit period of *laissez-faire* policy related to land and real estate speculation, a neglect for a socially just local redistribution system, the physical degradation of some inner-city areas particularly enhanced by local administrators and/or political rulers and private unscrupulous developers in particular, favouring prestige projects while neglecting the day-to-day civic duties and responsibilities for the great majority of its population. Although the general qualities of a good civic society were attempting to counterbalance the above negative elements in the Brussels city region, it has been clearly observed that the situation has deteriorated in the past two decades up to the point of being problematic at best, explosive at worst.

However, the recently completed Regional Development Plan did identify most of the ills and now modest attempts at remedying are set in motion.

E.2. Infrastructural and built environment

Built environment

The Brussels city region is characterized by a total urbanization and a high density (overall average close to 550 inhabit./km², with concentrations of 750 inhabit./km²). Since the late 19th and early 20th century, the city has had a tradition of, at times, innovative and exemplary urban development, with broad boulevards, prominent public buildings, well-kept public parks and wooded areas and particularly pleasant residential areas along major axes and in the periphery (particularly in the east-south-eastern part of the city); the Art Nouveau tradition of the early 20th century produced some of the finest examples of residential architecture as well as some outstanding public buildings; moreover, the historic core areas with its historic market-place are world-wide renowned. Starting in the 50's with the major north-south axis development, but particularly rampant in the 70's and 80's, have been the destruction of the old city fabric, the neglect of some of the cultural heritage (including the demolishing of some Art Nouveau public buildings) and the deterioration of the inner-city and 19th century periphery town-house residential/commercial areas. The traditional spatial segregation between the higher and lower part of the city has been further accentuated in the 70's with great neglect of the

lower and western city parts and the indiscriminate favouring of speculative office development (some of which has remained empty for years after construction in the late 70's and 80's). Urban voids had been created particularly around the North station, the Central station and recently around the South station. Recent neighbourhood actions have tried to alleviate the greatest excesses of this speculative development, and the recently approved Regional Development (Land-use) Plan promises to carry out a stricter land-use control and counter speculative development as well as increasing efforts to upgrade and maintain the urban built environment. The east and south-eastern city region has kept its quality of high income residential areas with particularly well preserved green and wooded areas.

Infrastructure

In general, the Brussels region has a well developed, although older, infrastructure network for water supply, sewerage and electricity, although the percentage of waste waters treated is still very low. Virtually all urban dwellings are connected to the infrastructure services; the major problems however relate to maintaining the relatively old network of water supply and sewage.

E.3. Transport and mobility

The Brussels city region has for decades been the converging point of the major national transport systems (road & rail); in addition, a local city transport system combining metro-train-bus mode of transport has been developed.

The convergence of national transport systems onto Brussels has created many congestion problems which have been seriously aggravated in the last decade, producing notorious black points in the city, and particularly in its periphery.

Road

The Brussels city region incorporates 11 km of freeways, 214 km of regional roads, 5 km of provincial roads, and a large number of local (municipal) roads. Although the number of registered motorized vehicles has increased from 420.071 (1980) to 487.333 (1993), the number of accidents with injuries has steadily decreased from 5008 (80) to 3197 (93).

It should be noted, however, that because of its national nodal function the city region concentrates a much higher number of motorized vehicles during day peak hours, and so suffers from road congestion at several points during peak hours, reducing city speed of motorized transport to an average of 10 to 15 km/hour.

Rail

The national rail network also converges onto the Brussels region with a particular bottleneck on the north-south axis, and a high number of passengers at peak hours (many of these being commuters), particularly at the South, North and Central stations. Major renovation projects initiated in the past 20 years and particularly concentrated around the North, Central and Luxemburg stations, have caused excessive real estate speculation, a creation of mono-functional office areas abandoned after hours and an expulsion of local inhabitants.

At present the HST (High Speed Train) system is being developed, so that the south connection Brussels-Paris/Calais should be operational before the end of the century. The north (Brussels-Amsterdam) and east (Brussels-Köln) connections await further approval.

Local public transport

A particular feature of the Brussels region is its well-developed combined local metro-tram-bus public transport system, covering by 1993 a length of 34 km (metro), 132 (tram) and 305 km (bus) with over 63 stations and with a total of 207.090.000 passengers/trips transported or 270 million passenger km per year. Although in general the local public transport functions well, some problems remain: a low frequency after working hours, a high price/trip, particularly for below poverty line inhabitants, and a poor lateral linkage between periphery areas, so that most public transport is along axes from/to the city centre.

These deficiencies have resulted in a decrease of public transport share for the work/residence mobility from 40% in 1981 to 27% in 1991.

Harbour

The Brussels city region includes one of Belgium's major (sea access) harbours with the canal Rupel-Brussels-Charleroi connection.

Although the harbour importance has decreased since the 50's, it still remains an important access point for goods distribution and has the advantage of decongesting the excessively burdened road transport system. Future efforts will favour the renovation of areas along the canal zone.

The Regional Development Land-use Plan includes many proposals to remedy existing problems. Recent actions include:

- a better differentiation between local (neighbourhood) mobility (max. 30 km/h) and thoroughfares (max. 50 to 70 km/h)
- improving the parking possibilities for local residents
- improving the local public transport system
- increasing the attention for the (much neglected) pedestrian and cycling mobility, still accounting for over 40% of all local mobility. A stimulation of cyclist mobility so as to account for 10% of local mobility is envisaged.

E.4. Environment and environmental management

The Brussels region, because of its entire urbanization nature and its high concentration of traffic and commercial activities, has its share of environmental

problems characteristic of a large urban metropolis.

Air quality

The specific urban character of intensive road-bound traffic, industrial and residential concentration, produces a relatively high air pollution. Brussels accounts for 5% of the total of the Belgian CO₂ emissions, or over 5 million tons per year. The heating of residences and offices accounts for about 58% of all CO₂ city emissions in Brussels.

Other emissions (SO₂, NO, CFK's) are produced mainly by road traffic, and also by residential fuel burning and waste incineration. The green areas in the south-eastern part of the region as well as in the northern part have an emission concentration four times less than other highest emission areas.

Water quality

The Brussels region has a good natural water reserve in the Brussels sands of the wooded areas south-east of the city (Ter Kameren and Zoniën), also the Zenne river and the canal still serve as water reserves, although their water quality has substantially deteriorate. Water becomes an increasingly scarce resource and suppliers from the Walloon region have to be tapped.

Waste

Waste production in the region is estimated at 1.840.000 tons/year, of which 25% is domestic waste. Present waste incineration amounts to about 520.000

tons/year and functions at about maximum capacity; remaining waste is discharged at 60 sites, of which 61 sites are considered problematic (35 of which are older sites and 3 reserved for industrial waste). The problem of waste management is identified and increasing campaigns for selective collection and recycling are initiated, but are far from having solved the major problems.

A special task force clean technologies has been established to promote environmental awareness and explore the reduction of waste, energy saving and alternative technologies. The cleaning of old industrial waste sites is also a priority.

Noise

More than 50% of the city population has identified noise pollution as the highest hindrance in the daily living environment; Recent environmental acts have to remedy part of this problem.

Sustainability and energy management

Domestic energy consumption accounts for 43% of all energy consumption, the tertiary sector for 29%, transport 23% and industry 5%. It is thus evident that major efforts at domestic energy reduction are needed. The Regional Development Land-use Plan stimulated Sustainable Development concepts and will step up efforts to improve environmental management.

E.5. Local government and civic society

The Brussels City Region has, like the two other regions, gained a large degree of autonomy, particularly in relation to its physical planning, human settlements and housing matters.

The real autonomy materialized since 1989, when a regional council was elected and a regional executive government was established.

Of particular importance was the initiative to immediately initiate the elaboration of a Regional Development Plan which would address several priority problems:

- countering the dualization of the city
- protection of weak functions (housing, historic sites and urban areas) against the excessive impact of the strong functions (offices and administrative centre particularly concentrated around the North, South and Luxemburg stations)
- a revitalization of the economic canal area.

However, in terms of governance, the Brussels City Region also has to deal with two rather unique characteristics:

- the Brussels City Region consists of 19 municipalities, each having a tradition of a relative strong autonomy and identity
- the city region being also the country's capital as well as the seat of the federal, the Brussels and Flemish regional government, this means catering to several masters.

The regional government will have to establish its municipal development plan, whereas particular crisis areas can be given priority with special contracts between the region, the municipality and other public and private partners.

The civic society has been active in Brussels in several ways related to human settlements and habitat:

- since two decades the consultation commissions have been active in soliciting opinions of inhabitants related to particular land-use plans
- several associations are active in neighbourhood committees as well as in social housing project areas

- the tenants co-operatives at present manage more than 6000 rental housing units.

In addition, many local groups, neighbourhood committees and associations actively contribute to streamlining the multi-cultural activities in Brussels

E.6. Housing and urban development

With the regionalization the Brussels regional government is responsible for the policies and implementation related to urban development and habitat. First a few factual elements of housing conditions in the Brussels region will be highlighted and subsequently the major new tendencies and policy matters brought forward.

In general the Brussels housing stock is old, the 1981 census indicated that 56% of the housing stock dates from before 1945 (24% even before 1919), only 10.3% was built in the period 1971-1981.

The older inner-city areas (pentagon) and within the first ring areas have the oldest housing stock with the highest density (6000 dwelling units/km² versus 2100 dwellings/km² in the second ring areas).

The predominant type of dwellings in all of the municipalities is the multi-dwelling apartments and/or older converted town-houses into multi-dwelling houses. In some municipalities this type is as much as 90% (e.g. St. Gillis, Elsenne, Molenbeek, St. Joost, etc.); other municipalities (such as Ukkel, Woluwe, Watermael) only have 55 to 60% of this types. Single family free-standing houses are few, except in the outlying areas (e.g. Ukkel, St. Pieters-Woluwe) with 20-22%.

A substantial part of the housing stock is rental housing (68% in 1981, approx. 60% in 1991), and a total of 8% is social housing (approx. 37.300 dwellings in 1993).

The age of the housing stock not necessarily being an indicator of quality, nevertheless several qualitative problems do exist (1981 data)

- connection to water supply network: 99%
- central heating: 61%
- bathroom/shower inside dwellings: 76%
- WC inside dwelling: 89%.

In addition, it was found that 20% of the dwellings had a kitchen of less than 4 m².

It is estimated that 44.5% of all dwellings require some renovation and 10% require major renewal. Although

exact data on unoccupied dwellings are hard to come by, estimates range from 4 to 6% of the total dwelling stock to be unoccupied.

On the other hand, the cost of dwellings, both for sale or for rent, has dramatically increased in the past decades: increases of 60-65% for the region as a whole have been estimated, but local variations show that increased of 100 to 150% are also regularly found and particularly in the categories of dwellings in highest demand by lower income people: in fact accessibility for lower income categories has dramatically decreased as more than 50% of the dwellings are in the 20% highest cost bracket (6 million BEF or above for houses, 3.5 million or above for apartments - 1988 data). The highest prices for dwellings are in general in the south and south-eastern municipalities, the lowest prices in the inner-city older areas and the northern municipalities.

This market increase has been clearly influenced by the influx of European Union administrators as well as by speculative demolishing or wilful neglect in major project areas around North, South and Luxembourg stations, and in the old city centre.

Because of the sharp increase in prices, the demand for social dwellings is rapidly increasing. It is now estimated that 75% of the population would qualify for a social dwelling.

Priority actions

Priority actions in the Brussels region focus on rental housing improvement, rent subsidies, tenancy access, and renewal of the housing stock.

The social rental housing stock is managed by 34 public housing agencies (SISP) under the overall responsibility of the Brussels Region Housing Society (SLRB).

The total investment budget for rental housing improvement in the two year period 1993-1994 amounts to 4 billion BEF.

Priority access to rental housing is facilitated by the premium for moving/rent-establishment (ADILS) and helps households that have to leave a dilapidated or functionally unadapted dwelling for another more appropriate one.

Access to property is facilitated through subsidies for acquisition, construction or renewal: many of these subsidies are given within areas where neighbourhood contracts are established.

The housing fund of the Family League give lower-than-market loans for those qualifying and also facilitates a rent-purchase system over a 5 year period.

The Brussels Region Development Society builds dwellings commercialized at variable costs depending on the income of the buyers.

Lastly the Brussels region has established partnerships with the private sector to develop new dwellings or to renovate old public facilities: particular examples are the former military facilities Rolin (3.4 ha) and the former military hospital (6.2 ha) with a total of 1400 new dwellings, of which 315 are social housing, 750 medium-priced and 350 free market dwellings.

PART

3

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL
POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS



BELGIAN REPORT

A. INTRODUCTION

Major elements have contributed to an increased attention for human settlements and habitat issues in the recent national and regional policy making and elaboration of present and future action plans:

- Belgium as a whole has had a strong tradition to give good attention to proper housing and to develop its settlements so as to guarantee a minimum level of welfare for all its citizens.
- Notwithstanding this strong tradition the late 1970's and 1980's have been a period of relative slow-down in the habitat and human settlements field so that by the early 90's studies drew attention to the increasing number of people at, or below the poverty line, and to particular urban problems in large cities (inner-city neglect, discrimination and social segregation, etc.)

- Taking into account some of these problems, the national and regional governments have taken the opportunity of the 1995 general election year and the establishment of the new national and regional governments to explicitate a number of new policies oriented towards improving urban living and habitat in general.

- Because of the federal structure of the nation, the regional governments are now almost entirely responsible for habitat and human settlement matters so that policies programmes and projects may be elaborated in a way better attuned to local and regional contexts.

The regional and the federal governments have set up consultative committees aimed at co-ordinating and harmonizing rules and regulations on human settlements policies in general and in urban and environmental policies in particular.

B. NATIONAL POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS

Although the specific Habitat and Human Settlements matters are to a large extent the responsibilities of the regional governments the national government still has the major tasks of co-ordinating and harmonising policies at national level and on specific matters also setting national policies, programmes and projects.

Future-oriented highlights of policy orientation are well summarized in the June 1995 Federal Government policy orientation agreement and include among others:

- working towards a more liveable society with a strong social fabric, sustainable development oriented, guaranteeing a better quality of life including consumer protection, a harmonious family-friendly policy and combatting social exclusion;
- more attention for employment work opportunities so as to stimulate a creative, sustainable economy of tomorrow;
- modernizing the social security system so as to be able to guarantee also the future generation a realistic but full-fledged social protection;
- an active role in the European integration and in international co-operation;
- a carefully controlled budgetary policy;
- a strengthening of the constitutional state and of the democratic functioning with optimal citizen participation.

Within this broad orientation, the Federal Government has several policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving human settlements and Habitat conditions nation-wide:

Strengthening policies of urban revitalization

In general the co-ordinating role of the federal government to halt inner-city degradation and social exclusion will be strengthening; specific tasks at the federal level include crime prevention, aspects of public health, and security in towns and cities. The federal government will work out "urban pacts" with individual towns and cities to strengthen integrated and efficient renewal and stimulate innovative security projects.

Social integration and poverty alleviation

Following the 1994 "Report on Poverty", the federal government has installed the Interministerial Conference and will speed up its specific poverty alleviation and social integration measures to include:

- improved access to basic infrastructure services;
- improving the efficiency of social security to reach the poorest people in society, including better access to the services of the Public Centres for Social Welfare (OCMW/CPAS).

Strengthening the legislative base related to Habitat and human settlements matters include some very important elements.

- Since 1994 the Belgian Constitution explicitly guarantees the right to a decent human life which *inter alia* includes "the right to decent housing" and "the right to protection of a healthy living environment".

These crucial constitutional rights will have to be further detailed with executive decrees and regulations.

- The rental housing legislation of 1991 constitutes a full section in the Civil Code and increases the security of tenure of renters. A further strengthening of this security of tenure particularly for the more vulnerable groups in society as well as with a view to improve security, healthy conditions and liveability of rental housing will be implemented. This

programme should have a positive effect on the quality of housing as well as on keeping rental prices within normal inflation limits.

Improving the quality of life includes strengthening environmental protection and better environmental norms for production, quality of water (water flows, coastal water and drinking water), waste treatment, more efficient and environmental friendly transport, etc. In essence the federal government, while further adhering to the principles of sustainable development as formulated in Agenda 21 at the 1992 Rio UN Conference, will play a role of co-ordination and harmonizing the various local, regional, federal and European rules and regulations and in addition will implement a system of "integrative environmental care" within its own functioning.

C. FLEMISH REGIONAL POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS

In the Flemish regional government agreement of June 1995 the five great challenges for the coming years are clearly indicated:

- quality of the economy and employment
- quality of Flemish region governance
- quality of urban living
- quality of the environment
- quality of life and living together.

To meet these challenges, several of which touch directly upon human settlements and habitat issues, a number of priorities have been elaborated. Some highlights of priorities related to human settlements include:

on improving the quality of the economy and employment, emphasis will be increasingly on sustainable economic development stimulating also innovations, continuous capacity-building, renewal of the economic infrastructure, more appropriate energy programmes, increasing job opportunities particularly also in the construction sector in general and for urban renewal in particular;

on improving the quality of governance, priorities will go on increasing responsibilities and subsidiarity, better partnership with municipalities and provinces, with particular emphasis on "urban pacts" with cities and municipalities focusing on improving urban quality;

on quality of urban living, the Flemish government is aware that improving urban living has to become a top

priority. Priorities will include a co-ordinated action plan encompassing on housing, urban planning, mobility, family care, education, health, employment, etc.

In essence the policy underlying this action plan emphasizes the necessity for a coherent and multifaceted set of actions as complex urban problems require an integrative approach.

A special "Social Impulsion Funds" will be established to alleviate the most serious problems in priority areas of selected towns. In order to effectuate this high priority a new Ministry of Urban Policy is to be established;

on improving environmental quality the principles of Agenda 21 are subscribed, a regional spatial structure plan is being elaborated and should be implemented, an improved environmental plan will be elaborated to maximize achieving European norms but also to adapt to local conditions, an agricultural waste plan is elaborated and will be implemented, better integrated transport and mobility plans will have to guarantee improved safety;

on improving the quality of life and of living together special attention will go to housing, including the drafting of a new housing code, to increased attention for the elderly also in their specific housing needs, to alleviating poverty and increasing the efficiency of the welfare state networks, to increasing the effectiveness of education and health care systems without increasing their costs, and finally to stimulating

attention for cultural heritage and traditions.

These general policy concerns and priority issues of the Flemish government have, in the second half of 1995, been translated into new specific policies and programmes and some proposed action plans. Three major domains are highlighted: regional planning, transport and mobility, urban quality improvement and housing.

Regional spatial planning, transport and mobility

Seven general strategic objectives are formulated:

Strengthening of urban areas:

1. Regional and urban spread of population has to be reoriented towards a more concentrated urban development. Therefore the urban built-up areas will be better defined to avoid spread and to increase efficient use of urban potentials. The Spatial Structure Plan Flanders will be approved and strategic projects executed.

The target date of 1999 is advanced to implement the majority of the strategic projects within an earlier approved Spatial Structure Plan.

2. Conservation and strengthening of green areas:

Sustainable development includes a better care for open areas (agricultural, nature, forest and recreational areas). The present spread of smaller settlements will have to be countered by concentration efforts so that open areas dominate outside the urban areas. Likewise, within the Spatial Structure Plan the policy framework will be operational and rules and regulations governing land use enforced; expansion of built-up areas between 95-99 will be limited to maximum 3500 ha.

3. Goal oriented and selective improvement of transport systems and related infrastructure for people, goods and information in order to strengthen the Flemish regional competitive advantages: the negative impact of traffic congestion has to be stopped by improving flows and infrastructure so as to guarantee the Flemish unique economic position for local, regional and international accessibility. Implementation of telematics may reduce physical mobility.

4. Ensure essential mobility of all target groups and guarantee accessibility of all target areas: the social dimensions of mobility are equally important and should be reflected in good public transport but also the promotion of alternative local transport means (e.g. cycling).

5. In spite of increased mobility, to limit environmental hindrances to present level:

Whereas mobility itself may not decrease, the envi-

ronmental regulations and specific measures (e.g. use of catalyser, improved fuels) to reduce environmental impact will have to be strengthened. Particular attention will go to reduction of noise levels due to mobility.

6. Increase the safety of transport system up to one of the best of Europe:

In spite of the good functioning of medical intervention teams the high number of road accident victims is of serious concern. A combination of increased awareness and stricter enforcement of rules together with physical infrastructure improvement will be elaborated.

7. Improve safety against flooding and natural disasters:

The Sigma plan has already increased the safety against flooding but further investment is needed to guarantee a higher water level safety. In addition, an improved monitoring and maintenance plan to guarantee waterflows in smaller and larger river courses is needed.

These strategic objectives are further translated into specific sector policies, programme and action plans.

Mobility and transport

A specific mobility project "2000" is being elaborated to integrate the needs of vehicular transportation, the train and bus public transport as well as goods transport (surface, water and air).

The costs of such project are estimated at minimum 51 billion BEF over a 5 year period; an increase of revenues of public transport by 50% as well as a gradual introduction of road pricing will have to balance partially the costs of the mobility project.

Transport infrastructure

The short time implementation of maintenance and improvement of road infrastructure (including bicycling paths) requires a 8,7 billion BEF budget for 1995.

Specific infrastructure programmes for the following medium-term 4 year period include e.g.

- implementing the road bound harbour link Dunkirk - Calais - Ostend - Zeebrugge - Ghent - Antwerp - Netherlands and Germany
- introduction of telematic control on freeways and major ringroad around Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels and Leuven (GABL region)
- introduction of road pricing system as major freeways
- improving public transport along major axes and local/regional/focal nodes

- improve "home to work" transport efficiency through car-pooling and improvement of road and public transport compatibility so as to reduce by 20 % the individual car use and by 10% in the specific CABL region
- reorientation of international goods transport from road to rail- and waterbound transport
- remove structural obstacles which reduce transport flows and increase efficient maintenance
- stimulate bicycling use for distances up to 5 to 7 km including all local urban mobility: to this end specific municipal actions will be elaborated and supported. The present bicycle transport accounting for 18% of local "home to work" transport and 40% "home to school" transport could be increased.

Public transport - The Flemish Transport Company (VVM-De Lijn)

The importance of the VVM-De Lijn is given by its 1994 figure of transporting 200 million passengers.

The strategic plan for the coming years includes quality improvement, modernisation and renewal of infrastructure, vehicles and equipment capacity-building, client oriented personnel policies.

Urban and suburban public bus/tram transport in and around the major cities and regional towns will be emphasised.

The agreement between the Flemish Government and the VVM aims at more efficient public transport with partnerships between municipalities, the VVM and the regional government, increasing also accessibility to public transport in inner-city or impoverished urban peripheries.

For 1996 a budget is set aside of over 11.5 billion BEF for operation and investment costs.

Air and water transport infrastructure

In addition to the national airport Zaventem, two regional airports are being improved: Ostend and Antwerp.

River and coastal waterbound transport is to be improved with special attention for the linkages between Schelde-Maas-Rhine (via Albert canal), and the Seine-Schelde. In addition local accessibility will be increased.

The major harbours of Zeebrugge and Antwerp will harmonise their co-operation and a spatial strategic structural plan for the Ghent-Terneuzen canal zone is being prepared. Several of these initiatives require co-operation with neighbouring countries.

Spatial planning

The existing tools (subregional plans, general plans

and specific plans) are to be evaluated and used more creatively so as to guarantee a sustainable spatial development on all scale levels.

The new tools of (strategic) structure plans are very valuable but do not have as yet a legal status.

Priority will go to further elaboration and consultative evaluation of the innovative and newly elaborated "Flemish Spatial Structure Plan" (Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen) which clearly accentuates the Agenda 21 sustainable development principle within a highly urbanised region.

This plan will need a complement in a set of executive tools but also in a better land policy to guarantee the plan's underlying principles.

Urban quality improvement policy

The November 1995 policy note of the Flemish Minister of Urban Policy summarizes the importance of a coherent and innovative urban policy to remedy the urban stagnation and/or decline particularly in some inner-city areas even in some neighbourhoods of medium-size towns. This stagnation or decline with multi-faceted causes (unemployment, social segregation, sub-urbanization, slowing of social housing investment, physical decline, etc.) has to be radically altered in the target period 1995-1999 and beyond. However also the urban expansion often along linear development axes or the sub-urbanization process has not contributed to the urban quality and needs to be remedied.

In essence the urban policy will have to operate via three leverages:

- From a "comprehensive" to an "inclusive" policy, urban decline and particularly poverty alleviation is not to be seen as the responsibility of one institution or project but must be included in all normal responsibilities at all levels of operation. Such inclusive policy will have to operate in all sectors, address various categories and at several territorial levels.
- A sectorially integrated policy will accentuate strategies related to labour and employment, to localized urban work, to attention for small and medium-size enterprises, to education and training, to housing, to urban mobility and improved spatial planning, to urban environmental aspects, to health and welfare, to urban culture, and to the improvement of urban resources.
- A policy of improved access and opportunities particularly for the disadvantaged will have to address directly social inequality and exclusion within par-

ticular urban areas will be between parts of towns. Particularly important will be to increase citizen awareness and participation at local level, whereby the regional government stimulates and creates necessary conditions and local authorities act, implement and give feed-back.

The main features of the implementation of such policy will include:

- at the level of the regional Ministry of Urban Policy the implementation will mainly focus on the coherence of the various actions into stimulating and co-ordinating policy framework to improve urban quality; the ministry will elaborate protocols of joint operation with other sectorial ministries;
- at the level of the regional administration the strategic action plan has to be elaborated, monitored and redirected if necessary;
- at the level of the municipalities, urban or municipal pacts will be elaborated to favour decentralization and increasing local responsibilities. Special attention will go to neighbourhood development plans.

Housing policy

The housing policy objectives of the Flemish region for the coming years are:

- to realize the constitutional "right to housing" also incorporated in the Flemish housing policy;
- qualitative housing improvement with special focus on upgrading of existing stock
- increase of rental and owner occupied housing
- priority for the disadvantaged groups
- a land and property policy.

In general the housing programmes in the coming years will continue some of the quantitative programmes of the early 90's but also increasingly focus on qualitative

aspects to improve the 15% stock of serious deficiencies mostly located in the large cities and smaller province towns and mostly being private rental for the lower-income disadvantaged groups.

Social housing programmes:

- The quantitative programmes will aim at completing the 10,000 local housing units planned (by the end of 1996 around 8,000 should be completed).
- The selectivity and priority rules for allocation of social housing will be improved, and in general the functioning of the social housing societies will be rationalized and improved.
- The debts of the past (transfer of national debts to regional agencies) will be solved through a new financing system.
- Existing social housing stock will be further improved.
- Architectural competition will be further organized to stimulate creative designs.

General housing programmes include:

- The finalization of a new Flemish Housing Code aimed at improving the quality of the housing stock.
- Legislative measures to tax empty property and dilapidated buildings.
- The elaboration of a regional housing plan and of municipal housing plans.
- The further identification and selection of production areas of two types: renewal areas, and new expansion areas if necessary.
- The system of subsidies and incentives for housing renewal will be rationalized and rendered more transparent.
- Housing programmes will be better harmonized with urban quality improvement programmes.

D. THE WALLOON REGION AND THE FRENCH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

D.1. Walloon regional policies and action plans

The Walloon regional government accentuates the following major policy objectives related to human settlement:

- improved social-action
- a further elaboration of the right to housing
- a better regional physical planning
- an environmental improvement policy
- a more efficient transport policy.

Each of these is further elaborated and includes

programmes and projects to be implemented in the coming years:

Improved social action

Since 1992 various actions to fight social exclusion were undertaken by local authorities together with the regional authorities and the civic associations at large. The Walloon regional government will strengthen these actions, including their financial base, by stimulating

the elaboration of municipal "Social Integration Plans" in view of a better co-ordination of local actions involving the various public and private actors. Specific programmes will include:

- Assistance to the homeless and to those people having difficulty benefiting from social security services. Particular attention will go to providing emergency housing for homeless and evicted people among others by rehabilitating public facilities for social dwelling purposes as well as by making long term contracts with private owners, or if necessary by requisitioning abandoned buildings for re-housing those in need.
- Priority will be given to inter-generation solidarity to emphasize the essential contribution to society by the elderly, thereby aiming at halting the feeling of isolation, insecurity and in some cases, mistreatment increasingly experienced by the elderly.
- Likewise the integration of the handicapped to facilitate their full participation in societal activities, is a priority.
- Finally a similar social integration policy will address foreigners and immigrants by elaborating programmes to favour full integration in local societies.

Right to housing

The Walloon regional government will fully implement the Belgian Constitution guaranteeing the right to decent housing; it will therefore elaborate an ambitious housing programme with two major objectives:

- to enable everyone to accede to decent and affordable housing
- to provide housing to the homeless while guaranteeing citizenship.

In order to implement such programme the regional government will boost the supply of social housing by making better use of existing land, thereby stimulating a coherent link between social action, housing programmes and physical planning.

The housing *observatory* already instituted will be a further stimulation to evaluate housing needs and to propose new approaches to meet those needs.

D.2. The French-speaking Community

The French-speaking community's competencies include, among others, matters related to education, family and youth, cultural affairs, and health. In general these matters also contribute to a better quality of life and improvement of human settlements and habitat.

Regional physical planning

Both a participatory process and a more decentralized physical planning process to encourage local level planning, will be given priority.

A better land use policy will be worked out to select priority action zones in which public means can be invested to achieve social objectives. The improvement of quality will particularly focus on increasing cleanliness in towns, improve street lighting, sidewalks and pedestrian crossings and reduce noise pollution in residential areas. Improvement of green areas will be stimulated.

Environmental improvement policy

Specific priority domains of the Walloon regional government are among others:

- a waste management strategy including the reduction of waste, recycling, use of thermal energy in recycling and treatment;
- energy management will be of high priority and will include more rational use of energy stimulation of least polluting energy forms and stimulation research and development on renewable and alternative energy sources.

The Walloon government emphasizes the essential role of municipalities in energy distribution; moreover it guarantees a minimum energy provision to all citizens including the least privileged ones.

Transport

The main objective of the regional government is to improve co-ordination of programmes affecting urban areas: physical planning, transport, housing, public works.

Special attention will go to general security and to people who are less mobile or more vulnerable.

A priority element will be the development of road bound public transport at scale with people's needs.

Public works programmes aimed at improving the quality of life will particularly favour labour-intensive methods.

Education

The French-speaking community guarantees a free compulsory education and equal access to all, irrespective of the origin of youngsters. In particular positive discrimination and equal opportunities for girls and boys are assured so that all may develop to

their fullest capacity. The promotion of a real school democracy to stimulate active and responsible citizenry underlies the educational system as well as the psycho-medical-social prevention.

In primary education the harmonious social integration is stimulated, as well as the practical orientation of the educational system. Post-school-hour activities will be studied together with the families.

In secondary education the principles of good citizenship, responsibility and autonomy are reinforced and future professional orientation facilitated in order to guarantee future employment. A close co-operation between schools and other societal activities is therefore stimulated.

Particular attention will be given to social promotion (so-called second chance education), to accessible higher education, to distant learning, and in general to an educational infrastructure of good quality.

Family and youth

Prevention and information will be important to combat

any form of social exclusion.

Young people and families encountering social, educational or psychological difficulties will be particularly assisted. Emphasis will be on "first-line" services, whereas associations and voluntary youth organizations will be supported.

Particular attention is going to the rights of children, both in prevention policies - by stimulating actions in problematic areas (open services with qualified personnel) - and in stricter punitive actions in case of violation of children's rights.

Culture

The principles stated above will also be highlighted by giving a central place to cultural promotion, stimulating the good functioning of cultural centres at local and regional level.

Health

Health promotion, particularly for the young and the disadvantaged, is of high priority.

E. BRUSSELS REGION POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS

The Brussels regional policies and action plans related to human settlements and housing will among others focus on improving the quality of urban life, the implementation of the Regional Development Plan and an improved housing strategy.

Brussels Regional Development Plan

The general characteristics of the 1993 Draft Development Plan remain valid:

- to increase the population of the Brussels region, particularly to stimulate a return to the inner-city;
- to guarantee an economic growth
- to provide a functional and aesthetic framework for urban living
- to reinforce the Brussels identity particularly by making the urban centre as well as historical city parts of various municipalities more attractive.

A further implementation and full realization of objectives of the development plan by the year 2005 is continued as a general strategy.

Housing policy, programmes and actions

The principles of the future-oriented housing policy of the Brussels regional government are:

- improve access to housing, stop the inner-city degradation and attract new residents;

- increase the housing supply, particularly of social housing;
- modifications to the tenant regulations so as to guarantee social diversity;
- adaptation of the income levels for access to housing;
- improved management of the Brussels Regional Housing Societies may draw on professional expertise.

Specific housing programmes and actions plans include

Social housing

Increasing supply and increasing access to social housing will be key elements. To this end both a better debt management and attracting additional investment in social housing will be effectuated with about half of the investment for new housing and half for the renovation of the existing stock.

Alternative financial mechanisms will be experimented with via pilot projects. Priority will go to acquisition-renovation schemes to favour private home ownership. The quality in and around the existing social housing stock will have to get particular attention.

The solidarity principle will be continued with special attention for e.g. handicapped and other socially disadvantaged groups.

Improving the management of the Housing Societies

and public real estate societies will be important.

Subsidies, Housing Fund and other incentives

A set of subsidies for moving, for rental and for refitting will give priority to low income people.

Temporary accommodation for rent will be increased.

A management contract between the regional government and the Housing Fund will be established and an evaluation of the Housing Fund effectuated.

Special projects

Projects aiming at re-utilizing public buildings (e.g. former military barracks) will be continued: co-operative housing will be stimulated.

Improved land use policy

A more efficient land use policy will particularly focus on a more effective land development (land-use policy) to manage public property or to facilitate sale of property to public institutions.

PART

4

INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATION



BELGIAN REPORT

The International Co-operation in the human settlements and habitat fields in Belgium, organised on four institutional levels:

the federal government deals with general European and world-wide policy matters and facilitates regional and local government initiatives. In addition the federal government is, to a large extent, responsible for international *development* co-operation oriented towards third world countries and this in multilateral, bilateral or non-governmental co-financing programmes;

the regional governments each have their increasingly

active role in *international co-operation* within Europe, as with selected countries and regions outside Europe; within selected fields the regions are also setting up frameworks for the elaboration of a proper *development* co-operation. Important financial means are thus being allocated to development co-operation projects including projects in the habitat sector.

local governments (municipalities, provinces), although predominantly active locally, are also taking international co-operation initiatives;

a good number of non-government organizations are active internationally.

A. BELGIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION (FEDERAL GOVERNMENT)

Although the Habitat field as such is not explicitly identified as a priority sector of the Belgian development co-operation, it may be observed that several programmes and projects have a human settlements component or that the impact of many co-operation programmes and projects on human settlements is considerable. Indeed, for many years now the so called "infrastructure sector" programmes and projects have been one of the major development co-operation sectors. In addition, one finds several programmes in other priority sectors such as "healthy" and "agriculture" having important human settlements impact.

In general, these priority sectors have had a predominant "rural" bias, although many infrastructure programmes and projects benefit both the rural and urban contexts. Moreover, a recent policy orientation of the Belgian development co-operation explicitly states that programmes and projects should stimulate *sustainable development* both economically and socially.

Following are some of the sub-sector programmes and projects with a clear human settlements component:

- transportation (road, rail, water, air)
- water supply
- energy
- environmental protection and tourism
- urban and rural housing
- telecommunications
- community development and community infrastructure
- urban development and spatial planning
- refugees and relocation projects
- capacity building in human settlements fields.

Such programmes and projects may be implemented through multilateral, bilateral or non-government organisation co-operation.

An assessment of the importance of the various programmes and projects with Human Settlements relevance as defined above reveals that in the period 1986 to 1994 a total of 7.69 billion BEF has been allocated in the development co-operation projects alone.

A.1. Bilateral programmes and projects

The Belgian federal bilateral development co-operation has a geographical concentration. In the last few years, the number of concentration countries for bilateral co-operation has been reduced, and is now mainly focused on three regions: Africa, Southeast Asia, and a few countries in Latin America.

Typical examples of such bilateral projects are among others:

in East and Southern Africa:

Kenya:

Study for the preparation of Road Investment and Traffic Improvement programme for Nairobi, Mombassa, Kisumu and Eldoret. The study is co-financed with the World Bank and has a budgetary envelope of 48.5 million BEF;

The Belgian development co-operation has for many

years been very active in supporting water supply programmes in several districts in Kenya. Increased assistance particularly for semi-arid regions in Kenya will be set up with a budget of 350 million for a three year period;

A wind energy programme has been initiated in Marsabit and near Nairobi.

Tanzania:

Major infrastructure projects focus on the improvement of the Central Corridor transport in partnership with the Tanzanian Harbours Authorities and the Tanzanian Railways Company; a total budget of 500 million BEF is allocated:

Assistance in garbage collection is programmed in Dar-es-Salaam;

Several other infrastructure projects (road improvement, bridges, transit terminal, etc.) are undertaken.

Southern Africa:

Major telecommunication projects are undertaken in Namibia (total budget: 430 million BEF);

Solar Photovoltaic Power Generation is stimulated in Lesotho;

A major Water and Sanitation programme is financed in Zimbabwe with a total of close to 200 million BEF and executed jointly by the District Development Fund and UNICEF;

New projects in South-Africa are being studied, among others also in housing and urban development.

In Central Africa:

Major projects were undertaken in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, particularly during the 70's and 80's. Several of these projects focused on infrastructure improvements (roads, harbour-shipping, energy supply, etc.);

Zaire:

In the late 70's and 80's, several major infrastructure programmes were financed including a major improvement programme of roads and related infrastructure (bridges) in selected regions; another major programme contributed to the upgrading of the national railway infrastructure; likewise the river transport system was improved; smaller projects also assisted in community services facilities (schools, medical centres, etc.) as well as stimulation of local building materials production.

Rwanda:

Major programmes of community facilities (schools, medical centres, etc.) were set up in the 80's; also some smaller social housing projects were financed. The

Ministry of Public Works was assisted through the "Bureau d'Etude de Construction", which prepared plans and supervised construction of several major public buildings (ministries, schools, hotels, etc.).

Burundi:

The Ministry of Public Works was assisted through the "bureau d'Etude de Construction" preparing plans and supervising public buildings construction. In the early 80's a rural housing improvement programme was set up.

A major project "Rural Habitat and Local Building Materials" with a budgetary envelope of approx. 60 million BEF is still operational and assists national, provincial and local professionals and technicians in improving rural housing, stimulating the production of local building materials, and supervising construction of community based public facilities. In addition, a "food for Work" programme is operational, which stimulates community work programmes such as road improvement, etc.

Because of the increasingly unstable political context, the scale and intensity of the programmes and projects in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi was greatly affected.

At present the focus is on assisting refugees in Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania in basic infrastructure improvements in refugee camps and with emergency aid.

In North Africa:

Morocco:

Major projects focus on water supply infrastructure in Ouarzazate and Tiznit, with a total budget of 800 million BEF; new studies are being sponsored in other municipalities as well.

Algeria:

Development aid is given in the form of credit or loans mainly in the transportation sector (bus and rail transport); a total of 1,431 million BEF is allocated; in addition studies on urban transport and habitat were undertaken in the past and could be taken up again.

Tunisia and Egypt:

Projects concentrate on water supply infrastructure.

In West Africa:

In Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon and Niger, assistance is given for water supply programmes.

In Niger and Mali, programmes of road and railway infrastructure are supported;

In Cameroon, a rural telephone project has been initiated;

In Gabon, a Railway training centre and operational programme have been implemented:

In Senegal, the municipality of Dakar has for several years, during the 80's, been given technical assistance in urban planning. Also small centres were assisted in improving the water supply system.

In Asia:

Programme and project assistance is again focusing on infrastructure provision and also on environmental impact of major new infrastructure:

In Vietnam and the Mekong river basin the access to Haiphong port and to the Bassac river is being studied (total around 100 million BEF):

In Indonesia: in the early 80's a project of manufacturing of local building materials for housing construction was set up. More recent projects focus on technical assistance to water supply infrastructure in Surabaya and Timor (total 100 million BEF), training for management of Inland Waterways in Palembang (105 million BEF), and technical assistance for an electricity power station in Gresik (354 million). In addition, a study for an appropriate urban transport system is undertaken in Bandung;

In Thailand, recent projects are focusing on environmental impact studies of the major Southern

Seaboard development and on the planning of the Eastern Seaboard (total 77 million). Earlier projects assisted the North-eastern region in rural development including housing and local building materials, transport. Also the urban transport in Bangkok has been assisted (bus transport, road overpass, etc.):

In the Philippines, a successful project was finalised in the late 80's to improve the port facilities in CEBU including a community based re-housing of squatters in a new neighbourhood; in addition, the water supply system and the airport facilities have been upgraded.

In Central and South America:

In Bolivia project assistance has been given for river basin development:

In Colombia assistance was given to earthquake victims for their relocation initiatives;

In Ecuador, a major project assistance was given to the "preservation of Cultural Patrimony", aiming at restoring the Santo Domingo cloister in Quito and other cultural heritage promotion programmes (82 million BEF); studies on regional and urban development of Guayaquil have been undertaken;

In Central America a few smaller projects assisting in road development and emergency assistance (e.g. to earthquake victims) have been financed.

A.2. Multilateral co-operation

The Belgian federal development co-operation is actively participating in multilateral programmes and projects, several of which have a direct or indirect human settlement component.

Multilateral co-operation is mainly organised through United Nations development programmes and specialised UN agencies, through the World Bank and regional development banks, through the European development programmes, through the Survival Fund and other multilateral contributions.

United Nations and specialised UN agencies

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS).

The Belgian development co-operation was among the first donor countries to contribute to UNCHS for specific projects.

From 1979 until 1993 the Belgian development co-operation contributed approximately 140 million BEF to UNCHS for a major capacity building project

"Training Programme Housing in Development". This programme was executed by the UNCHS Training Section in co-operation with the Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements of the K.U.Leuven, Belgium and local partner institutions in Southeast Asia, East Africa and North Africa, and has trained over 450 mid-career professionals from 34 developing countries.

In the early eighties an additional programme "Earth Construction in Developing Countries" was executed within the same budgetary contribution to UNCHS.

Since 1994 a major new and ambitious programme has been launched, named "Localising Agenda 21: Action Planning for Sustainable Urban Development". This programme will assist local governments in 3 priority cities and in more than 9 partner cities in three regions (North Africa, East Africa and South Asia) to promote sustainable urban development by means of appropriate urban planning, improved housing and better functioning of urban infrastructure and services. In 1994 a budget of 40 million BEF has been allocated; for 1995 and subsequent years budgetary allocations

will likewise underline the commitment of the Belgian development co-operation in human settlements.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The Belgian development co-operation's yearly contribution to UNDP averages around 650 million BEF the last few years. Several programmes assisted by this core funding are contributing to enhancing the quality of basic infrastructure and services and capacity building.

Other agencies

Yearly contributions are made to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), particularly in support of the Eastern African coastal and marine environment project.

Contributions to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and to the United Nations RWA have increased in recent years to particularly assist refugees with infrastructure and community facilities (schools, hospital, etc.) in among others Palestine, Syria.

Contributions to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have, among others, also focused on labour intensive public works and other infrastructure projects in Burundi and Burkina Faso.

Contributions are made to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) for reforestation in China and Cambodia and the river basin improvement in Vietnam.

Contributions are also made to UNIDO for an environmentally sustainable industrial development programme in Morocco.

World Bank and regional development banks

Contributions to various specialised study programmes of the World Bank average around 50 million BEF yearly. Some of these programmes relate human settlements improvement of urban transport (Sub Saharan Transport Policy Program); in addition, the support to regional development banks also include human settlements programmes e.g. in rural and urban infrastructure improvement.

European Development Programmes

The Belgian development co-operation substantially (approx. 3 billion BEF per year) contributes to the European Development Programmes within the agreed Lomé convention. Several of the projects of the EDP are contributing towards improving the urban infrastructure in developing countries.

A.3. Non-government organisation co-financing

Many NGO programmes and projects have been co-financed, which, as a rule, constitutes a 75% contribution by the Belgian development co-operation. Several of these programmes and projects have a major emphasis on habitat and human settlements components. Particularly relevant projects are among others:

In Tanzania:

Rural housing improvement, gender awareness and community participation project in Tarime and Missungwi (Northwest Tanzania). This project was assisted by COOIBO and executed with the assistance of the Tanzanian Community Development Trust Fund (CDTF).

In Zaire:

In the late 70's and early 80's several NGO projects were co-financed focusing on housing improvement and community facilities construction.

In Rwanda:

Several local water supply improvement initiatives

have been assisted through Broederlijk Delen NGO. In the 80's the COOIBO NGO was active in social housing and in setting up a production unit for puzzolana-lime binder.

In Chile and Colombia:

The SELAVIP NGO has for more than twenty years now assisted a major housing programme for the manufacturing of very low-cost (100 to 350 US\$) houses for low-income urban dwellers in Santiago, and for housing credit facilities to marginal settlement dwellers in Bogota, Cali and Medellin in Colombia.

Market centred road links were improved in Colombia in co-operation with the COMIDE NGO.

In Brazil:

The COMIDE NGO also assisted local construction workers with the implementation of 500 low-cost houses in different localities in the Northeast of the country.

In Haiti:

The NGO PROTOS has implemented several water

supply projects in various provincial districts and is now undertaking an urban upgrading project in Port-au-Prince.

In Peru:

The ACDA NGO has assisted an urban environmental improvement programme in Arequipa.

In Nicaragua:

The FOS NGO has aided urban communities in improving community based production units in construction materials.

In Cameroon:

A water supply improvement programme was assisted by Broederlijk Delen in the Nkomo region.

In India:

The Village Reconstruction Organisation has implemented projects in over 1,000 villages in East and Southern India during the past 20 years.

The SELAVIP NGO has initiated a programme of 1500 house construction in local building materials for Tamil families in Tamil Nadu.

In addition to the above, several NGO's (e.g. AZC/MSF, Red Cross....) operating in emergency or relief aid and financially supported by the Belgian Development Co-operation, have been active in countries like *Angola, Somalia, Afghanistan, Cambodia....*

A.4. Capacity building and other initiatives

The Belgian Development Co-operation stimulates training and capacity building programmes and also assists international courses and research programmes initiated by universities and contributes to other training and educational activities. In the field of human settlements and habitat some major programmes may be cited:

Bilateral capacity building programmes

In general a lot of attention is being paid to training activities in the field of transport and harbour development. However, the following specific programmes in the field of human settlements and habitat may be mentioned:

- A major programme strengthening the capacity of regional planners in Indonesia, organised by the WES (West Flanders Economic Office) has been assisted during the 80's. Likewise professionals from developing countries were trained in tourism development.
- The La Cambre School of Architecture has been organising since 1989 short-term training programmes in Urban Development for mid-career professionals from West and Central African and Latin American countries.
- For a couple of years now, a growing interest is attached to environmental problems. I.S.T.E. (Institut Supérieur des Techniques de l'Eau) trains professionals in water supply in urban agglomerations and in the processing of waste water. A specific programme in the processing of industrial waste is organized by CELABOR.

- Another training programme, organized by FABRI-METAL, deals with the rational use of energy.
- A short-term training in telecommunication for high level professionals from developing countries is organized by CREATIV in close collaboration with the Belgian telecommunication industry.

Multilateral capacity building programmes

As part of its major contribution to UNCHS, the Belgian Development Co-operation has facilitated the organization, between 1979 and 1993, of the K.U.Leuven Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements programmes on "housing in Development" for mid-career professionals in East and North Africa and Southeast Asia. A new "Localising Agenda 21" programme has recently been initiated which includes a major capacity building component oriented towards municipal level action planning for sustainable urban development.

International course programmes

Several university based international course programmes are supported by the Belgian Development Co-operation. Some of the postgraduate courses pertain to human settlements and habitat matters, e.g.

- Master of Architecture in Human Settlements organised at the K.U.Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven) specifically trains young professionals for sustainable urban development
- Master of Human Ecology organised at the VUB (Free University of Brussels) emphasises sustaina-

ble development principles in natural and man-made environments

- Master in Water Resource Engineering organised at the K.U.Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven) emphasises the necessity for careful water resource management
- Post Graduate Programme in Environmental Sanitation is held at the RUG (State University of Ghent).
- At the UCL (Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve) a programme on "Habitat et Développement" is sponsored.
- The Master programme in "Sciences naturelles appliquées et écodéveloppement" (Natural Sciences and Ecodevelopment), organized at the "Université de Liège" trains specialists in nature conservation.

University based research programmes

Universities are stimulated to take initiatives in research and technical assistance in partnership with universities in developing countries. In human settlements fields the Belgian Development Co-operation has supported research in e.g. housing and local building materials in Thailand and Southeast Asia and in Kenya, urban and regional planning in Ecuador, urban planning in Algeria, public transport in Thailand and water resources management in Bolivia.

Other related educational and training activities

Within the framework of specific bilateral projects, occasional short-term training activities have been organised, bringing mid-career professionals to Belgium for visits to factories, production units, infrastructure works and administration to exchange about methods and tools for improved management and organisation.

The Belgian Development Co-operation also

contributes to sending teachers, trainers and researchers to a number of developing countries through both the Flemish Association of Education Abroad (VVOB) as well as the French-speaking Association of Education Abroad (APEFE). In the past professionals have been involved in training for young civil engineers and architects and construction technicians, in countries like Morocco, Surinam, Zambia, Thailand, Kenya, etc.

Activities in Belgium to increase citizen awareness have been sponsored. The administration for development co-operation publishes the quarterly "Dimensie 3/Dimension 3" and an information newsletter. Special issues of the quarterly (then also published in English) have highlighted such topics as Earth Construction in Developing Countries (1985), the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987); in addition topics related to refugee living conditions and the growth of rural and urban population are increasingly given attention. An exhibit specially focusing on capacity building and training activities of the Belgian Development Co-operation was held in 1989.

In addition, several NGO's receive contributions to increase the awareness for development co-operation, for the public at large in Belgium, for specific target groups (i.e. school children), as well as for supporting special events or conferences related to development co-operation matters.

In 1993, for example, the Belgian Development Co-operation supported the First Global and European Conference EPC 93 (Environment and Public Health) and City '93 Forum which took place in Antwerp, emphasizing the links between environment, public health and urbanization processes within sustainable development.

A.5. International development co-operation policies for the coming years

In the late 1995 policy note of the new government the main objectives of Belgium's development co-operation are:

- peace keeping efforts in conflict-prone regions
- sustainable development.

The objectives will focus on international efforts to limit the arms-race, to evaluate and participate in humanitarian UN peace-keeping missions and to link aid to respect for human rights; within countries emphasis will be on stabilizing the local population in

its own setting, on strengthening the civic society, on supporting effective inter-national field diplomacy and on stimulation of regional mechanisms for conflicts prevention.

Sustainable development will be particularly emphasised through policies of social equitability, appropriate types of production (e.g. labour intensive, informal sector friendly...) and building partnership at local and national level.

The implementation of programmes and projects will

continue along similar lines of geographical and sector concentrations with increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation as well as on true local partnerships.

The target of 0.7% of GNP to be allocated for development co-operation is to be reached as soon as possible.

B. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION BY REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Because of the federal nature of Belgium, the regional governments are also increasingly active in international co-operation, particularly in those matters which are mainly the responsibility of the

regions. These matters are mainly: environment, housing and human settlements planning, education, infrastructure and social welfare.

B.1. The Flemish region international co-operation

The Flemish government accentuates the importance of international co-operation, thereby following several criteria for co-operation:

- cultural and historic links
- geographical proximity
- intensification of economic links
- similarity in policies towards developing a European idea
- similarities in institutional base (federalism)
- priority for democratic principles and human rights
- support and development co-operation accentuating international solidarity
- strategic location and international impact
- willingness to recognise the Flemish government as a full partner.

At present the international co-operation of the Flemish government in human settlements fields is mainly oriented towards the neighbouring countries and Central and Eastern Europe; some development co-operation is also initiated with South Africa.

Co-operation with Benelux and Western Europe

Benelux

Within the Benelux Economic Union, the Special Commission for Physical Planning was established already in 1970. The Flemish administration for physical planning has actively contributed to e.g. the Benelux Global Structure Draft Plan, etc. An active exchange of information as well as harmonizing proposals and plans related to regional plans in the countries, border-river region consultation, and even interregional exchange between Belgian regions find a good base within this framework.

Specific exchange between the Flemish region and the border provinces in the South of the Netherlands in matters of physical planning is also organized.

Euregio

The Flemish region co-operates actively in the Euro Transmanche (Kent, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Brussels, Walloon and Flemish region). Although originally aimed at smoothening Channel and rail infrastructure (TGV) implementation. Now the co-operation covers economic, social, environmental and physical planning aspects and stimulates co-operation and exchange related to the whole north-western European network of rail, road and waterbound transport.

European co-operation

In general the co-operation in the field of human settlements within Europe is increasingly felt to be necessary. The Flemish region is member of the CEMAT (European conferences of ministers of Physical Planning). The 1994 conference highlighted "policy strategies for sustainable development of urban areas in Europe"; the 1997 theme will focus on the problem of "water reserves and sustainable development".

Because of the fact that the Council of Europe so far only recognizes the national entities in Europe, the Flemish region is represented on an alternating basis with their Walloon and Brussels colleagues, although high level civil servants of each region participate in the preparation of activities particularly related to human settlements matters.

Co-operation with Eastern and Central Europe

At present the two major countries in Central Europe with which co-operation agreements have been signed are Hungary and Poland. Other initiatives are being taken in Czechia, Slovakia, the Baltic countries, Russia and the Ukraine.

Hungary

A regional development plan for the Great Hungarian

Plains is jointly prepared by the Flemish consulting group "Belconsulting - Mens en Ruimte" and the Ministry of Regional Planning in Hungary. The plan will give priority to agriculture, tourism and environmental aspects with an overall strategy of sustainable socio-economic development attuned to local and national potentials.

Another Flemish consulting group, "Hemmis-Belgroma", in co-operation with provincial authorities, is preparing the "Somogy County Environmental Information System (SCEIS)"; because of the realisation of the new national park "Donau-Drava", and because of wider regional planning needs, a regional co-ordination centre will be set up, equipped with an environmental data bank linked to a geographical information system.

An "Energy consumption assessment" project is undertaken to evaluate energy saving measures in housing as well as in the traffic and transport sector; in addition, experience with renewable and alternative energy resources in Hungary and Flanders will be exchanged.

Poland

Recently Polish housing institutes have established links with the Flemish administration for housing: co-operative projects will be elaborated.

A network focusing on capacity building and policy development related to environment and health in urban areas was initiated in co-operation with the Society for Research on Environment and Health, an Antwerp-based NGO.

Russia

A recent agreement strengthened the co-operation with the city of St. Petersburg, particularly in urban environmental quality data management.

Co-operation with South Africa

A particularly important initiative has started in the Habitat field to establish co-operation between the Flemish regional government and South Africa to assist in South Africa's ambitious plan to implement over 300,000 new housing units a year; the Social Housing Company as well as the New Housing Company are being given a capital subsidy and further capacity building and exchange of experience in social housing will be effectuated in the coming years.

B.2. The Walloon region international co-operation

The Walloon region is increasing its international co-operative efforts, stressing several criteria for co-operation:

- good relations with neighbouring countries
- cultural and historic links
- insertion in French-speaking international network (francophonie)
- intensifying economic links
- accentuating a balance between economic and social societal concerns
- attuned to specific traditions and strengths of the region
- international solidarity and humanitarian aid.

At present the international co-operation of the Walloon region in human settlements fields is oriented towards interregional co-operation with neighbouring countries France, Germany, the Netherlands and with the Flemish region.; in addition projects with selected developing countries have been initiated.

Co-operation with Benelux and Western Europe

In the field of human settlements and habitat, the co-operation with Benelux and with European Union countries has been particularly focusing on the so-

called "Euregio" programmes.

The Walloon region is particularly active in the "Interreg" European programme of which the objective is to stimulate the integration of border regions within the European Union.

This integration emphasises among others environmental and natural resource management, urban development and revitalisation, water management and capacity building.

Walloon region / Champagne-Ardennes (France)

In general co-operation between these two regions focuses on regional planning, transport, housing and urban development. Specific initiatives include the improvement of road links between the two regions, the rehabilitation of a monastery in Bourbier and an old mill in Neufchâteau, and a training programme for artisans and construction workers (e.g. stone masons - a typical skill for the region).

Walloon region (Hainaut) / Nord-Pas de Calais (France)

The co-operation between these two neighbouring regions is particularly important because of their

economic, social, political and environmental links.

Environmental activities focus on establishing a natural cross border park in the river basin of the Scarpe and l'Escaut, enhancing balanced development and rehabilitation of natural and manmade land- and townscapes, and improved water resource management.

Urban development activities concentrate on an improved Geographical Information System, on tapping the potentials and spatial coherence of the Lys and l'Espierre valleys across its administrative borders, and accelerating the development of an urban region Lille Tournai co-operation strategy.

Social activities focus on e.g. better public transport (bus) links between the two regions, and also on improving social infrastructure particularly for old age people and the handicapped.

Euregion Meuse-Rhin / Maas-Rijn/Maas-Rhein

(Co-operation: Province de Liège, German speaking community in Belgium, the Limburg provinces in Belgium and the Netherlands and Aachen Region in Germany).

The two rivers Rhine and Meuse are the major arteries of large parts of the Netherlands and Germany, and Wallonia, to a smaller part also for the Flemish region. The first phase of co-operation (91-94) co-ordinated by the Limburg Province in Maastricht aimed at drafting a "regional physical development perspective" in which later specific projects would be implemented. Both the Walloon and the Flemish region contributed 54.585 Ecu to this phase. In '94 a specific project was co-ordinated by the city of Liège and aims at increasing awareness for the importance of Euregions: an exhibition on the cities of Liège, Maastricht, Aachen, Heerlen, Hasselt and Genk shows their urban development concepts; in addition, the council men and urbanists of the towns concerned exchange experiences on urban growth and change.

Other specific projects are in preparation: e.g. to make increase river transport means between Liège, Aachen, Maastricht and Düsseldorf, are in preparation; harmonising standards and norms for industries in the Euregion concerned as a follow-up to the Eurocodes developed for the construction sector.

Co-operation with Eastern Europe

Presently co-operation between the Walloon region and Eastern Europe in operational with Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.

Slovenia

The 1991 co-operation agreement includes among

other fields, environmental protection, industrial, commercial and technological partnerships and European projects.

Slovakia

The Walloon region was the first foreign government to establish international co-operation with Slovakia immediately after the national elections. Priority fields for co-operation are among others: energy, water and forestry, capacity building to small and medium size enterprises, privatization of large enterprises, and agro-industry.

Specific project activities in these fields have already resulted in several exchanges, and in capacity building activities for Slovakian participants in the Walloon region.

Hungary

A 1990 work programme between the Walloon region and the Hungarian Baranya includes capacity building for entrepreneurs, promotion of agro-industry products and technical co-operation.

Poland

Since 1990 co-operation has favoured industrial and technological exchange, and with the region of Krakow more specifically exchange related to environment, physical planning, the construction sector and management training.

Co-operation with developing countries

Within the framework of the "francophonie", co-operation makes use of the agricultural-environmental and energy competence of the Walloon region mainly in Africa.

In *Guinea Conakry* an environmental documentation centre is set up in Labé to better guide the regional planning of the Fouta Djallon; in *Morocco* a study on waste water treatment in Mediterranean tourist zones is financed; a sub-Sahara international workshop on domestic waste has been supported.

Within the framework of humanitarian aid projects are supported:

- In *Vietnam*, a programme to develop, create and provide training in centres in the Quang Nam Province is set up, particularly in view of rehabilitation of handicapped victims of antipersonnel mines.
- In *Rwanda*, a programme is undertaken to rehabilitate and improve several medical centres, hospitals and medical services in urban centres Ngarama, Gitiuza, Nyagahita, Kageyo, Nyakozanga and Rwamangana.

B.3. The German-speaking community international co-operation

The German speaking community actively co-operates in the Euregio programmes which include their community, e.g. Maas-Rhein (see B.2).

It has also signed co-operation protocols with neighbouring countries and/or regions e.g. with Rheinland-Pfalz in Germany (1993), with the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg (1994), with the Saar-Lor-Lux greater region (1995), a major agreement with

Germans' Nordrhein-Westfalen and Rheinland-Pfalz together with the Walloon region concerning all transborder co-operation (1996).

The community is also co-operating since 1992 with the Italian Süd-Tirol region: in addition it has continued the formerly federal, cultural exchange programmes with for example Germany, the Netherlands, France and Luxemburg.

C. OTHER INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION INITIATIVES

C.1. Municipalities and provinces

In general many local authorities as well as provincial authorities are stimulating locally based initiatives for international co-operation. Such initiatives may take several forms:

- Municipalities often support a number of small development co-operation projects initiated and/or managed by local non-government organizations or by individual volunteers working in development co-operation projects abroad. Several of such projects have a human settlement component including the building of a school, a dispensary, a youth centre, housing for landless people or upgrading of squatter settlements, etc. In addition, municipalities will contribute to so-called "Third World" events organized by local groups. Usually

such support and co-operation is the responsibility of a municipal councillor in charge of development co-operation.

- Provinces may also undertake similar supportive initiatives in development co-operation and will have a provincial councillor responsible for such initiatives.
- Many Belgian municipalities actively participate in so-called "twining" initiatives whereby local-to-local exchange with sister towns in Europe or in other continents takes place. Some municipalities are members of international organizations co-ordinating local-to-local co-operation (e.g. International Union of Local Authorities, European Association of Cultural Capitals, etc.).

C.2. Non-government initiatives

As already indicated in the overview of Human Settlements and Habitat initiatives of the past 20 years, the Belgian civic society in general and the non-government organizations in particular are very active in all aspects of societal life including human settlements and international co-operation. Although a number of projects and initiatives are government-supported through co-financing contribution (see A), several other initiatives may be mentioned:

- The King Baudouin Foundation has for many years now been active in highlighting problems of urban decline, social exclusion, poverty, etc. Their early-warning function has also resulted in promotion of urban upgrading and poverty alleviation programmes. Very importantly the Foundation has established a King Baudouin Prize which rewards world-wide outstanding contributions to develop-

ment work; one of the beneficiaries of this prestigious prize has been the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and its Director.

- "Habitat & Participation" - HIC Europe - actively co-ordinates the European activities of the worldwide Habitat International Coalition (HIC). For several years now this international NGO has been particularly active in promoting the "right to housing" and in co-ordinating European NGO activities in the Habitat field.
- Several associations of tenants are working for tenants rights locally but are also regrouped in networks actively exchanging with other European associations of tenants (e.g. International Union of Tenants, "Habitants d'Europe", Brussels Right to Housing Group, Flemish Consultative Group of Tenants, Associations of Tenants, etc.).

- Several so-called service clubs (Lions', Rotary, etc.) are also active in supporting small-scale development co-operation projects with a human settlements component (building of houses, community health centres, etc.).
- Most Labour Unions have a section dealing with international co-operation and their activities in exchange and contributions to partner organizations world-wide include in some cases support to capacity building and management in the construction sector.
- The "Society for Research on Environment and Health" is promoting the improvement of urban quality of life emphasizing healthy living environments and has established a global and European exchange network.
- The Organization of Belgian Cities and Municipalities promotes exchange between local authorities and stimulates capacity building within each region in Belgium and internationally.
- Increasingly the local charity or community-based organizations assisting homeless people and in general urban dwellers below the poverty line, are seeking network links with other European organizations (e.g. ATD, "Fourth World", etc.).
- The "International Union of Public Transport" supports a better functioning of public transport so as to reduce the impact of private transport on the urban scene.
- The National Committee of Development Co-operation co-ordinates activities of many locally based NGO's and links with other European and Third World NGO's.
- COOPIBO, an international NGO, is active in human settlement improvement projects in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua and Rwanda.
- PROTOS, an NGO specialized in water supply and agricultural activities, is actively involved in settlement upgrading projects in e.g. Haiti, Benin and Burundi.
- Both the NGO's ATOL and COTA are active in evaluating development co-operation projects also in the Habitat field including the application of appropriate construction technologies.